

California I may just say a few words. The whole country is at present suffering from the effects of a boom in real estate which was at its height a year or two ago, and business of all kinds is exceedingly dull. The future of this country must depend largely on the growing of fruits, for which, owing to its climate and position generally, it is admirably adapted, and many will come here to make it a home on account of its mild and equable climate. Regarding the present population of this country I may say, that in the cities and towns generally, and in the country districts, there are a large number of very superior, well educated, refined and religious people whose influence, is

always for good. There are also many who are respectable and fairly good citizens, but to a great extent are indifferent to anything excepting the accumulation of money. What are known as the lapsed masses are large enough in all our Canadian towns, but much larger here. As the country becomes older the general average no doubt may be gradually improved, but in order to produce this result, here as well as elsewhere, it is necessary for those who are good and true themselves to be earnestly at work instructing the ignorant, the careless and the vicious, and using all their influence to prevent the world from sinking still further in wickedness and misery.

IMPORTANCE OF MODERN LANGUAGE STUDY.*

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THE study of language has long held an important place in academic curricula, and although educational reformers have not been wanting who have contended that too much time was spent on it, there seems little doubt that it will always form an important part of school and university courses. Enthusiastic devotees to the study of the natural sciences sometimes contend that since words are mere arbitrary vocal signs—mere sound—for the mental concepts of objects in nature, the study of language is of far less importance educationally than the study of our outer environment. But this position does not seem well-founded. Dr. Putnam Jacobi, a talented writer in the November number (1888) of the *American Journal of Psychology*, discusses the whole question of the edu-

cational value of the study of language from a psycho-physiological point of view, and comes to the following conclusions:—"It is plain, therefore, that to learn the name of a thing, and to learn how to use this name, involves much more mental action than is required simply to acquire sense perceptions about it." And again, "Thus the fundamental fact in the acquisition of language is, that it arouses the activity of the highest centres of the brain—the ideal or concept centres without whose functions all knowledge of the external world must remain as isolated groups of sense-impressions. Language is essential to all but the simplest forms of thought, because the registration in the brain of a combined impression or personal experience, derived from the union of two or more sense-impressions, is always attended by such a diffusion of excitation to the speech centre, that the organs of articulation are called into

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