

fresh literature having been obtained, or back numbers of serials bound, so that it is time steps were taken to place matters on a better footing. In view of the fact that the funds of the society are limited, that a large amount is necessarily drawn from them to supply the reading room with matter, and also that light literature of ordinary kind, especially novels of common writers can be obtained at an almost nominal cost, which was not the case when the library was founded and which obviates one of the special difficulties which it was intended to lessen, we should think that it would be better not to purchase any books of that nature whatever, and to apply such funds as may be available to the completion of sets of the standard poets and authors, so that the library, in time, might become possessed of a really valuable literature, such as it would not be easy for individuals to obtain for themselves, and also to the preservation in good condition of such serials as it is always a welcome source of entertainment to look over in years to come, not to mention that many of the Reviews, for instance, are of a permanent character, and should always be available for reference. We might suggest that some of the literature now in the library and which is wholly unsuited to its character, should, if possible, be disposed of to the University library; and this might be a help towards obtaining other works of the character we have mentioned.

OBITER DICTA.

Mr. Charles Dudley Warner, now one of the editors of *Harper's Magazine*, is in Canada collecting materials for certain sketches of Canadian life and manners which he intends publishing shortly. It is to be hoped Mr. Warner will generalize less sweepingly, and stick a little closer to facts than he did in his former Canadian efforts. It will be remembered that he attributed our intellectual and literary inactivity to the eccentricity of the thermometer. Our mental parts are stupified by the cold, he asserted. So much time is spent in trying to keep warm, that none is left for reading, study, and literary production. In short, this amusing American tried to make his many readers believe that Canadians are not only intellectually but physically impaired by the climate. Mr. Warner now has an opportunity to correct his numerous mistakes, and moderate startling generalizations.

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With regard to Mr. Warner's mission to Canada, we may remark that Canadian life and manners are as well worth picturing as American life and manners. Whilst American life may perhaps have some advantage over ours in the way of richness and fulness, we, on the other hand, have certain picturesque elements which American life does not possess. But our life has not been studied by ourselves to any appreciable extent, and hardly at all for the purposes of fiction. And yet there is much material for the novelist's craft in Canada, much to reward

study and observation, much that is absolutely unique. But people who do not take enough interest in themselves to study themselves cannot reasonably expect to be studied by outsiders.

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The Retaliation Message of President Cleveland—which may well be called a proclamation, so autocratic was the tone thereof—has served to arouse a national sentiment in Canada which augurs well for the future stability and honour of the Dominion. This national sentiment is our great, our crying need. It alone can save the State; it alone can drive out that wretched spirit of provincialism which has been the bane of the Canadian people from the earliest days of their history. It is to be hoped, too, that our native literature will receive an impetus from the awakening of national consciousness. The little interest taken by Canadians in the life of their fellows of another Province is chiefly the result of imperfect knowledge, not to say downright ignorance. A native literature would do much to arouse and foster a feeling of brotherhood among the people of the various Provinces of which the Dominion is composed.

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It is disappointing to learn that no biography of the late Lord Beaconsfield is to be attempted in the Queen's lifetime. Lord Rowton, who was the private secretary of the dead statesman, is to be the biographer; but his hands are tied for the present. Her Majesty does not wish him to begin his labours just yet. A splendid subject he will have to deal with when he is free to begin, and it is to be hoped that he has gifts fitted for the task. It will require a writer of no mean parts fitly to portray the many-sided and brilliant Disraeli, and show him to the world as he really was. That strange and impressive personality, so calm in will, so active in imagination, so strong to move others without the appearance of being itself deeply stirred, will tax to the utmost the abilities of him who essays to picture it. So far the best study of the noble Earl which we have read is that of the Danish author, George Maurice Brandes. Mr. Brandes is himself of Jewish descent. The great success of his work may in part be attributed to this: he would be so much the more in sympathy with his subject.

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With respect to what was said in a contemporary lately about the necessity of political leaders having a certain habit of "taking things easy," we may say that those who do great things, who work the hardest in the highest lines, are mostly very dependent on such a habit for a relaxation of strain, which real mental effort and personal responsibility always causes, especially when joined to the delicacy and sensitiveness which finely organized natures possess. It is a habit, too, which adds essentially to a leader's influence as well as to his personal comfort. People forget their fears when they find that those fears do not seem to be shared in by him to whom they look for