

editor. Original views on events and affairs were in those days usually given to the press in pamphlet form—of which subdivision in literature England alone has produced enough to fill many libraries. This pamphlet literature is now for the most part a dead letter, as ephemeral as our newspapers now are; unless when falling into the hands of men like Swift, Addison, Johnson and Burke, the publication of a day in dealing with principles and great characters, rose to the dignity and authority of a classic. There is no insuperable obstacle in the case to prevent our newspaper writing undergoing a similar improvement. The best English and American journals are now written in a style not inferior in finish to the best books, and though ours is the limited patronage of a province, it is not unreasonable that in our principal cities we should look for a high-toned, thoughtful, and scholarly newspaper style of writing. In the Australian colonies, where, by sheer force of distance, much smaller communities than ours are thrown more on their own mental resources, they produce newspapers, in all respects, superior, and when they do borrow from their antipodean exchanges, they borrow only the best extracts. With us the scissor does much, and does well; but I should say with profound deference to the editorial scissors, to spare us, on all occasions, what passes for Irish anecdote across the border; and especially to avoid naturalizing among us, those discourses or narrations which are disfigured by blasphemous perversions, and parodies of the Sacred Scriptures.

BOOKS AND PUBLIC READING LIBRARIES.

As to the other branch of supply, I believe our book-sellers have nothing to complain of. The sale of books is on the increase, though not at all so largely as the sale of newspapers. Our books are mainly English, or American reprints of English originals. In point of price the editions are not so far apart as they were on the other side during the civil war. As to the classes of books most in request, I have been informed by one of our members well-informed on the matter, that the sales may be divided somewhat in these proportions: religious books 18 per cent., poetical works 10 per cent., books on historical, scientific and literary subjects 28 per cent., and works of fiction 44 per cent. My obliging informant (Mr. Samuel Dawson), adds in relation to the comparative money value of the several classes of books most in demand, the historical, literary, and scientific works would represent about 45 per cent., the works of fiction 22, the poetical 15, and the religious 18 per cent. of the value. We thus have this striking result, that whereas the works of fiction are in volume, nearly one-half of all the reading done among us, in cost they come to less than one-fourth, what is expended for other and better books. An accurate analysis of these books would be a valuable index to what it much concerns us to know, whether "Thomas A. Kempis" is still the book most read next to the Bible. How many of Shakespeare, and how many of Tupper go to the hundred; whether the "Pilgrim's Progress" is bought chiefly as a child's book, or whether Keble's "Christian Year" sells as well or better than "Don Juan"? "The demand for novels," says my informant, "is not nearly so great as it was," and this he traces to the growing preference for newspapers and periodicals, containing serial stories and romances in chapters. On the general subject of reading fictitious works, I hold a *juste milieu* opinion. I hold that a bad novel is a bad thing, and a good one a good thing. That we have many bad novels, issued from the press every day, is a lamentable fact; books just as vile and flagitious in spirit as any of Mrs. Behm's abominations of a former century. The very facility with which these books are got together by their authors, might itself be taken as evidence of their worthlessness, for what mortal genius ever threw off works of thought or of art worthy of the name with such steam engine rapidity? It is true, Lopez de Vega could compose a comedy at a sitting, and Lafontaine, after writing one hundred and fifty sentimental stories, was obliged to restrain himself to two days writing in the week, otherwise he would have drowned out his publishers. But you know what has been said of "easy writing" generally. For my own part, though no enemy to a good novel, I feel that I would fail in my duty if I did not raise a warning voice against the promiscuous and exclusive reading of sensational and sensual books, many of them written by women, who are the disgrace of their sex, and read with avidity by those who want only the opportunity equally to disgrace it. We must battle bad books with good books. As our young people in this material age will hunger and thirst for romantic relations, there is no better corrective for an excess of imaginative reading than the actual lives and books of travel of such men as Hudson, Burton, Speke, Kane, DuChailu, Hue and Livingston. These books lead us through strange scenes, among strange people, are full of genuine romance, proving the aphorism "truth is strange—stranger than fiction." But these are books which enlarge our sympathies, and do not pervert them; which excite our curiosity and satisfy it, but not at the expense of morals; which give certainty and precision to the geographical and historical dreams of our youthful days; which build up the gaps and spaces in our knowledge with new truths, certain to harmonize with all old truths—instead of filling our memories with vain or perplexing, or atrocious images, as the common run of novelists are every day doing.

THE BOOK OF BOOKS ITSELF.

In regard to the Bible, Mr. McGee said, there is always, as a corrective to diseased imaginations, the Book of Books itself—the Bible. I do not speak of its perusal as a religious duty incumbent

on all Christians; it is not my place to inculcate religious duties; but I speak of it here as a family book mainly; and I say that it is well for our new Dominion that within the reach of every one who has learned to read, lies this one book, the rarest and most unequalled as to matter, the cheapest of books as to cost, the most readable as to arrangement. If we wish our younger generation to catch the inspiration of the higher eloquence, where else will they find it? If we wish to teach them lessons of patriotism, can we show it to them under nobler forms than in the maiden deliverer who smote the tyrant in the valley of Bethulia? or in the grief of Esdras as he poured the foreign king his wine at Susa? or in the sadness beyond the solace of song, which bowed down the exiles by the waters of Babylon? Every species of composition, and the highest kind in each species, is found in the wondrous two Testaments. We have the epic of Job, the idyl of Ruth, the elegies of Jeremias, the didactics of Solomon, the sacred song of David, the sermons of the greater and lesser prophets, the legislation of Moses, the parables of the Gospel, the travels of St. Paul, the first chapters of the history of the Church. Not only as the spiritual corrective of all vicious reading, but as the highest of histories, the trust of philosophies, and the most eloquent utterance of human organs, the Bible should be read for the young, and by the young, at all convenient seasons.

In other respects, I do not advocate a domestic spy system on our young people; but if one knew that a young friend or relative was acquiring a diseased appetite for opium-eating, would we not interfere in some way? And this danger to the mind is not less poisonous than that other drug is poisonous to the body. "The woman that hesitates," says the proverb, "is lost;" as truly may it be said, "the woman who hides her book is lost." And in this respect, though society allows a looser latitude to men, it is doubtful if reason does; it is very doubtful if any mind, male or female, ever wholly recovers from the influence on character of even one bad book, fascinatingly written.

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IN THE DOMINION.

Mention must be made, gentlemen, of those institutions of learning and those learned professional classes which ought, and doubtless do, leaven the whole lump of our material progress. We have already twelve Universities in the Dominion—perhaps more than enough, though dispersed at long distances—as from Windsor and Fredericton to Cobourg and Toronto. The charters of these institutions, up to the close of the last decade, were Royal charters granted directly by the Crown, with the concurrence, of course, of the Colonial authorities for the time being. In the order of time they range thus:—King's College, Windsor, Nova Scotia, 1802; McGill College, Montreal, chartered in 1821, actually commenced only in 1829; King's College, Fredericton, 1823; Laval, 1852; Lennoxville, 1853; St. Mary's, Montreal, 1859; Queen's College, Kingston, 1811; Victoria College, Cobourg, 1841; Trinity College, (formerly King's), Toronto, 1842; Toronto University, 1860; Ottawa, 1866; Regiopolis, 1866. All these institutions possess and exercise university powers in granting degrees both to graduates and "*honoris causa*," though some of them have never had organized classes in more than two faculties—divinity and arts. Nova Scotia has, I believe, no native medical school; New Brunswick, I believe, is in a similar position; and some of our Ontario and Quebec Universities have been always deficient in one or other of the four faculties. In the ancient sense, therefore, of a University being the seat of universal knowledge, we have no such institutions; but it cannot be supposed for a moment that the existence, at twelve different points of our territory, of classes even in the single faculty of Arts, is not, in itself, a cause of thankfulness. We might have had a higher standard, with fewer institutions, could we have agreed upon the same curriculum of studies for all our youth; but, taking them as they are, those institutions which have had a reasonable time to do it, have work to show for their time. We have not had, except in the case of McGill alone, large bequests from private persons, as they have had in the United States and England, and as it is to be hoped we may have, as we increase in wealth and public spirit. Most of our Industrial and Classical Colleges (of which we have some ten or twelve in this Province) owe their origin to some such private acts of beneficence; but the number of scholarships founded by wealthy individuals, who have made large fortunes in this country, might, I fear, be reckoned on the finger of one hand. It were perhaps to be wished that this whole subject of superior education had remained in some sort to Federal care and superintendence, under a Federal Minister of Education, capable and devoted to the task. But the honorable rivalries of local administrations may be trusted as preventives against stagnation and exclusiveness. If many Swiss Cantons and third-rate German States are able to sustain famous Universities, unbacked by high political patronage, we may hope that, in this matter, Ontario and Quebec, and Acadia, may be found capable of doing likewise.

THE LEARNED PROFESSIONS.

Of the learned professions which represent in the world to a large extent these native colleges and universities, there are probably in the Dominion above 3,000 clergymen, 2,500 medical men, and perhaps (this is a guess) from 500 and 600 lawyers; say, apart from collegiate professors, 6,000 essentially "educated men." The special acquirements of this large body of men, in languages, laws, history, dialectics, chemistry, and *belles lettres*, ought surely not to be confined solely within the rigid limits of professional occupation;