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## JAMES DEMILLE, A.M.

It affords us pleasure to present to the readers of the JOURNAL a portrait of the late Professor DeMille. We regret our inability to furnish such a biographical notice as would do justice to his noble qualities as a man, to his scholarship, and to his meritorious contributions to literature. Dying at the early age of forty-three, he, nevertheless, in his chosen sphere of labor, has left a name second to that of no contemporary Canadian.

Mr. DeMille was a native of St. John, New Brunswick, in which city he received his early education. His college training was secured partly, we believe, at Acadia College, Wolfville, N.S., and partly at Brown University, Providence, R. I. At the latter institution his mental powers were brought under the plastic influence of that rare educator, Dr. Francis Wayland. The writer of this sketch first met Mr. DeMille a few months after his graduation, somewhere about the year 1859, when fate shut them up together for a day or two in the narrow confines of a Bay of Fundy packet. Even then his conversational ability, the extent of his reading and his literary enthusiasm were quite remarkable, and made an impression on his youthful companion not yet obliterated.

After graduation, Mr. DeMille visited Europe, spending much time in researches in the ancient cities of Italy. "Helena's Household," one of his first and most popular works, bears testimony to the profound impression made on his youthful mind by the memorials of early Christian faith and practice. On his return, after a brief career in business, he was chosen Professor of Classics in Acadia College, which position he filled for some four years to the entire satisfaction of the friends and supporters of that institution. Throughout his whole course as an instructor, he bound his pupils to himself with hooks of steel, so that though he has left behind him enduring literary monuments, the preservation of his memory is not self-dependent on them. By none is it more warmly cherished than by those who enjoyed his

lectures when he was in the fresh enthusiasm of his youth.

In 1864, the Governors of Dalhousie College invited Professor DeMille to accept the Professorship of History and Rhetoric in connection with their University. In this post he labored faithfully and successfully until his sudden and lamented death. For the duties of his dual professorship he possessed rare and equal qualifications. His lectures on historical subjects evinced patient research and deep philosophic thinking, while the style both of the composition and delivery was such as to make them peculiarly attractive. The recently published, but already well-known treatise on "Rhetoric," which bears his name, embodies, we suppose, the chief points of his discussion of the principles of that Art.

It is a thoroughly good and valuable book, and is even now a standard text in some prominent institutions in the United States. An elaborate consideration of his various contributions to popular literature is not required in the pages of an educational journal. Mr. DeMille was a tireless worker and wielded a singularly facile pen. His career as an author began with, we believe, anonymous contributions, which at once attracted attention in *Harper's Magazine* and other high-class periodicals. To the journal he afterwards contributed the "Dodge Club" series, which has done much to give him popularity. With all the merits, and these are great, of Mr. DeMille's well-known novels, it is the impression of those who were in the best position for gauging his mental powers that he was capable, when the ripe opportunity should come, of literary achievements surpassing any actually accomplished. The versatility

of his attainments and capabilities has perhaps not been adequately recognized. The author of the text-book on "Rhetoric" and of the famous "B. O. W. C." series, the very cream of modern literature for boys, must have been a many-sided man.

The tidings of Prof. DeMille's altogether unexpected death came to the citizens of Halifax like a shock of sad surprise. Though he was unobtrusive in manner and shy of public appearances, his death revealed the hold which genuine merit invariably has on popular esteem. Dalhousie College will find it difficult to fill Prof. DeMille's place with a man combining so many elements of power. Canada mourns the loss of one of her most gifted sons.

