

7. *Ordered*, That any lists and books for libraries and prizes, submitted by publishers and others, be referred to Messrs. McCabe, Deroche and MacLennan, such committee to report thereon from time to time.

8. *Ordered*, That applications for the vacancy in the fourth division in the Boys' Model School, from teachers holding First Class Normal School Certificates, be solicited by advertisement in the daily *Mail* and *Globe*, for such time as the Chief Superintendent may think necessary.

9. The Chief Superintendent was authorized to intimate that the Spring Term of the High Schools shall this year close on Friday, 26th June, in order to facilitate the holding of the entrance examinations on the 29th and 30th of that month.

Adjourned.

(Signed) H. J. GRASETT,
Chairman.

(Certified.) ALEX. MARLING,
Clerk of the Council.

Education Office,
Toronto, May 21st, 1874.

I. Papers on Literary and Scientific Subjects.

THE NEW ENGLISH DICTIONARY.

An elaborate article in the *Quarterly Review*, after giving an historical sketch of dictionary-making for the English language, and particularly describing the dictionaries by Bailey, Johnson, Webster, and Worcester, proceeds to give an account of the labours of the Philological Society in England, as follows:

"It is clear from this account of existing English dictionaries, that the Philological Society had good cause to set about constructing a new one. At the outset, however, their scheme was not devised to remedy the special defaults which we have as yet dwelt on. Their first intention, as their published papers record, was to complete the dictionary rather than to reform it. In 1837, they determined to form a collection of words hitherto unregistered in the dictionaries of Johnson and Richardson, with a view of publishing a supplementary volume which might be used with these. The idea was taken up energetically, and a committee was formed to carry it out, till the suggestion arose that the scheme should be extended to the compilation of a new complete dictionary more scientific than any existing. Accordingly the Philological Society, at its meeting on January 7, 1858, resolved that instead of a supplement to the standard English dictionaries, a new dictionary of the English Language should be prepared under the authority of the society. Two committees were appointed: one, literary and historical, consisting of the then Dean of Westminster, (Dr. Trench) Mr. F. J. Furnival, and Mr. Herbert Coleridge; the other, etymological, consisting of Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood and Professor Malden. Arrangements were made for the publication of the work in parts, but fifteen years have since passed, and though a really vast work has been done in collecting and editing materials, no part has reached the final stage of completeness. What the future of the undertaking may be, not even those most devoted to it can predict with much certainty, but meanwhile we have in print the Prospectus and the Rules, with some subsidiary vocabularies, etc., and by the aid of these a brief account may be given of the scheme, and its merits judged of. The dictionary is to consist of three parts, viz., (i.) a "Main Dictionary"; (ii.) a vocabulary of technical and scientific terms and proper names of persons and places; and (iii.) an etymological appendix. The "Main Dictionary," and the supplement succeeding it, are to find room for all English words. "According to our view (say the framers of the proposal) the first requirement of every lexicon is that it should contain every word occurring in the literature of the language it professes to illustrate." It is not merely what may be called ordinary English that comes within the range of the programme. From the rules, it appears that the Main Dictionary is to admit obsolete, provincial, local, and slang words, where vouched for by some reliable authority. The treatment of these words, ordinary and extraordinary, is to be as thorough as the range is wide. The etymology is not only to give the proximate origin of each word, but also to exhibit several of its affinities in the related languages, always including that language (such as Sanskrit, etc.) which seems to present the radical element in its oldest form. The etymological appendix is to contain general philological information as to roots, affixes, etc., necessary to complete the special items of the vocabularies. The task of tracing the development of successive senses of words is fully faced by the committee, who lay it down thus: "In the treatment of individual words the historical principle will be fully adopted; that is to say, we shall endeavour to show more clearly and fully than has hitherto been done, or even attempted,

the development of the sense, or various senses, of each word from its etymology and from each other, so as to bring into clear light the common thread which unites all together." Moreover, they design to produce evidence of their linguistic growth, change, and decay, by a system of appropriate quotations, showing the epoch of the appearance of each word in the language, and the limits of its various phases of meaning.

"To carry out this immense scheme, an elaborate co-operative system has been arranged. English is, for convenience, divided into three periods; the first from Henry III's time (1250) to the printing of an English New Testament (1526); the second extending to Milton's death, (1674); the third, thence to our own time. All English words are to be classed in the periods they belong to; and, as aids in fixing their appearance and duration, standard lists are adopted or drawn up for the guidance of a volunteer army of readers, who undertake to overrun the field of English literature, amassing the linguistic material out of which a number of sub-editors have to select the items fit for actual use, upon which, by the laborious and critical processes of arrangement, definition, and derivation, the editing of the dictionary at large is to be at last accomplished. Directions for the use of readers willing to contribute materials may be had from the society; and it is unnecessary to enter into these details here. To judge from Mr. Furnival's last reports of the position of the undertaking, which give the state of sub-editing, letter by letter, it appears that this work, preparatory to the actual elaboration of the dictionary, may be now half or three quarters done, but is almost at a stand. The great question which arises is not so much When will the great work be done? as Will it ever be done? in our time at least. An effort as great, or greater than that which started the New English Dictionary, fourteen years ago, will be needed to complete it fourteen years hence."—*Conn. Sch. J.*

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

Perhaps no trite sentence of any author has been honoured with such frequent quotation as that of Bacon, "Reading makes a full man." Its truthfulness is so plain, it will not be disputed. The instances when extensive reading has added a wealth and power to life are too numerous to be gainsayed. Perhaps Macaulay was the most notable reader of modern times. At least it is most clearly seen in him. Pick up his history or essays, and you are overwhelmed with his wonderful acquaintance with literature, ancient and modern, secular and religious. So early did this develop itself in the youthful Macaulay, that he was familiarly known by his school-mates as "Macaulay the Omniscient." The wealth of literature to expand the mind, and to give abundant resource for conversation, illustration and address, is remarkably displayed in the "immortal historian."

But few persons have, however, the time for extensive reading. Business bustle, ever impulsive, ever encroaching, claims so many hours that the jaded mind refuses to turn with any fondness to reading. It becomes imperative then that whatever is read must be of an entertaining and cheering type. Indiscriminate reading will soon end in discouragement with literature generally. To try to read everything is madness. Floods of periodicals and works are poured upon society, and but few of them enrich the mind like the Nile the plains of Egypt. Selection is necessary. Culling a few of the finest works will be found infinitely more satisfying than an indiscriminate perusal of many.

Frederick Robinson says: "I never knew but one or two fast readers, and readers of many books, whose knowledge was worth anything." Mrs. Martineau says of herself that she is the slowest of readers, sometimes only a page an hour. But then what she reads she makes her own. It seems, then, that it is not the quantity so much as the quality which is so necessary to be thought of. Under this conviction we advise a close and continuous acquaintance with the best portions of English literature. There should be the founding of a habit of turning to the highest works, and very soon those light, unreal and worthless books of which our libraries and brains are unfortunately too full, will be laid aside as unworthy of the golden moments and noble energies of the mind.

No man is complete whose memory is not familiar with the history of his native land. HISTORY is an indispensable subject of study. To know the tendencies of our own age we must be able to contrast them with those of former centuries. Any lack here is a serious one indeed. It happens that some historical writings are so laborious that perusing them awakens weariness. They are mere "pigeonholes of facts." There is no enthusiasm imparted from the author to the reader. But the histories by Macaulay, and the voluminous works of Froude, seem to inspire one with such cheerfulness that the reader forgets himself in the theme.

POETRY is eagerly prized and appreciated by many present-day readers. However prosaic our life generally may be, there is still