

Contemporary Thought.

THERE are too many children on the streets at night. Parents, if you could realize the immoral education they are receiving, you would certainly be less lenient in this direction. Insist that the parental roof covers all the children's heads at nightfall, and set a worthy example yourself.—*St. Thomas Times*.

MEN read books on this topic, and attend lectures on that; decide that their children shall be instructed in these branches of knowledge, and shall not be instructed in those; and all under the guidance of mere custom, or liking, or prejudice, without ever considering the enormous importance of determining in some rational way what things are really most worth learning.—*Herbert Spencer*.

POPULAR opinion appears to consider drawing purely as an accomplishment. This is a popular fallacy. The earliest efforts of a child with a pencil are attempts to represent things. There is scarcely a person in Topeka but has more use for ability to draw than for ability to repeat the rules of syntax, to solve problems in the "rule of three," or to describe the vegetation of the table land of Thibet. Yet school time is willingly given to the latter and denied to the former.—*D. C. Tillotson, Topeka, Kan.*

THE system of popular election of the persons who shall have the practical management of National Education produces occasionally some remarkable results. Amongst these is the frequent recurrence of debates on questions of fundamental consequence, which the speakers appeared to think they have discovered for the first time. No references to ascertained facts, or to previous discussions, occur in debates at some of our School Boards upon subjects on which authentic facts are available, and on which the last word of argument has long ago been said.—*The Schoolmaster*.

CHILDREN get much of their education from one another, and education by companionships may undo the best home-training, just as the home lessons may destroy those of the schools. Young persons are receiving an education in their modes of thought and speech, and in their estimates of men and things, and their judgments of right and wrong, from their associates, quite as much as from their teachers in school. It is a noted fact that the young will soon become what their companions are, and the worst are usually the best teachers, for men and children will imbibe an evil contagion more readily than they can impart a good influence. Evil is communicated more surely than good.—*Ex.*

"TENNYSON'S last effusion," writes Mr. James Waylen, "contains a gross libel on 'our fathers' who, he asserts, 'drove from out the mother's nest that young eagle of the West.' I beg to remind him that our fathers did nothing of the kind. Laudean priestism it is which has to be credited with that affair; whereas 'our fathers' were so far from participating in it that when the Commonwealth arose they gave the name of *Mayflower* to one of their war ships in order, no doubt, to help keep the pilgrim fathers in everlasting remembrance. The agency which, like a upas-tree, then shed its influence over British society, and which is not yet extirpated, was a genus alienum, a genus

anti Britannicum, anti Christianum, anti Humanum."

THE central aim in all the so-called "new methods" of teaching reading is to cultivate the thought and understanding. The mental side of reading is placed before the oral expression. Great attention is given to thought-seizing power of the mind through the eye, so that thoughts are seen on the printed pages as wholes, just as they are received through the ear. The "internal digestion" of what is read is deemed of greater consequence than "delivery." In short, silent reading is cultivated by every variety of means until the pupil can rapidly scan the printed page, and by a sort of alchemy of mind, tell in his own language what he has gathered. Can there be mental exercise better than this to give flexibility of thought and fluency of expression?—*Supt. S. T. Dutton, New Haven, Conn.*

IN the ideas of good and evil there is doubtless, something more and far higher than is found in the ideas of mere pleasure and pain. But nobody could know the idea of pain from mere sense-perception. It is from consciousness only that the ideas of pleasure and pain are derived. Nobody has an idea of pain, or could understand what the word means, who had not felt a pain. Nobody could know an idea of pleasure who had not been pleased with something. And I cannot doubt that however exalted our ideas of good and happiness may be, they had their beginning and origin, their starting-point at least, in the consciousness of pain and of pleasure or enjoyment. If I remember rightly, Plato somewhere introduces Socrates as saying that all good is relative—that is, whatever is good is good for something, if not it is good for nothing. Hence we call an object or person as one not good—in reference to the welfare of others—of all concerned perhaps—of the whole universe, including the glory and honour of God, the Creator and Moral Governor of the Universe. But the idea of goodness comes doubtless from personal experience—the consciousness of pleasure and of good in ourselves, even though in some cases that good comes as a result of what is painful to us, or is accompanied by something that is painful. But when we turn our thoughts from ourselves and the present moment, we call the object or event good. Mere pleasure is personal and selfish, but good is universal, and implies self-sacrifice on our part, or at least a willingness for such sacrifice.—*Prof. W. D. Wilson, LL.D., of Cornell University.*

"You ought to have heard Harriet Adam's paper at the alumnae re-union," said Nan. "Her topic was the quality of women's teaching as compared with men's. She believes we can do as good work as men; but she doesn't think we always do. And she attributes our deficiencies to our failure to make the most of our spare time. Vacations being so much longer in our profession than in any other, the judicious use of them becomes, relatively, much more important. She thinks we ought to make it our principle to spend them in laying up something that will be helpful when work begins again. It needn't be in the line of study always. A reserve force of health and energy and good spirits may be just as valuable." Tabitha nodded. "Thank you, Nan, for helping me out with my argument. Harriet's

practice bears out her preaching, as I happen to know. I remember her saying to me once, *apropos* of this very subject of clothes, 'I'm not ashamed to say I can't afford the money to buy handsome dresses. Why should I hesitate to say I can't afford the time to make my dresses up handsomely? My time and strength are more valuable to me than money. I make a poor bargain if to save money I waste time. If there is anything I am heartily glad to pay out money for it is leisure.' And so, from the very first, Harriet made it a point never to have any more sewing than she could afford to hire done. And the time the rest of us spent with our machines, she had for out-looks and for books; and, as she grew more prosperous, for travel. For a year or two I thought she was making a great mistake. She used to look almost shabby when I met her at re-unions (and yet one scarcely thought of her clothes after she began to talk—she had so much to say that was worth hearing). But now see her, with her nine hundred a year and expenses, besides the dignity of a seminary position! Oh, I tell you, girls, teaching is just like any other business—it pays to put capital into it, even if you have to scrimp yourself in other ways for a while."—*From "A Vacation Experiment," by Lily S. Rice, in the New England Journal of Education.*

WHAT are the lessons to be learnt from this [the choice of books] discussion by readers who are anxious to make the most of their opportunities, and who (notwithstanding the blandishments of the read-anything-you-like school of theorists) would choose to make themselves acquainted with the best books in preference to the worst? There are many; but the leading moral appears to be that we shall have to depend in this matter largely upon ourselves, upon our own insight and discretion, for it is quite plain that our doctors are in hopeless disagreement. The main thing, after all, is the love of reading; to strive after that if we have it not, to foster and cultivate it when possessed. "If you do love me," says Portia to her suitor, Bassanio, as he stands before the three mysterious caskets, hesitates as to the choice on which his life-happiness depends, "if you do love me, you will find me out." In the intellectual life we are confronted not with three caskets, but with many. Of two things, however, we may be assured: first, that if we love the treasure we shall find it out; and, secondly, that it is not, like Portia's portrait, contained in one casket only. "The thing to ask about a book," says Walt Whitman, "is this? Has it helped any human soul?" And Mrs. Barrett Browning struck a true note when she wrote in "Aurora Leigh":

"We get no good
By being ungenerous, even to a book,
And calculating profits—so much help
By so much reading. It is rather we
We gloriously forget ourselves and plunge
Soul-forward, headlong, into a book's profound,
Impassioned for its beauty and salt of truth—
'Tis then we get the right good from a book."
Let these, then, be the tests for our books. Are they helpful to human souls? Do they impassion us with their "beauty and salt of truth"? If so, though banned by all the Professors, they are the books for us to read. If not, whatever name they bear on their title-page, we may well leave them alone.—*H. Tattersall in The Schoolmaster (London, Eng.)*