

Ontario Normal College Monthly.

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Ontario Normal College Monthly

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If, from the shelter of the editorial sanctum, we might presume to criticize the attitude of our fellow-students, we would say that they are not sufficiently ready to express an independent opinion and to discuss openly and frankly the questions that are daily laid before them in lecture-hall and class-room. We frequently hear mutterings of repressed opposition to the opinions expressed by our lecturers, and of covert criticism of the methods they advocate, as well as of the reforms proposed by recent contributors to the "Monthly." When a request is made, however, that these points of difference from current pedagogical practice or from suggested improvements in the same be openly acknowledged and formally laid before the class for consideration and discussion, the authors of these petty heresies draw back in alarm and virtually declare themselves as unwilling to acknowledge them as children of their brain. There is, however, no valid reason for this timidity and reserve. The members of the staff, we are sure, would welcome any such discussion as a sign of evident interest in the work they have been presenting, and would not regard it as in any sense a reflection upon their efficiency as exponents of

their department or upon their conscientious work therein.

Many of the topics that would thus come under review are generally acknowledged to be to some extent moot questions. Being such, they can be adequately understood, and a proper attitude towards them can be arrived at, only when they are taken up and discussed in all their bearings. The lecture method, therefore, in which through the necessities of the situation or from conviction, the instructor feels obliged to champion one side of the case to the consequent neglect of the other, is wholly inadequate to convey a just appreciation of full significance of the matter in hand. It requires to be supplemented by the discussion or symposium method in which the question is looked at from various aspects and the arguments for and against the customary popular solution are weighed. In this way, even if no definite conclusion is reached, the thoughtful participant is given a grasp of the situation and a power of dealing with similar problems which is worth infinitely more to him than hundreds of dogmatic judgments doled out by a never so faithful and experienced instructor.

These discussions, as a medium for which we throw open the columns of the "Monthly", need not be confined to questions arising out of the routine work of the classes but may to be extended to other pedagogical and literary topics, from the consideration