

nitude, as it will before the end of this century, the interest of the fund, if it can be legally done, might not advantageously be appropriated, as a permanent endowment for the support of the library.

### III. THE USE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

"Read thou first and well approve the books thou givest thy child"

There is a certain transition state, a period in which, most of all, children need a parent's fostering care and guiding hand, when their minds are in a chaotic state, and are suffered too often to run wild—to vegetate where they will—and to wander without company or guide. These are the neglected ones—and neglected, at the most critical period of their lives. Now take such a child, interest him in reading, or in listening to the reading of useful and instructive books, and his education is begun, and not only begun, but so well begun, that it may be said to be half done. Now if parents will not take upon themselves the responsibility of this part of a child's education, an education which begins with the first development of thought, but will force it prematurely upon the teacher, then let the proper course be pursued at school. Instead of driving him to his A B C, teach him first of all, to love books—to love the knowledge they contain—teach him to think, to reason, to philosophize, to analyze. Then, after he has arrived at an age in which he can read for himself, furnish him with books, direct and encourage him in reading, and you have laid a foundation for his education, broad, sure, and deep, upon which he will not fail to build a fitting superstructure. To accomplish all this, we need books at the school room to which pupils can have daily and easy access.

With these prefatory remarks, we are led to the consideration of the subject before us: The use of libraries in schools. Were our wishes to take the form of a resolution, they would be embodied in the following words:

Resolved, that we recommend to each and every school section, the purchase and introduction into the schools of said section, of suitable libraries for the exclusive use of persons connected therewith.

We would urge the adoption of this resolution for the following reasons:

1st. The insufficiency of other public libraries to meet the wants of the young. These libraries are confined to the cities and large towns, so that but a small proportion of the population of the county have access to them. Many of those public libraries belong to mechanics' institutes and young men's associations; and of course, are intended for their exclusive use. Even if these libraries were designed for general circulation, the selection of books would be ill adapted to the capacities of children.

2nd. The same fault may be found with township libraries, with the additional objection, that they do not contain books sufficient to supply any considerable portion of the community. Libraries without books present a strange anomaly. From these township libraries, the trustees have the privilege of drawing a certain number of volumes for the use of the schools in their district. But the proportion of books to the number of pupils, must be extremely small. In instances which have come under our observation, the proportion has been about 1 to 10, and more than one half of these books were very unsuitable for young persons.

3rd. Were family libraries general there would be no necessity for school libraries. A family library is the best of all libraries.—Besides being always accessible, always available, always select, children form an attachment for the books they daily and hourly see and use, they become to them old familiar friends, and they learn to cherish and revere them in after life. But such libraries are not general, either for want of means, or lack of interest on the part of parents. A few odd volumes, of doubtful interest, are the most that many, and perhaps a vast majority of families, can boast.—How few parents take sufficient interest in the improvement of their children or have the ability to direct or encourage them in their reading.

4. There are as yet but few section libraries in the county; but the testimony of those teachers who have them, is that they are of vast utility, and invaluable auxiliaries in the education of the young.—A section library selected, as it necessarily would be, with reference to the ages, the attainments and tastes of the pupils in attendance on such schools, would meet, more than any other could, his actual wants.

"Remembering the weakness of his thought, and that wisdom for him must be diluted, let him taste the strong wine of truth, in the honied waters of infant tales." Books for the young should be adapted to their capacities. Knowledge, encumbered with abstruse thought, becomes repulsive. The selection of books for section libraries, would of necessity be entrusted to those best acquainted with the capacities and wants of the pupils, as well as with the books to be purchased. Kept in the school building and if necessary during vacation, at the residence of the teacher, such a library would be not only accessible, but a place of daily resort. It would be a source of attraction, drawing many into the school who would not otherwise attend. It would render important service to the teacher, as an auxiliary in imparting in-

struction, in inciting an interest in study, and in securing obedience to the rules and requirements of the school.

A section library should, to a certain extent, supply the wants of the teacher. The successful teacher must be a diligent student. The present standard demanded of the teacher, is such that constant application to books will be necessary in order to meet that demand. The teachers' profession is the worst profession in the world for personal improvement or literary attainments. Required to teach such a diversity of subjects, with a moment's thought bestowed upon this, and a moment upon that, here a little, and there a little, his mind must be, to a certain extent, broken up, and his powers of concentrated thought dissipated, if not fatally impaired. By continually bending or lowering his own capacities to meet those of the child they become weak. This is sometimes termed the levelling process. Now, to counteract all this tendency to lower his own standard of attainment, he should have constant resort to books of the most elevating character; and so marked should be his daily progress, that the influence should not only be seen, but felt by his pupil. No teacher can safely trust to past attainment. Not a section is under obligation to furnish a teacher's library as a part of the section library. The salaries of most teachers will not allow of their having very extended libraries for personal use.

Again, a section library would be a source of interest and improvement to parents. Books drawn by children would be taken home and read at the fireside to the profit of the whole household. They would also have a reflex influence, leading parents to take a deeper interest in the school and their children's progress in their studies. The economy of this system is another argument in its favor. In a community of fifty families, an annual contribution of one dollar each would furnish them with sufficient reading matter. This, to all practical purposes, would amount to so many distinct family libraries, for each family has the benefit of the whole fifty volumes, and that too at a place nearly as accessible as if at their own dwelling.

Two points only remain to be considered: What books should be read and how they should be read. For a small library, fifty dollars would be a fair beginning; and for this we might name a few familiar histories, and other books. But for a complete library, each district should be furnished with,

- 1st. Books for circulation among the pupils.
- 2d. Books for parents and patrons.
- 3rd. Books for reference, such as Encyclopedias, Dictionaries.
- 4th. Books on Schools and School Systems, for officers of schools and for parents.
- 6th. Books on the theory and practice of teaching, and on Education generally.

How should books be read? They should be kept at the school building in a suitable case, and always under lock and key. Pupils should be allowed to draw but one book at a time and to keep the cover on till returned. Books should be delivered to those only who by diligence and good deportment have proved themselves deserving. The drawing of the books should always take place in the presence of the whole school, who should be made to feel that the use of the library is not only a privilege but a great honor. The teacher should frequently read choice selections to the school, making such comments as will give them a better understanding of the subject investigated and offer such criticisms as the case demands. That a library may be made of the greatest utility, the teacher should be not only familiar with its contents and able to make just criticisms and exhibit the beauties of the various works, but also to give some general instruction in respect to habits of reading, and the application of the knowledge acquired. A good library in the hands of such a teacher is a mine of wealth from which can be brought forth jewels of untold worth.—*E. L. Ripley before the Michigan State Teacher's Association.*

### IV. ADVANTAGES OF AN AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY.

The man who guides the plow is no longer a slave—he thinks. He turns up the soil in unquestioning silence no longer—he reasons—he inquires. The sun is to him no longer a vast plan, unstudied and unknown. The man who guides the plow is no longer the most deplorably ignorant of all the sons of men; he no longer considers mind culture, opposed to agriculture. Such has not always been the case; farmers have improved as a class. The cause of their improvement is the reading of printed matter, prominent among which stands that relating to their own pursuits.

The reading of agricultural literature like the labor of agriculture, is without any contaminating influences. The heart of him who reads of agriculture, is elevated, instructed, and refined. The result may be favorable to the cultivation of the farm, but its greater value is in the cultivation of the mind. The day when the farmer is ashamed to be an educated man only in "figgers," has passed away; he now has books of his own, papers of his own, thoughts of his own, and libraries of his own; and only supported by him. The day of his abasement is gone. That antiquated annual, provided to tell the changes of the moon, and sun's rising and setting and the day of the month, is less consulted,