

Elizabethan era. It produced a war of tracts and disputations, which dissensions greatly augmented the use of the language as a literary instrument. These religious disturbances made men think. Their sluggish mental faculties were awakened by the stirring scenes and earnest spirit of the times; for the sight of martyrs at the stake, courageous to the last, did not fail to leave a deep impression on the minds of spectators, who began to study the Bible for themselves. This engendered a freedom of thought which found expression in the writings of the age of Elizabeth. An eminent critic says that Protestantism was a life-giving element of the atmosphere from which the authors of that age drew their inspiration. We have only to imagine that at the reign of Mary and her religious system had continued through the sixteenth century, and we shall appreciate the indispensable part which the Reformation took in the creation of English literature. The reformers also gave an immense impulse to literature by displacing the Latin of the schoolmen and using the language of the people.

The Reformation also gave an impetus to the rise of the drama, itself a mighty power in the growth of literature. The beginnings of the drama, the mysteries and morality plays were the direct result of religious revival. The influence of the drama can easily be understood when we consider what an important part of our literature is dramatic.

The last event of which we shall speak, as having aided the expansion of our national literature, is the first French Revolution. There was not a single gifted young mind in Europe, upon which this bloody tempest did not come with disturbing or stimulating influence. Poets believed that a golden age had dawned for man. Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Southey were carried away by this feeling, and their writings breathed the spirit of revolution. Burke's "Reflections on the French Revolution" was widely read, and exerted a powerful influence on the public mind. But the storm cleared, leaving its mark on England's literature rather than on her constitution.

Thus we see a few prominences rising out of the rushing brook of the history of English Literature. The country on one side of this brook is wild and barren, and inhabited by a semi-barbarous people who care nothing for culture and refinement. The other bank is smiling and fair, and its refined and gentle

though manly occupants are watching with interest the progress of a fair being across the torrent. The first stepping stone Christianity is firm, the next Scholasticism does not move, another, the Reformation stands firm against the currents of infidelity; and so one after another is safely passed in spite of the whirlpools and yawning gulfs which threaten to overwhelm the brave traveller, until, as the literature of the nineteenth century, she steps on the firmer ground of the Victorian age, whence her progress is sure, her prospects brighter, and her dominion wider.

R. D. B., '93.

The ordinary Canadian student lives in two distinct worlds. One is the home world; there business, news, gossip, and nothings form the staple of conversation. Books rarely intrude; when they do they are treated in a gingerly fashion and are soon dismissed. From this world the student, whether at school or college, passes abruptly into a new world. He may enter into it conscientiously; so may a clerk enter conscientiously into the weighing of sugar. The clerk thinks but little of sugar when once out of the shop, and school out or college over, our student returns into the bosom of his family. Everything that student knows is the result of a distinct conscious effort. Now life is very short and our duties are many. The number of conscious efforts we can make is comparatively small, and the knowledge gained by such efforts is limited. But nature has kindly made a provision that much—perhaps the most—of our education is the result of unconscious assimilation. Human nature is indefinitely porous. The atmosphere we breathe has an immense, though unostentatious, influence upon us. Holmes speaks of having been bred amongst books, and of consequently having the same easy feeling amongst them that a stable boy has with horses. The boy who has grown up in a home where books and literature—things of the mind, in short—are, not necessarily supreme, but at all events part of the household life, has an immense advantage over the lad who finds a great gulf fixed between his home life and his school life. The victim of our ordinary home life strives hard for every intellectual fact he acquires, while the other leaps as by inheritance into much that the first has to work for, into much that he will never attain.—*Queen's College Journal*.