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## THE CULTIVATION OF A LITERARY TASTE IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

It is very much to be regretted that so little attention is paid to the cultivation of anything like a taste for literary pursuits in this country. While our Dominion is making rapid strides in commercial development and the acquisition of a national status, while our public men are beginning to take a very good position as legislators and debaters, and our professional men establishing a reputation which is alike creditable to themselves and their country, literature seems to languish, and Canada is so far without a single name, if we except Judge Haliburton, that has secured anything beyond a merely local reputation. The necessities of self-preservation—the restless, endless struggle for social position—the pursuit of wealth—the strain upon the energies in fighting the battles of life, seem to absorb all the national life-blood, and there is nothing left with which to garnish the prosaic current of events, or to gild the wide horizon with a silver lining of brightness or glory. We are fully conscious that in a new country like ours, in the very infancy of its existence, where so many have settled to secure that social independence denied them elsewhere, that there is but little leisure for that research necessary to the development of a literary taste. And yet it is true, that many of those who contributed most to the literary glory of the mother country, were men whose struggles with life were long and hard. Luxury never pampered their appetites, nor did they ever slumber in the lap of ease. Burns and Shakspeare, Walter Scott and Dickens, felt the pangs of “pinching poverty,” and yet by the princely power of their genius, they have made the world cast tribute at their feet. By the force of talent, and not by the force of circumstances, (rather in spite of circumstances), they have given to the world of letters stores of literary wealth, which none that appreciate the beautiful and the true will ever let die. Little Dorritt, and David Copperfield, by Dickens, Old Mortality and the Heart of Mid Lothian, by Scott; Hamlet and King Lear, by Shakspeare, or Auld Lang Syne, and the Cotter’s Saturday Night, by Burns, are contributions to the literature of the language which have