

It is gratifying to note that much progress has been made in the establishment of professional libraries in connection with County Associations and High Schools. No staff of teachers, however well trained, will preserve the necessary lively interest in their work, and keep themselves abreast with the rapid advance of modern thought, unless they have access to a good library of works relating to their profession. The teacher, as well as any other professional man, must keep in "running water." This fact is being recognized and acted upon now that teaching is in reality regarded as a profession by the public as well as those engaged in it. Hence the increased interest manifested by the teachers in all that tends to fit them more fully for the performance of their duties. Perhaps this growing desire to keep thoroughly up with the time is shown more clearly by the remarkable success of the JOURNAL itself than in any other way.

As this volume ends with the present (December) number, a carefully prepared index, embracing everything from the beginning, will be published with the next (January) number.

Those whose subscriptions expire with the present number will do well to renew promptly, in order that they may procure the new volume from the beginning.

#### BOOKS ON SELF-CULTURE FOR TEACHERS. ✓

"The greatest mistake I ever made," said a veteran teacher the other day, "was when I spent my first fifty dollars in board and clothes instead of books. I ought to have bought Worcester's Unabridged Dictionary, Marsh's Lectures on Language, Wood's Algebra, Hallan's Introduction to the Literature of Modern Europe, Brand and Taylor's Chemistry, and Macaulay's History of England, and to have made my landlady wait until the next windfall." Many young teachers would, no doubt, spend freely their final dollars for books if they knew precisely what would be the best selection to make. Perhaps no books, outside the text-books of the course of study marked out for them by authority, can be so unhesitatingly recommended as those devoted to self-culture and biography. The influence of precept and the influence of example here unite with immense power. The one class of books tells what should be aimed at, the other shows what has actually been done. "Lives of great men all remind us," etc. No young teacher should be so short-sighted as to neglect the stimulus communicated by reading "The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties," "Plassy, the Potter," "Cobbett's Advice to Young Men and Women," "Smiles' Self-Help," and other such books, exhibiting the triumphs of energy, and patience, and continuity of purpose. "Todd's Students' Manual" might profitably be committed to memory by every young teacher who hopes to rise above mediocrity. At any rate, the fiftieth reading of it will amply repay the reader. Those who are entering on any profession, and neglect all reading outside their examination course, will never be formidable rivals of those who wisely seek recreation, variety and encouragement in the pages of works not on the list of text-books. It is of prime importance that young teachers should learn the proper antidotes to the chagrin, worry and disappointment which they

will inevitably be called to encounter. Half an hour a day spent on such a book as Paxton Hood's "Self-Culture," or Matthews' "Getting on in the World," will unbend the mind and cure it of the melancholy and misanthropic thoughts which too frequently take possession of young teachers, and will also rouse the flagging interest to the tension required for successful action. Perhaps no person ever can appreciate the immense advantages or disadvantages who has not previously fortified the mind with copious examples of fortitude. "What man has done, man can do." "How can man die better than facing fearful odds?" rise to the lips simultaneously with a determination as persistent as that of Grant, "to fight it out on that line all summer." One of the most fatal, yes, the most fatal mistake of young teachers is the utter disregard of their health and physical powers generally. It results directly from their ignorance of the laws of health. Most terrible are the consequences of this lamentable neglect of the plainest precautions. Any periodical like "Hall's Journal of Health," any books like Dr. Hall's "Health by Good Living," etc., Dio Lewis's "Gymnastics," "Our Girls," etc., would be the means of saving valuable lives which every year are sacrificed through ignorance. If knowledge is power, ignorance, here at any rate, is certain death. Of course, every teacher worthy of the name will gradually accumulate and digest a select library of works on Teaching and School Life. It is utterly inexcusable for any young teacher to neglect "Abbott's Teacher," "Calderwood's Teaching, Its End and Means," and such like valuable aids to every-day work. To battle single-handed and ignore the accumulated experience of the race on one's special work is surely unwise. No better means of mastering that powerful method called Socratic questioning can be suggested than the reading of the "Socratic Dialogues," to be had for a few cents in Bohn's translation of Plato. Half an hour a day on such a book will produce a daily mental growth, and lead to a maturity of thought which can never be attained by exclusive attention to text-books alone.

It is very common for young teachers to show their unwisdom by devoting all their leisure to fiction, and little or none of it to poetry, which is far more powerful as a means of self-culture. What did not Macaulay owe to "Paradise Lost"? What would Gladstone have been without Homer and "his dear old Greeks?" To have loved some woman is said to be equivalent to a good education. To have loved and fully appreciated a true poem like "The Faerie Queen," or Tennyson's "In Memoriam," is certainly a most valuable training for the taste and the judgment. How the dull monotony of school life is relieved by a trip into the world of imagination with Shakspeare!—how some sweet lyric will soothe the galling of our harness and mollify our wounded spirits with its balm! Those young teachers who once discover the delight will never again neglect the sorcery of poetry; they will soon find a favorite magician capable of entrancing them to order. We do not disparage fiction. Nothing could be better than to spend the long holidays with Dickens and Thackeray. But unfortunately some of our young teachers waste their money and their unreturning opportunities of self-culture over the twaddle and trash of fashion papers and dime novels. "They have their reward."