

If the youth starting in life, let us suppose, as a member of the teaching profession, knew at the outset what a mine of exhaustless riches lay within comparatively easy reach, what a very Golconda of intellectual wealth was to be had for the seeking, surely he would put forth some effort to make this wealth his own—for all the incalculable treasure stowed away in language may be acquired by him who diligently seeks it. True, by so doing, he may not attain to universal homage; he may neither ripen into a Shakespeare nor a Macaulay; but I do say, that every painstaking, conscientious student may garner from the fields of literature such sheaves of wisdom as will amply repay him for his outlay of toil, place him on a level with the leading minds of the age, and make him something more than a mere perambulating mathematical formula. Besides being enabled to do much good, and confer much pleasure on his generation here below, he will have laid up for himself a heritage of beauty, which may not indeed be appreciated by the educational powers that be, but will, I firmly believe, bear rich fruitage hereafter in a more congenial sphere, where mental capacity will not alone be gauged by the charlatan-like ability to unravel the intricacies of an incomprehensible equation, nor will intellects be measured solely by the automatic capability of appreciating the astounding relations existing between an involved problem and its inexplicable solution. One may endeavour to convince us that the true secret of success in life is to be found in the function of an algebraic expression, but history gives him the lie. Another may strive to make us believe that renown can only be acquired by a formula, but poetry whispers it is false.

Professor X. may frantically declaim upon the *all importance* of correct

mathematical instruction, but art criticism echoes, "I never made a point by my mathematical knowledge." Dominic Y., because he hasn't a soul above an indeterminate, may whine about the development of the intellect through mathematical agency alone, and yet the world of letters sneers "Tush!" All that is most beautiful in language that has been written, or said, or sung by the humble and illiterate, by the lofty and the enlightened, from the "God said, let there be light, and there was light," of Genesis, to the poetry of Tennyson and the prose of Carlyle, has been formed irrespective of mathematical agency of words—words without figures, words without symbols, words without involved processes—not a formula employed but the great truism of thought, not a contrivance adopted but the spontaneous utterance of native genius, or the intelligent outpouring of cultivated mind. The study of mathematics is good, as all study is good in its place; but to set the golden calf of mathematics upon a pedestal of isolated perfection in our curriculum of education, to the exclusion of everything else that is noble and worthy of acquirement, and then to fall down and worship it, perpetually reiterating, "These be thy gods, oh! Canadian instructors of youth, which will bring thee up to a first-class certificate," is an idolatrous bigotry which should be denounced, and a sin against common sense which should be derided. It is not given to all to excel in every branch of educational attainment; and if the world has seen one Admirable Crichton matured, alas! how many failures has it witnessed! I believe it was the poet Gray who detested mathematics, but the author of the incomparable "Elegy" could well afford to detest that which had so little to do with the establishment of his undying renown. Do not misunderstand me. I have no