

advice which they so often need. The reading public of New Zealand are, speaking generally, not enthusiastic towards their own countrymen. They prefer something with the hall-mark of London popularity. Recognising this, the young writer prefers to keep, unpublished, his early work, and in silence develops his powers until his independence one day asserts itself; and fearless of criticism, he stakes his all.

Nor must we forget, in dealing with this subject, that many of our cleverest students of nature and of books, travel to the Homeland for the facilities to be obtained there, for the training in a wider field, for the kudos that the average New Zealander is chary of giving, unless he knows that the aspirant is an arrival from Europe.

And, stimulated by the encouragement given to a young virile writer, that writer is apt to forget that he owes his very virility to his native land; and taking advantage of the larger reading public, of the opportunities of publication given to the successful, of the companionship of numbers of similar aspirants for literary honours, he remains where he is, and becomes, to all intents and purposes, a Londoner. But assuredly, since he is of our soil, of our education, he is of *our school*; and we claim him as being one of us, even though he is no longer with us.

This brings me to what I consider the most important feature in our literary education—our surroundings. We are too apt to blame our climate for not always being perfection, and to act, or rather *not* to act, upon the groundless assumption. We forget that occasional days do not make a whole year, and even if, for the sake of argument, we grant that the climate of Auckland is enervating, even then we have said nothing about all the rest of New Zealand. Probably no other country has so wide a range of climate, and that, too, of temperate climate.

Between the semi-tropical summer of its most northern point and the cold winter of its southern province, there is an endless diversity of temperature. We have a land clothed by nature from mountain to sea-beach

with magnificent verdure, glorious scapes of sea and land, exquisitely-tinted skies, and around us breezes that sing to us of freedom and happiness.

Everything about us is conducive to pleasure, to love of life, to freedom of action, to independence of thought. We are casting from us many of the shackles of conventionality obtaining in the Mother Country, we are developing types, we are feeling our power. For the meditative philosopher there is food for reflection, for the merry there is abundance of pleasure, for the athletic there is training, for the artist there are uncounted beauty spots.

To warm temperate climates we are accustomed to look for vivid colouring in art and literature. Wait till the artists and poets of New Zealand have realised their powers, and then luxuriance will blossom forth all the richer for the delay. By such a climate as ours, the finer feelings are stimulated and cultured. The emotional spirit is vivified and intensified; and some day encouragement, which has been wanting in the past, will develop it into a glorious birth.

Unconsciously the influences of beauty work their spell upon the mechanism of the human mind, subtly elevating and purifying it; but assimilation is slow. Some day, like the tiny spring, bubbling and losing itself among the mountain rocks, and, in time, suddenly gushing forth from the hillside a purling stream, all the more powerful for its restraint under ground, there will leap forth into recognition those whose minds have, by the delay and consequent introspection, gained culture, and control, and strength.

It has been often remarked that our scenery is monotonous in colouring, and that this produced an undesirable effect upon the artistic mind. I can scarcely credit this, for no one who looks for variety can fail to find it. I ask you to go further afield than your own immediate neighbourhood.

From the myrtle green of the puriri with its scarlet berries, from the yellow of the kowhai, from the crimson of the pohutukawa, and the graceful falling of the rimu, cast