

properly termed antiquities. Our historic ruins are few and far between. Nevertheless there do exist among us certain objects and materials which should have consequence in our eyes, and be deemed worthy of preservation, and in the absence of any active antiquarian or historical societies it is just here that the opportunity for the Old Boys' associations presents itself.

Dr. Bain, the genial and erudite librarian of the Toronto Public Library, can tell harrowing tales of the ruthless destruction of letters and documents which had high historical value, in regard to which the possessors were either ignorant or indifferent. In one instance that came under his immediate notice, a quantity of papers bearing upon the early history of the Province of Ontario were consigned to the bonfire on the occasion of a particularly severe attack of the house-cleaning mania suffered by the lady of the house into whose custody they had come, and in another case the most earnest representation of their historic value did not avail to rescue from destruction in a similar way another collection of documents that were somewhat considered by their feminine guardian to be of purely private interest.

Then again, the newspapers, the brief abstracts and the chronicles of the times in which they are published, are apt to be held in small esteem after they have been perused. They are tossed aside to the rubbish heap, or are utilized for sundry humble purposes. Yet every village, town, and city should see to it not only that complete files are kept of all local publications, but that such fragments as may remain of those of the past be carefully preserved for the benefit of the future historian, to whom they would be of the utmost value.

Some years ago an effort in this direction was made by a private individual in Nova Scotia, and it was amazing what a mass of printed material he was able to gather and preserve that would otherwise have been entirely lost.

Another line of usefulness open to these associations is the marking with descriptive tablets buildings or other objects that have in some way figured in the history of the localities. The Antiquarian Society, of Mont-

real, and the Canadian Club, of Toronto, have already shown the way in this matter, and their example might be followed to great advantage.

Finally, these associations could accomplish much permanent good by offering substantial rewards for historical investigation after the manner of the late Thomas B. Aikins, of Halifax, who for a number of years provided, in connection with King's College, a handsome prize for the best historical essay upon a designated county of the province, the result being a series of essays by some of the ablest writers of that prolific province, wherein the local history of the counties is preserved for all time in a thoroughly satisfactory manner.

Why should not a beginning be made with the County of York, for instance? Let the Old Boys put their heads together, and their hands in their pockets, with the result of raising a substantial sum to be offered as a reward to the writer who shall prepare the best history of the county within the compass of say sixty thousand words, thus guarding against undue prolixity and minuteness of detail. We would strongly commend the idea to the Old Boys, and shall hope to see it carried out at no distant date.

In the meantime it is to be trusted that the whole movement is no mere passing phase of life, but embodies the qualities of permanence, for even though it should not develop in any or all of the directions suggested, it will nevertheless accomplish some good, particularly if it is kept absolutely free from all tinge or taint of politics, which have been the bane of so many other promising organizations. It cannot fail to promote solidarity of feeling, and that is something of which the Dominion cannot have too much, in view of her geographical characteristics.

Although not arising directly out of the Old Boys' movement, yet having a great deal in common with it, is the *Home Comers' Festival*, for which such elaborate preparations are being made. For the genesis of this idea we have again to turn to the sister Republic, and it would seem that to Governor Rollins, of New Hampshire, belongs the glory of having first made the sug-