

avoid narrow-mindedness and bigotry we must learn to look upon truth in its various aspects. We may learn something even from an enemy, and to expose our minds solely to one train of ideas—the ideas of our sect or party, and those alone—is the surest way of training ourselves to be mono-maniacs, and has, in fact, led many a one to the Lunatic Asylum. God alone can view at a glance the whole field of science. Truth comes to us in fragments, but let us try and see as much of it as possible. Try first one window and then another, getting as enlarged ideas of universal truth as possible.

The Moral Power of Books was the last topic dwelt upon. There was a wholesome moral power not merely in religious books, strictly so called, but also in books of science and general learning. What drove men to saloons and bar-rooms but a desire for pastime? A cultivated intellect will place within their reach a relish for books, which, if the taste for baser pleasures be not already too deeply implanted, will hold their spirit with a fascination which it cannot break. The soul craves nourishment, and if these Institutes do anything to foster a taste for intellectual recreation and to furnish the means of gratifying it, they do a great work—a work which is greatly aided in this country at the present time by the Chief Superintendent of Education in the establishment of Public School Libraries.

3. LITERATURE IN THE CANADIAN BUSH.

An odd idea, certainly, since the bush is rather fruitful of chips than letters, and of choppers than scribes. Poets may find inspiration among the trees, but common people are more likely to find axes. The bush is not the best place for quickening thought. A man gets into the forest, and when the world outside forgets him, he is too prone to forget the world. Day follows day during the busy winter, and the only variety in his labours is furnished by the size and sort of trees which he fells. His body is wearied ere night comes, and his mind is apt to go to sleep long before his body. He is an active man; but in the eternal silence and the lack of change, mental sluggishness is prone to over-power him, and must do so if he do not put forth an effort to throw it off. It is true that summer brings greater variety, but there is so much sameness even in the variety of summer, that the drowsiness is apt to continue, and this more especially from the fact, that toil then is great, and reading almost impossible. The Bush in itself, is fitted to eat out thinking. A watch cannot tick unless it be wound up, and as little can a man. He must be wound up. But what key does the lonely cleared or newly cleared country afford for such a winding? None *per se*. In the country we lie on the grass on a summer day; we look at the "wimpling stream;" we listen to a bee humming half asleep, and then we go to sleep ourselves. In itself, the country is a Sleepy Hollow, we incline to be its Rip Van Winkle, and the events which daily occur, are very likely to bump on our dulled senses, much after the manner of the legends of that famous place. We say we are apt to be so affected in the country; and we are no wise different from other people, but are amenable to the law common to the race, and we believe that the same circumstances will, in the long run, influence the ways of men in a similar fashion. And they do so unless counteracted, not only in Canada, but in every other level country. We repeat—"level country." Hilly countries are not so bad. In them the mountaineer is often excited. The shapes about him vary; the scenery is glorious and prophetic; the winds which rend his firs, and the tempests which confound the eternal hills, bring to the spirit of their tenant life and elasticity. But on the plain, the eye daily wanders over the same flat; there is no scenery at all; the wind speaks in a monotone and tempests come but seldom, and when they do, are only suggestive of injury to uncut meadows, or unhoused grain. Look at the level land of England. Sunny England! glorious England! Look, we say, and see the Boetians who there inhabit. They can handle a plow, curry a horse, and descend with vigour on a pig, but their minds doze in a flat as regular as that of the fields in which they vegetate, make ridges, and die. We say, that a quiet country, a level country, the tree land of our own Canada, all tend this way. The Bush is inherently soporific.

There is a cure, however. Mental stimulants may be imported. Letters may creep among the trees, and the unhealthy stagnation of the mental state of the forester be broken. You may thus make a wind play on his soul. You may thus soothe his weariness. You may thus excite him when torpid. You may thus make him a quiet thinker, but a thinker. You may send in Milton to sound vast symphonies in his reverential ear; you may send Thompson to kindle fancy as he speaks with nature; you may send Hemans to whisper of better lands, and Cowper to remind him of early days and "parents passed into the skies." All this you may do and much more. Books of history, and science, and Christianity, may walk up the side-lines, and diverge at the concessions, bringing their lessons of the past, the present, and the future to every door. And we rejoice that such fountains of thought well out all over our land. Often have we stumbled on "a lodge in some vast wilderness," and when we entered

its hospitable but unpretending walls, have discovered on the little hanging shelves, a row of Immortals. The man had friends beside him. He seemed alone, but he dwelt among many teachers. The greatest of earth's sons made their permanent abode under his rude roof. Then we find new books ever joining the old ones, and what one reader may not possess, he can borrow from a more knowing, or lucky, or wealthy neighbour. Thus is the "literature of the Bush" by no means scanty. We hope it may increase in the right direction. Certainly our rural population have every opportunity, and if any man is not taught and kept alive, he is numbed because he will not use the medicines which will save him.

We have spoken of private stores. We need only further allude to the village libraries which are everywhere being formed, to show others, and assure ourselves, that influences are at work, tending blessedly to the elevation of the yeomen of Canada.

We have dilated on books. We cannot forget the Press. The newspaper goes everywhere. Rummage the backmost of the back woods, and you can hardly find a house in which there is not a newspaper. We are too well aware indeed, that all is not done in this way which could be done; that the Press is not always so faithful a monitor as it might be; that its contents are not always so copious nor so select as they should be. We know all this. We feel our responsibility. Still a great deal is being done; and into the quiet of the forest, the "paper" brings life, tells much that is curious, yields many a laugh, affords instruction, and links the man and his rural household with the great centres of propulsion. We may safely count the newspaper as no despiseable portion of "the literature of the Bush."

Come we now to the schools. Riding through dark, rough pathways, now winding round a prone tree, now diverging to escape a gulping swamp, we have sometimes found ourselves in front of a square building which we knew to be a school-house. And as we listened for a moment, we have heard the hum of voices breaking the almost oppressive silence, and telling that little minds, germinant spirits, were at work there, learning that they were not mere animals, learning that thinking was to be done, and that there was a way to do it; learning from the noble school-books of our system, truths fitted to make them both wise and good, both useful and happy. Oh the school house is a blessed place! Dwarfed is his soul, whose heart throbs not as he nears it; miserable is that manniken who would limit its circle of usefulness; contemptible is the bigot, who, for some paltry sectarianism, would pollute its sanctity with his shibboleth; and still more contemptible is the temporizer, who, to gratify a clique, or to get favor from a caste, would in any way make it maimed, imperfect, or abortive. Yet there are such people; and these are the shame and weakness of our Province, true to nothing but themselves. However, let us hope that our schools may survive them. Assuredly the unutilized school system of Canada is its glory. It is raising a generation, and is preeminently to be reckoned as the foundation of "literature in the Bush."

But there are other elements at work in the production of the same material. These are scattered all over the country. Men of various professions; educated men; reading men; thoughtful men; these in their lectures in our villages and country towns are fostering and forming "the literature of the Bush." In this respect we believe Canada is as well off as any British Colony, and better off than the newer portions of the United States. For while such districts of the latter country are supplied with the lowest class even of American professional men, we, in Canada, have scattered everywhere, individuals who have been trained under loftier and more permeating influences, and have carried health, finish, and refinement into a life of comparative seclusion. These men are thus centres of happy influence always, indirectly by their tone of mind, directly by their efforts to train the people. Such appear in lecture rooms taking much trouble to instruct, and setting a literary standard of no mean sort before young Canada. We have heard, in essentially rural portions of this land, lectures delivered, which would have done honor to Exeter Hall.

We have spoken of the deadening influence of silent woods, monotonous toils, and a level country. We have spoken of the necessity for guarding against these stupifying tendencies. We said that they could be guarded against. We have now indicated the counteracting influences, the stimulants which are at work. And we feel encouraged; for we believe that not only does "literature in the Bush" not languish, but that there is all over the country, an increasing supply of knowledge, and increasing spurs to the mental life of our people.—*Globe*.

4. GIVE YOUR CHILDREN BOOKS.

Books are the cheapest teachers, and often the best. He who would have his children become good scholars and grow up thoughtful and intelligent men should provide them with books: nor mere school books, nor learned treatises on religion or govern-