

superstition is losing in the number of its slavish followers. The plowman dares to inquire, doubt, and to reason.

There has been a manifest improvement in the mass of farmers, since our early memory. A change for the better brought about by the reading of agricultural literature. The agricultural library had its uses as well as the plow. The mind has to be cultivated as well as the broad acres. The library of the man is an index of the man—it shows the currents of his thought—the desires which prompt him and the ambition, the success of which would reward him. For the great conflict of life, a knowledge of agricultural science is worth more than all that may be added in a college course, and a full knowledge of chemistry is of more value than all the dead languages.—The value of the latter is lilliputian, compared with the former; and chemistry is feeble in its claims compared with strictly practical agricultural literature.

The influence or the advantages of an agricultural library are beyond mention. Farmer's children love to read the truths of literature in the description of the birds and beasts of the farm earlier than they would paintings of fiction. It is not so much the superior cultivation of the farm as of the man, that we claim as an advantage gained by agricultural libraries. We have shown that the farmer has progressed. The truths which should be stored in every farmer's library are the cause of that progression. We care not through what channel it may have reached him—the columns of the newspaper, the agricultural paper, or the address or lecture. The legitimate office of the agricultural library is the transmission of such knowledge, such man improving truths, as shall elevate him from the position of the unthinking ploughman to the intelligent citizen. The time is at hand when the agricultural library will be the ladder by which the mere man will climb into mind, and avail himself of the labor of worthy intellects gone before. The time is not distant when the farmer will study yet more closely the mysteries of his occupation. We are but witnessing the clearing away of the fog of superstition and prejudice—the symbolical almanac is scarcely dethroned as yet; the result will be when man has put off his superstition. Let it come! Let the light of knowledge shine!

V. ON READING FOR INSTRUCTION.

The object of all reading should be instruction. If you do not grow wiser, in some way, by what you read,—that is, if you are *only* amused, and not instructed, by what you read,—you are throwing away the greater part of the time spent in reading. To gather instruction from the pages of a book, you must understand them; and you can not understand without consideration and thought. While it is desirable that you should select such books and publications as you can master, it is indispensable that you should exercise the powers of your own mind, and be determined to master them.

Do not complain of the words of many syllables that a writer uses, so long as he speaks to you in fair and honest English. It is better for you—better a thousand times—that you should come upon a word or a phrase, now and then, the meaning of which you should have to seek out by inquiry, or by the help of the dictionary, than that you should be written to in such words and forms of expression only as you are already acquainted with. If authors were to write down to the comprehension of the lowest intellects, they would never succeed in raising them to a respectable standard; and instead of promoting the popular improvement, they would retard it.

It is an old saying, that if you wish to make a person a dunce, you have only to treat him as a dunce, and he is sure to become one. There is much truth in this, and it is not less applicable to a class than to an individual. If the uninstructed classes are written down to, be sure of one thing—they will be kept down.

When a man or a lad acquires a taste for reading, he makes a grand discovery; he enters upon a new world—a world as new to him as America was to Columbus when he first set foot upon it—a world full of marvels and mysteries, and what is better than these, full of wealth and wisdom of which he may help himself to as much as he can carry away, and make it honestly his own.

The great drawback is, that he finds he can not carry much of it. The land of literature is to him a strange land, and its language, to a considerable extent, a strange language. In this dilemma he is apt to make the mistake of supposing that if simpler language had been used, he should have understood the subject at once, and enriched himself by a new possession. In the present day this idea is generally without foundation.

There was a time when knowledge, which was not thought good for the common people, was boxed round with a kind of learned pedantry which rendered it accessible only to a few; but that time has gone by, and the best writers now address themselves to the largest classes—for a very sufficient reason, namely, that in these days, when books are sold so cheap, it is only from the patronage of the multitude that they can hope for adequate remuneration. It is the interest of all popular writers to simplify their propositions, whatever they may treat of, as far as possible; but this practice of simplifying can only

be carried out to a limited extent, after all, for a reason which, on a moment's consideration, will be obvious.

What are words? Words are nothing more nor less than the names of ideas; if any combination of letters of the alphabet suggests no idea to the mind, such combination is mere gibberish, not a word. All the words that an illiterate man is acquainted with have their corresponding ideas in his mind; and all the ideas in his mind have their corresponding words in his memory.

Now, if he turn the faculties of his mind to a new subject,—a subject entirely different from anything which has before occupied his attention,—it is as certain that he will meet with new words as that he will meet with new ideas; and, simplify as much as we may, it is not easy to perceive how he is to make himself master of any new subject through his old stock of words. Thus, in order to get new ideas, you *must* get new words; and in the proportion that you master their meaning will be your knowledge of the subject to which you turn your attention.

To profit by literature, then, you must learn its language. All that has been done, or can or will be done, in the simplifying processes, will never do away with that necessity. Remember that the language you have to learn is your mother-tongue; that the words whose signification puzzles you are on the lips of your fellow-countrymen every day and all day long; that you have a living dictionary in your teacher or parent, who will help you; that you can buy a Webster's pocket dictionary for a quarter of a dollar; and remember, too, that every step you advance will render the next step easier.

Take advice, if it suits your case. Select a volume of average reading. Begin the perusal of it with a determination to understand the whole before you have done with it. Do your best with every sentence, using your dictionary with discretion. A sentence which may not be plain enough on the first reading may be so on the second or third. By this means you will learn the meaning of thousands of words which you did not know before.

The language of literature once acquired, the world of literature is before you. It is a boundless field of delightful and exciting inquiry, if you make the right use of it. We will not promise that it shall lift you to worldly prosperity, but it shall build you up to a nobler state of being, and make you a credit and an ornament to any position you may be called upon to fill.—*Sargent's School Monthly.*

VI. READING TO PUPILS.

It is an excellent practice to select, occasionally, a passage or paragraph, full of instruction on some practical subject, to be read by the teacher to the pupils of a school, or, it may be, to an older class, according to its nature and application. In a school where there may be a class of lads looking forward to business, the following selection may be read with advantage, to be followed by judicious remarks from the teacher, drawing a parallel between the performance of duties in the school-room and in the employment of the merchant.

Few boys will fail of receiving a stimulus from counsels so tersely presented as these. The lad who cannot be made to perceive and feel that the spirit, manner, and tact which business will demand of him hereafter must begin to be exhibited in the school-room, may be set down as an unpromising candidate for success in the great school of life.

The passage is taken from that most valuable publication, *Hunt's Merchant's Magazine*.

COUNSEL TO MERCHANTS' CLERKS.

Make yourself indispensable to your employers; that is the golden path to success. Be so industrious, so prompt, so careful, that if you are absent one half hour out of the usual time you will be missed, and he in whose employ you are shall say—"I did not dream George was so useful." Make your employer your friend, by performing with minuteness whatever task he sets before you; and above all, be not too nice to lend a hand to dirty work, no matter how repugnant; your business in after years depends upon how you deport yourself now. If you are really good for anything, you are good for a great deal. Be energetic; put your manners into your business; look as well as act with alacrity; appear to feel an interest; make your master's success your own, if you have an honest one. Let your eye light up at his request, and your feet be nimble; there are some who look so dull and heavy, and go with so slow and heavy a pace, that it is irksome to ask them what it is your right to demand of them: be not like these.

Be the arch upon which your employer may rest with safety; let him feel that he may entrust with you uncounted gold.

If you do an errand lightly, you begin to lose his confidence; if you forget twice some important request, you cannot be trusted.

If you accustom yourself to loose and untidy habits, you will gain no respect, but rather contempt. Avoid theatres, card-rooms, billiard saloons, as you would a pestilence; little faults are like so many loopholes in your character, through which all that is valuable sifts out, and all that is pernicious sifts in to fill the empty places.