

to the tastes and requirements of the mass of readers. It appears as if in the States the readers looked to the magazines and other periodical literature for all their solid reading matter, and were content with the cheap and nasty evening sheet for their daily allowance. They appear to think that a newspaper should stick exclusively to providing news. In our case we may say that we have no periodical literature of our own, and therefore ought to encourage as much as possible those papers which aim at being somewhat more than a conglomeration of daily events. We do not by this mean to praise the plan which some of our contemporaries adopt of inserting children's stories, discussions on etiquette and columns of poor jokes. These are special subjects which require books or periodicals to themselves, and only make a daily paper ridiculous. Economical considerations it is certain will always remain paramount, but we hope to see our Canadian journalism improved as we grow in wealth and numbers, and we hope that the journalists themselves as they come better paid will not become of less ability.

We welcome the appearance of the First Part of Professor Bovey's Applied Mechanics. The second part was published some time ago and has met with deserved recognition not only in Canada but also abroad. We believe that it has been adopted as a text-book by the University of Tokio, in Japan. The volume before us although modest in size contains a great deal of matter tersely but clearly set forth. The first chapter is devoted to an explanation of general principles; to it is appended an elaborate table of the strength, co-efficient of rupture, and weights of different materials. The second chapter introduces the more technical portions of engineering work and consists of the elucidation of various examples of shearing force and bending moment, each of which is illustrated by diagrams. The deflection of girders is then ably treated and supplemented by tables of practical moment to the engineer. The equilibrium and strength of beams it is next discussed, leading up to problems on loaded continuous girders, the theorem of Three Moments and its application to swing-bridges. The remainder of the work which consists of nearly 200 pages is taken up with the transverse strength of beams, a valuable chapter on pillars, one on the deflection of struts, one on torsion and the last on the strength of hollow binders and spheres. The author has embodied in the text a number of problems, fully solved, which illustrate the leading points of the "book-work." At the end of each chapter is placed a copious set of exercises, many of which appear for the first time in a work of this kind. The price of the book is \$3.50.

THE 'Varsity of February 24th makes a very good suggestion as to the granting of the M.A. degree. It maintains that that degree ought only to be granted after a pretty severe post-graduate course of study, extending over several years, and not as at present merely upon the payment of a certain fee. The plan of testing knowledge by means of a thesis, which is the one generally adopted, is in our opinion purely and simply a farce. We have not the slightest hesitation in asserting that the M.A. degree has up to the present time had a money value solely, and we doubt very much whether many graduates of good standing would be anxious to change their B.A. degree, even at the small cost of twenty-five dollars, for one which is nominally higher but in reality is not a mark of any further distinction. The degree should be made the mark of students who have attained a certain degree of eminence, and who have proved their scholarship by some satisfactory test; or else let it be granted wholly *honoris causa*, without any prescribed test. In the latter case it would perhaps be just as well to use some little caution, lest by conferring it indiscriminately the result be detrimental to the cause of true scholarship. In our own University we notice that after next year the M.A. degree will be granted only after an examination in Science or in Literature, except to those who graduated with first-class honours, or who obtained a first-class in the ordinary examination. This is slightly better than the method of theses, but will not do very much good until there is a corresponding course of lectures which candidates can attend.

The American Steam Gauge Co., (through their Superintendent, Mr. H. H. Moore), presented Prof. Bovey on the occasion of his late visit to Boston, with a very fine Thompson Indicator, a Planimeter and a Pantograph. These will form a valuable addition to the Applied Science Museum

and will be especially useful in the course on Steam and the Steam-engine. This gift shows the interest that large manufacturing firms take in the welfare of Scientific Schools, which often supply the men that undertake the most difficult branches of their work. The University thankfully acknowledges the gift and hopes it is the herald of still further additions in the immediate future.

As will be seen by a notice in another place the annual meeting of the Lawn Tennis Club is to be held on the 20th inst. We believe that steps will be taken to place the club on a firmer basis this year, and we hope that a large number of members will attend and give their hearty support.

Contributions.

(We are not responsible for any opinions expressed in this column.—Eds.)

CICERO.

There are certain characters in the history of the past that stand out from their contemporaries, not because of their superior ability in their own day, or because their name is associated with some important events that make an epoch in the world's history; but because there is something in the men themselves that brings them near to us, something that makes us realise their position with greater vividness, something in fact that makes them almost men of to-day in our eyes. Among writers there is no one of whom this is truer than Plato: one is constantly surprised by the modern tone with which he writes. Among statesmen there is hardly any one that fulfils these conditions more thoroughly than Cicero.

In forming an estimate of his character it is important to recollect the opinion held by such an impartial judge as his own countryman Livy, who seeing his faults as clearly as his virtues does not hesitate to say that, if the two were set in the balance against each other, it would be at once seen that Cicero's greatness was quite equal to his fame and that to do full justice to his character would require a tongue and pen as eloquent as Cicero's own. The verdict of the middle ages was equally favourable; it is summed up by Dante when he places Cicero among the philosophic family that surrounded Aristotle—along with Socrates and Plato, Zeno and Seneca.

Though the weak points in Cicero's character, his vanity, his indecision, his want of backbone and moral courage shewn upon different critical occasions in his life were not, we may be sure, forgotten by the ancients, it is as reserved for writers in modern times to discover that his contemporaries who, like Caesar, always revered and respected Cicero, loving him even when opposed to his policy, were mistaken in their opinion of him; that Cicero instead of being one of the greatest, was in fact one of the ideal is Caesar; of historians who, valuing success highly, have forgotten to rate excellence of moral character and true patriotism at their due importance. Among such writers Mommsen is perhaps the most typical. Cicero is with him "a statesman without insight, opinion, or purpose,..... never more than a short-sighted egotist,..... valiant in opposition to sham attacks," a man who "knocked down many walls of pasteboard with a loud din," but who never decided any serious matter for good or evil. "A dabbler—a journalist in the worst sense of the term." His soul is "stale and empty as was ever the soul of a feuilletonist banished from his familiar circles"—superficial and heartless. With less reason and with more appearance of truth, Froude an historian of the same school, writes: "So ended Cicero, a tragic combination of magnificent talents, high aspirations, and true desire to do right, with an infirmity of purpose and a latent sincerity of character which neutralized and could almost make us forget his noblest qualities,..... In Cicero nature half-made a great man and left him uncompleted. Our characters are written in our forms, and the best of Cicero is the key to his history. The brow is broad and strong, the nose large, the lips tightly compressed, the features lean and keen from restless intellectual energy. The loose bending figure, the neck, too weak for the weight of the head, explain the infirmity of will, the passion, the cunning, the vanity, the absence of manliness and veracity. He was born into an age of violence with which he was too feeble to contend. The gratitude of mankind for his literary excellence will forever preserve his memory from too harsh a judgment."

This, though doubtless intended to be a fair summary of Cicero's character, fails to do him full justice because it does not recognise the unique greatness of the man, the point by which he is distinguished from all others. We see his weakness clearly, but Froude does not make it sufficiently clear why after all Cicero was the really great man that all but a few allow him to be. The judicious Heeren acutely points out that Cicero was the statesman and philosopher that "first taught Rome, in so many ways, what it was to be great in the robe of peace." Was Cicero a failure as a statesman? Merivale asks; "Shame on the generation in which his lot was cast!..... He has left, as a public man, an example of patriotism which we would not willingly have forgotten; he has enriched succeeding