

## Contemporary Thought.

REV. W. R. ALGER, in a lecture on "The Uses of Music," delivered recently in Boston, said the justification of music lay in its power of enriching the finer and better part of human nature. "If soft and melting strains," he added, "inspire to sensual thoughts, the ill effect is not the natural response, but the private contribution of the individual listener."

ONCE a week, at least, every pupil in the class should be sent to the board to test his knowledge of the lessons. The blackboard is a very uncomfortable place for the ignorant. It is not the intention of sportive instruction that the child should be spared effort, or delivered from it; but that thereby a passion should be awakened in him, which shall both necessitate and facilitate the strongest exertion.—*Jean Paul.*

PROFESSOR BELL is confident that telephonic communication may be established between passing vessels at sea. He believes a wire a mile in length trailed behind a ship, will so charge the water with electricity that a vessel coming within half a mile of another thus equipped may communicate with it. "The principle," he says, "is not new; it is old, with a new use waiting for commerce to utilize it. I have experimented in the Potomac, and marvel at the simplicity of the apparatus and the stupendous importance of the results."

"EXAMPLE is more powerful than precept. Hence the importance of the teacher in all cases setting an example worthy of imitation. The personal character of the teacher will have a most powerful influence on the character of his pupils. In many respects, what the teacher *is*, is of more consequence than what he *knows*, to the right bringing-up of his pupils. It is absolutely necessary that a man should possess a certain amount of information to fit him for the work of a teacher. But it is at least as important that he should be able to exert a healthy, moral influence."—*Collins' School Management.*

I HAVE peeped into quiet "parlors" where the carpet is clean—and old, and the furniture polished and bright, into "rooms" where the chairs are neat and the floor carpetless, into "kitchens" where the family live, and the meals are cooked and eaten, and the boys and girls are as lively as the sparrows in the hatch overhead, and I see that it is not so much wealth and learning, nor clothing, nor servants, nor toil, nor idleness, nor town, nor country, nor station, as tone and temper that render homes happy or wretched. And I see, too, that in town or country, good sense and God's grace make life what no teachers or accomplishments, or means or society can make it—the opening stave of an everlasting psalm; the fair beginning of an endless existence; the goodly, modest, well-proportioned vestibule in a temple of God's building that shall never decay, wax old, or vanish away.—*Dr. John Hall.*

TRENCH's original poems have perhaps still admirers, though they are scarcely likely to survive. In his youth it was, and perhaps it may still be,

the custom of clever aspirants to try their strength in verse before they settle down to the business of their lives. Their sympathies and sentiments seem to them to require a free expression which might sound egotistical in prose; and many of them are unconscious of the imitative element which is introduced into their compositions through their admiration of greater poets. Trench's poems are not deficient in originality, and some of them are carefully and successfully polished; but they are in the nature of intellectual gymnastics and of pro-lusions to the main occupations of life. Practice in verse tended in the case of the Archbishop, and of many others, to the improvement of prose style; but he probably in later years attached but moderate value to his poems. In verse or in prose he never wrote anything foolish or insincere. His literary career, like his active life, may be recalled with unqualified satisfaction by those who cherish his memory.—*The Critic.*

WHEN the foreigners who are disgracing America in their war against the Chinese in California, will produce a record as honourable as the following, we shall be willing to give ear to their protestations: "I have done business with the Chinese perhaps to the amount of several millions of dollars. I have never had a single one of them fail to live up to his contracts. I never lost a dollar by them in all my business engagements with them, though we commonly accepted a Chinaman's word as good for a cargo of merchandise, while a written contract was demanded of white men."—Former manager of San Francisco Merchant's Exchange. "I never found a case of theft among them. They are a very steady people. I have never seen a drunken Chinaman in my life."—An employer of three hundred Chinese operatives. "Their frugal life gives them more immunity from disease. They eat only what is necessary to live upon. They eat to live, and do not live to eat. They are clean in their habits, and they drink no whiskey. I have never seen a drunken Chinaman in my life. They consequently obtain a better resisting power to the attack of disease."—Dr. A. B. Stout, member of State Board of Health.—*The Chautauquan.*

WE speak of the rapid changes in our American cities, but nothing like the changes of London can exist with us. Growth is not a change of this kind. Paris alone, in certain respects, can show such metamorphoses as London. But on the whole, Paris, as I saw it at this first visit to the Old World, was more like the Paris one sees now than was London of 1850 like the London of to-day. The mere question of growth is a minor matter. London was not the metropolis of the world in 1850, and now it is. Then it was only a huge provincial town. The Londoner in general measured nothing but himself, and nobody came to London for anything but hardware, good walking-boots, saddles, etc.; now it is the *metropól* of the civilized world. The World's Fair of 1851 and succeeding similar displays of what cosmopolitan industry can do, the common arrival of ocean steamers, rare at the time I am writing of, have changed the entire character of London life and business and the tone of its society. It is not merely in the fact that 48,000 houses were built in the capital in the last year, or that you find colonies of French, Italians, Russians, Greeks in

it, but that the houses are no longer what they were, inside or out, and thus the foreigner is an assimilated ingredient in its philosophy. All this has come since 1850.—*Atlantic.*

It is often said that Mormonism, as a religious belief, would be harmless except for polygamy. Nothing could be more unwise than to admit that. It is Mormonism itself, the union of church and state, the implied treason that will not rush to arms while it is allowed to flourish in a little feudal despotism of its own, the secret power which cares nothing for polygamy except as it believes polygamy may be a weapon in its hands—it is Mormonism itself that is to be hated, to be feared, to be crushed. Show the Mormon that the other, deeper, subtler aims he has at heart cannot, must not, shall not be endured, and he will drop his polygamy before you ask him to. Horrible as they are, Mormonism and polygamy have their supremely ridiculous aspects, and it is part of the supremely ridiculous that no man can possibly enjoy polygamy. If he practises it, it is to further other aims. In a community where he is bound to "cherish" all his wives, outwardly at least, and to provide for them all, where he cannot take refuge from the scold in the arms of the favourite, where he must appear on the appointed day at the door of the poor housekeeper as faithfully as on the other day at the table of the excellent cook, it may safely be presumed that polygamy brings its own penalties with it, and would only be endured to secure another object. It has been wittily said that, with a railway through Utah, and Gentile ladies in Salt Lake city, the milliner and dress-maker can be trusted to work the much desired reform; and there is judgment, as well as wit, in the saying. Few men can afford to have a dozen wives and forty children to be supported in equal comfort and luxury.—*Alice Wellington Collins, in Lippincott's Magazine.*

WHEN a few days ago we were requested to prepare this report, Superintendent Gorton was consulted, and from him it was learned that this Yonkers experiment was of two years' growth, and that the idea originated in Mount Vernon. The principal, Mr. Nicholas, heartily approves them as a source of good moral influence. As the result of an investigation of this subject, your committee would sum up as advantages accruing from the exhibition of the home-work of children through the medium of the schools: A bringing together of the home and the school, thus conducing to a better acquaintance between the parents and the teachers; giving to the teacher a better knowledge of the child's home influences and surroundings, thus enabling him to exercise a more intelligent care over the development of the child's moral character; giving to the parents a better insight and new interest in the schools and their management, with an overflowing of the moral influence of school training into homes where intelligent discipline is unknown; a greatly increased respect in all quarters for handicrafts; the diffusion of the principle that in the liberal education of the individual a development of manual skill, as well as a harmonious unfolding of the mental faculties, should be looked after, and that these react favourably on each other in various ways.—*From "The Hand-work of School Children," by Rebecca D. Rickoff, in Popular Science Monthly.*