

is finely put in the sketch of Columbia College which appears in the current number of *Harper's Magazine*. In the year 1810 a committee of that College, in their report, defined education to be "*the evolution of the faculties and the development of habit.*" It will be observed that nothing whatever is said here about the acquisition of knowledge, classical or otherwise. The literal meaning of the word education is preserved, and it is considered to be the function of educational institutions to lead out or develop the mental faculties of the student, and not simply to instruct him or build up in his mind a fabric of knowledge. Colleges were correctly regarded as gymnasiums for the mind. The student was given the bare text of the author, with the dictionary and grammar, and he was required in the main to work out the author's meaning for himself. And thus the language was made rather a means to an end than an end itself. The object of the study was not at all classical knowledge itself, but the rigorous and comprehensive mental discipline which was acquired in the process of working out that knowledge.

But now the knowledge is in a large measure already worked for the student in special vocabularies and elaborate foot-notes and petty commentaries attached to the text, and in literal translations. Thus the main object of classical education is entirely defeated, and instead of that education we have a system of mere intellectual spoon-feeding. It is the editor of the text-book or the author of the translation who receives all the education in the case; the student gets only the instruction. But the mental muscles of youth will not be developed so long as they receive all their nutriment in this way, and so long as all the intellectual gymnastics are performed by others.

The mischief, however it was begun, may be said to have been very much aggravated in the United States by the publication of Professor Anthon's annotated editions of the classics, and in Britain by Bohn's translations. The evil has probably not spread so widely in the latter country as in the United States and in Canada. Here, while every undergraduate must ordinarily include one or both of the classical languages in his course of study, yet it is well known that owing to the vicious methods of study in vogue the amount of real culture received from this source is almost absolutely *nil* to all but the few students who make these languages a specialty. It has even become possible for students to take a very high stand on the lists by sheer dint of memorizing power alone.

And so it has come about that in the intellectual city of Boston, recently, Charles Francis Adams, himself a thorough classical scholar, but observant of the fact that classical study is no longer productive of the high culture which was claimed for it, went so far as to attack it vigorously in a public address under the name of "*The College Fetish.*" The address was subsequently published and received an immense circulation; and but a few months since this attack, was followed by another in the *Century*, by President Eliot. But the objections brought forward by these two gentlemen do not really hold against the classics as a means of education, but only against that means as it is at present abused. There are still all its old virtues in the subject itself; only let us return to the old methods of using it. To this end let a more vigorous and manly spirit of independent effort be cultivated among students themselves, and encouraged by all who have any influence in this direction.

Much good would be done also if more attention was paid in our high schools and colleges to reading *ad aperturam libri*. This feature might also with great advantage be introduced into even the Pass Examinations of the University, and given considerable prominence, under due limitations, of course, with respect to the difficulty of the passages selected for translation.

Another means by which more conscientious and thorough work could be secured in this department would be the selection for examinations on prescribed authors of short and difficult phrases and sentences instead of long and continuous paragraphs as at present. This would necessitate closer study, and would tend to confine memorizing to individual words and abstract relations, and this alone ought in general to be the province of memory in the study of the dead languages. The adoption of such a system as we have here outlined, might require the reduction of the number of authors prescribed for study on the Pass course, that is, if only the same relative importance as at

present continued to be allowed to classics in the curriculum. But few would doubt that if even only three authors each year were studied as we have described, the results would be much beyond what now follow the study of twice that number.

THE NEW CRITICISM!

A witty Frenchman, M. Timon, once said, "*que le ministre de l'Instruction Publique doit lui-meme savoir parler Français.*" This remark was very forcibly recalled to my mind by reading the article by Mr. J. E. Collins in a recent issue of the *Week* on "*English-Canadian Literature.*" One is reasonably entitled to expect that a writer on such a subject, and in such a journal, would show a decent regard for the English language. But if Shakespeare laid a curse upon any one who should violate his tomb, what punishment would be severe enough for the man who has desecrated Shakespeare's language in the atrocious manner of Mr. Collins.

With what deftness and ease does the critic decapitate Canadian authors! But, in the name of charity, what have most of these unfortunates done that they should be reviewed by Mr. Collins?

Our historians have fared the worst from the critic. He says, "In historic literature we have a number of books, most of them very poor (!) the balance (!) of them not very good." With what refined cruelty does the critic punish the delinquents! He does not take a wheel to break such butterflies; he merely refers to their books as "poor," or as "the balance," just as he would speak of stocks and cash, and goods, and other base commodities. Indeed, elsewhere in this article he *actually* does talk of "taking stock of fiction and essay work," and of "one of our most able lady writers, Miss Louise Murray"! Alas that Miss Murray should have lived to meet such a fate as this!

Mr. McMullen, we are told, got many of his facts for his history of Canada "out of the air." And, horrible to relate! "It was through such means that came about all the carnage at Montgomery's tavern." Surely this matter ought to be inquired into at once. What is our Crown Attorney, Mr. Fenton, doing that he has not had Mr. McMullen brought to justice long ago for this terrible treason? It would seem that the vulgar public have been utterly astray heretofore as to the causes of this disaster. Neither the Family Compact nor William Lyon Mackenzie could have had anything to do with the matter, for Mr. Collins assures us that Mr. McMullen, by some devilish necromancy, I suppose, "got it out of the air"! True, not all of it, but "about all"! If these are not the exact facts of the case, I may excuse my misapprehension by saying of Mr. Collins' sentence, as he himself a little farther on says of Mr. Christie's history, that "it is exceedingly ill-ordered," and that "there is no index or device of any sort to point the searcher to the fact that he may desire." And, by the way, a searcher who "desires" (!) facts does not deserve to get them until he can ask for them in intelligible English.

Thomas D'Arcy McGee must have been, to say the least, a very strange man to behave in the extraordinary fashion described by Mr. Collins. Not only does he seem to have been guilty of "pounding a desk" while "on the stamp," but worse still, he is represented as "swinging his arms—when writing history!"

On the whole, Mr. Collins does not think much of our Canadian histories. They seem to him to "exhibit none of the qualities that make the histories of Carlyle, of Froude, of McCarthy, "*full of interest as well as moving pictures*"! Here is an idea for Canadian authors and publishers! If they would only "fill their books with interest and moving pictures," they would not fail to meet with Mr. Collins' approbation, and so command larger sales. Mere stationary pictures are no longer of any service; they must be made to move somehow, Mr. Collins thinks; but unfortunately he does not tell us how this panoramic feat is to be accomplished within the limited space of a volume octavo or quarto.

In speaking of Colonel G. T. Denison our critic says that "a red flag has the same effect upon him as a member of another