

like ours, even if he is to be employed in merely mechanical labour, should be able to read the newspapers intelligently, and to write a decent letter—considerable literary accomplishments, and none too common among us. But when it comes to be asked how much, then, of this admittedly necessary element ought to be included in a normal school and university education, opinions differ very widely, and in my judgment the view which tends to prevail in Canada assigns to Literature in comparison with other things far too small a place.

The number of persons in any English-speaking country capable of estimating at its full value what Literature can do for us is, I believe, relatively smaller than in any other great nation, not excepting Russia. And that number again is perhaps at present at least not relatively larger in Canada than in any other English-speaking country.

This is natural enough. Our thoughts have been taken up with other things. We have had to clear the forests, to build rail-roads, to start great industries, open up our North-West, to work our coal and iron, our gold and silver, and nickle and mica mines, to negotiate boundaries, to build canals and locks. The immediate demands have been so urgent and the prizes so great, the country we live in is so vast, so full of all manner of material possibilities even now scarcely scratched upon the surface; it offers so magnificent a field for the exercise of that rude vigour that has always been the strong point of our race; it holds out such tempting rewards to the more elementary pluck and perseverance which seem to spring up naturally out of our blood, without any special cultivation, that it is not surprising that we have given very little serious attention to what people immersed in these loud activities are apt to regard as frills, to what, for my part, I think might be more adequately described as civilization. We have been so successful too, and seem to be on the threshold of such astonishing expansion. No wonder our young self-confidence and self-satisfaction is still unruffled. The young giant, to use the picturesque German phrase, *strotzt von Gesundheit*, "riots and runs over with health."

So breathlessly eager have we been in this congenial field of primitive labour upon the mere material problem, that we have been extraordinarily wasteful even of those very material resources which have absorbed our energies. Our forest wealth, for instance, is the greatest in the world. It is calculated, in what seems a very moderate and cautious estimate, as being capable with decent management of bring-