

To-day, unless I am very much mistaken, there is a danger that in our studies in the theological seminary and in our studies in the pastorate we pay too little attention to what may be called general literary culture.

The reasons for this are not far to seek. In her portraiture of the minister at Oldtown Mrs. Stowe says: "His Sunday sermons were well-written specimens of the purest and most elegant Addisonian English, and indeed Mr. Lothrop was quite an elegant scholar and student in literature." The time has come when we almost need to be reminded that this man of recognized literary taste was not an English rector or a French abbé, but only a country parson in the State of Massachusetts, and this not farther back from our own times than the beginning of the century. The popular conception of the minister to-day does not credit him with elegant Addisonian English. His acquaintance with literature is sometimes of the scantiest; but then he is on familiar terms with Schopenhauer and Herbert Spencer. He may care very little about the niceties of style, but he is well versed in human nature and thoroughly understands the management of men. His sermons may not be remarkable either for depth or for clearness, but he is very popular with the Society of Christian Endeavor, and shines in a Sunday-school address. No one trembles under his tread in the pulpit; but who does not thrill under the contralto, and melt into æsthetic languor before the tenor? His discourse may lack in arrangement, but he has the church-membership at his fingers' ends; and those who never dream of entertaining an opinion about him as a preacher are unstinted in their admiration of his ability in running a prayer-meeting and getting a hundred and fifty people, large or small, on their feet to testify in the course of half an hour.

Valuable as are the qualities which go to build up such a minister as this, I think we do well to plead for many other things besides—for things which will not make him a worse business man if they be cultivated, and the neglect of which will put him out of touch with very much that he ought to aim at winning for Christ or for the Church.

For this reason, if for no other, I wish to call attention to Ministerial Literary Culture.

There is, let us recognize at the outset, such a thing as national literary culture. A country may earn for itself a reputation for this. So may a community. Curtius claims for the Athens of Pericles that in it reading was universally diffused. In the narrow Canongate of Edinburgh I have heard barefooted boys discussing the Latin inscriptions on a crumbling doorway four hundred years old, and Scotland has done more for literature than any other country of her size and opportunities. The New England parson came honestly by his Addisonian diction, for among the makers of that great and heroic colony Williams, and Saltonstall, and the Winthrop, and Davenport, and Colton were almost without exception English university men, and the stern realities of a settler's life could never erase the memory of those calm retreats of learning in which they had

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