

Contemporary Thought.

ACTING is not an art, it is only a profession. Every art has *product*. The actor produces nothing. He contributes nothing to the future. When the actor dies, everything dies with him.—*Athenaeum*.

PHILANTHROPY is the great factor in modern civilization, and the school, especially the teacher, must be in sympathy with the philanthropic activities of the age. There is in some quarters a timidity on the part of teachers in regard to labours for humanity, lest in some way they antagonize important officials. If the schools and their teachers are afraid to be manly, independent, whole-souled, it is a sad commentary on the times in which we live. We shall not be misunderstood as counseling any action, speech, or thought even, that is injudicious, but within the bounds of courtesy and wisdom the teacher should have a cordial expression for the works and workers in philanthropic lines. We abhor the crank, the fanatic, and the superstitious devotee, but there remains a wide margin for the activities of the teacher by methods that are wholesome, in efforts that are wise, for the benefit of the poor, the sick, the plague-cursed of every kind.—*New England Journal of Education*.

ADVICE is not difficult to obtain. It is about the most extravagantly dispensed article we have. Without money and without price it is flung into our doors, and thrust into our faces on the highways and byways. Were it less freely distributed, or more difficult to obtain, it might be held in higher esteem and a greater value attached to it. Or it may be that we have it bestowed so lavishly and gratuitously that we consider it a cheap article, a kind of rubbish thrown out of back shop doors and carted off by scavengers. At any rate, we can find nothing more freely given. We are always told what to do and what not to do, and then do about as we please. At present we are being abundantly advised regarding what we should read. The minister, the publisher, the writer, the critic, the educator, the physician, all are invading our studies with classifications of books, programmes, directions, and such things, taking up our hours with preliminaries and rules and forcing us into literary straitjackets. It may be good pasture for those filled to overflowing with advice, but the difficulty is found in one man knowing what another desires and needs most to read—his time in which to read, and the circumstances and conditions modifying even his own desires. Here is a list of books that would be useful to a theological student, but would waste a lawyer's time and wreck his fortune at the beginning of his career. Here is another that would make a scientist, but would ruin any other. And thus we find it throughout. System and wise selection are proper, but each individual must, to a great extent, direct his own course. Certain classes of books are, of course, to be discarded altogether, and should be destroyed without ceremony. Yet, from the long lists of good books embracing all subjects, the student must determine not only the class of books which may be the most useful to him, but must select the best from that class. No one can read all books; few can read all the books of value to them

in their chosen profession, and those who read the best of the best class do well. Those who have had experience can direct well the course of those who are without experience; but the best advice comes from one who knows the limits of his time, his wants, and all the circumstances surrounding his individual case.—*The Current*.

ONE curious part of the Georgian land theory is the extraordinary coolness of its historical assumptions. If a theorist were to assume that the contents, say, of the warehouse of that most respected of Senators, the Hon. William McMaster, were the fruit of the Senator's daring exploits as a buccaneer, he would be thought to be running his head against a hard fact. Yet he would not be running his head against a harder fact than do the disciples of Mr. George in assuming that property in land has its origin in a series of robberies committed by primeval landgrabbers against the people. The origin of private property in land is not lost in the mists of fabling time. On this continent it is as certain and as palpable as the existence of the continent itself. Much of the land has been recently granted or sold to the proprietors by governments elected by universal or widely extended suffrage. The rest was either divided by settlers among themselves with mutual consent, or granted by authorities universally recognized at the time. The whole of it has been brought under cultivation by private owners, and manifestly owes its productiveness and value to the labour and capital which they have expended on it. Not a shadow of fraud, violence, or usurpation, rests on the process, nor is there more room for acrimonious speculation as to its nature than there is with regard to the authorship of the British North America Act, or the foundation of the Parliament Buildings at Ottawa. The fact is really the same with regard to the Old World. The Anglo-Saxon division of land into book-land and folk-land shows, that in the Saxon settlements each freeman had his private lot, while a portion was reserved as common pasture. In no country is private property in land more immemorial or more closely entwined with the general organization and character of the community than in Norway, where there is not, nor ever has been, a territorial aristocracy. The *Alod*, or freehold, was the very basis of ancient Scandinavian civilization. The same thing may be said of democratic Switzerland. That the land held in private ownership has been sometimes transferred by force of arms from one set of owners to another, as in the case of the Norman Conquest of England, makes no difference as to the origin or character of the institution. Property of all descriptions has changed hands in the same manner. The fact is that settled agriculture and private ownership necessarily came together. Together they came, and together they would depart. How much inducement would there be for the husbandman to fertilize with the sweat of the brow land in which he could have no individual interest, and of which the universal landlords were a ring of politicians dignified with the mystic title of "The State?" But the fact is that not one in a hundred of Mr. George's followers either pretends to understand or cares for the arguments, historical or economical. What they do understand and care for is the plunder. Mr. George has given a philosophic

character and an air of scientific respectability to the lust of confiscation. That is his grand achievement, and its importance cannot be denied.—*The Week*.

DESPITE all our severe party-quarrels, we trust that the welfare of Greater Britain is dearer to us all than the rise or fall of any party in our Home Parliament. Nor will we be deterred by any party-jealousy from giving frank expression of approval of any action of our Government which seems to make for the prosperity and greatness of the land we love. We therefore express our profound satisfaction with the despatch which has been sent by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the governors of colonies under responsible Governments; a copy of which despatch has also been transmitted to the governors of colonies not possessing responsible Governments.

The despatch links itself with that paragraph in the Queen's Speech which affirmed the existence of a growing desire to draw closer in every practicable way the bonds which unite the various portions of the Empire, and stated that communications had been entered into with the principal Colonial Governments, with a view to the fuller consideration of matters of common interest. The practical outcome of the intentions indicated in that paragraph is this:—A conference is to meet in London early next year, at which colonial representatives are to be invited to attend, for the discussion of questions demanding present attention. The first of these is the question of military defence. And the colonies are informed that it is not larger expenditure which is meditated, but such intelligent and friendly co-operation, in the light of common information and united purpose, as may increase, to the highest point, the effectiveness of expenditure.

The second leading subject suggested for consideration is—"the promotion of commercial and social relations by the development of postal and telegraphic communication."

Other subjects will no doubt arise; but we heartily agree, as our readers know, with the paragraph of the despatch which deprecates discussion of political federation, and for the reasons which the despatch alleges. Formal political federation, to be healthy and lasting, must be the outgrowth of the popular desire in Great Britain and the Colonies. To go too far ahead of public feeling is to get into the flimsy land of paper constitutions. For some time to come our duty is the grateful and useful work of strengthening the ties of good-will by all manner of suitable deeds and words, and when the spirit is thoroughly developed, a body will be found for it.

It is proposed that the conference shall be purely consultative; so that it can include any leading man from the Colonies or Dependencies who may happen to be in England at the date of the conference. It will include, of course, the Agents-General, and these, with the special delegations and casual but important visitors, will form a body of Colonial opinion to which the most earnest heed will be given by all whose hearts are set on the vitalisation of Greater Britain. No one can tell to what noble issue such interchange of thought and feeling, face to face, may grow; and there is a gracious suitability in its occurrence in the Jubilee Year of the Queen.—*The Leeds Times*.