

And the lamentable absence, up to the present time, of anything like an attempt to give it deserved prominence, and to require any adequate knowledge of it from our students, makes it urgent that its importance should now be insisted on. So far, it has formed a minute and generally overlooked fragment of the pass paper of one year; the honor papers do not touch it at all. How far the new curriculum will remedy this we do not yet know; but certainly much ought to be done to encourage general attention to this study.

A national history, like a national tongue, merits peculiar recognition, and is almost everywhere made an essential element of education. Ontario recognizes the importance of the subject in her primary schools, but we have so far neglected it, that instead of that thorough training which a national university should afford, our graduates go forth with less knowledge of the past life of the nation than the primary school requires. It is certainly a disgrace that no Canadian university affords thorough treatment of the subject.

Each decade sees the loss of important material that would be mines of information to future historians and antiquarians. Much could be done by the university itself to preserve such material, and still more by awakening a little intelligent enthusiasm in the students.

In is not necessary to insist on the value of the study as fostering a national spirit. It is plain that the more we identify ourselves with the country, the more we feel its claims on us. But assuredly the study will have a practical value when those radical changes in the constitution of the country, now already under discussion, shall be vigorously advocated.

There is no time like the present when it is so important to keep in mind the value of Canadian History, so that the University, as the highest factor in our educational system, shall do justice to it. It is to be hoped that even the little national spirit among us will be able to overcome the semi-foreign sympathies of so many of those in authority over us. It is certainly not an agreeable sight to see so many who for all that we do will look with blank eyes upon the monuments and institutions of our country.

"THE EDUCATIONAL WEEKLY" AND MODERN LANGUAGES.

We are much obliged to the *Educational Weekly* for the explanation of its position on the relative value of classics and modern languages as studies, given in its issue of the 19th of February. Still, all has not yet been made plain. It would seem that if English can be made as useful as classics, French and German can also be made as useful; and the *Weekly* seems to admit as much when it says, "English, thus studied, will make an excellent substitute for Latin and Greek. Perhaps any language, thoroughly learned, could be made so."

There seems to be a notion abroad that there is something loose and inexact about all modern languages, and that we must look to the classics for anything like precision. Now, to say that the modern languages lack exactness means that men are not able to make themselves understood in them, and without precision language fails in performing its chief function. But who will say that there is any less definiteness in the modern languages than in the classical? What "elaborate system" is there in Latin that is not in French, for example? It would be very interesting to make a comparison between Latin and French with respect to their grammatical structure. We should find that there was not such a very great difference between them after all. We must not forget that French is but modified Latin. The different relations which are expressed in Latin by means of case-endings are expressed in French chiefly by means of prepositions. And who shall say there is any more education in the discussion of the various uses of the "Dative Case" than there is in the discussion of the preposition "à"? In Latin there is no article, in French there is one, and a most interesting word it is. Some verb-forms have been lost, but new ones have been taken on, and the use of them in French is just as exact as it is in Latin. The study of the use of the Subjunctive in Latin is supposed to afford a valuable mental training; why should it not in French, where the subjunctive is subjected to regular and beautiful laws? And so we might go on contrasting the various features of the two languages, and we should find the modern language would hold its own in the comparison. What the *Weekly* urges against the study of modern languages seems to be rather against the method of study than against the educational value of the languages themselves, when properly studied. No doubt there has

been a great deal of study in modern languages to very little purpose, but unhappily this is just as true of the study of the classics. And we feel satisfied that this will continue to be the case in both until the majority of students aim at a much higher goal than heretofore. The ordinary student, of both Classics and Moderns, says that he cares nothing about the language if he can only get at all the thoughts of the writer. He is very much exercised about the philosophy to be found in Greek prose writings, for instance, or about the beautiful style and grand poetical ideas of Greek poetry, but about the language itself he cares nothing. Of course it is easy to see that as long as he stays in that mind he will never see anything in the language, nor in the philosophy nor in the poetry. The language must be studied first, and studied earnestly; studied in a way that but few have adopted in this country. There must not be so much taking out of the foreign tongues into English, but a great deal more putting of English into the foreign tongues. The true measure of our knowledge of a language is our ability to put our *own* thoughts into that language, and the acquiring of this ability no doubt affords the most valuable mental training to be found in the study of languages. We are convinced that there are many other valuable things in connection with language study, but we have not space to speak of them now. Besides, this point is so often ignored that we feel it needs emphasizing. It needs to be said over and over again, as we put it in our issue of Dec. 6, 1884: "*Mental change of standpoint with regard to every thought and feeling is the one essential with regard to language study; and it is by virtue of this circumstance alone that the study of language constitutes a real study.*" When men begin to look at things in this way they will see that the language of any people who have developed any large body of thought is worthy of study, and will cease asserting that the languages of the French and Germans—nations noted for their high intellectual development—afford no mental training.

A CANADIAN CRITIQUE OF UTILITARIANISM.*

WHETHER we agree or disagree with Dr. Beattie's views on moral questions, there can be no doubt that he has expressed them with admirable clearness in the little book now before us. The chief value of the majority of works on metaphysical and ethical questions, lies in the intense intellectual exercise which is required for their comprehension. But Dr. Beattie has given us a book which is at once philosophical and intelligible, and can be read with ease and advantage even by those who have not previously undergone that "discipline of distraction" (as Professor Ferrier called it) which a general course of philosophical reading implies.

The book is introduced by a rapid review of the general history of ethical speculation from the times of Pythagoras and Heraclitus down to those of "Professors Young and Watson." Then in Part I. we have, first, a presentation in brief form of the various questions which constitute the province of ethical science, and further, a general statement and exposition of the utilitarian theory of morals; and in Part II. an analysis and criticism of this theory.

In treating of the facts of our moral consciousness our author follows Professor Bain's method of classification, and deals with them under the several captions of the Theory of Life, or Summum Bonum; the Theory of Moral Sentiments, Conscience or the Moral Faculty, the Ethical Standard, and the Will. But he also dwells at length on moral obligation, disinterested affections and benevolent actions, and motive and action.

Our author uses the word "Utilitarian" in a much wider sense than its originators contemplated, or would probably authorize. He applies it to the happiness doctrine of Democritus, the eudæmonistic system of the Cyrenaics and of the Epicureans, and all such modern systems as those of Hobbs, Paley, Hume, Bain, the modern Positivists and Spencer, as well as to those of Bentham and J. S. Mill, to which alone the term "Utilitarian" is ordinarily applied. We conceive that Herbert Spencer, particularly, would not at all agree to having his system confounded with, and condemned along with, the others mentioned. For he expressly declares his theory to be deductive, and thus, in a measure at least, it is free from the weakness inherent in purely inductive systems. It is certain, too, that Frederic Harrison would protest most emphatically against any classification which would bring his philosophy into close connection with the system of Herbert Spencer. The use of the term "Utilitarian," however, it perhaps unobjectionable, since the author has clearly defined in what sense it is to be understood in his work.

Dr. Beattie's summary of the leading principles held by Utilitarian moralists is exceedingly clear and comprehensive, and, speaking generally, it is as fair a presentation as it is possible to give within such narrow limits. By some strange oversight, however, he has neglected to notice

* *An Examination of the Utilitarian Theory of Morals*, by the Rev. F. R. BEATTIE, M.A., B.D., Ph. D., Brantford; J. & J. Sutherland, Publishers, 1885.