DALHOUSIE GAZETTE.

NEW SERIES—VOL. III. OLD SERIES—VOL. X. HALIFAX, N. S., DECEMBER 27, 1877. NEW No. 4. WHOLE No. 98.

ENQUIRY INTO THE VALUE OF LESSING'S EULOGIUM OF DOUBT.

THAT estimate of the comparative worthiness of the *quest* and *attainment* of knowledge which pronounces in favour of the former, is, we are persuaded, undeservedly popular. We refer of course to Lessing's famous finding on this subject, to the effect that were the choice proffered him he would prefer the search for truth to its actual possession, even although a state of perpetual dubiety were the result."

Now, the first remark we wish to make is, that the spirit of this utterance is preëminently selfish. It bears upon its forefront the impress of the author. One sees at once what he was—a student, ardent, self-centred, living and breathing in an atmosphere of books, thoughts, abstractions. Indubitably the cultivated man, well furnished with educational appliances, and keenly conscious of the joys of study, may in all sincerity express a desire to forego the attainment of truth in favour of a condition of perpetual progress. Search and research, amid multiplied obstacles and perplexities, with constant advance up the infinite heights of knowledge, nearer and nearer to where the Eternal sits enthroned;—here is an idea and ideal which to student sensibilities appeals with persuasive power. But meanwhile what about the busy, practical, work-a-day world? Labour, with the sweat of honest toil upon its brow. Enterprise, to which multiplied competition permits no experimenting in the struggle for existence. Philanthropy, conscious that it has a great work to do, and a very limited time for doing it: what think these better arbiters of the proposal to yield up the positions to which they have already attained, by which they are regulating their exertions, and have life transmuted into a perpetual search to regain them? For there are truths in the world beyond the circle of the classic and mathematical sciences. Were the intellect the only part of our nature concerned with progressive knowledge, and had we no duties and responsibilities in connection with our fellow-men, then by all means let us with Malebranche, having attained to a truth bid it fly away that we may have the pleasure of a pursuit and re-capture; or let us, with other idealists—not all philosophers and not all fools—have the march of mind transformed into a psychological treadmill, ourselves alternately gaining and spurning each point in the circle of rotatory truth, but in the light of the interests of humanity! Contemplate the position of a man who would fain consign into oblivion for the sake of refetching them thence, truths, principles, advances in knowledge, for which a less privileged brother has been aimlessly, wearily striving—which given to the world would act with resuscitating power upon many a fainting soul. What is the spirit that lives and breathes in such a thought but the Horatian pride of superiority and isolation of intellect over again,—"odi profanum vulgus et arceo."

Again, the sentiment is defiant of some of the noblest attributes and aspirations of the human soul. Man has a God-given capacity of appreciating truth. From the fanciful he would ever fain turn away to the real and abiding. Hence wisdom's voice, announcing the message that she may be found is to the sons of man: and wisdom ought to know what she is about. The love of search and study may spring from a far less unexceptionable source. Granted, however, there is pleasure in investigation apart from any objective results, and that discoveries are apt to be put to perverted uses: still is man as man unfit to be trusted with truth? It is at least that for which he longs, and to the attainment of which study and research are taken up but as means to an end. All teachers of mankind feel the meaning of this fact, and so all systems of instruction frame themselves into an answer to the demand, "What is the truth?" The whole history of human thought bears heavily upon Lessing's sentiment.

"Pure Truth" said Lessing to the Almighty in an imaginary colloquy "is for Thee alone." There is a sense in which this utterance cannot be improved upon: God alone is and has absolute wisdom. But "pure truth" does not necessarily mean omniscience, else the question were at once over. Lessing, as a man of finite mind, could not, even at the offer of the Almighty, receive the treasures of infinite knowledge and retain his humanity. The fact is, that truth, being properly destitute of degree, is always pure and perfect, though in any given case it may be concerned with only one out of the multitudinous problems of the universe. Every line of thought and system of action in this world—and probably in the next as well—is definitely related to some truth: either as proceeding upon it, or engaged in its discovery, or setting out in array against it. Discover then the spring of action, object of discovery, or subject of attack as the case may be, and so far you have disclosed the truth unmixed and pure.

The question cannot be kept entirely apart from some theory of study. Is the ambition of study to *train* or to *inform* the mind? Every student, partly as the result of the exercise of his own intelligence, and partly because it is so faithfully insisted upon by his professors will answer in favour of the former. But there are some necessary limitations. Because *at College* the object to be attained is the formation of methods and habits of research: these are surely not the ultimate end to be kept in view, but are themselves subservient to something higher. At a certain time of life the proper thing to do is to acquire good principles, but the necessity of so doing arises from the fact that good principles are of use only as designed to lead to right action. We students need to be reminded, that the University is not the world, and to be encouraged to train our minds now—not as an end but merely as preparatory to our life-work of gaining knowledge and acting upon steadily-formed principles. The real object of study is to fit the mind to appreciate truth.

Again, we cannot but think that there is something contradictory in the process of thought expressed by Lessing's utterance. Advances of knowledge are themselves necessary to the maintenance of the search for truth. While Newton was working towards the verification of the great theories and laws associated with his name, he was really making a triumphal progress through mathematical perplexities by means of ascertaining series of facts graduated in importance and scope. The process of discovery is one of constant advance, except where some fortunate accident expedites matters. The man who sets out searching for truth, but praying to the Almighty not to give it to him, proceeds about his business in exactly the same way as the man who without this ostentatious humility is searching for truth in order to enjoy its possession. That is to say, he begins with observation: he notices this little fact and that significant occurrence: puts them together, compares, commences to reason: casts about tentatively and experiments: and then, if he does not swerve aside in time and calling out "Pure truth, is for Thee alone," begin again at the beginning—comes the discovery, which destroys his romance in favour of his 'fair renown.'

Malebranche says that if he held truth captive in his hand he would let it fly and proceed to the chase. This is one way of making the best use of time. But observe that the metaphor is radically defective. For except that which is determined by strength of wing and the use made of a few seconds start, there is no connection between a bird and the ground which the fowler has to traverse in order to recapture it: whereas truth is but the climax of a number of different steps of knowledge, seeking their perfection in it, constituting part of its nature and determining for the enquirer its greatness and limits. To compare the apprehension of the truth which inspires any given subject of investigation to the ascension to the top rung of a ladder, may not be such a poetical conception, but is, we are convinced, a better metaphor than any that has to do with captivity and birds, and the science of fowling.

Well, a search after verity means the attainment of successive steps leading up to it to greater or less heights—means or implies progress in knowledge: for only thus can the search be maintained. But every such step is itself a truth, and every truth is in itself complete and pure. Lessing's choice becomes therefore practically a decision between a greater and a less portion of the whole system of truth: between the apprehension of the grand principle sought for, and the comprehension of a certain number of graduated facts. As for Malebranche, he inclines to treat truth and error in much the same way, giving the "mittimus" to each in favour of doubt. Here surely is impartiality and freedom from bias: "Tros Tyriusve mihi nullo discrimine agetur."

Still further: we are persuaded that the sentiment contains a double falsity.

It is false in *theory*. Here comes a man who says, my ideal is to be a perpetual seeker after intellectual wealth, ever pursuing knowledge without overtaking it: this in deliberate preference to the idea of being made the recipient of wisdom itself. Observe the sentiment. It assumes that the palm of being the "summum bonum" lies between the search for and the possession of truth. Nothing higher than one or the other of these alternatives is contemplated. No end is recognised to whose attainment the possession of truth is but a preliminary condition: for Lessing declares that, could he have his choice, he would decline this said usually-coveted possession. How then could he proceed to anything higher, which even for a German philosopher is only attainable through that knowledge from which, when it may be had for the grasping, the sentiment under review would have us so lightly turn? Now, as it happens, the chief end of man is—well, here we will refer readers to Sunday-school catechetical literature. But two things it is not: it consists neither in passing existence in hunting for knowledge, nor yet in being able to count upon an accumulated stock of information. Truth itself is but a means to an end, the greatest attainment being neither a well-trained judgment nor yet a better-filled memory. There is something higher and nobler still, even a character. "Ye shall believe in the Truth" says a Book which we all reverence. In this statement is contemplated a successful advance into the field of wisdom, the grounds of ignorance, prejudice, superstition, distrust and scepticism, being traversed for ever. "And the Truth—*shall make you free*." By which is taught, and eminently in accordance with common-sense principles, that truth itself is valuable only so far as it induces a right and proper course of action, by embodying its energy in the life of the individual, forming his character, effecting his liberty, and thus reappearing in tangible practical results. Useless enough to the world at large as is the intellectual miser who keeps to himself his hoarded funds of thoughts and ideas, while fellow-men are dying of ignorance and folly, a more curious problem and suggestive of a stranger type of human nature is presented by the man whose ideal it is to be "ever learning and never arriving at the knowledge of the truth."

False in *fact*. We are not to be diverted from applying to any theory the test of fact, because the theory may happen to reside in the expression of the sentiment of an individual mind. We believe that the question, "which is the higher thing, to be a seeker after or possessor of truth?" is capable of being answered by an appeal to facts. And facts being proverbially stubborn will not accommodate their decision to the foregone conclusion even of a German and a literary reformer.

God is the greatest, in one sense the only, Truth: let us substitute the Divine name for the moral quality, and we are asked to believe, that the search after God is to be preferred to the full knowledge of Him. Nor is it left to us to speculate as to the results involved in such a statement, for they are already matter of history. Ever since the day when man felt himself a thing of guilt, and awoke to consciousness of estrangement from good, the one aim of the world has been to find God. In all the varied utterances of art and literature and social and religious life is the longing manifest. This is not a theological speculation, but a statement of historical fact. Ages ago Lessing's aspiration was anticipated by the Roman and the Greek. Not indeed voluntarily adopted as the guiding-spirit of their enquiries: with painful intellectual effort they sought for the truth for its own sake, and not to satisfy an aesthetic sentimentalism: but as regards the Fount of all truth it was with them 'the time of ignorance.' The nations of antiquity "sought after God if haply they might find Him," just as the modern German desired to seek after truth if haply he might find it. Let facts then speak, and estimate for us the worth of the sentiment. Now in various ways it could be demonstrated that this life of enquiry was not a desirable state of things: as by an appeal to the genius of Christianity and its procedure when confronted with mere seekers, such as were the Athenians, or to the state of darkness which enshrouded the ancient world. But it is the high privilege of Christendom to have had God disclosed to it and to *know* Him—so far as He can be known by finite minds of the earthly human type. If then it be acknowledged that the degree in which the true God is truly recognised by heathendom and Christianity respectively is the explanation of the difference between these two systems of life and thought, we have here the required means of comparison: the relative value of pagan and Christian principles, as we deduce them from the patent facts of history and social existence, is the measure of the compara-

tive value of the alternatives between which Lessing makes his decision. Heathendom engaged in a search after God—the greatest, as He is the source of, Truth—while Christianity revealed Him: which, as a matter of fact, has contributed most to civilization, happiness, and the realization of all that is possible in and to humanity?

And so with all lesser truths. Let us not be misled by French contributions to the elucidation of this subject: wisdom gained is not a bird captive in the hand: though if the metaphor be insisted on, that good English proverb should be allowed a hearing which says, that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Truth is too difficult of attainment and too precious a possession to be lightly toyed with. In point of fact, if the inner history of the soul be consulted in the least degree, one of the most agonizing moments in a man's life is when he comes to feel or fear that he has lost his hold upon a truth—that his principles are false—that there remain for him only doubt, and anxiety and groping for light. For the possession of a truth, fancied or real, is the inspiring cause of every energy and action of a well-ordered life. Who are the men whose character and deeds become historic, who would mould national thought and educate national opinion, but they who are majestically conscious of the reality of the righteousness of the cause for which they labour? Hence the contagion of martyrdom: hence the potency of conviction: hence the attraction of truth to all well-regulated minds.

Fellow-students! let us form our estimate of responsibility in connection with what and how and why we study, not from the utterance of any philosopher, however great, nor from the dictation of our own intellectual pride, but from the still small voice within, as it bids us hark to the cries of the ignorant and the suffering and the sinful of humanity. Let us never despair of the success of our cause, if that cause be one of duty: nor let us fear for the truth, but rather be every thought, word and deed a witness to our faith in its inherent power: for, believe we it, or believe we not, the law of the universe and the will of the Eternal is this, "Magna est veritas, et praevalebit!"

Mr X., translating Laelius, hesitates at the phrase *non queo dicere*. Prof.: "Well, what does that mean?" Mr. X., who has omitted to look up *queo:* "I can't tell." Prof.: "That's right, go on." And that Soph. chuckles, wonders what the Prof. thought he said, and goes on.—*Ex.*

MY UMBRELLA.

It is a painful fact that the world is full of wrecks. They lie bleaching on every shore, each telling its own sad tale. Perhaps there is nothing that causes so strange a feeling, as to climb in among the timbers of a weather-beaten hulk. There the framework lies, vast and ugly, like the exhumed ribs of some antediluvian mastodon. What a contrast between this poor, blasted thing, and the haughty queens of the deep! They, swelling with inborn life, go dashing on; it remains a monument of "some stormy night, or night-like day," or of some sailor's recklessness.

But there are many wrecks besides those of ships, dotting the whole land. What these lose in greatness, they gain in variety. Doubtless, to carelessness can be traced, many of the mishaps of life. There are days in which the sun rises sweetly, days that promise to give happiness. Yet the brightness is quickly hidden, and in retrospect we would fain hide them with a drop of ink forever. Perhaps the tea at breakfast was cold, or the porridge a little too near boiling point, after passing to that receptacle that ever cries, "give, give." It was only a trifle, yet the sun, moon, and stars seemed to go wrong too. It is painful to look back and see how we have failed, miserably, wretchedly, all because a cloud no bigger than a man's hand crossed the face of the sun when rising.

Yet some things are peculiarly fitted to go wrong—in fact, seemed destined for disaster. I do not judge by size or construction, but by what the lumber-room reveals. A peep in there makes the tears ooze unbidden. It is indeed the "hidden world of matter." Under and above everything else there is the fragment of all fragments, the most ungainly skeleton of all broken-necked things—the wrecked umbrella.

In the possession of others I had seen keepsakes of this kind, and once and again had presentiments myself of what might come. My umbrella was a beauty—in days gone by—and especial care was taken of it. It served as parasol in bright days, as staff when the way was long, and as a defensive weapon against ghosts. The "machine" that made it meant it to protect only one head. But in a wet day mortals are capable of indefinite contraction; and it was made to do service beyond its utmost capacity. The fatal day did come; but the wonder to me now is that the umbrella didn't express an opinion much sooner. We grew together for years,—I getting longer and it shorter. This led to the conclusion that it was on the shady side of life before I started. The difference of age, however, didn't prevent the best of friendship exsting between us, as is sometimes the case.

The sad tale of loss is easily told. There was not rain enough falling to keep the wind steady, hence there was no "weather" or "lee" side, or it was all weather side together. It was a day when old Eurus and all the little Euruses were out on review. No sooner had I opened the umbrella "to the breeze," than the breeze took it. There was no time for action, no time to call for help, "the last ray quivered on the" convex "dial plate of its doom," and in an instant it turned into an inverted parachute. I went home sad, but wiser by one lesson—never expose the weak point of a friend.

R.

INFLUENCE OF MAN.

It is midnight. Our study is quiet. Nothing breaks the dull monotony, save the howling of the wind outside, and the splash of falling rain—just the time I like to write for the Gazette. Tired of study, we have laid aside our books, and as we take our pen to write, the association of ideas brings up the happy days of the past, when books were forgotten and we could follow our own inclinations to a greater extent than present employment permits. We think of past actions and their various results—some satisfactory—others, of course, decidedly the reverse. We try to trace the motives of our actions and are surprised to find how many are due to the influence of our fellow-beings. The world seems full of principles which exert influence on man, but we refer now only to the influence exercised by one individual over another. Confining ourselves to this, we write a few ideas as they just now occur to us

With regard to our subject, the same seems true in the world of mind and morals, as in the material world—just as a falling stone influences the earth's motion, so, in the spiritual world does every act we commit exert an influence. Involuntarily man influences his fellow. It is as impossible for him to prevent it as for the sun to keep its place in the Heavens without influencing his system. Even suppose one could leave society and live entirely apart from human beings; still he leaves his influence upon the society with which he has been connected, and though even his name may be forgotten, and he be as if he had never lived, yet his influence survives, and his

> "——— distant footsteps echo
> Through the corridors of time."

For himself too, he would find it difficult to break the ties that joined him to society, forget acquaintances and the wish to "mix again with action."

It seems strange that persons of no distinction whatever should exert a lasting influence, but that such is the case, is evident. For proof, we need only refer to history. How Homer's Illiad, composed probably by a travelling bard, has influenced the world! History is filled with names of men whose influence still remains powerful as ever. If we turn to the church for examples, we have only to mention the Apostles and their Great Master, or coming down to more modern times, we may point to Luther, Knox, and the great names of the Reformation. The influence of such men is still felt more strongly than when they lived, and will continue to affect the church throughout her remaining history.

"Time, the common lot of mortals, lies in Lethe's wave." One of our poets has well expressed it; yet in many cases individuals are remembered for ages after they have passed from this to another state of existence, in which, perhaps, to exert influence greater and more powerful, in proportion as mental powers have been enlarged and strengthened. The influence of the humblest of our race too, we think, remains long after its possessor has entered the unknown state which human knowledge cannot explore, but which we must all, sooner or later, investigate for ourselves. That such influence survives, any one who considers the subject for a moment will admit It may not be extended to a large number of mankind, yet some are certainly subject to it—more perhaps than we would at first suppose. If we could travel back through past ages and know their different generations, or view the beings of the unseen future to

> "The last of human mould
> That shall creatures dawn behold,"

we should find every one that has lived on our earth, or may be so unfortunate in time to come, influenced to an inexpressible extent by the single act of one member of our family—a being of the 'gentler sex,' who, ages ago, allowed herself to be guided by the advice of a serpent in Eden.

If then, our acts are to influence others to such a degree, we should certainly be careful to shun the example of our first mother, and use what influence we may possess for the improvement of mankind.

X. X. X.

DALHOUSIE GAZETTE.

HALIFAX, N. S., DECEMBER 27, 1877.

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IT has been said, probably more than once, and no doubt with truth, that "exercise is the grand law of development." No one that has any experience in cultivating either the physical, mental, or moral powers of himself or others, can fail to notice the truth and force of this proposition. All the parts of the body increase in strength, and becomes capable of performing greater and more difficult labours, according as the strength already possessed is put into activity. The mind, by a judicious exercise of its powers, becomes able to grasp greater ideas, and wrestle with mightier problems; and by the force of the same law, our moral powers are so strengthened, as to enable us to overcome our natural inclination to that which is base and immoral.

Notwithstanding all this, we are of opinion that a great proportion of the sports which are, and have been at all times engaged in, for the pretended purpose of giving strength to the muscles of the body, and thus invigorating the mind, are really undertaken for the purpose of becoming notably expert in the particular sport or bodily exercises engaged in, and are pursued to an extent which defeats the object for which they are really serviceable.

It is plain that the only real good which can possibly be derived from all such exercises as *foot-ball, la-crosse, base-ball, cricket, boat-racing, gymnastic performances*, and many others of the same nature, is the muscular development arising from the bodily exercise, which these sports necessarily involve; and yet in how many cases are these engaged in, with that object in view? Many take part in them, merely for the fun and excitement always connected with such games; and many others, simply to pass away time, for which they imagine they have no other use. And granting that some have the desire of strengthening their bodies; yet for what purpose is that physical force coveted? Is it that they may be better able to perform the duties which are required of them in their several spheres of labour? Is it that their minds may be more energetic on account of the vigorous condition of their bodily frame—that their intellect may partake of the energy of their limbs, and enable them to advance more rapidly in mental culture? If these questions can be answered in the affirmative, then these sports and exercises are certainly useful, and ought to be encouraged. But we are persuaded that very few have these laudable objects in view. The great end with the majority is, to gain renown for their skill and prowess, in the several sports; to have their names published far and wide, and even transmitted to future generations. If such is not the case, then whence is all the noise, Summer after Summer, about boat-racing, sledge-throwing, horse-trotting and such like? Why do hundreds, and sometimes even thousands, assemble to see men perform the most wonderful feats in circus-riding and its associate performances, and Spanish or Texan ladies go through, with the utmost agility and amazing suppleness, the various movements of the trapeze performer?

The question has been asked, "What's in a name?" With respect to a name won by skill in such feats, the question may be asked with with double force. Why should the name of a man be honoured who has not benefited, in any way, either himself, his country, or his fellow-

mortal, by those exploits which have made him notorious? What good has been done for mankind by such men as George Brown and those who vainly contended with him for a useless renown?

Physical exercise is good, if undertaken for good objects, whether to strengthen the body for its duty, or, by means of it, to improve the mind; but beware of the deceitfulness of the desire to be considered great in those things which are of no real good to ourselves or others, and defeat the legimate object for which they are sought.

Elocution Simplified is the title of a neat little book lately published by the firm of Lee & Shepard, Boston. The author of this treatise is Mr. Kobes, a Graduate of Boston University School of Oratory. The design of the writer in preparing this book was to produce a methodical, practical, and brief digest of elocution; and comprised within the narrow limits of ninety octavo pages, the result of his labors is given to the world. After careful examination we can say that he has done his work well. We admire the systematic arrangement of matter which pervades the whole. This is one of the chief characteristics of the book. The style is pleasant; the rules plain and easily remembered; the explanations neither too elaborate nor yet unnecessarily brief.

Part one of the work treats of "Physical Gymnastics." These are intended to give strength and elasticity to those muscles of the body that are used in speaking.

Under *part two* are given rules for the cultivation of the voice. Tone, pitch, inflection, force, stress, articulation, movement and breathing are explicated; exercises being given for practice in these.

Part three brings us to the practical application of parts *one* and *two*. It contains selections for reading, with further explanation as to the use of tone, stress, inflection, &c. The extracts are well chosen. Some of the old popular pieces are retained, but the most are new; while the very hackneyed ones are altogether omitted. We think, however, that the author has committed a mistake in not giving selections suitable for declamation. If he would take in hand to add 40 or 50 pages of extracts from the best orators, the value of the book would be enhanced indefinitely, at least to Students.

In *Part four* hints are given to the amateur orator or reader, who is about to make his first appearance before an audience; precepts are laid down for his guidance, the gist of which is nowhere better expressed than in Hamlet's advice to the player—"let your own discretion be your tutor; suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature." Defects of speech are discussed—on stuttering:—"When you have too slow thought and too rapid speech, you have stuttering; for the tongue keeps moving all the time while the thought is coming, and repeats syllables or words. Make the mind of the stutterer move faster, and the tongue talk slower . . . . . know what you wish to say before you attempt to say it."

We recommend this book to those who wish to become proficient in the art of elocution. They will find it interesting, and, if they follow the instructions therein contained, not unprofitable reading.

SCRAPS ON LANGUAGE.

SCHOOL-BOYS are wont to believe that the rules of grammar exist of themselves, that as they were, so they are, and will continue to be, the models by which tyros and others are to be guided in composition. But is this the case? We, upon whom a brighter light has dawned, know that the best authors shape the ends of the text-books—that as literature takes up new positions, syntax shifts its ground, and Mentor-like follows the footsteps of its great guide in the mazy "wanderings of thought." So, in the moral relation between thought and speech, a separation cannot take place without the most injurious effects. There is a subtle relation between language and national character, which, al-

though difficult to explain, and hard to trace, is none the less real, and has none the less influence upon the tone of man's customs and morals. The botanist can explain the processes which take place in the growth of the plant; the geologist can read the history of the rocks; but the linguist has to satisfy his cravings after the discovery of the golden treasures of his science with mere theories.

The faculty of speech comes directly from "the Giver of every-good and perfect gift," and hence it is less easy to define its scientific position. Language is not a mere conventionality.

The "ourang-outang" theory has long since been condemned to oblivion, and the man who would now attempt to "resurrect" it from its "long home," for purposes other than anatomical, would be looked upon as an idiot. The truth is, "God gave man language, just as He gave him reason . . . Man is not a mere speaking machine." Language is truly the instrument of thought, and, we believe, "the nutriment of thought." Our lungs may be in perfectly good condition, and our general health be excellent, but place us in the Black Hole of Calcutta, and the spark of life will soon be extinguished.

In this world of change and motion, we care not for passive mechanisms. A living, acting principle alone appeals to our reason, and presents a pleasure, which it were needless to dwell upon. Do away with such an acting, living, principle, and you may as well obliterate from the tablets of memory all that is choice and superb in literature. Regarding Homer's Iliad, or any of the great Epics whose praises have resounded throughout the ages, you are free to confess that they are "the precious life-blood of master-spirits embalmed and treasured up to a life beyond life." These wondrous combinations could not have been the result of a crude mechanism. Who ever heard of a machine producing anything godlike?

Language is apt to be undervalued, because it is regarded as secondary to the operations of mind. How natural is the influence exercised upon us by our mother tongue! Chalk lines never have formed the boundaries of nations. There is an unbreakable bond of union, by which men speaking the same language are drawn to each other and united in a common cause. In a sense, the English constitution causes English hearts to beat as one; but examine more closely and you will find the true secret of the harmonious maintenance of the governing principle.

The poet Fletcher said that others might make the *laws* of a country, while he would make its *songs*, and all experience approves the wisdom of the utterance. When the Spartans were hard pressed in the Messenian war, they sent to Athens for a general. The Athenians, in contempt, sent Tyrtaeus, a lame school-master, who, however, possessed the gift of lyric song in a wonderful degree. So much did his war-odes inspire the drooping courage of the Spartans, that complete victory rewarded their efforts.

"Language is the pedigree of nations." If the morality of the founders of a nation be of a somewhat pure character, if a substratum of thoughtfulness exist in any marked degree, the result is, that the language of their descendants will long continue to exhibit that impress of true nobility of thought handed down to them by their ancestors. No less is it true that,

> "Words, like nature, half reveal
> And half conceal the soul within."

"Language most shows a man; speak that I may see thee! It springs out of the most retired and secret parts of us, and is the image of the parent of it, the mind. No glass renders a man's form and likeness so true as his speech." Linguistic writers have conclusively proved that the degeneracy of not a few modern nations has resulted from the polluted channel, in which the current of language has flowed. Words expressive of the hightest moral ideas have been lowered to the level of the commonest (nay, sometimes vilest), things. Truths, crystallized in what seemed enduring forms, have been "tossed about as tempest-withered leaves." The introduction of all that is debasing follows, "like a shadow," the downfall of purity of speech. "Man is of a divine truth and stock. His language bears at once the stamp of his greatness and degradation. What dark and sombre threads he must have woven into the tissue of his life, before we could have those threads of an equal darkness which run through the tissue of his language."

The French and Italians show, in a lamentable way, how trifling in the most flippant manner with significant moral ideas may result in emasculating nations in other respects, exhibiting some of the finest traits of national manhood. The daughters of the City of the Seven Hills do not rank so high in Europe at the present day, on account of their low standard of moral sentiment.

Foreigners were never successful in keeping the German tribes in subjection for any length of time. Commerce, which bears with it many blessings, often brings vice into the midst of a people not enervated by contact with what is degrading. The Germans, whose morals were of a comparatively pure character, do not seem to have suffered in this way. Tacitus speaks of them in the highest terms of praise. We are amazed at the wonderful success that attended the arms of the German Empire in the Franco-Prussian war of a few years ago, but our astonishment ceases when we know that Charles V., who was acquainted with most of the languages of Europe said that German was the language of soldiers.

The English language, in its historical associations, is a most interesting study. It is far more important to understand these than to be intimately acquainted with the "battles, sieges, fortunes," through which kings, lords, commons and people have passed. Says Archbishop Trench in his first lecture on the "Study of Words," "There are cases in which more knowledge of more value may be conveyed by the history of a word than by the history of a campaign." A great author has said, "In our ordinary language there are several excellent phrases and metaphors to be met with, of which the beauty is withered by age, and the colour sullied by too common handling; but that takes nothing from the relish to an understanding man, neither does it derogate from the glory of those ancient authors, who, 'tis likely, first brought those words into that lustre."

In Germany, it is probable that Luther's translation of the Bible has influenced the nation more than the bayonets and sabres of petty princes. The dialect, in which this translation is written, is not spoken throughout the whole country, but in districts where the divergence from it is very great, theological discussions are conducted in its phraseology. Cressy and Agincourt, pale into insignificance, when compared with King James' translation. Wordsworth says:

> "We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
> That Shakspeare spake; the faith and morals hold
> Which Milton held."

So Cowper, whose love of country showed itself in the lofty spirit of the "Task," says with "rapture-smitten frame":

> "Praise enough
> To fill the ambition of a private man,
> That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,
> And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own."

One beginning to read Shakspeare is struck with the number of phrases which he meets, that have been familiar to him from childhood. They have become common property. The English poets delight in extolling the immortal bard of Avon. How far his vocabulary has influenced the national literature, we can better appreciate than compute. We must not do injustice to Milton by omitting to notice the beneficial results of the study of his sacred effusions upon the "faith and morals of the nation." When one who is almost a national poet, embodies in his poetry the religious beliefs of his countrymen we must expect to see the faith endeared, still more, if possible, to the hearts of the people. Notwithstanding the laxity of his later theological views, which Professor Lyall has recently noticed in an instructive and lucid paper on a "Personal Trinity," Milton will stand out as one of the pillars of English Christianity. If Pope's sentiment could have force anywhere, here it holds:

> "For modes of Faith let graceless zealots fight,
> His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right."

—Read by G. L. George, at a Union meeting of the Excelsior and Kritosophian Societies, December 14th., 1877.

Correspondence.

HALIFAX, DEC. 8TH, 1877.

To the Editors of the Dalhousie Gazette:

DEAR SIRS,—In some numbers of the *Morning Chronicle* published in August last, attention was called to the imperfections of the work on English Grammar, which has been prescribed for use in our schools by the Council of Public Instruction. This is well; but it should have been done two or three years ago, and it would have been, had I not thought that a Council that could prescribe so poor a book, to the exclusion of many more suitable, would be quite immovable by any facts stated by a mere correspondent. One of our principal political journals has, however, very properly taken up the matter in its editorial columns. But, as there is a distinct part of the book, about which nothing has yet been said, I wish to make it the subject of a few remarks, and as Mr. McCabe, the author, has in a unique epistle to the *Chronicle*,* invited all to criticise

* This letter requested all to send the author information touching any errors which they should discover in his Grammar.

his work, I feel that I am taking no unwarrantable liberty. An attempt is made in this Grammar to give explanations of some existing inflections, by reference to forms in Anglo-Saxon. It is to these explanations especially that I wish to direct attention.

I quote a section :-

"68. One form of the Anglo-Saxon plural ended in *en*. We have still some examples of this in our language; as *ox, oxen; man, men.*"

The A. S. ending referred to was not *en*. And if it had been this would account only for such a word as *oxen*. It can never explain the plural of the word *man;* for, though the plural of *ox* is *oxen*, the plural of *man* is not *man-en*, which it would be according to this explanation. The reason is plain. The *en* of the word *men* is not an "ending," but a part of the stem or theme or word itself. To see that the two words given as examples under the same would-be explanation are totally different in kind does not require much scholarship. I may also add that *feet, mice*, and *teeth*, are not noticed in this book, yet those who understand the matter know that these words belong to the same class as the word *men*, and are to be explained in the same way. Again I quote :

"69. Another plural form in the A. S. ended in *ru*, (afterwards *er-ri*.) Four words formed their plural in this way, *child*, lamb, calf, egg. This form is now seen in the word *child-r-en*, which, strangely enough, has two plural terminations, the *r* of *ru*, and the *en* mentioned before."

There was no such A.S. "ending" as *ru*. The *r* was part, not of a plural "ending," but of the strengthened stem. There are not then two "terminations" in *children*, which would be "strange enough" indeed. But the *r* in this stem would not have astonished our author had he compared the German *die Kinder* (which has no "ending"), and the old Frisian, *Kinder-a*, both of which have the strengthened stem, and the latter of which, as well as the A.S., shews this "ending" distinct from such stem. That he should ever have supposed this *r* to be part of a "plural ending" is "strange enough;" for has he not in his A.S. reading met with it in the singular? He certainly must have done so. But why has he not shewn how the other words—*lamb, calf* and *egg*—came to have their present forms in the plural? and why not explain *-ren* in *brethren?* Truly this book begins to explain so much, and really explains so little, that I suppose it might be called "a very suggestive book." It is, however, rather too suggestive to be satisfactory.

Section 183 treats of the infinitive and the word *to* prefixed to it. There is no need of taking up your space by quoting it. Any who choose can refer to the section and see that it is directly and impliedly erroneous. The great difficulty of this part of English grammar is known to all who have carefully investigated and considered the subject, and so, of course, to our author; but yet he has dismissed it with a few lines, and these not to the point. What the infinitive is in modern English; what are its various forms, what earlier forms these represent or are derived from; whether from A.S. forms at all; whether in such phrases, as *they do speak*, and *they will walk*, speak and walk are infinitives; what the *to* in in the so-called infinitive is, where it came from, and why it is there; whether any of the words ending in *-ing*, and generally bearing the name of participles are in reality infinitives, and how such words arose,—all these and many more are important and difficult points of this subject, but very few of them have been discussed at all in this book, and even these not correctly. It is sometimes desirable that an author should know the difficulties of his subject: that is when he wants his book to be of value. Again it is sometimes desirable to have no such knowledge, that is when one wishes to write a book without labor and perplexity.

There are a few more references to A.S, but they are either comparatively unimportant or incorrect. Of these "explanations" I may say generally that they shew just enough acquaintance with Anglo-Saxon to put one wrong; and an entire want of knowledge of such subjects as umulaut, and strong and weak endings. A man cannot write a work on Grammar without knowing something about language, or, (lest I should be misunderstood) about the science of language, and even tit-bits of information from private letters to the author will not ensure his success.

With the remainder of the book I shall not now meddle, though it is a field white for harvest and full of tares.

I am treating solely of the book; and, therefore, I abstain from enquiring what sort of training our young teachers have had at Truro, in one subject at least, when such a book could issue from the Head Master, and what sort of a Council of Public Instruction we have, when such a book could be prescribed for use in our schools.

In no case have I undertaken to teach, but have contented myself with bringing to the author's notice statements which I consider erroneous. This is all that he can desire. And though it may be said, that I have only found fault, pointing out errors without stating what is right, yet I must exuse myself that I cannot presume to tender information, on his own chosen subject, to the Principal of a Normal School, to a gentleman of "high scholarly attainments," on whom a college has lately conferred the Degree of Master of Arts. (See the *Boston Pilot*, Aug. 4, 1877.)

Judging from Mr. McCabe's letter, he seems to think it necessary, or at least desirable, that he should be the author of a Grammar, prescribed by our Council and used in our schools. Well, if it must be, I would with due deference suggest that the old one be at once proscribed, and that at least four or five years should elapse before the new one makes its appearance, during which time, having banished from his mind Horne Took's ingenious but altogether antiquated and untrustworthy speculations, Mr. McCabe might by diligent study be enabled to produce a work which would be a credit to himself, and confer a benefit upon the youth of this Province.

Yours, &c.

GAMMA.

OUR EXCHANGES.

THE *Bates Student* is published monthly by the Senior class of the college whose name it bears. The November issue of this magazine we have read with much pleasure. There is no humbug about it. The literary contributions appear to have been written by honest men, striving rather to speak truth than make a display. We were specially pleased with the articles entitled "Harmony of Culture and Religion," and "Republicanism in Europe." The writer of the latter thinks the probabilities are small that the Republican *form* of Government will supersede the Monarchal and Imperial in the old country. He says, however, that "Republican *principles* will prevail." If he will look at the matter closely he will find that they prevail already to a large extent. His statement that England believes in the divine "rights of kings," must be taken at a very large discount. Englishmen believe in the divine rights of kings about as much as Americans believe in the divine rights of presidents. They believe far more firmly in the divine rights of the "Commons of England in Parliament assembled." The Editors' portfolio is also well filled. Human nature is the same world over. They complain that their Reading Room "is made a rendezvous for students to indulge in every kind of boisterous merriment and display their gymnastic ability." Paper grabbers exist there too as in Dalhousie. The *Student* contains some excellent clippings.

THE *College Herald* contains a very good poem on a very peculiar and unusual subject—*Anthracite*. We make an extract :

"When the chill blasts of December whirl crisp snow-flakes down the street,
And the thin panes feel the pelting of the wind gusts and the sleet,
When the darknesss settles earthward like a raven seeking rest,
And the weary child clings closely to his mother's warming breast.
While the hearth-fire robes us richly with its glow of ruddy light
I will hail thee, prince of comfort, dusky monarch, Anthracite!"

The *Herald* is an average good College paper. It signifies its intention in criticising its exchanges to call a spade a spade.

Our Societies.

CHARLES I. of England was shamefully treated. So some of the Kritosophians thought, and concluded to give him another trial. The opinion, however, was expressed that since Charles couldn't be present in the flesh, it was unfair to argue the case. The Counsel for the nation opened, and said many hard things about the poor man. He had all that the kindness of the English nation could lavish upon him. No caprice of his was thwarted. And as a token of his gratitude, he plunged the country into civil war. The excellence of his private life was admitted, as well as his pointed beard, and mournful looking eyes. Also to aid his appearance, a modern Ulster was added to his knee-breeches and silk stockings.

Those backing Charles took as a strong position, the illegality of his trial by the High Court of Justice. It was urged too, that the attachment of the people to royalty made his death a cause of the greatest possible danger to England. Proceedings were continued far into the night, and Charles was acquited.

AT the regular meeting of the Excelsior on the 7th., the subject discussed was, "Whether is town or country the better situation for a college."

H. W. McGee was opener, and read a paper setting forth the advantages of the country. A. McLeod was respondent, and J. N. McKittrick, critic. The vote was in favor of the town.

The meetings of the Excelsior are quite interesting; but we are sorry many of the Freshman class persist in being absent. It is humbling for a man to see his mistake, when the opportunity of rectifying it is gone for life. The fact that some of our Seniors have repented of their evil ways, and now attend debate, is the strongest inducement we can present.

THERE was a union meeting of the Kritosophian and Excelsior Societies on the evening of the 17th inst. The programme consisted of original papers, songs, recitations and readings. The time was passed merrily,—fun and dust rising together.

Dallusiensia.

THERE is a noted Junior whose cognomen is Alfred. Alfred has a watch, and thereby hangs a tale. Whenever the gun fires, he extracts this watch from his vest pocket, and displays it with sundry flourishes to the bystanders, exclaiming exultingly: "What d'ye think of that?" meaning the fact that the hands denote 12 exactly. It has lately been discovered that there is a certain peculiarity about this pocket chronometer, viz., that it goes only when Alfred goes. *O tempora!*

A ROSE dropped from her hair. One of our gallant Seniors saw it, and followed to return it, but she had already gone within. A sportive fancy seizes him, He rings the bell, and brings the bereaved one to the door. He holds the rose at a tantalizing distance, while he demands proof of property, payment of expenses, &c., and enjoys her confusion and blushes. That Senior is reported to be very busy.

"ME dit à la fin le libraire" was translated by a Junior: "he called me to the end of the shop," and even then he thought he didn't quite deserve all the applause.

"AND he was left lamenting" It wasn't Lord Ullin's daughter, but some other man's. Though he was a Senior, yet he was human, and as he stood on the platform of the North street depôt, and watched the train whirling away from Halifax, and *him* the fair object of his affections, he was heard heard soliloquizing thusly.—When we reflect, we conclude not to say how, as we believe in the golden rule, and besides we respect his lacerated feelings.

Prof. of Physics (loquitur): "Magnus prosecuted his researches to a very great extent, so much so, that for a time he was deranged. This was, as I omitted to mention, the case with Regnault." The unfeeling shook their heads in an I-told-you-so manner, and indulged in protracted applause.

FOR college lodgers we predict a fall in the price of breadstuffs, as we have it on good authority that one of our most persuasive Seniors is exerting all his influence to the attainment of that end. He won't be satisfied with anything less than an an unconditional surrender.

OUT in the country for the next eight days our students will display themselves á la peacock.

Personals.

REV. D. STYLES FRASER, B. A., '74, one of the Editors of the GAZETTE in the happy days gone by, has been ordained, and inducted into the charge of the Presbyterian Church, Mahone Bay, Lunenburg. The field is a most inviting one, and will give the pastor's acknowledged energy a fine opportunity of showing itself. But Mr. Fraser concluded wisely, that he, unaided, couldn't keep himself and the manse warm, so without delay the adored one became his wife. The happy pair spent a week in town on their way "home." We wish them all happiness and success in life's work. By sending the Editors a piece of bride-cake, they have given them an opportunity of *dreaming*, at least, of *their* future beloved ones.

JOHN H. SINCLAIR, a Junior of session '75–'76, is not *teaching*, as reported in a former issue of the GAZETTE, but *studying Law* in New Glasgow.

F. W. O'BRIEN, who won a scholarship in this College in '72 has deserted the Halifax Medical School, and is now at a similar institution in connexion with Bellevue Hospital, New York.

A. G. DOWNEY, a Freshman of last session, is reported to be teaching the boys and girls, and making love to the young ladies somewhere in the western part of the Province.

HOWARD CHAMBERS, a General of '75–'76 is this winter a Soph at Acadia, where vacation has commenced earlier than usual on account of the burning of the College buildings.

HERBERT H. WHITTIER, a general student of last session, the *greatest* of all the Freshmen, is engaged in school-teaching at St. Croix, Hants. Woe to the disobedient children of St. Croix.

SNOWDON D. SCOTT, a Freshman of last session busies himself with implements of agriculture at West Brook, Cumberland.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

R. Cox, M. D., $1; C. C. Gregory, Esq., $1; Rev. T. Cummings, $1; G. J. Hamilton, $1; Jas. McLean, $1; A. J. Patterson, $1; J. W. Kelly, Ph. D., $1; Dr. McKenzie, $4; John Waddel, $1; Mrs C. W. Bullard, $1; Mr. Davidson, $1; A. Kirk, $1; H. H. Hamilton, B. A., $1; M. C. Webster, $0.25; D. McDonald, Esq., Inspr., Pictou, $1; A. Thompson, $2; A. Greighton, $1; Very Rev. Principal Ross, $1; J. M. McLean, $1; H. McGee, $1.

Twelve numbers of the GAZETTE are issued every Winter Session by the STUDENTS of Dalhousie College and University.

TERMS:

One Collegiate year (IN ADVANCE)..... $ 1.00
Single copies (each)..... 10

Payments to be made to C. S. Cameron, Financial Secretary, and all communications to be addressed to "Editors DALHOUSIE GAZETTE, Halifax Nova Scotia." Anonymous communications can receive no attention.

Printed by the NOVA SCOTIA PRINTING COMPANY, Corner of Sackville and Granville Streets, Halliax, N. S.