

that rests upon the citizen of a representative government, have not been slow in ascertaining that upon higher education, as well as upon the common branches of learning, depends the perpetuity of our national institutions.

The latter of these two necessities, we have doubtless seen consummated in the perfection of our system of common schools. And so thorough has this been instilled into the body politic, that there is little danger of its being totally eradicated. But our system of higher education has not always met with hearty approval. For though it exists for the material benefit of all, yet because it benefits an individual personally, it has had many obstacles to overcome. Subject to the frequent fluctuations of political power, our institutions of learning too often become mere toys in the hands of political aspirants.

With this fact in view, statesmen, observing the advantages of broader culture, now step forth and boldly demand a greater stability for our colleges maintained by the state. Instead of their existence and prosperity depending upon the generosity of legislative authority, they now demand that such laws as pertain to the maintenance of colleges and universities, be made constitutional and not legislative. This would indeed be a radical change. But the change is not advocated without good grounds. For there are serious difficulties arising from the careless legislation in this respect throughout the western states. But we have faith that the legislation of our own state has not reached that state of partly intrigue and party prejudice as to ignore the interests of higher education—the vital element of society. For when a community has reached that state of licentiousness, that it cannot control its own institutions by representative policy, what must be the fate of its laws chained by constitutional fetters and deprived of the means for revision and adjustment.

SUPERFICIAL READING.

One of the most notable of the many famous sayings of Bacon is the statement that "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested." This aphorism, so characteristic of the great philosopher, is in our own day still more pertinent to the object of reading than when written by him. This fact is due to the greater abundance of literature at the present time, and especially to the multiplication of the newspaper, an institution quite unknown to the sixteenth century.

While we would in some measure excuse superficial reading, it is far from our purpose to ignore the importance, in its proper place, of deliberate and attentive reading. Some persons, in their zeal for condemning the practice of reading in a hasty manner both important and unimportant books, insist on the necessity of always reading slowly and carefully.

But while this is a useful rule, it is not of general application. The character of one's reading is rather to be determined by its amount and its value. That which has proceeded from the pens of the representative men of all ages, and which is worthy of being so read that the thought may be retained, is comparatively small in amount. On the other hand, the amount of fictitious and journalistic literature is immense. Here and there is a fragment worthy of special notice; but what reason is there for storing up with equal pains, a history of our country and a story in the *New York Ledger*? The office of the novel is to amuse and entertain. Being of a light nature, it is rapidly read, and when once perused has usually served its purpose. This remark can be made in respect to by far the greater part of the contents of newspapers and other periodicals.

With men in the learned professions, superficial reading is almost imperative. They have to deal, in many cases, with great numbers of books, and while their