

tions may help to emphasize the main thought of this article, that the true aim of every student is to make the most of the highest that is in him; not simply to increase his knowledge, but to develop himself.

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Some time ago we intimated that in our opinion the standard of education in Canadian Theological Halls has not been raised as rapidly as the standard in other departments of learning. We do not think this is as it should be. We do not believe that it is for the good of our country, and we would urge upon the churches the importance of giving this matter serious consideration. One point in this connection strikes us as remarkable, viz., that the money which supports the arts work in our universities comes, we may say, exclusively from those who professedly believe in Christian Theology. This being so one would think that theological education would receive first attention. How is it that theological education—at least as regards the range of subjects taught, and the time a student is supposed to spend on these subjects—has changed so little? In all our universities provision is made in honour courses for students who desire to pursue special lines of study. And a student who has taken honors in a department may be supposed to have got beyond a mere preliminary view of the subject or subjects embraced in the department, and to be in a position to do some little independent work on his own account.

But our Theological Halls (and we do not refer specially to those of any denomination) have practically done nothing in this direction. Surely this is not as it should be. At a time like the present, when there is so much discussion, both within and without the church, of subjects such as Dogmatic Theology, Apologetics, Exegesis and Historical Criticism, surely the churches should aim at giving men who desire it, the opportunity of pursuing any one or all of these subjects to a greater length than the ordinary pass course leads them.

Should there not be, in the Theological course, something corresponding to the honour courses in Arts? There must be something wrong in the church if lack of money is the difficulty. We believe that if the matter were fairly presented to our people the money required would be forthcoming. The discussions on the subjects above referred to, which are now agitating other parts of the world, will soon be upon us in Canada. Ought not the church make sure of having her ministers in a position to at least understand the force of the questions raised. We do not propose to indicate any particular line of action. That is not for us to do. But we desire to call attention to the very pressing need which exists for something being done.

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The oldest college in the world is the Mohamedan College at Cairo, Egypt, which was 1,800 years old when Oxford was founded.

In American colleges there are four thousand young men preparing for the ministry.

There is a movement on foot in the University of Pennsylvania to establish a chair of the Irish language.

## LITERATURE.

### WHAT IS LITERATURE?

JOHN MORLEY, in an address he delivered two or three years ago, asked the question, "What is literature?" and answered—but we had better use his own words.—What is literature? It has often been defined. Emerson says it is a record of the best thought. "By literature," says another author, "We mean the written thoughts and feelings of intelligent men and women arranged in a way that shall give pleasure to the reader." A third account is that "The aim of a student in literature is to know the best that has been thought in the world." Definitions always appear to me in these things to be in the nature of vanity. I feel that the attempt to be compact in the definition of literature ends in something that is rather meagre, partial, starved and unsatisfactory. I turn to the answer given by a great French writer to a question not quite the same, viz: "What is a Classic?" Literature consists of a whole body in the true sense of the word, and a classic, as Saint Beuve defines him, is an "author who has enriched the human mind, who has really added to its treasure, who has got it to take a step farther, who has discovered some unequivocal moral truth, or penetrated to some eternal passion, in that heart of man where it seemed as though all were known and explored, who has produced his thought, or his observation, or his invention under some form, no matter what, so it be great, large, acute and reasonable, sane and beautiful in itself, who has spoken to all in a style of his own, yet a style which finds itself the style of everybody—in a style that is at once new and antique, and is the contemporary of all the ages."

Literature consists of all the books—and they are not so many—where moral truth and human passion are touched with a certain largeness, sanity and attraction of form. My notion of the literary student is one who through books explores the strange voyages of man's moral reason, the impulses of the human heart, the chances and changes that have overtaken human ideals of virtue and happiness, of conduct and manners, and the shifting fortunes of great conceptions of truth and virtue. Poets, dramatists, humorists, satirists, masters of fiction, the great preachers, the character-writers, the maxim-writers, the great political orators, they are all literature in so far as they teach us to know man and to know human nature. This is what makes literature, rightly sifted and selected and rightly studied, not the mere elegant trifling that it is so often and so erroneously supposed to be, but a proper instrument for a systematic training of the imagination and sympathies, and of a genial and varied moral sensibility.

From this point of view let me remind you that books are not the products of accident and surprise. As Goethe said, if you would understand an author you must understand his age. The same thing is just as true of a book. If you would understand it you must know the age. There is an order; there are causes and relations. There are relations between great compositions and the societies from which they have emerged. I would put it in this way to you, that just as the naturalist strives to under-