

## Contemporary Thought.

FROM 1852 to 1868 Chicago's population increased 5.1 times what it was in the first period. The death rate increased 3.7 times. The deaths from nervous disorders increased 20.4 times. These figures are significant of the wear of city life on the nervous system. Is not this strain of the nervous system a peculiarly American danger? To be sure, all brain-workers in all countries are liable to it, but in our country climatic influences increase the tendency. Under these influences we have developed national characteristics, showing in form and feature. We do things in a hurry. We are in haste to get rich. We are in haste to be wise. We have no time for exercise. We have no time for play. Both exercise and play are by serious people often looked upon as a waste of time for adults, however good they may be for children and young people. A boy must be a man before his time, and a girl must be prim and staid, and must not romp like her more fortunate brothers, but must be a sober woman after she has entered her teens. It seems as if the battle of modern life (at least of modern city life) was a battle of the nerves. From nursery to school, from school to college, or to work, the strain of brain goes on, and strain of nerve—scholarships, examinations, speculations, promotions, excitements, stimulations, long hours of work, late hours of rest, jaded frames, weary brains, jarring nerves, all intensified by the exigencies of our school and city life." The worst of the mischief is that this strain falls most of all upon those from nature and circumstance least able to bear it—upon our women. Public opinion frowns upon their exercising like men. Yet with a nervous system more sensitive than man's, they need the very exercises (out-of-doors) which, by a mistaken public sentiment, they are often forbidden to take. The healthy housework is often deputed to a servant, either because too hard for our American girls, or too much beneath them.—E. L. Richards in *Popular Science Monthly*.

As touching orthography, one word on the insanity of the *fonetik skül*, if that's the way they write it. It has gained some adherents among scientists and scholars; but I have never seen any answer to the inquiry, Would they, then, revolutionize all our literature and reprint all English standard authors in the new jargon? Does anybody imagine that a Shakspear, so metamorphosed, would smell as sweet? Is not the spelling of our old authors part of their genius? Admitting that modern editions have modified Shakspeare's spelling, can we afford to reduce it to illiteracy and read—

"That which we cal a roz  
By anè other nām wūd smel az swët."

This may not be approved spelling, but there are as many plans as roses in this *nu skül*, and it will be as hard to decide between them as to keep on the old path. Granted that there is force in all that is said about the anomalies of English, there they are, and you must cut down the old oak to get rid of its gnarls and contortions. Our language is a growth, not a manufacture. Every word has a history, and orthography points out the history and suggests the etymology. To help the lazy and the

stupid must we make a holocaust of such precious elements as these? As a matter of fact, children of intelligence, taught by the eye, with chalk and blackboard, catch the correct forms very readily.

If education and not mere "preparation for business" is the idea, I must bear witness to the splendid gymnastics of mind to which our language subjects the growing boy. He learns a hundred things besides spelling in his spelling-class. He gathers the history of words, the roots of speech, the philosophy of language, and the elements of many languages besides his own. Here, if anywhere, applies the true wisdom of Providence, so beautifully signaled by the poet—

"*Pater ipse colendi  
Haud facilem esse viam noluit. . . . curis acuens  
mortalia corda,  
Nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno.*"

—Bishop A. Cleveland Coxe in *The Forum* (October.)

THE *Appalachian Philosopher* gives the following twelve ways of injuring the health:

1. Wearing of thin shoes and stockings on damp nights and in cool rainy weather. Wearing insufficient clothing, especially upon the limbs and extremities.

2. Leading a life of unfeeling stupid laziness, and keeping the mind in an unnatural state of excitement, by reading trashy novels. Going to the theatres, parties and balls, in all sorts of weather in the thinnest dress; dancing till in a complete perspiration, and then going home without sufficient overgarments, through the cool, damp night air.

3. Sleeping on feather beds in 7x9 bed-rooms, without ventilation at the top of the window; especially with two or more persons in the same small unventilated bed-room.

4. Surfeiting on hot and very stimulating dinners; eating in a hurry, without half masticating the food, and eating heartily before going to bed, when the mind and body are exhausted by the toils of the day and the excitement of the evening.

5. Beginning in childhood on strong tea and coffee, and going from one step to another, through smoking tobacco and drinking intoxicating liquors, and personal abuse, and mental and physical excesses of other kinds.

6. Marrying in haste and getting an uncongenial companion, and living the remainder of life in mental dissatisfaction, cultivating jealousies and domestic broils, and being always in a mental ferment.

7. Keeping children quiet by giving paregoric and cordials, by teaching them to suck candy, and by supplying them with raisins, nuts and rich cakes; when they are sick by giving them mercury, tartar emetic and arsenic, under the mistaken notion that they are medicines and not irritant poisons.

8. Allowing the love of gain to absorb our minds, so as to leave no time to attend to our health; following an unhealthy occupation because money can be made by it.

9. Tempting the appetite with bitters and niceties when the stomach says no, and by forcing food into it when nature does not demand, but even rejects it; gormandizing between meals.

10. Contriving to keep a continual worry about something or nothing; giving away to fits of anger.

11. Being irregular in all habits of sleeping; and eating too much, too many kinds of food, and that which is too highly seasoned.

12. Neglecting to take proper care of ourselves, and not applying early for medical advice when disease first appears, but by taking "celebrated" quack medicines to a degree of making a drug shop of the body.

THE following is well fitted for our "Contemporary Thought" columns:—

The Prince of Wales has addressed the following letter to the Lord Mayor:

Marlborough House, Pall Mall, S.W.,

September 13, 1886.

DEAR LORD MAYOR,

My attention has been frequently called to the general anxiety that is felt to commemorate in some special manner the approaching jubilee of Her Majesty's reign. It appears to me that no more suitable memorial could be suggested than an institute which should represent the Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce of the Queen's Colonial and Indian Empire. Such an Institution would, it seems to me, be singularly appropriate to the occasion, for it would illustrate the progress already made during her Majesty's reign in the Colonial and Indian Dominions, while it would record year by year the development of the Empire in the arts of civilization. It would thus be deeply interesting to Her Majesty's subjects both within and beyond these islands, and would tend to stimulate emigration to those British territories where it is required to expend the trade between the different British communities, and to draw closer the bonds which unite the Empire. It would be at once a Museum, an Exhibition, and the proper locality for the discussion of Colonial and Indian subjects.

That public attention has already been forcibly directed to these questions is sufficiently proved by the remarkable success which is attending the Colonial and Indian Exhibition at South Kensington, and I confidently anticipate that arrangements may be made whereby the more important collections, which have so largely contributed to this success, will be placed at the disposal of the Institution.

I have much satisfaction in addressing this letter to your Lordship as Chief Magistrate of the capital of the Empire, and to invite your co-operation in the formation of this Imperial Institute of the Colonies and India, as the memorial of Her Majesty's jubilee by her subjects. Should your Lordship concur in this proposal, and be willing to open a fund at the Mansion House, I would suggest that the contributions received be vested in a body of trustees, whom the Sovereign would be asked to nominate, and I would further suggest that the Institution should be under the permanent presidency of the Heir Apparent to the Throne.

I remain, dear Lord Mayor,

Yours truly,

ALBERT EDWARD, P.

To the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor.

In reply to this communication the Lord Mayor has expressed his readiness to co-operate heartily in promoting the formation of the proposed institute, and to open a fund at the Mansion House for the receipt of contributions.