

But what an unfailing source of satisfaction does that man carry about within him, in whose memory lie stored the great facts of nature and of history ; and whose mind has acquired the habit of reasoning upon those facts ! What an unfailing resource against weariness and vacuity has he, whose knowledge, and whose mental activity enable him, looking around, to apprehend the order of nature and to inspect the mechanism of the universe ! What an unfailing resource against weariness and vacuity has he, whose knowledge and whose mental activity enable him, looking back, to reanimate the past ! Beneath whose eye, as he unrolls the records of time, the spirits of our fathers start from every page in their habit as they lived, to re-enact for his gratification and instruction the story of the world ! Young man, though your means may not command social distinction—though the accidents of fortune may have placed you in an uncongenial sphere—you never can be at a loss for good society, if you have made yourself a fit companion for yourself, if you have grown familiar with the wise, the great and the good, of other days—if you have learned to hold “midnight converse with the mighty dead—” if you have made yourself master of the spell that can “create a soul under the ribs of death,” and call up Shakspeare, or Milton, or Addison, for your entertainment and delight.

But enough of this : education has, as I intimated just now, though I do not care much to insist upon it, a practical and commercial value. The first thing we have to do—be our calling or profession what it may—the first thing we have to do is to put ourselves in possession of the experience of preceding generations. This is the law of civilization. This is the condition of progress. This is no less the condition of individual success—we must bring ourselves abreast of the intelligence of the day. And you will find, young men, that a finished education is a profitable investment. Are you touched by that last infirmity of noble minds ? Would you set your mark upon your generation ? Do you covet power ? Then cultivate your mind. Would you bear yourself manfully in