

qualities, they lose the sight of sympathy, and become conscious actors of a poor farce.

Happy is he who judges and knows books, and nature, and men, (himself included,) spontaneously or from early training—whose feelings are assessors with his intellect, and who is thoroughly in earnest. An actor or a spy is weak as well as wretched; yet it may be needful for him who was blinded by the low principles, the tasteless rules, and the stupid habits of his family and teachers, to face this danger, deliberately to analyze his own and others' nature, deliberately to study how faculties are acquired and results produced, and thus cure himself of blindness, and deafness, and dumbness, and become a man observant and skilful. He will suffer much, and run great danger, but if he go through this faithfully, and then fling himself into action and undertake responsibility, he shall be great and happy.—*T. O. Davis, of Dublin.*

TASTE FOR READING.

Sir John Herschell has some admirable remarks on this subject—"Give a man his taste," says he, "and you place him in contact with the best society in every period of history—with the wisest, the wittiest, with the tenderest, the bravest, and the purest characters which have adorned humanity. You make him a denizen of all nations—a contemporary of all ages. This world has been created for him. It is hardly possible but his character should take a higher and better tone from the constant habit of associating with a class of thinkers, to say the least of it, above the average of human nature." What is still farther in favor of this habit, it may be cultivated as amusement, not as an occupation, and therefore may be possessed by any one; for it need not interfere with any business of life. The testimony of literary men indeed goes to show that literature itself should never be the sole employment even of an author, that should be pursued only in the intervals of business as a relaxation. Mr. Coleridge speaks feelingly on this point, and recommends to every literary man to have some occupation more or less mechanical, which, requiring no labor of the mind, hours of leisure, when he can turn to his books, to be looked for with pleasing anticipations.

It will be found that the authors who have written most and who have written best, were chiefly men of active lives whose literary labors were their amusement. Cicero, one of the most voluminous of ancient writers, was a lawyer and a statesman, whose whole life was passed in a contention of the forum or in the service of the republic, inasmuch that no great political event of the period is without some mark of his active participation therein. Milton was a school-master and a warm controversialist. He was better known to his contemporaries as the antagonist of Salmassius than as the author of *Paradise Lost*. What was Shakspeare's life but a continued scene of active labors, and those too of a very vexatious kind—for he was the manager of a theatre. The voluminous works of Sir Walter Scott were written, no one could tell how or when, so numerous were his other occupations.

The knowledge derived from books, and that which is gained by a practical acquaintance with the world, are not of such diverse natures that both cannot be pursued together. On the other hand, they act mutually as correctives; the one tends to liberate from narrow views, the other to give reality and truth to intellectual conceptions. There is moreover a certain freshness and elasticity of mind acquired by mingling with the business of life which enables one to use efficiently the knowledge derived from reading. He learns to understand the character of men in various points of development, to comprehend the spirit of the age, its wants, its tendencies, and to know how to accommodate himself accordingly.

But with authorship most of us have not much to do. Our purpose was to show by the instances just cited that if men busied in the daily concerns of life could find time to write books, and voluminous ones how easily may all, if they are so disposed, cultivate a taste for reading. There are few occupations which do not allow intervals or fragments of time which may be thus employed, without detracting anything that is properly due to social intercourse. To young persons especially does this refined and useful accomplishment commend itself. The taste once formed will grow of itself: the mind will require no urging to yield to it, but will look for each coming hour of leisure, and enjoy it when it comes. Grosser delights will gradually loosen their holds upon the affections as this gains strength. "For there is," says the same writer whom we quoted at the beginning, "a gentle, but perfectly irresistible coercion in a habit of reading, well directed, over the whole tenor of a man's character and conduct; which is not less effectual because it works insensibly, and because it is really the last thing he dreams of."

POWER OF KINDNESS.—No man has ever measured it, for it is boundless; no man ever seen its death, for it is eternal. In all ages of the world, in every clime, among every kind, it hath shone out a beautiful star, a beaming glory.

BOOK-KNOWLEDGE OF FARMERS—DERIDED BY WHOM?

With a man of any reflection and honest care for progress in all the arts and employments of useful industry, there are few things more trying to his patience than to hear men, sometimes even gentlemen, who have some pretensions to education, and who therefore ought to know better, denouncing book-knowledge as affording no guide in practical husbandry. Now, to all such, and especially to practical men who succeed well in their business, and who have always something useful to impart, as the result of their own personal experience, does it not suffice to say, "I am obliged to you for what you have told me; your integrity assures me that it is true, and your success convinces me that yours is the right rotation, and yours the proper process, since I see that while you gather heavy crops, your land is steadily improving; but now, my friend, let me ask you one question further. What you have imparted is calculated to benefit me personally, and unless communicated again by me to others, with me its benefits will rest. Now, suppose, instead of the slow and unsocial process of waiting to be interrogated, and making it known to one by one, as accident may present opportunities, you allow me to have recourse to the *magical power of types*, which will spread the knowledge of your profitable experience, gained by much thought and labour, far and wide throughout the land, that thousands may enjoy the advantages which otherwise I only shall reap from your kind and useful communication. Will not that be more beneficial to society, and is it not a benevolent and a Christian duty not to hide our lights under a bushel? Doubtless such a man, if not a misanthropic churl or fool, would say, Yes. Yet the moment, by means of types, such knowledge is committed to paper, it becomes (by fools only derided) *book-knowledge*.—*Plough, Loom, and Anvil.*

COMMON SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

The page of history furnishes few examples where a government has as well subverted the just and paternal ends of its creation, as did the State of New-York, in providing that libraries of sound and useful literature should be placed within the reach of all of her inhabitants, and rendered accessible to them without charge. This philanthropic and admirably conceived measure may be justly regarded, as next to the institution of Common Schools, the most important in that series of causes, which will give its distinctive character to our civilization as a people. The civilizations of ancient and modern times present a marked distinction. While the former shot forth at different epochs, with an intense brilliancy, it was confined to the few; and the fame of those few has descended to us, like the light of occasional solitary stars, shining forth from surrounding darkness. The ancient libraries, though rich in their stores and vast in extent, diffused their benefits with equal exclusiveness. The Egyptian peasant who cultivated the plains of the Nile, or the artisan who wrought in her princely cities, was made neither wiser nor better by the locked up treasures of the Alexandrian; and though the Grecian Roman, and even Persian commanders plundered hostile nations of their books, no portion of their priceless wealth entered the abodes of common humanity, to diffuse intelligence and joy.

The art of printing first began to popularize civilization. To make it universal, however, it was necessary that all should be taught to read. The Common School supplies this link in the chain of agencies. But another was yet wanting. Not only must man be taught to read, but that mental aliment to which reading merely gives access, must be brought within his reach; and it is surely as wise and philanthropic, indeed, as necessary, on the part of government, to supply such moral and intellectual food, as to give the means of partaking of it, and an appetite for its enjoyment; Without the last boon, the first would be in the case of the masses, comparatively useless,—nay, amidst the empty and frequently worse than empty literature which overflows from our cheap and teeming press, it would oftentimes prove positively injurious. In the language of the philosophic Wayland, "we have put it into the power of every man to read, and read he will whether for good or for evil. It remains yet to be decided whether what we have already done shall prove a blessing or a curse."

New-York has the proud honour of being the first government in the world, which has established a free library system adequate to the wants and exigencies of her whole population. It extends its benefits equally to all conditions, and in all local situations. It not only gives profitable employment to the man of leisure, but it passes the threshold of the labourer, offering him amusement and instruction after his daily toil is over, without increasing his fatigues or subtracting from his earnings. It is an interesting reflection that there is no portion of our territory so wild or remote, where man has penetrated, that the library has not peopled the wilderness around him, with the good and wise of this and other ages, who address to him their silent monitions, cultivating and strengthening within him, even amidst his rude pursuits, the principles of humanity and civilization.

A colonial nation, we inherited the matured literature of England: but in our country as in that, this literature has not extended to the