

are not dead; we are not intellectual mummies; we have thoughts and interests which transcend the bounds of absolute social selfishness. We do get a little above the mere animism whose everlasting motto is "what shall we eat and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed." There is good along with the evil—there is something more than vanity and greed in public life. Our business, then, is not to cry down political agitations, even though they do at times rock the land like an earthquake, but to purify them. Our duty is, not to keep out of the struggles of national life, but to throw into them the elements of honor and purity which spring out of a high level of character and thought in ourselves.

Leaving the sphere of political life, we might ask what is the condition of literature in this country? The term embryonic might well describe it. Its manifestations are scanty in extent and narrow in range, transient and of little worth in ultimate achievement. It is hardly to be expected that they should be anything else. And this is not altogether the fault—misfortune rather, of the writer. Those for whom he writes must share in the blame or the pity as the case may be. Let any man undertake to write a book that will cost him time and study, and what is the prospect he has to look forward to? Is it not neglect? We have a tide of foreign literature flooding into the land, and we are not sorry that there is a demand for it; but we are sorry when it sweeps away all attention and interest from our own productions. There has been much talk about protecting our manufactures. We need to talk a little about protecting our literature. This protection must come, however, not from law but from what is better, the intellectual sympathy and self-respect of the people. But every good cause the world over has its martyrs, and these are generally the men who go in to break up the new land. They have to suffer that others may be crowned. They have to toil in the shadows of obscurity that others may come out into the sunlight of success. Men like Heavyside must sing unheeded amid the stir and bustle of the audience in order that those who come after may obtain a hearing when people have time and inclination to sit quietly and listen.

Need I apologise if for a moment I tread upon theological grounds. I think not. The theologian who knows naught but his theology, who is ignorant of the thought and life of those who are not theologians, is a miserable being indeed, too narrow to be clearly seen or much noticed. But I venture to say that he is not more wretchedly cramped than the man of literature who persistently and contemptuously leaves out of sight those deep perplexing problems which theologians ought to deal with, though alas! they sometimes do not even know of them. With reference to these questions there is much stagnation in Canada. Men array themselves submissively, and without independent thought, under some of the generally received forms of religious life, or else fall in just about as submissively under the banner of a radical materialism. There all move on self-contained in their own spheres, knowing little of each other, and too often feeding bitter and contemptuous feelings upon their ignorance. Now, what I would contend for is that there should be more of contact, that men may become broader and better by understanding each other. True, there might be storm and strife, but that is healthy. They say it is like leaving the whirling of a tempest for a dead calm, to come from the intense religious life of the old country to the mental apathy which seems to brood over us here.

Leaving these generalities we come to the Literary Society, which, I think, should act as a sort of bridge from the life of the student to the life of the man, freed from the restraints and guidances of the college course. It should teach us self-reliance. What is the aim of a Literary Society? To me it

seems to be simply this, the development of independent thought and of its expression. You see there are two things there; both are of vital consequence.

There is not much scope for independent mental activity in college life. There is activity, no doubt, with some exceptions, of course, but it is to a very large extent driven and controlled by the professors; and this is right enough in its place. But the time must come when the student will escape from this tutelage. He must begin to think and act for himself. Now there are at least two dangers which beset the path of a young man at this stage. If he is largely developed in the direction of self-esteem and combativeness, he will probably go out of college with the conviction that he was born for the special purpose of setting the world to rights. He will have an invincible confidence in his own ideas—ideas which are great because they are his, and for no other earthly reason. He will all the time be striking his head against stone walls, which don't care much how long he continues the exercise. On the other hand if he is timid, modest and self-depreciative, his trouble will be in the opposite direction entirely. He never has boldness enough to form an opinion at all. He is constantly and painfully playing the part of a foot-ball for men who have more self-reliance in their composition. Against both these dangers the Literary Society ought to guard. It should rebuke the arrogant, encourage the timid; it should soften the conceited down to a becoming modesty, and beget in the fearful a manly confidence. It should teach the student to have and hold his opinions without being entrapped by blundering folly on the one hand, or by an indolent cowardice on the other.

But it is not enough to have opinions; we must be able to send them out from us so that they will have power upon others. The reservoir may be full to the brim of water, cool and clear, but it is of little use as a water-system without channels to convey it to the lips of the city's thirsty thousands. Men may have all the height and length and depth and breadth of their nature stored with knowledge, but if there be no flowing forth it is but buried treasure.

"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

That word *waste* is most happily employed. What in the name of common sense is the use of the sweetest odour if there are no nostrils to inhale it? In many minds the flowers of thought spring up, give out their fragrance, wither and die, without the world being any the wiser or any the better. The first couplet of the stanza has its analogy too—

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear."

Yes, the gem is there, but it might as well be a common pebble for all the good it does. It must be polished and placed upon the brow of beauty in order that its worth may be realized. Gems of thought are lost, because they lie hidden away in caverns. Some men are walking sepulchres, where forms of beauty lie entombed. The thoughts as they go in feel that they must take a long last look of life, for they are plunging into darkness and death from which there is no resurrection. It is a pity that good thoughts should be treated in such an unseemly manner. If the Literary Society would act the part of a resurrectionist here, it need fear neither fine nor imprisonment.

The Literary Society ought to come in here. College life, while it may put a good deal into a man, does not teach him very much as to how he is going to get it out again in some useful form. The Society should, to some extent at least, fill this breach. It should stimulate the student to the use of pen and voice. How few of us know how to wield the pen with