

## Review.

### Canadian Literature.

Mr. H. Beckles Wilson speaking before the Canadian Club at Windsor Hotel, March 9th, urged his hearers to look with more favoring regard upon Canadian Literature both for what it is and for what it may become. "Do you know your history and your literature?" he asked; do you know the stirring deeds enacted by your sires? do you sit around the fire on a winter's night and tell them to your children? Quite likely the bulk of the audience could plead guilty to the body of the indictment.

The cause of literature does not make strong appeal to Canadians of today, and our own output is scarcely of the compelling kind which could win us from our preoccupations. Here and there we have had some preluding in a minor key, but nothing has been accomplished, in English at least, to challenge study for its own sake.

If the French Language has not yet achieved a classic in Canada it seems to me to be in a better way of doing so than the English. Quebec has more direct inheritance of heroic memories than the other parts of the Dominion, and it has preserved and diffused its history better, a natural consequence of that history's springing from the deeper sources of their religious and national life. Nor is there any lack of grand figures around which those aspirations might worthily crystallize into a genuine epic. At present, however, there is not that cordiality among their compatriots of the English tongue which would invite them to take down the harp from the willow tree.

While we await the advent of a major strain which shall "link all perplexed meanings into one perfect peace," we shall do better to resist any application of the "National Policy" to the material of our intellectual needs. We do not carry our hats and shoes into eternity with us, and these articles may be "made in



Canada" well enough if we so will But in letters we want the best : Philistines in everything else we are all Greeks in this.

### The Montessori System.

Dr. Maria Montessori, "the Italian apostle of a new libertarian education" has been interpreting her system to New York audiences at the request of her American disciples. It proceeds by three steps : 1st, to become acquainted with the Physiology of the child, 2nd. to lead the child to observe the properties of bodies and 3rd. to give it facilities for pursuing its own fancies: in a word the system aims to keep the child in health and let it grow.

Barring the health clause and the elaborate school apparatus the system does not differ much from our own oldtime *laissez faire*. Madame says nothing about punishments ; we may presume, however, that a contingency might arise "vindice dignus" even as it did sometimes with ourselves.

Dr. Montessori is Italian and, if the newspaper cuts are faithful and we are permitted "to read the mind's construction in the face" she has her own share of the good nature and the transcendental good sense which is the birthright of that people ; and I make no doubt that a school under her personal supervision would restrain the evil and foster the good impulses of its pupils. But when she comes among us to "mix it" with the experimentation to which the intelligences of young people have been immolated she must be prepared "to hear the truth *she's* spoken twisted" to justify many strange uses. For we have been badly used by promoters in elementary education ; they have held out all manner of hopes, we have followed them everywhere and landed nowhere. They may perhaps be said to have stuck faithfully to the etymological meaning of the word "education" inasmuch as they have drawn us away, and yet away.

There has always seemed to me to be a great insincerity in every "prominent educationist," though I should find it difficult to say with certainty what it is



about them that conveys the impression. Perhaps it is because they talk so much about physical and moral training while they are nearly all genetic evolutionists in science and creedless in religion. The fact that our cousin german the ourang-outang enjoys rugged health without calisthenics should encourage them to hope for as good in our own case without too much conscious effort ; while the fact that moral education has no sanction but in some form of religious creed should warn them away from the subject of morals for a secular curriculum. Since then the monkey beats us in health and probably lives a better life—by the creedless ethics than men do, it seems obvious that our chance of drawing farther off from our ancestors, that is of progressing, lies in the direction of abstract intellectual studies, and thither we should expect the promoters to lead us. This they refuse to do ; this, in fact, they stoutly maintain should not be done. On the contrary, "train the senses" they say, "teach the children to observe things accurately." But generalization, abstraction and deduction, the very words they use as terms of reproach. That is to say, under the aegis, and in the foolish name of progress they are systematically starving the really human powers of the mind by compelling it to crawl painfully and consciously over all the scaffolding of the building without engaging it to build.

This observation of phenomena which has become so much a passion among modern educationists, and in which they all imagine themselves the disciples of Francis Bacon, should have revealed to them this obvious and significant fact at least, viz., that no matter how much we focus attention upon the sensible properties of things, we shall never arrive at that morbidly lucid sense apprehension of them which comes to the ape without effort. He sees the greenness of the green forest leaves and feels the roughness of the rough cocoanut shell at once, and the mother ape does not waste her time or befuddle her cub's perception by dancing these objects before his eyes, according to the folly of her cousins german, and shouting "green, green, green ; rough, rough, rough." Nay a wild-geese flying safe from gun above the fields will know



if a blade of grass has been disturbed from the slope which it had last autumn. The ape and the goose are our types of stupid ; do we aim to list the kindergarten child with them? And if their method does not teach them the meaning of this parable, then I ask them, in the name of that immemorial Psychology which they have superannuated in favor of cerebral Physics, to recognize in the Greek myth of the origin of Psyche that the human mind does not stage it in the leisurely kindergarten way through all the domain of animal experience, but comes at once to the colossal conclusion that white is white and black is black.

The test of intellectual education, is the degree to which it gives the power of analysing principles and of carrying them forward to conclusions. These processes involve accurate memory and accurate reasoning, and concentration is the condition of such accuracy. To recall the exact words of an author, to write *in extenso* what is implied in a definition or to solve a mathematical problem are simple exercises which will reveal the quality of an intellect unerringly. Anyone who has had the opportunity of contact with applicants for College entrance during the last quarter of a century knows that these tests indicate a steady decline. And this is the period of our greatest activity in elementary education.

Now candidates, all unprepared as they are, enter College nevertheless, for the ranks must be filled, and go from form to form "dragging at each remove a lengthening chain", fortunate if at last they come to the realization of a few elementary principles which they should have had before entering. The student who beats them out of competition comes, as like as not, from some backwoods place where there were few pupils, no classification, no examinations, no prizes, no flower gardens and no courtesies ; but a hardheaded elderly teacher who came to school when it suited him in the morning, heard lessons but not excuses, banged the delinquent's ears with the unmastered text and sent him for the remainder of the day to slate and pencil, in spite of hygiene. I do not say that these are the ideal, they are rather to be called the evolutionary methods.



"The struggle for life" took the form of mastering lessons from a text and that struggle brought all the powers of the intellect alive.

By whatever catastrophe awakening is brought about in it I shall hail a sign of hope. It does not matter so much what the subject, if only the mind is extended to master it. Something is gained when the subject matter is valuable in its conclusions but the main issue is lost when it is not educative in its process. Therefore it appears to me that we should concentrate upon reading, arithmetic, grammar and its accompaniment, writing; and we should rigorously exclude all popularized and fragmentary presentations of sciences too difficult to be grasped in their principles. These serve well enough for lectures, for occasional recreational talks or for reading matter in the school library, but they are alien to the aim of a disciplinary curriculum.

### Mexico

Since our last issue no decisive change has taken place in the conditions of the contending parties in Mexico. Though the Constitutionals have met with some reverses, success in the field has been on their side to a degree that would be decisive were it not for the fact that the real strength of the Federalists has not so far been put forth. At the moment of writing word comes that Villa has been repulsed with heavy slaughter at Torreon. General Valasco who defended the place seems to have had the situation well in hand, and two brigades of the attack were allowed to enter one wing of the city only to find themselves in the impossibility either of defense or escape and were cut down with machine guns. Villa himself is reported wounded though not seriously. While this report is not yet confirmed it has sufficient probability to justify us in glancing at the effects of such a reverse upon the movement. Villa has been, up to the present, a successful bandit upon a large scale, so successful indeed as to dazzle and fascinate thousands who would have been shocked at his crimes were they exhibited in a less masterful personality. Given that the spell of



success is broken, it would not be strange if disillusionment and revulsion were to diminish his following, and a Catelinian mania drive himself to unconsidered movements and desperate chances. A definitive split with Carranza would soon follow. The latter probably seeking terms while Villa would sink back again into his original condition of bandit. Whether or not the operations at Torreon have been as disastrous to the Constitutionalists as reported, it seems extremely probable that Villa has been so galled in this first real fighting that he will reconsider his purpose of pushing on to the capital to hang Huerta. Any cessation of hostilities, in the present exhausted condition of the country, would tend to become relatively permanent, the North as far as Taxpan on the Gulf of Mexico, remaining in the control of the Constitutionalists and the South faithful to Huerta. But inasmuch as President Wilson, by refusing recognition to Huerta and by raising the embargo on war materials, has favored the Constitutionalists, we would expect the Northern area, in any reconstruction, to be very much under the influence of the United States. It is hardly to be supposed that President Wilson just now desires to burden the United States with the obligation of policing all the territory from the Rio Grande to Panama, nevertheless, if he directly aimed at absorbing it by division and devolution the process could not go on much more satisfactorily. Meanwhile everything remains in doubt, with Great Britain and the United States watching with ominous quietitude the gradual exhaustion of the contending parties.

### **The Crisis in The British Cabinet.**

We confess to a feeling of satisfaction in referring to the expression of our assurance, in the last issue of this magazine, that the Home Rule Bill could not fall through because it was part of the larger movement toward democracy now sweeping Great Britain. That Ulster all through had the backing of the Lords and of all those who regretted the loss of the veto, as well as of those who were hit by Lloyd George's agrarian policy, was known ; it now becomes evident that she was able



to count upon the good will of the titled army officers as well. Now the Secretary of State for War, perhaps inadvertently, gave countenance to the assumed right of these officers to palter with their obedience to the state when, in communicating a ministerial order to Brigadier General Gough, he added guarantees that the latter would not be called upon for active service against Ulster. Secretary Seeley, in giving these guarantees, doubtless believed with his ministerial associates that appeal to force would not become necessary. It was one thing to feel such an assurance, it was quite another thing to translate it into the form of a guarantee the effect of which could only be to embolden those whom the movement of troops was intended to restrain. In lower life this would be called blabbing, in ministerial circles it is called a tactical blunder. Mr. Seeley was let out of the Cabinet with the least noise possible and Premier Asquith takes over the portfolio himself, resigning his seat in consequence to ask for a new mandate from his constituents of East Fife.

With the King embarrassing the Government, the aristocracy whether in Parliament or in the army seditious and Ulster in open revolt the moment is a very significant one in the history of constitutional government in Great Britain. That Mr. Asquith will be returned seems certain and it is scarcely less so that the next general election will greatly strengthen the Liberal majority.

### **The Auto.**

I am sure that every college man is interested in the fate of the Auto in this Province, for, to put the question on no higher basis, freely running autos would add a few minutes to his short free time of Thursday after-noons. But, proverbially selfish though youth may be, I scarcely think that St. Dunstan's is without its quota of young men who can look beyond the present moment to what shall be the conditions tomorrow. I trust that all the graduates of this year will make their homes among us. Would they rather have the automobile in the land which is to be their own? If so they should, at least, have the liberty of stating as



much. College men, as a class, put forward their opinions on practical issues rather diffidently. They find themselves more at home when there is question of the meaning of a term, the turning of a phrase or even the logical sequence of a line of reasoning. But when the reasoning touches on questions which elicit present public feeling they are not prone to offer unsolicited suggestion. They seem to take more delight in watching the permutations of opinion and collecting material for the study of men and movements. They have read that biting phrase from Carlyle to the effect that "with stupidity and good digestion a man may affront much," and it damps them from putting forward opinions where others seem to feel so much more capable of settling the matter. This diffidence is rather to be regretted, perhaps, since they have the opportunity of a wider range of knowledge and are freer from the pressure of interest, a thing which has disastrous effect upon judgement; nevertheless, we must take things as we find them, they say, and it may well be that these "still, strong men in a blatant land" shall in the long run, wield all the greater influence because they have not struggled to be heard.

Unless I have altogether forgotten the student's point of view he is in favor of the automobile, partly because it is a present convenience, partly because it diversifies life and renders the prospect of living here more agreeable, partly because, though not possessing a car of his own, he is unselfish enough to enjoy the enjoyment of others, but chiefly because his sense of justice tells him that Jones has a right to ride as he likes so long as he is not a nuisance to Smith and Brown, "Precisely" break in these two immemorials, "but he is a nuisance." I cannot take their judgement on the question of what constitutes a nuisance, for I cannot recall the time when either of them scrupled to whip past me in their buggies and fling the hot summer dust in my face as I drove the road in a cart. Now something appears which they fear will do the same to them and they cry nuisance, and the intelligence of the horse is invoked to establish the claim. There are horses that will shy at sight of a boy flying a kite, or a man casting for trout over a



bridge, or a boat drawn up to the landing, or a farmer driving a steer along the road, but we do not take our definition of nuisance from these. We have simply outlived the newness of these things as the world at large has outlived the newness of the automobile.

It would be wrong to disregard the really serious inconveniences which might reasonably be expected to follow, for a time at least, upon the unrestrained running of autos in the rural parts of the province. That time and patience will be required to so accustom even steady animals to the appearance of the machine as to altogether remove the chances of accident is probably true. But we look to the restraint of regulating laws and to the honest purpose of those who use the cars to reduce these chances to a tolerable minimum. That we may count upon this honest purpose the more securely, license to drive the machine, outside police jurisdiction, should be granted, for a few seasons at any rate only to citizens of the province. We certainly are not yet prepared to throw open the highways to excitement seekers from all parts of the world, nor have they, as our own citizens have, any claim upon our consideration in this matter.

From observation of the experiment of last summer I am inclined to think that the only real menace to public safety from the auto lies in running the machine with its dazzling head-light through the narrow country roads by night. Unless I knew my horse very well I should not care to meet one of them under those conditions, and I should think it best to prohibit their use outside the lighted areas of the towns after a certain hour, or, if we wish to be more generous, to grant specified routes and a definite hour of the evening for the homing of belated motorists. If this hour were made variable from section to section, being earlier in the remoter sections, it would be possible for one to journey a long way by night and still be within the limit of the law in each district through which he passed. This arrangement would reduce the interference with traffic to a few minutes in each section, and would serve as an automatic check upon speed.

To one who, like myself, desires to see the automo-



bile remain with us if that can be without violation of the older rights of the people, the remonstrances which have come from certain sections are not very convincing. It is true that a heavy majority of the school districts returned an adverse vote last year, but it is likewise true that as great a majority of the voters had not even the slightest experience of the thing they called a nuisance. It is a guess how many of them have since changed their views. Two years ago, when the automobile was being discussed in the Legislature a man came galloping to me on horseback, his breath in one fist and a petition in the other. For his sake I signed it because he was really alarmed for the safety of his wife and children. Just a year later another petition, of contrary tenor was presented. Glancing down the list I saw the name of my frightened friend and signed again longside it, for his sake.

It is fairly evident that wherever the adverse vote of last year was not traceable to local diplomacy it was the result of an honest conviction that the issue was city versus country and the rich man versus the poor. Had the matter been posed as a proposition to run motor busses and trucks through localities not convenient to railroad, there would have been no opposition, for it would then have been seen that such a convenience would be a decided benefit to the man who had no horse and buggy and who lived far from the centres. And are there not many people in the towns who cannot afford to keep a horse and rig but who could, nevertheless, snatch an afternoon occasionally from work and the dust of the streets to rest their wearied eyes and recreate their spirits if only they had the means of transfer to the green fields and pure air? Are we of the country so ungenerous as to hold them prisoners to the dust and flatness of their little towns? Perish the thought. The good things which we shall enjoy shall be none the less ours and none the less pleasurable to us for having solaced their distracted, or cheered their jaded spirits. If hard fortune and the drive of life has forced them back upon the centres surely it is not for us to say that out these places there shall not be even a momentary redemption. No, no; you who raise that cry do not represent the spirit of the country, and many of us are ready



to cry "harry" upon you and bang you all into the towns there to find, by feeling, what it is to be ground. But the townsman, who is between the stones and has learned the lesson, him we welcome, when he can find a moment's respite and an auto fare, to come where the creamy cream and the golden butter and the diamond eggs are mined; to stroll with us in the bosky dells "where the plush of the pale green moss on the carpet deadens the foot-fall" and where the blue-bird of good omen,—his voice not tuned to the twanging of telephone wires—and the siren brook—not foul with the ooze of muddy streets—and the broad-bosomed birch whose trunk is not blatant with the legend of rascals' names, sing in free voices but in high harmony the idyls of the lingering joys of Arcady. I know a cool place where "the sand-hill crane stands idly on the sedgy brim of the lonely lake through the live-long day with his hands in his tail pockets of his tan-colored coat," and, much as I love quietude, I will gladly lead the children of the town into my hermitage sobeit they have any sense of its witchery; gladly see their dusty fathers stand where the crane so often stood and dream, if only for a moment, that their sentence of disinheritance has been revoked.

And when business drives me to the city and it has been discharged, if the train schedule allows the time, I wish to motor out to Old St. Dunstan's and brush it a little with the men who are working in the armories and tempering the good swords that shall yet strike true for all the Master's causes. There where the spirit of fun dog-ears the leaves of the homes of knowledge, and where humor, the naif child of understanding and detachment, tweaks pretence and cheers unselfish endeavour, there I shall trust to find the analogue of my Arcady—the music that shall answer note for note to my blue-bird of good omen. Do you, Mr. Editor, if you care to see me or to come where I am, drive that stout pen of yours to the end that a responsible citizen with an auto may have some share in that right to the road which we do not deny to a liquored lout with a maddened horse.

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