

TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

Literary and Historical Society of Quebec.

SESSION OF 1874-75.

PAPER I.—THE PRESENT STATE OF LITERATURE IN CANADA, AND THE INTELLECTUAL PROGRESS OF ITS PEOPLE DURING THE LAST FIFTY YEARS.

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(Read before the Society on the 2nd of March, 1875.)

WITH the year 1874 closed the fiftieth year of the existence of our Society ; and, therefore, I have thought an appropriate theme on which to address you is the intellectual progress of Canada, and more especially of the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario during the last half century. At its creation, expectations of a very exalted kind were entertained with regard to the influence of our Society. In their address to the public its founders said : “ It will raise us in the moral and intellectual scale of nations. It will cherish our noblest feelings of honour and patriotism, by showing that, the more men become acquainted with the history of their country the more they prize both their country and themselves. In a literary point of view, it is fair to expect that the formation of this Society will introduce a lasting bond of union and correspondence between men eminent for rank, erudition and genius, from one extremity of the British provinces to another.” We can scarcely claim to have fulfilled these anticipations ; nevertheless our Society has doubtless done

much to encourage and foster a love of literature in this city ; and in its publications it has distributed to historical students the world over documents to which they have acknowledged their indebtedness. The Society has always afforded its members access to a good library, and, in addition, has tried in various ways to stimulate literary activity and encourage investigation in physical science ; but the results have not been encouraging. Yet, when we look to see what success similar endeavours, made by kindred societies, have met with, we find that the disappointment has been general. We are, therefore, led to seek for influences operating everywhere in Canada, which are detrimental to literary culture and literary production ; and for such influences we shall not search far ere we find them.

Though leisure cannot be accounted necessary to the cultivation of literature, few men absorbed in the toil and business of life will be found willing to spend their spare moments in what for a time at least will be arduous occupation, the thorough understanding and appropriation of good books. The taste for reading has in most cases to be acquired, and the acquisition is not always easily made ; and, therefore, in a population where few have enjoyed the training of a University, and there learnt to love learning for its own sake, and where nearly all have either passed from school to the drudgery of a commercial house or the hardly less elevating influences of strictly professional study, it is not to be wondered at should there be but little inclination for any other than merely amusing reading. It is a pity that it should be so, but the education of the mass of our people must be carried beyond the elementary stage where it usually stops, before much improvement in this respect can be looked for. In this new land of ours, every man is struggling for a living ; or, if that has been secured, for a competency ; or, if this has been gained, for wealth. A very small class has inherited wealth, and the culture, which across the Atlantic so often accompanies it,—a culture derived from generations

of highly educated well-bred ancestors. So few in fact have been born to wealth and leisure, that all may be said to be straining every nerve to acquire them. Unfortunately it usually happens that those who succeed in attaining the former have in the process so dwarfed their higher faculties as to have become unfit to appreciate the advantages of and rightly use the latter.

When our Society was founded in 1824, the population of the Canadas was about 574,600, and that of our large cities somewhat as follows:—Quebec, 26,000; Montreal, 22,000; Kingston, 2,849; Toronto, under 2,000. Since then, by natural increase and by immigration, the population of Quebec and Ontario has swelled to 2,812,367. How the energies of this growing population have been expended is apparent in some of the older hamlets having sprung up into spacious and handsomely built towns, and the older towns having assumed the proportions of influential cities; in thousands and thousands of square miles of wild land cleared and converted into arable fields; in an annual exportation of \$90,610,573 instead of \$7,237,425, as in 1829, and in an annual importation of \$126,500,000 instead of \$6,169,500, as in 1829; in over 218 miles of canal dug, and 3,669 miles of railway built, and in the country having risen from comparative commercial insignificance to the position of the sixth maritime nation of the world. The result and object of such activity, displayed by so comparatively small a population, is decidedly hostile to, if not incompatible, with literary culture. It has been brought about only by every man employing himself almost uninterruptedly in manual labour or commercial pursuits or purely professional services. It does not necessarily follow that these employments should exclude the cultivation of letters, for the hardest worked farmer or artizan can find many an hour, usually spent in apathy, which, if devoted to intellectual culture, would prove the best spent hours of all the year, and the most pecuniarily profitable too; and the mercantile man has a

still larger store of spare time at his command. But the fact remains that, amongst us, these classes do read very little and that the mental and physical toil, to which their occupations expose them, offer a fair explanation of the fact, though not a justification of it.

In proof of the fact that we are not a reading people, the smallness and fewness of our public libraries bear humiliating testimony. In Montreal, the commercial capital of the Dominion, and a city whose corporation and whose citizens are ostentatious in the expenditure of wealth for purposes of outward show, there is not a public library worthy of the name, none at all of any kind to compare even with our own of 8,000 volumes. Toronto has a large University Library open for reference only to the public, but no free library of any pretensions; and all our other large cities are as badly or worse off. Even the Parliamentary Library at Ottawa, which has on its shelves 75,000 volumes, is small when compared with the Boston City Library, which circulates freely among the public 270,000 volumes. Boston possesses moreover in the Athenæum Library another collection of books of equal size; and in New York, Jacob Astor bestowed freely on the public a magnificent library of almost as many volumes. Our own library and the small collection of the Montreal Natural History Society, the library of the Canadian Institute of Toronto, the Law Library of Osgood Hall, our various College and Parliamentary libraries, are none of them accessible to the public, and are not, therefore, correctly speaking public libraries, which it is a crying disgrace to Canada that she should be almost entirely deficient in. I was strongly impressed with the immense benefit which may accrue from such benefactions, by noticing lately the class of men who frequented the free reading room and library of the Cooper Institute of New York, on a Sunday afternoon. There were in it not less than 600 men, principally mechanics and labourers, reading in hushed silence, men who, from their appearance, had they

not been there, would have been, that cold winter afternoon, warming themselves in far different resorts.

Now, if we be not a reading people, we are sure not to be a literature-producing people. For writing is an art only to be acquired by a long and pains-taking apprenticeship, and an art practiced therefore only where there are readers to appreciate and reward it. Even when there be genius in the writer to suggest thought, unless he possess also skill in the use of words, which shall enable him to express his thoughts clearly in language, and the art of arranging his thoughts thus expressed so that they shall impress and not confuse the mind of his reader, his genius will be of little avail to him; and these qualifications are the product usually of long practice only. Proofs of this are many. Very able men, for instance, have always written for the leading American magazines, but their articles have been till of late crude and uninteresting as compared with similar productions in Great Britain; for, though good thinkers, these writers had not learnt that necessary art of putting just enough and no more thought into an article, of beginning it with an attractive paragraph and rounding it off with that finish which gives it the appearance of completeness. A thoroughly well written magazine article, from a professional pen, is worth studying for its style; but still more artistic is often an editorial from a leading English newspaper. The art displayed in introducing the subject by an appropriate metaphor or aphorism, the skill with which a multitude of facts are described in a few words, but so combined, that the mind without effort passes from the facts to the conclusion which the writer wishes to draw from them, and the unhesitating confidence with which he clinches the argument, are all qualities which practice and not native talent alone confer on a writer. And the same is equally true of book-making. A mere chronological stringing together of historical facts, for instance, is not writing history. The annalist is the historian's drudge. It

is the part of the historian so to weave together facts, and so to identify them with persons and places as to give life and reality to the period he is describing. To do this well he must possess the power of combination, which makes the dramatist, and the vivid imagination of the poet; and these faculties must be controlled and guided by logic and a severe regard to truth. Now, writing history is popularly supposed to demand little genius and little skill; but, if I have correctly defined the qualifications of the historian, it is evident that he who is to succeed in that branch of literature must possess, not only a large stock of mental endowments, but have learnt by long practice how to make best use of them. The wide disparity there exists between annals and history any one will immediately feel who will read together the volume our Society has published on Jacques Cartier's Voyages and Mr. Parkman's Chapters on the same subject, in his "Pioneers of France in the New World." Any accurate observer can write a book of annals, but a life has to be devoted to literature ere such masterpieces are produced as Macaulay's "History of England" or Prescott's "Ferdinand and Isabella." The charm of such books depends as much on their style as on the information they convey, and such style is not so much the gift of nature as the product of art, and not therefore to be looked for in the writings of men who are wearied with physical toil or immersed in the sordid cares of business.

Writing is a profession, and good writing seldom comes from any but those who practice it as such, and whose whole thoughts are set on literary pursuits. There are, no doubt, notable instances of men who have attained high rank in literature and who yet followed other avocations. Roseoe was a Liverpool merchant, but he failed ignominiously in business. Charles Lamb was a clerk in the India House. John Stuart Mill and his father held similar posts. Arthur Helps was Secretary to the Privy Council. Anthony Trollope has or had an appointment in the Post Office Department.

Greg is in the English Civil Service. And yet all these men have written most excellent books. But they are or were men whose avocations simply absorbed so many hours of the day without filling their minds at all times with cares and with thoughts hostile to calm reflection.

There is another class of writers in old countries which is wanting here. Men of highest culture and wealth, and who, if they chose, could devote all their leisure to literature, but often prefer to unite literature with politics. We find three notable instances of that class in the late Lord Derby and Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli. All these have written books which would be accounted good, even if not the productions of British Prime Ministers. We, in Canada, have had Premiers and public officers of no mean talent or literary skill, but I fear the claims of political life are more exacting and harassing here than in Great Britain; and in the class of men who possess both culture and wealth we are lamentably deficient.

But though literature is sometimes seriously followed as a pastime, it is generally pursued as a trade by men who earn their bread by it. Such a class, however, can exist only where there is a market for their wares, and such a market there certainly is not in Canada. The newspaper editor is paid; and his lieutenants, who scour the streets to pick up scraps of gossip, are paid also: and our magazines do their best to pay a pittance to their contributors; but no man could live on the money product of other literary work than that of the newspaper press in Canada. A Colonial publisher knows his own interest too well to give anything worth while for a manuscript which, if he publish it, will be likely not to meet with sale enough to cover cost of printing. A Canadian book is sure, with the stigma of a colonial imprimatur upon it, not to circulate beyond the confines of the Dominion; and, therefore, when a Canadian writes a

meritorious book like Todd's "Parliamentary Government," or Heavyside, "Jephthah's Daughter," he seeks a publisher abroad.

It is not, therefore, because we have not and have not had men of talent in Canada that our literature is so scanty, but because remuneration for literary labour is not great enough to withdraw talent from other more lucrative walks of life, and because our colonial society is without that large class of men, inheriting both wealth and culture, who, in the old world, compose the powerful body of literary volunteers that so ably supports the army of professional writers.

I would not be understood to imply that Canada has not produced some literary work. Mr. Morgan's carefully compiled Dictionary of Canadian Authors is a large volume, and shows what a host of writers in all departments of literature Canada has produced, and M. Edmond Lareau's "Histoire de la Littérature Canadienne," corroborates the fact. But while we are thus surprised at the number of men who have resorted to the press in order to circulate their thoughts, we are the more surprised that so little of this vast mass of printed matter should have possessed sufficient value to survive.

Fifty years ago there had been hardly a book published in Canada. Political pamphlets had streamed from the press, and nineteen newspapers at that date gave a meagre outline of home and foreign news; but the leading spirits of the country were too immersed in political strife to devote time and thought to literature. Of intellectual activity displayed by men of great intellectual power there was no lack, but the activity found vent in one direction only. Neither before nor since has Canada possessed a band of men of greater power than those who, on both sides, fought the battle of the constitution in the House of Assembly, and, unfortunately, out of it too. There were Bédard, Papineau, Lafontaine, Jules Quesnel, John Neilson, Sir James Stuart, Andrew

Stuart, Chief Justice Sewell, and a multitude of others, men of lofty talent and wide acquirement, but who could spare no time from their all-absorbing occupations to write aught more pretentious or enduring than political or professional pamphlets. In 1823, however, a magazine was started in Montreal, "The Canadian Magazine and Literary Repository;" and in 1824, a rival appeared in the same city, "The Canadian Review and Literary and Historical Journal," both conducted with considerable ability, though written in a painfully stilted style, and displaying too strong a political bias to circulate beyond the limits of the Montreal English party. In 1824, moreover, appeared in Kingston the first two-volumed novel that issued from a Canadian press, with the ominous title "St. Ursula's Convent, or the Nun of Canada, containing scenes from real life." But it was not till political quiet succeeded the turmoil of nearly half a century, and till liberty of the press allowed our newspapers to expand from shabby semi-weekly sheets into daily journals, so short of matter that the aspirant after literary fame could be pretty sure of being allowed a corner for his pet production in prose or verse, that we began to produce *belles lettres*. The sum total of all that has been published since in *brochure* or in book form is really very considerable. Of course most of it possesses no value, but it is not in Canada only that measures of quantity and quality as applied to literature are not convertible terms. And out of the mass some shelves full of really good books can be picked. It is not fair to call John Galt a native author, but Judge Haliburton was born, bred and educated in Nova Scotia, and, therefore, we may claim the author of "Sam Slick" as altogether our own. Mrs. Moodie wrote before she emigrated to Canada, but she was fully naturalised when she published "Roughing it in the Bush," and Mrs. Leprohon is by birth and at heart a Canadian. Other English ladies have written good stories with considerable skill; and more cannot be expected, considering how few anywhere succeed in doing better.

French Canadian *littérateurs*, however, produce upon the whole better romances and novellettes than the English. "Charles Guerin," "Jacques et Marie," "Jean Rivard," possess style as well as plot; and the stories of our associate, M. Faucher de St. Maurice, are picturesque and so well constructed that the interest of the narrative rises in intensity to the climax.

A good poem is the product of an age, and it is, therefore, no disgrace if Canada has not been the fortunate home of its author. The only work of importance which has issued from the Canadian press is "Heavyside's Saul," a dramatic poem, which, despite the dowdy dress in which it appeared, called forth loud praises from the organs of criticism in England. Many other English poets, and, notably, Mr. Sangster, have written harmonious verse. In such compositions, however, our French Canadian writers excel, and to one or two of them is due the high honour of adding to the *repertoire* of Old France.

But it is in the domain of history and political economy where we might have expected much work would have been done; and here very little has been effected. Garneau's "Histoire du Canada," as a comprehensive history of the country, from its discovery to the date of the Union, is a work beyond all praise; for, although written with strong party and national feeling it displays immense research and philosophical spirit; but a first attempt must necessarily be faulty. Dr. Miles' compilations are excellent manuals; and Mr. Lemoine's sketches of history and topography are not only graphic but add largely to our store of facts, and from other pens both French and English have proceeded many good historical essays. But what we might have looked for would have been extended monographs on different epochs in our history, in which the whole of the rich material, even now at the disposal of the student, would have been digested, and a rational connection of the period with the past, and its bearing on the future explained. Short as our history has been, it seems

with dramatic incidents and complications, any one of which is a worthy theme for a historical treatise. Every one will be glad to hear that Mr. Lemoine is now engaged on a more elaborate work than he has yet undertaken. What we want is vivid, and at the same time full descriptions of the past, not merely lofty eulogies on people or periods, about which the panegyrist generally tells too little for us to form an opinion for ourselves. Political economy likewise is a subject on which, had there been much intellectual life among us, treatises would have been written; for by us trying to create a new nationality and to avoid the errors of the old, the subjects of the tenure of land, the treatment of poverty, and the regulation of the currency deserve much attention.

Good work has been done in Canada, and by Canadians, in science. Mr. Bouchette's topographical works are models of accuracy and completeness. Sir William Logan was born in Montreal, and though he studied geology in England, it is on Canadian rocks he exercised that skill which has made him one of the most eminent stratigraphical geologists living. Aided by his *collaborateur*, Dr. Hunt, he won for the survey of Canada and for Canada through its survey, fame, when Canadian politicians were doing their best to bestow on her only an unenviable notoriety. Dr. Hunt was born in the United States, and to the United States he has, to our disgrace, been allowed to return; but Canada can never repay the debt she owes him, not only for the faithful services of twenty-five years, but for allowing her to share in the honour which foreign nations have bestowed on his genius and labours.* Then, again, Dawson is a name known wherever and in whatever language geology is studied; and Billings and Murray, and Bell and Bailey are men who have earned laurels from judges who never distribute their praises

* Since the above was in type, we are happy to state that, Dr. Hunt has been offered the charge of the Chemical Laboratory of the Inland Revenue Department, Ottawa.

too lavishly. The professors of Toronto University, Wilson, Chapman, Croft, Cherriman, and McCaul, are all men whose connection with our country has given us a good repute abroad; but we cannot claim them as products of Canadian soil.

As I said, therefore, work, and that good work has been done in every department of literature in Canada, but it has been small in quantity and but ill-requited at home.

What then do the three and a half millions who inhabit Canada read? Imported books and home-made newspapers.

Since 5 per cent duty has been levied, that is since 1868, the following is the custom's return of imports and exports of books, kindly furnished me by Mr. Dunscomb :

YEARS.	TOTAL VALUE IMPORTED.	TOTAL VALUE EXPORTED.
1868	\$478,630	\$13,793
1869	640,820	17,096
1870	674,373	51,793
1871	689,341	32,073
1872	848,922	67,937
1873	938,241	44,832
1874	958,773	37,282

Thus in 1874 books were sold in this country to the value of \$921,491, or at the rate of 26 cts. per head of the population. The duty collected last year from this source amounted to \$47,941.86.

As to the classes to which these imported books belong Mr. McGee told us in 1867, in his lecture on the "Mental Outfit of the New Dominion," on the authority of Mr. Samuel Dawson, of Montreal, that the sales might then be divided somewhat in the following proportions :

Religious Books,	18 per cent. ;
Poetical Books,	10 per cent. ;
Historical, Scientific and Literary,	28 per cent. ;
Works of Fiction,	44 per cent. ;

but the money value of the several classes of books most in demand was of

Historical, Scientific and Literary,	45 per cent. ;
Works of Fiction,	22 per cent. ;
Poetical Works,	15 per cent. ;
Religious Works,	18 per cent.

Great changes in the direction of European thought have taken place since then, with which, of course, we sympathize, and, therefore, corresponding changes in the character of the books most read. These influences, Mr. Dawson tells me, have notably disturbed the previous calculation. Never in his recollection has poetry been less read, and science and theology more than now. The Vatican Council and its results, and the contest between science and religion, are subjects discussed no longer in purely theological and scientific circles, but are the topics of every day conversation, and are really affecting the mental and social life of the people. But while books on polemics are of all religious productions those most read, it is hopeful to know that Thomas à Kempis' "Imitation of Christ" is still that of which more copies are sold than of any other theological work. Moreover, the juvenile book trade is assuming such growing proportions as to excite the apprehension that adults are really delegating more and more the duty of reading, and of mental culture to youth.

Mr. Dawson would, therefore, modify his calculations of books now sold as follows :

Religious books,	20 per cent. ;
Poetry,	8 per cent. ;
History and Literature,	16 per cent. ;
Science,	20 per cent. ;
Fiction,	36 per cent.

A decline in the item of fiction from 44 per cent. to 36 per cent. is hopeful, if the improvement be not more apparent than real; but as nearly all novels now come out in periodicals before assuming book shape, there may be a decrease in the number of novels sold, while there is in fact an increase in the number read. Take our own case, for instance. We exclude from our Library the works of all living novelists, but cover our table with a profusion of periodicals, nearly all of which, even the organ of advanced realism, the "Fortnightly Review," are issuing serial fictions; and these periodicals when bound are the most read of all our books. Appearances, therefore, may be deceptive, and I fear are in this instance.

Our home publishing trade, it will be inferred from my previous remarks, is not large. Besides the few Canadian books, there are re-printed some popular English novels; but since Confederation, the number of articles copyrighted, including books, pamphlets, music and photographs, has reached only 625.

In the department of newspaper literature, there has been wondrous growth, but here more than elsewhere, quantity and quality are in inverse ratio to each other. From a note to the Canadian Review for July 1824, I find that there were then published nineteen newspapers in Upper and Lower Canada, of which six only were even semi-weekly:

4	were published in Quebec;
7	in Montreal;
1	in Brockville;
2	in Kingston;
2	in York;
1	in Niagara;
1	in Queenstown;
1	in Stantead, Lower Canada.

From Rowell's Newspaper Directory for 1874, I gather that there are now published in Canada and New Foundland 470 newspapers and periodicals, of all descriptions, distributed as follows, to wit:

PROVINCES.	Daily.	T'ri Weekly.	Semi-Weekly.	Weekly.	Bi-Weekly.	Semi-Monthly	Monthly.	Bi-Monthly.	Quarterly.	Total.
Ontario.....	23	1	1	212	1		16	1		255
Quebec.....	12	11	3	41		1	17		3	88
Nova Scotia.....	4	5		24	1		4			38
New Brunswick	4	3		21			4		1	33
British Columbia.....	3	2	7	17	2					31
Prince Edward's Island		1	1	7						9
Manitoba.....				3						3
New Foundland		1	5	5	2					13
	46	24	17	330	6	1	41	1	4	470

In 1867—the first year of confederation—the Canadian Post-Office distributed 14,000,000 newspapers; during the year ending June, 1873, the number was 25,480,000, an increase greatly out of proportion with the growth of population.

Newspaper literature is, therefore, the chief mental pabulum of our people. What then is its character?

If we compare a London newspaper with one of the best New York dailies, we find that they are conducted on totally different systems, and adopt very different styles of writing. Column after column of the American newspapers is filled with foreign and home telegraphic news, most of which, though of little importance or interest, costs hundreds of dollars daily. But the editorial page instead

of being occupied with calm and dignified discussions on leading questions, contains, besides some longer articles, a number of isolated paragraphs, criticising current events and prominent men with a fierce party bias and an utter disregard for the feelings of individuals, not to say of truth. These comments, though striking, often startling, are too flippant in tone to be consistent with the responsibilities of journalism. But even more repulsive to taste are the *facetia*, consisting of diluted wit and stale jokes, with which even leading American newspapers fill the gaps in their columns; and the interviewers' reports of conversations with crowned heads and condemned felons, who, through some strange fascination, are induced to unbosom their secrets more freely to the correspondent than the one class do to their ministers or the other to their attorneys. The reports of proceedings in the courts are told in language travestied from Dickens, and the most ordinary incidents of news are narrated in a grandiloquent style, and with a profuse use of bombastic words utterly bad under any circumstances and ridiculously inappropriate to the trifling subjects under narration. As purveyors of news, the American papers altogether outstrip the English, and their proprietors show a degree of enterprise and a liberality towards their employees worthy of all commendation; but in pandering to the low tastes of the multitude for horrors, in their inquisitorial prying into domestic affairs, and the prominence and sensational colouring they give to every revelation of vice, they, generally speaking, diffuse harm not good among their readers; while the English language is suffering from the slang and the exaggeration which characterize their style of writing. We cannot claim for any class of British newspapers complete exemption from the same faults in matter and manner, and there is an evident tendency in the more recently established British Journals to copy the United States rather than the older English models. Nevertheless, as a rule, English newspapers discuss the topics of the day

more fully and more calmly than do the American ; they do not indulge in such undisguised personalities ; they do not flaunt the instances of immorality they may be obliged to chronicle in such gaudy colours before their readers, and the style of writing in the older journals is not disfigured by such glaring departures from the standards of good composition as we must all have been annoyed with in the American newspaper.

It is to be regretted that our own papers have imitated the American rather than the English type. When we consider the position of a newspaper in a small community, we readily see that it labours under peculiar disadvantages. It can with difficulty be independent. Therefore too generally our newspapers, out of fear or friendship, lavish praise where no praise is due, and refrain from censure and exposure where grave abuses call for blame. The power of a single man or a powerful corporation is enough to blunt the pen of the most valiant editor of a local journal, which, dependent for mere existence on a handful of subscribers, can afford to offend none. A recent trial in England, which exposed the relations between the city editor of the *Times* and the great company-monger, Baron Grant, proves what was already currently believed, that even the writers of the greatest English journal are not proof against mercenary considerations. If so, we can hardly expect that a provincial paper, which would be almost ruined by the withdrawal of the support and advertisements of a single patron, should take an unbiassed view of, and fully expose the deeds and misdeeds of friend and foe alike. Moreover, our newspapers cannot possibly pay lavishly for news or liberally for matter. The cost of supporting a staff of home and foreign writers, and of printing a large paper, can only be sustained by a circulation of hundreds of thousands. Our papers are fortunate when their subscription list contain some thousand names ; and, therefore, it is unreasonable to demand such writing as is found in

newspapers with a world-wide circulation, or that there should be such a profusion of recent intelligence and telegraphic news as the New York papers boast of offering their readers. But while these advantages must be confined to journals published at the centres of intellectual and commercial wealth, it does not follow that what our journals can offer should not be good of its kind ; and that as a rule it is not. Public events are discussed in a narrow party spirit, the same spirit which unhappily has diffused itself through our politics, and makes our public men on the alert to detect and magnify new points of difference instead of aiming at reconciling the few that really exist. When any important subject occupies the public mind—such as the Pacific Railway complication of last year—the evils of party journalism appear very prominently in an utter contempt of honour, and fair-play, and a supreme disregard for the sanctity of private character. Nor is the style of our editorials better than their matter. Simplicity and a use of Anglo-Saxon words seem to be sedulously avoided. In the extracts from foreign journals as little taste is shewn as in the original communications ; and one is therefore driven to admit, that, if the intellectuality of the country is to be gauged by the character of its newspapers, it is low indeed. There are journalists of talent and education and refinement, who write for both the English and Canadian press. It would be invidious to mention them. But I am sure that none would be more ready than they to admit that what I have said is substantially true.

Attempt after attempt has been made to sustain a monthly magazine in Canada, but not, as yet, with complete success. At the commencement of the period we are reviewing, two very respectable monthlies, as already mentioned, were published in Montreal “The Canadian Magazine and Literary Repository” and the “Canadian Review and Literary and Historical Journal.” Neither lived long ; and, since their decease, have been started and stopped the “Literary

Garland," in Montreal, the "Victoria Magazine," in Belleville, the "Anglo-American Magazine," in Toronto, the "British American Magazine," in Toronto, and probably others of which I have no knowledge. These all languished and died for want of support. As literary productions they were, of course, far inferior to British Magazines; and, though they all aimed at discussing home questions from a broader point of view than the newspaper press, they did not always succeed in doing so. At present there are two monthly periodicals printed in English, the "Dominion Monthly," in Montreal, and the "Canadian Monthly," in Toronto. The former has already enjoyed the unusually long existence of seven years; the latter has passed through grave vicissitudes, though only three years old, and heretofore supported, if not edited, by one of most brilliant political writers of Britain, Prof. Goldwin Smith. It is undoubtedly the best literary periodical which has yet been published in Canada, and it would be surprising were it not, considering its greater command of writers, owing to our increase in population, and owing to our colleges having drawn from abroad men of talent and even eminence in their several branches. Though the serial novels it brings out, and its other purely literary articles, may not come up to the standard of the best English magazines, yet, when compared with all similar previous productions, they show that Canadian writers are cultivating a better style than heretofore. It is moreover printed as well as any foreign periodical. The support accorded to it has not as yet made its publication remunerative. If it must share the fate of its predecessors, its stoppage will be only another proof of the lack of a public national feeling among the English-speaking population of the Dominion and any real desire to foster and encourage a native literature.

The French Canadian Reviews, though, perhaps, conducted with more spirit than the English, have not been pecuniarily more successful; and, seeing how small is the circle of readers they address, it cannot well be otherwise.

The Canadian Naturalist, the Canadian Journal, the Antiquarian, and the Transactions of our own and other Societies, as they depend for support on the contributions, literary and pecuniary, of the members of various associations, devoted to literary and scientific pursuits, have continued to be issued, whether the public read them or not.

Of course, the growth in intellectuality of a population as a whole is to be measured rather by the increase in the education of the masses than by the intellectual feats of the few. What this increase really is, however, cannot be determined by the number of schools or the number of scholars, but by the system of education adopted and by its result, not only in imparting knowledge, but in stimulating the intellectual faculties of the people, and teaching them to observe and think for themselves. Different observers will adopt different standards of comparison, and as the product is not a quantity capable of exact measurement, it follows that very different opinions as to the result will be arrived at. Into such a complicated and vexed subject I have little inclination now to enter; but I think it fair to take as another gauge of our progress in intellectuality the rate of attendance at our Universities.

McGill College, although founded in 1821, made little progress, owing to the sectarian character of its administration and other causes, till the charter was amended in 1852, and till its board of governors acquired control of the High School in 1854. In that year it had 97 students in the three faculties of arts, medicine, and law.

	In 1855.	1856.	1857.	1858.	1859.	1860.	1861.
Arts,	38	42	47	47	60	58	65
Med,	57	96	90	97	108	124	146
Law,	15	16	30	30	37	47	45
	<u>110</u>	<u>154</u>	<u>167</u>	<u>174</u>	<u>205</u>	<u>229</u>	<u>256</u>

	In 1868.	1869.	1870.	1871.	1872.	1873.	1874.	1875.
Arts, 51	46	31	29	41	40	54	54	
Med., 146	145	135	148	137	152	129	129	
Law, 57	70	71	82	97	111	118	121	
	254	261	237	259	275	303	291	304

Since 1854, the English-speaking of Montreal has increased from about 60,000 to about 120,000 or 100 per cent., whereas the students in arts have increased only 42 per cent. Fifty-four students in arts is too small a contribution from so large and wealthy a population as Montreal possesses, and from the well-to-do English-speaking population of the Ottawa and Eastern Ontario. Were the advantages of a liberal education appreciated as they ought to be, the number would be vastly greater. Montreal is justly proud of her University, and several Montrealers have expressed their appreciation of its value by very substantial contributions towards its support, (contributions the more necessary, as the aid from the public funds towards its maintenance has always been contemptibly small, especially when compared with the grants accorded to other educational institutions not more deserving of Government patronage), Montrealers, I say, are justly proud of their University and willing to help it with money, but in addition they would do well to send their sons to be educated within its walls.

Queen's College, Kingston, (whose usefulness is perhaps impaired by its denominational character) seldom counts over twenty students in arts, though favoured by the Scotch of Eastern and Central Ontario; who, however, seem out here to value less than the same class does in Scotland a liberal education for their sons.

The University of Toronto, with the advantage of a rich endowment and professors of eminence, attracts 225 students to the faculty of arts.

Nor is the record of the French Universities more favourable. The Laval University, with so large a population to draw from, with the advantage of the Seminary as a source of supply, and though requiring of the students of Theology and Medicine that they have passed the arts course, enrolled last year only 103 students in that faculty.

I think all these considerations make it clear that our intellectual acquirements have not kept pace with the growth in material wealth of our country. Canada has now nearly one-tenth the population of Great Britain, and though I have pointed out good reasons why there should be proportionately less culture and less devotion to literary pursuits here than there, the disproportion is greater than it ought to be; for rapidly there is springing up in Canada a class of wealthy men, who, with their children, enjoy both wealth and leisure. Did they rightly estimate the advantages these bestow, and did they use them for study and for the cultivation of their higher faculties, it would be well for themselves and well for the country. We should then have a class of men educated and well read, from whom we could draw legislators,—men who could judge of what would be good or ill for the country from their knowledge of what has happened in the past and what is transpiring now in the world, and who, from the possession of wealth, would be less likely to be influenced in the formation of their opinions and in their decisions on political subjects, by considerations of pecuniary interest. It would not be well that our legislatures should be filled by men of any one class, but it certainly would be well if there were more men in them of the class I have indicated. Such men, likewise, sensible of the advantage and pleasure they derive from intellectual pursuits, would be eager and active in diffusing their own spirit and sharing their enjoyment with others; and thus through the foundation of public libraries and the endowment of University chairs, and still more through the example of hard, honest, intellectual work, done without the hope of sordid reward, education would be encouraged among the masses.