

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

MENTAL CULTURE.

Mr. Editor.—

Perhaps no subject of a secular character is more deserving of a full and elaborate discussion than the one already started in reference to Collegiate Reform. Acadia College and its relations to sound general education comes up every year for the earnest consideration of all our denominational gatherings. Acadia College is regarded as the pet, the idol of the Baptists of the Lower Provinces—or as it was termed by our old veteran pioneers of Collegiate Education—the child of Providence. It is with no small satisfaction, therefore, that I noticed the appearance of some articles in your last issue advertising to this same interesting topic. The greatest sin of the present day is that of indifference. There are important matters ever demanding public consideration, which multitudes who are capable of grappling with them, are too indolent and indifferent to handle.

I am by no means inclined to regret that the writers referred to, felt called upon to differ from me in my ideas and conclusions—fair criticism and intelligent opposition are pleasing always to the candid seeker for truth, and beneficial too, as calculated to bring out the real merits of a question.

I must bandy a word or two for the sake of courtesy with “Plebias”—patronizing, facetious “Plebias.” Nothing in his communication deserves any attention of itself, but I may as well inform your cynical scribe at the outset that I do not engage in this discussion for the purpose of discovering whether he, or I, or anybody else, can say the most witty and biting things, or send forth the most powerful current of sarcasm or invective. I write only with a view to directing public attention among Baptists to the wants of our College in view of the spirit of the age and the requirements of the times, I want to meet this matter face to face, fairly and squarely, sincerely and honestly. I trust all who volunteer communications on this subject will treat it in this spirit.

Another writer, “True Culture,” deserves praise for his manly and dignified method of treatment. I perused his article carefully, more than once, I think he must pardon me for hazarding the opinion that it was a very incomplete answer to the facts and arguments which I adduced in my two previous communications. Let him carefully read his article again, and I am sure he will see what all sound judges must have seen, that it is just a catalogue of bald assertions—mere statements. “I do believe,” “I do say,” “I do think,” was the extent of his logic. For instance, he says:—“Let the views of your correspondent be universally adopted in Colleges, and in one or two generations sound learning would degenerate into scholasticism.” Give us the proof, and I am content. I might annex a similar comment to every sentence of his production,—and that is about all the answer his communication admits of.

Having been long interested in this matter of Classical Education, and for a long time sceptical as to its wonderful efficacy as a means of Mental Culture, I have taken pains to converse at length with its warmest and soundest advocates—desiring earnestly, if possible, to discover what its much vaunted virtues really were. I have invariably went away unsatisfied—unenlightened.—The champions of classical learning have a fashion of talking vaguely about “mental growth and expansion,”—“full development”—and such like, but what these really mean, or what Classics can do to produce them, I could never fully understand.

But I find it is quite useless to arrive at the main point of the question by considering it in this manner. It all reduces to a few practical considerations, which common sense can decide, and the most simple comprehend. I will mention one or two that occur to me, which I think are in point.

A glance at the past history of the world gives me great reason for faith in human progress. I see an age many centuries past when, according to the popular idea, scholar and sophist were synonymous. The Aristotelian system of logic was carried to most absurd hairsplitting, and the great ambition of the would-be-scholar was to fill whole books with logical niceties about a point not deserving a moment's consideration. Passing by sundry intervening mutations in the ideal of true scholarship, I discover another age, much later, when learned men conceived a mania for ancient

lore—grew wild over Grecian and Roman relics. Every body who sought to gain the honors of scholarship must needs devote so many years of his life to Homer, Sophocles, Herodotus, Virgil, Ovid and Plato. All wisdom was centred in these stores of ancient learning—all moderns were fools or buffoons. Lords' sons were compelled to devote all their school days to scanning Dactylic and Trochaic measure. In this state of things Classics became fashionable, and every student desired to study them to keep pace with the times. I see still later a period open when men begin to grapple—not with “shows” and “appearances” but with living realities—to leave day abstractions to deal with considerations of vital practical importance. From the dawning of this Epoch to the present day I have seen classical study steadily losing ground, and year by year losing its prestige. Need I ask why?

I would beg to submit one or two simple questions. Why are those of our scholars who are more than half a century old, all masters of the Classics, while our young rising scholars are poorly stored with Classic lore, and bid fair to make small progress in that direction? Why is it that half a century ago a college graduate could read the classics with ease and fluency, while a graduate of to day can scarcely blunder over the simplest piece of Latin prose? Do these facts necessarily denote retrogression in culture, scholarship or mental power?

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.

Make Classical studies elective, eh? No, their friends dare not do it. They know full well that scarce a student would deign to study them. Yet fifty years ago they could have done so safely. The times have changed.

I have not yet exhausted the reasons for my belief, and I hold myself in readiness for further objections.

MODERN CULTURE.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE COLLEGE AND MENTAL CULTURE.

LETTER II.

Dear Sir,—

In my last letter the attention of your readers was directed to the subject of Colleges in general, and my design was to vindicate their practice of requiring students to spend a considerable portion of their time on the Classics and the Mathematics.

Your correspondent seems particularly anxious about Acadia College, and desires to have its curriculum improved, as he thinks it would be, by the introduction of other studies. If those other studies are designed to supersede the Classics and Mathematics, I can give him no hope of success: Acadia's policy resembles that of McGill, Toronto, Brown, Harvard, and a host of others in this continent, in all which Colleges it is essential that the graduates be well grounded in the Classics and the Mathematics. Otherwise the degrees (to adopt your correspondent's elegant phraseology) would not be “worth a button.”

The additions that have been made to the ordinary College curriculum within the last fifty years have been supposed necessary, on account of the advanced state of knowledge. But I think it may be doubted whether it is not an extension of breadth at the expense of depth. It would have been better, in the opinion of excellent judges, to lengthen the term of study. As it is, our young men gain a mere smattering of knowledge of many subjects, a fuller acquaintance with which could be obtained if sufficient time were employed.

It is questionable, too, whether it would not be a great improvement to postpone some acquisitions till the close of the College course. A college graduate, for instance, would learn French and German in half the time, and much more accurately, than if he had undertaken those studies during his residence in College. The same remark will apply to the sciences, the mere elements of which, and nothing more, can be learned if the curriculum is to be so unmercifully crowded. The establishment of scientific

schools meets the want in the best manner. There the students study the sciences, and nothing else, and acquire a proficiency which can be obtained in no other way.

“Modern Culture” complains that the study of Classics and Mathematics is “compulsory.” He desiderates more “elective” studies. Young men, he thinks, should be allowed to choose for themselves. He forgets that this liberty is already enjoyed at Acadia. At p. 13, of the Catalogue it is stated that “the studies are arranged with reference to the wants of students who intend to take the full course of four years; at the same time provision is made to accommodate all who may wish to study for a shorter period in any department, if they are prepared to work with existing classes. Such students, when they leave College, can have Certificates of proficiency according to their attainments.” This is liberal enough, assuredly. But it would be absurd, and fatally injurious to any College, to grant a degree to a student for proficiency in the studies of his choice, thus ignoring the laws and arrangements of the Institution, and constituting the pupils, rather than the Faculty, the judges of fitness. The value of such a degree would be practically nil.

I observe that those Colleges which have enlarged the curriculum jealously guard the honour of their degrees. They offer to students certain facilities for gaining scientific knowledge; but to those who choose to spend their time chiefly in that pursuit they do not give the College diploma, but one specially invented for the occasion. The “B. A.” is reserved for those who take the full course. The scientific student, if qualified, becomes a “B. Sc.,” which title, honourable and deserved as it may be, indicates no amount of literary excellence.

I grant that the wants of Acadia College are many and great. A Professorship of Civil Engineering is wanted. A Professorship of English Literature is wanted. A Professorship of Modern Languages is wanted. A Professorship of Oriental Languages—particularly Syriac, Arabic and Sanscrit—is wanted. A Professorship of Natural History—especially Botany and Zoology—is wanted. A Professorship of Natural Philosophy—including Optics, Pneumatics, Statics, and Electricity—is wanted. (One Professor of Science in a College is ridiculously insufficient.) And the Classical Professorship ought to be divided. There should be a Professor of Latin and a Professor of Greek.

These are large wants. They can only be supplied by an ample endowment. It is idle to talk of enlarging the curriculum and appointing new Professors, while the income of the College fails to meet its present expenditure. If the wealthy men who inhabit the Counties of Kings, Annapolis and Yarmouth felt as they ought the importance of education they would not hesitate to provide the needful funds, both for existing wants and for prospective enlargement. Fifteen thousand dollars will endow a Professorship. Which County will take the initiative? May we look to Annapolis for a Professorship of Modern Languages?

I believe that I am correct in saying that the Governors have learned wisdom by experience. They must have the full endowment for a Professorship before they appoint another Professor. Nothing less will satisfy them. It will not be sufficient to promise annual support for a limited period. The full sum of fifteen thousand dollars must be raised, or the amount of the Professor's salary *securely guaranteed in perpetuity.*

AN EX-GOVERNOR OF ACADIA COLLEGE
Oct. 20, 1871.

ERRATUM.—In my former letter your printer gave an incorrect orthography to “*pons asinorum*,” as may be seen by referring to my manuscript.

For the Christian Messenger.

LETTER FROM MISS NORRIS.

The following letter to the Secretary of the N. S. Central Board will be read with interest by all the members of the Woman's Missionary Aid Societies:—

HENTHADA, Aug. 10, 1871

My Dear Mrs. Selden,—

I do not wish to give you the opportunity to forget me, though I have been detained longer than usual from any communication. We have had much sickness in the school this season, though it seems now to have passed by. Our own household has been bereaved of a dear little child, who has carried many thoughts with her to heaven.

As I wrote, a Karen girl brought me in three letters from the jungle, and I have stopped to read them. A man has just

arrived from a village where Miss DeWolfe and I spent a little time in the dry season, and they have availed themselves of the opportunity of writing to the “Mamas,” and will look anxiously for a word in return. One says, they read the Bible continually but it is hard to understand, and the impression they leave on my mind as I read the one prayer of all to be patient in continual prayer for them, is a most painful sense of the utter inadaptateness of the means employed to reach and enlighten these simple-minded, ignorant and waiting people. It is a painful thing to know that a willing people are seeking from us the Bread of life, and so few are ministering to their necessities. We have many interesting cases in our school. One that I have felt particular interest in, as he is in my own classes, is a boy about twelve years of age, a child of heathen parents, and all whose relatives are heathen. His mother died while he was quite young, and a few years since his father fell from a tree and was killed. This boy has joined himself to the Christians, learned what he could in the jungle and found his way here to school. He told me there was another heathen boy, his playmate, who wanted to come, but he was afraid he could not get clothes. Then I noticed how carefully the little fellow had mended his one jacket, and I could not but think God would honor the faith that led him to come and trust, not knowing, “He talks often of going back to tell his relatives and his one little brother the story of Jesus—but he wants to understand the Bible first himself so that he can help them. His home is up among the mountains, and the very tones of his voice shew that he does not belong to the Christian villages.

I might write of many others who give promise of doing much yet for the Master's kingdom. It seems to me if the people would invest a little in training native pastors, as well as in taking up those that others have trained, it might prove no vain or unsatisfactory outlay. From thirty to forty dollars a year will amply support one throughout the whole course of study for the ministry. And though many can and do win their own way through, perhaps some faint that a little aid would have carried safely to the end of the journey. For a poor boy to leave home and spend eight or ten years in study means the same and more out here than it does at home.

Yet let us not forget that while those here have some knowledge of Christ and are on the road to civilization, thousands beyond, as ready for the Gospel as these, have not had one word yet spoken to them, and are sinking into utter night, while Christians are consulting as to the risk involved in any endeavor to save them. How precious the promise that the world shall yet be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God!

I am as ever,
Yours in Christ Jesus,
H. M. NORRIS.

For the Christian Messenger.

A LATIN HYMN.

Mr. Editor,—

As I was driving down to the Convention, at Yarmouth, I got interesting myself one day in translating into Latin the beautiful hymn commencing

“Come thou Fount of every blessing.”

I succeeded so well in my own estimation that I had the vanity to submit my performance to the inspection of friends, and among others I sent it to a Latin scholar. He sent me in return a very courteous reply, made some remarks, rather non-committal, as you may well suppose, on my work, and made some reference to the labors of others in the same line, but sent me the copy of a translation of Watts's touching hymn, commencing:

“When I survey the wondrous cross,”

which my friend pronounces the best translation into Latin that he has seen of a modern hymn, not excepting Gladstone's “Rock of Ages.” In addition to all the knowledge I have gained and regained respecting that splendid old tongue, by my attempts to translate a hymn into it, (and even this has amply repaid me for all my labor), I cannot but deem the translation so kindly sent me by Dr——, of itself an ample reward.

Oh! I love that hymn! I remember reading it once in a meeting, about thirty years ago, with such emotions of soul as language would fail to describe. I had just been carried up to the “Mount of Transfiguration,” had seen the Saviour in his glory, had heard Moses and Elijah talking, had caught glimpses of the celestial city, and had, literally and without ex-

aggeration, “rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory!” I went into the pulpit and opened the hymnbook at random. My eye fell on that hymn, (834 in the Psalms), and I read it. Every line, every word seemed to pierce and thrill my very soul. It took me weeks to find it again. In fact I should never have found it again until this day had it not been a familiar hymn, the words being distinctly remembered as also the page and the exact place in the page, where it had appeared. Oh I can remember how I felt my whole soul thrown into the last stanza:

“Were the whole realm of nature mine
“That were a present far too small!
“Love so amazing, so divine,
“Demands my life, my soul, my all.

And I bless God that the experience of nearly thirty years since has not led me to retract that vow.

I enclose for the Messenger the Latin translation referred to. Many of your readers will be able to read and appreciate it, I am persuaded; and I will not suspect the rest of such selfishness as would deprive “others of a rich treat” because they cannot taste it themselves. They have the impressive, *original*.

S. T.

Mira crucis dum contemplor,
Rex qua pendet glorie,
Luctum omne damnatum duco,
Iludus superbiae.

Abstulit! abstulit! gloriari
Nisi in morte Domini;
Nihil est quod non postponam
Redemptoris sanguini.

Defluit ex fronte sacra,
Perforatis manibus,
Mixtus amor cum dolore;
Defluit ex pedibus.

Mixtus amor cum dolore
Quando tantus adfuit;
Et coronam tam regalem,
Quando spina praebuit?

Mundum si donare possim
Parum id appareat
Mirus; amor cum divinus
Memet totum postulat.

Missionary Intelligence.

SIAM.

LETTER FROM DR. DEAN.—The Chinese in Siam.—Bangkok, Feb. 9, 1871.—The work among the Chinese is of more importance than among the Siamese, both at present and as relates to the future. The mission was established here when our missionaries could not enter China, and a missionary here to-day has access to as many Chinamen as he could have in China itself. Very few Chinamen are found up at Ayuthia, but the same is not true in other places. Here in Bangkok there are thousands of Chinese who must depend entirely upon our Board for their knowledge of the gospel. Hundreds come here every year from China, and nearly all speak our dialect. Sometimes 500 come in a single ship. Some return to China every year, but the Chinese population is evidently increasing very rapidly.

The Chinese constitute the bone and muscle; and a good part of the brain of this country. The agricultural and manufacturing interests depend almost entirely upon the Chinese, and the commerce is to a great extent in their hands.

What their future history will be in this country, we cannot predict; but it is very evident that their influence will never be less than it now is. If difficulties arise in China, compelling our brothers to vacate Swatow for a time, they could find ample work here. We have frequently the pleasure of welcoming native brethren from the Swatow churches. On the banks of the two large rivers west of us there are hundreds of Chinamen, whom we can very seldom visit on account of our small force here.

As near as I can judge, the population of Banplasoi must be nearly or quite 10,000, the majority of whom can speak our dialect. I believe China is to be converted within its own borders; but as this station is fairly established, and as its influence is constantly increasing, I cannot feel that it would be right to diminish the number of influential workers.

I believe, however, that the churches and at the out-stations would not die, even though the missionaries should be removed. For I have faith enough to believe they are known to the Lord as “branches of His planting, as the work of His hands.”

Chinese Medical Notions.—April 14.—After worship this evening it was reported that two bears had been killed this morning in the jungle, and brought into market. A Chinese doctor present inquired with great