

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

A MISREPRESENTATION.

Mr. Editor,— There can be little doubt that the discussion which some of your correspondents have recently been carrying on in reference to collegiate training, has been both interesting and profitable to your intelligent readers. The subject is one of popular importance, and is now being more generally discussed than it was in former years. Then it was left almost entirely in the hands of sage schoolmen; now popular intelligence claims the prerogative of examining the matter for itself, and of forming its own conclusions. In the exercise of this prerogative we have no fault to find with your scribe who assumes the pretentious fancy name (How will that do, Mead?) of "Modern Culture." His bold onslaught upon long-established usages will not generally be disapproved. If they cannot resist the force of his own destructive logic, they deserve to be overthrown; and he should be considered as a great Reformer. But, judging from the results of the controversy, we fear that the prospects of such a consummation are exceedingly doubtful. If wild, sweeping, reckless and unwarrantable assertions constituted valid argument, the palm of victory would be cheerfully conceded to our friend "Modern Culture."

Take the following example of egregious misrepresentation, for the exposure of which the present communication is intended. It occurs in your scribe's article published in your issue of Nov. 1.

"I state, Mr. Editor, as a fact, and I defy contradiction, that nine-tenths of our college graduates possess but the barest smattering of the Classics—that they cannot read their review Classics without dictionary, and possibly other aids; and that when they get out into the world they find few or no inducements worth considering to pursue or even retain what little they know. These may be considered rough statements, but they are as true as the fact of our existence."

"Rough statements," without doubt! But that they are "true," is not quite so patent as "the fact of our existence." No, sagacious detractor! but, to use modest and becoming terms, they are both dishonest and untrue. We will not presume that an insult to the whole body of Acadia's graduates was intended in these reckless assertions, although that is what they clearly amount to, as every disinterested reader will readily perceive. But we will view them simply in the light of pretended arguments.

The allegations are dishonest, inasmuch as they are intended to make the general impression that the superficiality of college students obtains in the study of Classics only; whereas, if there be any truth in the imputation, it applies equally to all the other studies of the course.

Both Professors and students know right well that, as a general thing, a smattering in one branch of study is but a smattering in all other branches. And I have only to appeal to those who have studied at Acadia College to confirm the statement that those students (of whom I hope that "Modern Culture" was not one), who have resorted to "other aids" in classical studies, have done much the same kind of thing in the study of Chemistry, Geology, History and other branches. If, therefore, the dishonest argument has any force against the Classics, it is equally opposed to all other collegiate studies.

But, further, the assertions are simply untrue. It is not the fact that nine-tenths of our graduates are smatterers in the Classics. That there have been a few such characters at Acadia we will not for a moment deny. There may be a few bumpkins even among philosophers. All colleges have their "specimens" of that class of individuals. But, in proof of Acadia's superior classical training, we have only to point to those graduates who have gone to other institutions—to Great Britain, to Germany, to the United States and the Dominion. They have almost invariably taken the highest positions. Such institutions as those of McGill, Harvard, Newton and Brown are always glad to get our students on account of their general proficiency in classical and mathematical culture. Nor have those students who have won honors in other institutions been, in all cases, the highest in rank at Acadia College. Will "Modern Culture," in the face of these facts, have the effrontery to tell us that nine-tenths of our graduates are mere smatterers in the Classics?

But the greater number of our best classical students have gone quietly into their

various spheres of life-work. They are among the leading men in our Denomination and in the public affairs of our provinces. The classical training they received from their Alma Mater has left its indelible impress on their intellect. Some of them may not now conn over their old Greek and Latin Grammars, or spend much time in ferreting out the dainties of Plautus or Aristophanes. The ladders by which they climbed to intellectual eminence may well be left behind for the benefit of their plodding successors. Yet, doubtless, almost all of them still find pleasure and profit in spending an occasional hour with their favorite old Grecian and Roman authors. Indeed the Christian minister, the physician, the lawyer and their professional men find that a thorough acquaintance with the classics is almost indispensable to success in their daily studies. In many cases reliable information can be obtained only by consulting classical authorities. In other cases the Classics afford an international language through which to study the works of foreign writers. But, best of all, they are found to be the most accurate interpreters of our own complicated language; and they give beauty and poetry to words which, in the eyes of the unlearned seemed upgrowth, enigmatical or absurd. Thus, in many respects, the industrious graduate, who continues to be a student, reaps the advantage of his classical knowledge.

But more than this, it is quite evident that, in the way already indicated, graduates, in general, make more use of their Classics than of almost any other acquisition they have gained at college. How many make any practical use of their Chemistry, or their Geology after leaving College? And there can be little doubt that most of our graduates, if necessitated to undergo the unpleasant ordeal of being re-examined, would consider themselves better posted in Classics than in Logic, Modern History, etc. Nothing is here said against any of those other branches above mentioned—they are all indispensable to a liberal education. But it seems absurd for any man in his senses to bring forth, as arguments against one department of collegiate study, objections and insinuations that, if true, have equal force against almost all other studies.

But enough has been said. Neither Acadia nor her Sons will suffer from the ungentlemanly (or, perhaps, unladylike) aspersion of "Modern Culture." And, whatever modifications may be made in the Curriculum, let us hope that due prominence may ever be given to the Classics and Mathematics.

JUSTITIA.

For the Christian Messenger.

MENTAL CULTURE.

I really did not expect to pursue this matter of College Curricula so long when I commenced writing. I really was only moved to take up my pen by what seems to me to be exceedingly erroneous views, published from the pen of one of the Professors of our College. Your correspondents have suggested to me the task of pursuing the matter more fully, and of proving conclusively to every intelligent reader and candid man, that our present system of giving the great prominence to Classical and Mathematical Education is altogether contrary to the Spirit of the age and the requirements of the times. So I would ask your readers, Sir, to have patience with me and follow me carefully in my methods of reasoning—and weigh well the facts and authorities which I adduce.

I promised in my last to shew that the testimony of great scholars was not entirely on the side of my opponents. In the course of my reading I have fallen in with many clear and decided expressions of opinion adverse to the old system of higher education, written by men of the highest rank in the world of learning. I will here give a few brief extracts, and will begin with one whose authority and weight will hardly be impeached by any of my opponents:

SIR WM. HAMILTON—"If we consult reason, experience and the common testimony of ancient and modern times, none of our intellectual studies tend to cultivate a smaller number of the faculties in a more partial or feeble manner, than Mathematics. This is acknowledged by every writer on Education of the least pretension to judgment and experience."

DR. WHEWELL says: "More Classical reading is a narrow and enfeebling Education." LORD MACAULEY:—"Unfortunately those grammatical and philological studies, without which it were impossible to understand the great works of Athenian and Roman genius, have a tendency to contract the views and deaden the sensibility of those who follow them with extreme assiduity."

GOLDWIN SMITH—"In choosing the sub-

jects of a man's studies, if you desire any worthy and fruitful effort, you must choose such as the world values, and such as may receive the allegiance of a manly mind. It has been said that six months of the language of Schiller and Goethe will now open to the student more high enjoyment than six years study of the Languages of Greece and Rome. It is certain that six months study of French will now open to the student more of Europe than six years study of that which was once the European tongue (Latin.)"

CHARLES LYELL gives it as his decided opinion that the study of the physical sciences calls into operation and develops faculties of the mind which are not called into activity by Classics or Mathematics; and further that the reasoning powers and judgment are more cultivated by these subjects than by the exclusive study of the Classics and Mathematics. And he laments the mental waste entailed on young men who having no taste or aptitude for Classical and Mathematical studies, are nevertheless forced to take a long course in them, or forego the benefits of University Education altogether.

I might quote many other passages of similar import from the writings, not of one-idea men, but of the foremost men of learning of our time. But I think those given will suffice to show that the opinions of the learned are by no means so favorable to the old system as your correspondents would have us believe.

Let us now consider the alleged superiority of the culture at present given in our Colleges, over that which a Curriculum drawn up on the Modern Culture idea would afford. I presume we are all agreed in saying that the aim of all true culture is to develop and improve the mind in such a way as shall be most beneficial to the Student in after life. I do not mean merely beneficial or valuable in a commercial sense, as has been insinuated. I speak of all real benefits, conferred by a good education—the pleasures of a taste refined and a heart purified and enlarged, no less than the worldly advantages and distinctions which learning, let us hope, will ever bring to its possessor.

Let us begin with the reasoning powers. It is the boast of Mathematics to develop these. My objection is that this study develops the reason only very partially and feebly—develops only that part of the reasoning powers which need it least. The reasoning of Mathematics is purely deduction. It supplies the evidence or principles, tells you that you are to accept these without cavil or doubt—and to reason from them to obtain conclusions which follow. It concerns itself not about the certainty of the facts, the reliability of the evidence, but about the inferences to be derived from these. Now any one who reflects on the subject will perceive that the great concern, in the reasonings of actual life, is with this very matter which Mathematics so unconsciously overlooks: the reliability of the evidence. Get once at the facts, let these be made clear and beyond dispute—any person of ordinary intelligence can tell you what conclusion they warrant without any fussing with Mathematical "reasoning" in the case. And accordingly is it not proverbial that Mathematical men are the very worst reasoners in the questions of actual life? Their powers of observation (the powers concerned in the gathering of facts) have not been trained. They have no nice faculty for discerning between the real and the false, in evidence—no sharpened perception of the countless changes and motions going on in the world around them. They are altogether engrossed with the minor logical process—a thing bound up and expressed in a few abstract symbols and formulas—lifeless and unbecomingly skeletal.

I ask those who have studied Chemistry, if it does not afford ample training for those powers of the mind which deal with symbols and formulas. It has a language of symbols and formulas, sufficiently deep and abstract to exercise all the Mathematical powers. But it is also a living reality. It brings you face to face with the world you live in. It gives you a thousand facts to observe and classify—a thousand substances to "put together, part, and prove." The work has that wholesome stimulus of reality and life so lamentably wanting in Mathematics. And this is no small matter for it is a well-known law that all exercise, whether of the body or the mind, must be pleasant and lively in order to be really beneficial. If it be gone through as a penitentiary business, it brings neither vigor to the limbs nor strength to the mind. I have never met with a student who regretted the time spent on scientific study; I have seen but few who did not regard their Mathematical labors as so much wasted life. Who that has mastered the "law of

combining proportions" will say that it is inferior to the "binomial theorem," as a means of discipline? Who will say that the study of a complicated "reaction" in Chemistry is less bracing on the mind than the transpositions and eliminations of Algebra? It calls certainly for as much mental acumen; and it has this further advantage that you can prove the matter by actual experiment—and test whether you have or have not correctly apprehended the process—and if you have, you know it is one letter in the vast inscription which God has written on the face of the world for you to read—one link in the vast chain of laws through which He has created, and maintains all things by the word of His power.

There are only a very few further remarks to offer on this interesting subject; and I trust I shall be able to write *Finis* at the conclusion of my next article.

MODERN CULTURE.

Nov. 25th, 1871.

For the Christian Messenger.

BOOK NOTICE.

A BOOK FOR THE YOUNG.

Being a History of the Kings who ruled over God's ancient people from the death of Solomon to the Babylonish Captivity. By Mary L. T. Witter.

Whatever tends to attract the attention of the young to the study of the sacred Scriptures is evidently adopted to do good. By leading them, therefore, to the contemplation of an important portion of the history of "God's ancient people," and treating the subject in an interesting and instructive manner, the pious and talented writer of this work has undoubtedly performed an acceptable and beneficial service.

By great diligence and unwearied assiduity she acquired a good education; and usefully devoted a number of years to the instruction of young ladies. She has also long been a very successful Sabbath School Teacher. The inspired Volume has been studied by her with close attention, deep interest, and great profit both to herself and others.

This work, which Sister Witter has felt constrained to publish for the benefit of youthful readers—the aged may profit by it—contains nothing of the nature of romance, pedantry, or bombast; but is written in a plain, chaste, and pleasing style; and suggests numerous natural and profitable reflections. Its extensive circulation, with attentive and beneficial perusal, is, in my opinion, much to be desired.

The work is printed on good paper, with a fair type, and is neatly bound and lettered. It is sold at 40 cents per copy; and it may be obtained from James S. Witter, Esq., Canning, Henry B. Witter, Esq., Wolfville, William Churchill, Esq., Yarmouth, or the subscriber.

CHARLES TUPPER.

Aylesford, Nov. 25, 1871.

Religious Intelligence.

For the Christian Messenger.

THANKSGIVING DAY AND OTHER MATTERS AT YARMOUTH.

Dear Editor,—

We do not wish to trouble you too often with our affairs, but we desire to let the churches know what we have been doing of late. A few weeks since, the ministers of the county agreed to hold Home Missionary meetings in their respective fields of labour, and to take collections and subscriptions for the French Mission. The first meeting of the kind was held at Hebron. It was a season of great interest and power. The amount raised was \$48. The next meeting was held in the Temple Church, on Tuesday evening last. The sum raised there was \$70. The following evening we met in the vestry of the First Baptist Church. The collections and subscriptions there, with donations subsequently made, amount to about \$100. Our encouragement has been so great in this matter that we expect to raise about \$600 in the county. As the Secretary of the French Missionary Board will, we presume, furnish you with an extended report, we forbear to add anything further in regard to this matter. We merely express the hope that the ministers in other counties will do likewise. Such a course, we are sure, will benefit ministers, churches, and the people generally.

Thanksgiving day was observed by our churches here by holding union meetings. At each service, according to an agreement between the ministers, collections and subscriptions were taken for Acadia College.

The amount so raised in the Temple Church was \$40, and in the First Church, with other donations, \$55. Collections were also taken at Arcadia and Milton, but we have not yet learned the result.

In view of the present wants of Acadia College, permit us, Mr. Editor, to urge upon all the churches in the three Provinces the propriety of taking collections and subscriptions on Thursday, the 7th proximo—the day appointed for Humiliation and Prayer—to enable the Governors of the College to meet the claims that are pressing upon them. For our own part, we have but little faith in humiliation and prayer unless they are backed up by benevolence. The religion that dries up when money is mentioned is not the kind we want for ourself or wish to see in others.

And now, as we consider the importance of Acadia College, we would urge the Denomination to make its Endowment their chief work during the current and coming year. We would also advise the Governors to aim at \$100,000, as the new Endowment Fund. In our opinion they will come as near to that as they will to \$50,000 if they try merely to raise the latter amount. And perhaps it may not be amiss to say in this connection, that the ministers here think it desirable that the President and Professors of the College should spend the next Summer vacation in holding Education Meetings. One of the Faculty of the College, with some minister whose place might be supplied by a ministerial student could canvass one part of the field. Others could go in other directions, and thus they believe the work of Endowment could be carried forward successfully.

We have merely to add, in respect to local matters, that the good work is going on at Milton, Bro. Wallace expects to baptize several candidates to-morrow.

G. E. DAY.

Yarmouth, Nov. 25, 1871.

YARMOUTH, Nov. 27th, 1871.

Dear Brother,—

On Thursday the 23rd we observed the day of Thanksgiving in Yarmouth, Brethren Wallace, Day, and myself united in holding religious services at the Temple in the morning, the First Church in the afternoon and at Milton in the evening. Lest our thanksgiving might be lacking in sincerity, and as a means, at the same time of testing and increasing it, we resolved to do as the wise men did in worshipping the infant Saviour, to present our offerings. And as the object most needy and deserving at present, seemed to us, to be Acadia College, we gave our collections and subscriptions to that object.

At the Temple Church the amount given was \$40. At the First Yarmouth Church, I think about \$50, the amount at Milton I did not ascertain. Thus, pleasantly and profitably passed the day with the three Churches of Yarmouth, and, I think I can truly say, that the giving part of it did not by any means dampen the spirit of the Thanksgiving.

The revival at Milton is still advancing. Bro. Wallace baptized six happy converts there on Sabbath the 19th, in the presence of an immense concourse of spectators, and ten more yesterday, making in all, since the revival commenced, twenty-six.

The Missionary meetings at Hebron, the First Yarmouth, and Temple Churches, were very interesting and successful. At Hebron especially, the power of the Lord seemed evidently present to bless.

The collections and subscriptions in aid of the French Mission, amounted, in the three places, to about \$166—which has been increased since the meetings, to about \$200.

Since sitting down to write, I received by mail the following very pleasing note:

REV. W. H. PORTER,

Dear Brother,—Enclosed you will find ten dollars, Canada Currency, which I send as a small donation to the French Mission. Please forward the same to the Treasurer of the French Mission Board, and give notice of the same in your next communication to the Messenger.

M. R. S.

And so the French Mission shall live, for like Acadia College, it too is the Child of Providence.

At the meeting of the Ministerial Conf held in the vestry of the First Yarmouth Church on Tuesday, the 21st inst., the following Missionary meetings were appointed:

At Acadia on Monday the 27th, at 7 o'clock.
At Milton on Thursday the 30th, at "
At Derfeld on Mon. Dec. 4th, at "
At Tusket Lakes Tues. Dec. 5th, at "
At Central Ch. boque Thurs. 7th, at "
At Chego in Monday Dec. 11th, at "
At Ohio Thursday Dec. 14th, at "
At Argyle Monday Dec. 18th, at "
At Tusket Tuesday Dec. 19th, at "

The ministers at the above places, are requested to give timely notices from their pulpits, and to announce collections to be taken on behalf of the French Mission.

W. H. PORTER,
Sec. of the Min. Conf.