

are often spent in visiting the neighbours' houses, lounging about the doors on a summer evening, or perhaps loafing about the tavern or the blacksmith's shop; and any little smattering of education gained at the common school is soon forgotten." There is special danger of young men thinking that when their school days are over, their education is completed. They have reached the goal of learning so far as they are concerned. Not so, however. Nothing can be more fatal to mental culture and true progress as such an idea. The school is not an end, but a means to an end. It is to help feet that have not yet learned to walk alone; but long and advancing steps remain to be taken when the school-house door has been closed upon them. True progress comes only from the use of one's whole life, not merely the early part of it.

The eulogy pronounced upon our system of education is worth a passing glance. "Without at all conveying the idea that our schools are all they might be, we have no hesitation in saying that any Canadian youth may procure the elements of a sound and profitable education." No country is more highly blessed than ours in respect of education. It is the source of perpetual admiration to strangers who visit us. The standard is high, the benefits are free, so that only will is wanted to secure these benefits and reach this standard.

A sound piece of advice is tendered about the class of books which should companion our spare hours. "Many books are highly injurious, because they infuse a secret poison into the mind, polluting the imagination, vitiating the taste, and depraving the heart. But there are good books written by men of character and worth—fully competent to discuss the thousand topics to which they apply themselves. Let spare hours be devoted to making a good selection, and systematically reading the books of one's choice, and they will be abundantly rewarded." There is no doubt standard literature is often shelved, while pure rubbish is found in the hand and head. And the warning against the shilly-shally productions of men who write for money, not for the propagation of the good, is well-timed.

Debating societies come under the notice of the writer. He approves and disapproves of them at one and the same time. "They stimulate thought and inquiry." "All that has been ever read is again recalled, the elaborate faculty rearranges it, and so it becomes more the debater's own than it ever was before." "The memory, imagination, and judgment, are all called into activity and must be improved." But, *per contra*, "the evil arising out of such societies is the disposition to debate everything that comes up in common conversation. How can I contravene the opinion my friend has advanced? is the question which is fostered." Here the essayist treads on delicate ground. It has always been a disputed point among men of mind as to whether debating societies are expedient or judicious. Whately takes the negative promptly. But arrayed against him are Jeffrey, Macaulay, Hamilton, and many others who heroically maintain the affirmative. Undoubtedly, the greatest number of opinions advanced by great men are in their favour.

The closing pages of the essay are devoted to the discussion of the use of the leisure hours in advancing morality. The Doctor says, "It is on the cultivation of our moral faculties the safety and happiness of the community depend. Intellectual strength is really no more the test of a truly great man than is muscular power. It is moral goodness that makes the great man." There can be no doubt of this. "Beauty is strength," in morals especially. And this conclusion has been reached by several whose opinions are worth regarding, among whom none excels Tennyson in his noble lines,

"Howe'er it be, it seems to me
Tis truly noble to be good;
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood."

The whole essay has a healthful tone and manly vigour about it, which cannot fail to commend it to those who heard it. It is refreshing to peruse it. It is like breathing good, pure, bracing air, exhilarating and stimulating in its results. And if our various associations can secure the services of such men as the essayist whose production we have been reviewing, their intellectual and moral powers cannot fail of progress and enlargement.—*London Daily Advertiser*.

LITERARY SOCIETIES.—The importance of literary societies cannot be over-estimated. They offer to the young advantages which they cannot otherwise obtain. It is well for young men to utilize the advantage thus offered, especially when a debating society is connected with a literary society. Most of the men who are now celebrated in the pulpit, and at the bar, commenced at literary and debating societies, and sometimes in a very humble way. To debate any question satisfactorily, requires careful reading, and much useful information can be obtained in that way. Many years ago, in a city not a thousand miles from Lancaster, a printer's apprentice said to the wife of his employer, Mrs. X—: "I wish I knew

what to do with my evenings." "Why," responded the lady, an educated and intelligent woman, "why, Will, don't you start a debating society?" "Oh, I couldn't he replied, "there are only two or three of the boys at the office, know anything about debating." "That is enough," said the lady, "just go on; I will help you all I can." Thus encouraged, the young man organized the society. It grew rapidly in numbers and importance. The young man read, thought, and rose gradually higher, until to-day he edits one of the "giant dailies" and is a power in the land.

If pupils could realize the influence which the participation in debates, etc., may exercise upon their life in the future, they would eagerly embrace every opportunity to discharge the duties which literary societies require of their members. Ages have elapsed since Demosthenes and Cicero lived, and yet their writings are models for all who would perfect themselves in oratory. Let young men keep these facts before their minds, and never neglect an opportunity to improve the advantages which may offer, and always consider the literary society as an important instrumentality in their mental development.—E. M'V. MOORE, in *Pennsylvania School Journal*.

2. PREPARATION IN VACATION.

The travels and recreations of vacation should not wholly shut the duties of the future out of mind. The faithful teacher will take pleasure, even in periods of rest, in gathering material for classroom use, and in devising plans for professional improvement. The opportunities of travel and visiting will furnish many facts and principles that may be used in illustration of school lessons; and all should be carefully treasured in note-books and memory. The experience of the last year has, very likely, indicated branches of study or methods of instruction in which the teacher is weak; and the cool mornings of many summer days may profitably be given to a review of these matters, and to general reading of popular science, history, travels, and other literature not remotely related to our work. Some excellent work may also be done by way of review of all common-school branches, upon the list of questions prescribed for the examination of teachers, and which are easily procurable from the County Superintendents, or in educational magazines and reports. Teachers who need nothing in review may well break ground in some new study, which shall prepare them for promotion by and by. Of course, attendance upon such professional conventions and institutes as are within reach will not be neglected.—*Michigan Teacher*.

3. THE COMET.

WHAT LEADING ASTRONOMERS SAY OF THE GREAT CELESTIAL LIGHT.

The conflicting views of leading astronomers respecting Coggia's comet will be read with interest just at this time. Professor Lyman, of Yale College, says:—

For two weeks past it has been visible to the naked eye. Now it has so increased in brilliancy that it is visible in moonlight. It is going for ten or fifteen days to increase in brilliancy. Its apparent path now is toward the sun—that is, it strikes in between us and the sun. The probability is that the tail will be quite a conspicuous object. Much depends, however, on the amount of matter in the comet as to the extent of the tail. The nucleus of the comet will probably be so near the sun that the head will be invisible—that is, that it will disappear below the north-western horizon—as it is going so near the sun. The nearest it will approach the earth will leave it about the same distance from us as Venus, when at inferior conjunction. After it disappears from the northern hemisphere it will be visible in the southern hemisphere, its motion being nearly directly south from the pole-star. As to the tail reaching us it is more than probable that we shall not perceive the visitor although, of course, no one can at the present time say whether the sweep of the tail shall touch the earth or not. Even if the tail did touch the earth the touch would likely be so diffuse as to be scarcely perceptible. The shooting stars are associated with comets, and are probably the *débris* of comets, as was especially illustrated with Biela's comet and the meteoric shower of November 27, 1872. Those showers were simply portions of Biela's comet.

Professor Newton, of Yale College, says:—

This comet, so far as he can judge, is going to travel directly south, away from the north star. It will grow in brightness for some ten days. After that the nucleus will get so near the sun as probably to be invisible in the strong twilight. It will pass almost directly between us and the sun about the 19th and 20th of July. At that time the tail, if long enough, may stretch out across our heavens, though if short too diffuse it may not be at all visible. It is fairly within the possibilities that the earth will strike through the tail, but the result would be totally inappreciable either in the