

## Contemporary Thought.

WHILE the Government officials sent down to L'Original by the Minister of Education are enquiring into the sectarian differences between the school supporters there, they should be instructed to look into the charge that has been made, to the effect, that the English school books have no place in the education of the young. This charge has been freely made on what certainly appears to be good ground. It is no answer to say that the regulations provide that authorized English books shall be used, when the facts are that English books are not used, but French. In Quebec the language of the province is French, and therefore French is the language of the schools. But the language of Ontario is English, and English should be the language taught here. Those who wish to learn French or German are at perfect liberty to do so, but this is a very different thing from maintaining French public schools with the money of English-speaking people, thus perpetuating an anomaly that it should be the object of our people to do away with—a dual language in an English-speaking colony. The elections are over, and the Minister of Education is free to do what is best for the schools under his control. By all means let a definite line be followed in regard to these French schools in Prescott and Russell. It is bad enough to have public schools and separate schools, without also having schools in which the English language is ignored.—*Telegram.*

COMING down to modern days we find that many of the most illustrious women have remained spinsters all the days of their lives. Elizabeth of England, one of the most remarkable of latter day sovereigns, and a woman of remarkable acuteness, courage, and political sagacity, was an old maid. So was Maria Edgeworth, whose literary work prompted Sir Walter Scott to begin the Waverley novels; so was Caroline Hersche; so was Jane Porter; so was Joanna Baillie; so was Mary Russell Mitford; so was Jane Austen, to whom Macaulay awards a very high place in the field of fiction; so were Harriet Martineau, Francis Power Cobbe, and hundreds of others whose works live after them. Who will doubt that such women as Florence Nightingale, Emily Faithfull, and Clara Barton, single women though they be, have done and are doing double duty for humanity? Some of the most eminent women of every civilized land are found in the pursuit of science, literature, art, or benevolence, and are wedded only to their chosen calling. The tenderest ministrations to sick and suffering strangers in our hospitals and on our battlefields, come from the hands of the sisterhood. Are they not worthy of all honour? And because there are weak and silly, curious and gossiping old maids (just as there are weak and silly, curious and gossiping married women), shall all old maids become the subject of addelegated jest? That a woman's reason is best known to herself may apply to matrimony as well as to other affairs in life, and it is a matter into which idle curiosity has no right to apply. The good there is in the old maid commands our love and respect: for the sorrows which may have been hers she deserves our sympathy, and common justice, which is the common right, requires that we render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.—*Phila. Record.*

THE Church party in Huddersfield, England, connected with the school board have frequently "harped on" the question of having in the board schools some systematic teaching of Scripture. Recently an attempt was made to carry a resolution authorizing the reading of the Ten Commandments in the schools, with such explanations as the teachers might think advisable. The board overruled the resolution. If they had not done so one would not have been surprised to hear that the teachers had revolted against the decision. What teacher with a grain of common sense would have dreamt of explaining to young children such a commandment as the seventh? The vicar (the Rev. J. W. Bardsley, M.A.) is not a member of the school board, and till this week has made no public declaration on the matter. On Tuesday, however, a meeting in connection with the Pupil Teachers' Examination Association was held at Spring Grove School, and a letter was read stating that while Mr Bardsley took great interest in pupil teachers, still, so long as all religious teaching was excluded from the board schools he could take no part in any meeting of which the representatives of the board school formed a part. The letter continued: "When the Ten Commandments are absent I chafed at the inscription on any scheme of education. It pains me to write this. I have never entered a board school in Huddersfield while school has been going on. As far as I know myself, I never will until the present régime is changed." Mr. Bardsley's letter was commented on by Dr. Bruce, a member of the school board, and Ald. Glendinning, a former member, who remarked that he had read in the Old Book something about a man saying, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are." He supposed that the vicar could take that text to himself, preach from it, and apply it to his own experiences of the public establishments of Huddersfield. Most of the officers of the Examination Association are connected with Church schools.—*The Leeds Times (Eng.).*

It is not to be denied that, considered from certain points of view, the music of Offenbach presents a certain number of objectionable features. To the stern philosopher it will always be stamped with irreverence; to the austere moralist the sentiment of "Dites-lui" (for instance) or the "Invocation de Venus" must of necessity appear, to say the least, a trifle easy going. But society is not wholly composed of austere moralists and stern philosophers, and for the greater part of it the Offenbachian magic will endure while it has ears to hear and feet to move and pulses to set dancing. The man was a prodigy of wit and gaiety and fun; an inexhaustible source of melody, new graceful and now riotous, now touched with a certain passion, and now bubbling with laughter. For thirty years he amused all Europe, and at first sight it seems by no means to all Europe's credit that, after a term of eclipse, a number of wiseacres should be found assuring it, with every mark of surprise, that there was something in its idol after all. Of course, the fault is with the wiseacres and not with all Europe, which has never forgotten, and is not yet likely to forget, the potency and glamour of the inspiration to which it succumbed, and lay so long in thrall. All the same, it is a little mortifying that it is possible for Offenbach to even seem to be for-

gotten. He was the musician of such masterpieces as "Les Deux Aveugles," and "Orphée," and "La Belle Hélène," and "La Grand Duchesse," and "La Princesse de Trébizonde; " to him we owe the strains of "Il grandira," and the letter song and "Les femmes, les femmes," of "La Perichole," and the "Chanson de Fortunio," and "Quand j'étais roi de Béotie," and the irresistible duet of the two gendarmes, and a hundred brilliant or bewitching melodies besides. He was, of his kind, the greatest writer of tunes that ever lived; and while the world has any ear for music pure and simple his work will touch whenever it is heard. That his name may cease from being remembered seems possible enough; that his melodies can does not. *The Saturday Review.*

UNITED STATES SECRETARY MANNING, in a recent report, stated that high wages and low cost of production go hand in hand, and the Boston Herald finds in this statement a strong argument for free trade. It says, in substance, that wages being higher in the United States than in Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America, the goods manufactured in the United States must of necessity be cheaper than in any other country, and it must control the markets of the world if free trade were universal. The Herald declares that in the last thirty years wages in the United States have increased on an average more than 40 per cent., while during the same period there has been a reduction in the cost of production in every line of manufacture. It believes, too, that in some parts of India and China five cents per day would be a tolerably fair rate of wages for an able-bodied man, but thinks it would probably cost more to make a pair of shoes, or a pound of nails, or a yard of cotton cloth in these parts of India and China, than it would in the United States where the workmen are paid from forty to one hundred times more per day. For these reasons the Herald claims that it can be demonstrated as conclusively as any possible economical statement that high wages is the almost invariable concomitant of a low cost of production. This may be admitted, but it would be very difficult to prove that cheapness of production is invariably the result of the high wages paid as the Herald seems to assume. It is true that it is usually cheaper to employ a skilled artisan at four dollars per day than an unskilled workman at one dollar per day, but the reduction in the cost of production during the last thirty years is due not to the increase in wages, but to the many inventions and improvements in machinery which have been made during the last quarter of the century, making it possible in many cases for one man to do the work formerly done by three or more. The productive powers of the workman have not increased. He does not do more work than formerly, but with the assistance of machinery he is able to produce more. The increase in wages merely shows that workmen now get a much larger share of the profits from the productions of combined capital and labour in proportion to the part they take in the production of articles than formerly. In the sections of India and China referred to by the Herald the people are not only without the machinery used in civilized countries, but are altogether unskilled in most of the lines of manufacture mentioned. If the manufacturers of the United States were forced by the adoption of free trade to compete with those European manufacturers who while having all the most improved modern machinery, still pay their workmen comparatively low wages they would probably be obliged either to reduce the wages of American workmen to the European level or shut down their works.—*Montreal Star.*