

How to Read.

(Mrs. G. S. Barnes.)

Oh! for a booke and a shadie nooke,
Eyth'er in-doore or out;
With the grene leaves whispering overhede,
Or the streete cryes all about,
Where I may reade all at my ease
Both of the newe and the olde,
For a jollie goode booke whereon to looke
Is better to me than golde.'

Waiting in a public library, I found myself by the side of a bright young girl.

'You here for a book, too?' I said. 'Do you then find time to read library books with all your studies?'

'Oh! yes; I generally read two books a week.'

'Two books a week! How can you do justice to so much reading?'

'I read very fast! I often read quite a large book through in an evening.'

'Will you tell me something about them? What sort of books do you read?'

'Oh! stories mostly. I have read Jane Eyre, and'—here followed a list of fascinating novels.

I once heard a prominent literarian say, 'If I were a tyrant, I would compel everybody to read the Odyssey through at least once a year.'

I thought as I turned from my young friend that were I a tyrant, I would compel everybody, and especially every young person, to forego the rapid, thoughtless and utterly unprofitable reading, which is the habit of so many. It is not simply the reading of so much fiction that is ruinous to the memory, it is the habit of reading without the effort to retain what is read, whether it be the daily paper, the religious weekly, or novels.

It is surprising how much reading the average person does without any apparent results. Let one, who on Sunday reads his church paper through, try on Monday to give a fair account of its leading articles, and he will learn of how little value is his reading.

It is hardly worth while to read anything that brings us only a passing pleasure. There are many 'great readers' who, notwithstanding their familiarity with good literature, have a poverty-stricken vocabulary, incorrect language and ability to converse only on trivial commonplaces.

My young friend of the library reminds me of another young girl, who, above all things enjoyed reading, and read whatever came in her way—mostly stories. No one took the sort of interest in her reading that would be any help to her. Her mother fretted over such waste of time, and her father grumbled whenever he saw her with a story, whatever its merits. 'What's the use of reading such stuff?—nothing but a pack of silly lies! There is 'John Quincy Adams,' read that: that will do you some good.' But as 'John Quincy Adams' was the only book she had ever known him to read, his literary judgment had little weight. This unsympathetic treatment of her reading proclivities had no effect except to arouse a rebellious spirit; but later, as a student, she was in the home of a lady of fine literary taste, who said kindly:

'It is all right to read occasionally a first-class story, but you cannot afford to read too much or unadvisedly; it will injure your memory, give you false ideas of life, and is a waste of precious time. Let me select your books; you shall give me the benefit of the thoughts in each book that impresses you. That will furnish pleasant topics of conversation.'

This arrangement proved delightful and helpful. A little sympathetic interest is

sometimes most effective in influencing the young. It led in this case to a discrimination in the selection of authors, and a taste for solid reading. It led later to the habit of reading with note-book and dictionary at hand—all allusions not understood noted for further study; no word allowed to pass until it had become a part of her working vocabulary. Thus she strengthened her memory, and gained a love for the study of words, their derivation and shades of meaning.

True, this may seem drudgery at first. We cannot read two books a week in this way, but we soon learn to find pleasure in lingering over a book till we make it our own. One can afford to linger since 'A good book is the life blood of a master spirit, treasured up to a life beyond life.'—Michigan Advocate.

Bob's Decision.

A TRUE INCIDENT.

Does any boy know what it is to want a wheel, and to want it, and want it, until the want grows from small letters into capitals? I suspect there are many such.

When at length Bob Thurston's desire was gratified, he was happier than can be told. Learn to ride? Bless you, he didn't have to learn! Boys take to a wheel naturally. A boy who can stand on his head, or dance on the beams in a barn, doesn't find much difficulty in balancing on a bicycle. Then Bob had had more than one ride on other boys' wheels. So he was quite ready to begin when he had a wheel of his own.

'I shan't need my life insured, either,' he comforted his mother, who felt a little anxious.

The precious machine came on Tuesday, and there's four days before Sunday. The novelty wear off in four days? No, indeed!

The Thurstons lived about a quarter of a mile from church, and Bob suddenly felt as if he couldn't walk. He approached the subject with the wisdom of a lawyer, in a way to disarm objections—so he intended.

'There's the Olmsteads driving by. Wonder what makes 'em always drive to church. They live only two houses beyond us. Do you think it's right, papa?'

'Certainly; what a queer question! You know old Mrs. Olmstead is lame, and could not possibly walk.'

'What is that boy up to?' thought Mr. Thurston. Pretty soon he knew.

'I thought—papa—may be I might ride my wheel to church, 'twould be just the same as going in a carriage.' Bob considered that a clincher.

Mr. Thurston was a wise man. He liked to make his boy see the reasons, instead of giving him a sharp, irritating 'No!'

Just then two or three young men wheeled past the house.

'Look there,' said Mr. Thurston. 'Do you think those fellows are going to church?'

'No, sir,' Bob was forced to confess.

'Now, Bob, it's this way. When old Mrs. Olmstead drives by, every body knows she is bound for church, going early, too, so she can get her lame foot propped up comfortably before many get there. But when a wheelman goes by, everybody does not know he is bound for church, in fact, the supposition is against that. I like to please you, however, and I'll tell you what I'll do. If you'll hang a placard on your back with the words on it, "I am on my way to church," in large letters, so all can read it. I'll say "Yes," and you may ride the wheel. But until it is more common to go to ser-

vice in that way, I shall feel obliged to make such a condition. See?'

Bob did see, and looked rueful. Much as he wished to ride, and brave as he certainly was, he couldn't decide to show his colors by a placard on his back.

'I think I'll wait, papa, until it becomes the custom.'

'That's the better way, my boy. When it is the custom to go to church on a wheel, there'll be no "appearance of evil." But in this case, it's hardly wise for a lad like you to be a pioneer.'—Zion's Herald.

David's Good-By.

(By Mrs. Helen H. Farley.)

Two grey-haired men were walking along the street, one of them carrying a bouquet of beautiful fragrant flowers.

'Wait a minute,' said the latter as he stopped before a small cottage and rang the bell. A little girl opened the door. She smiled as she took the flowers. 'I know who they're for,' she said, 'they're for gran'ma.'

'Yes,' assented the giver, 'with my love.'

'Well, I do declare,' observed his friend, as they passed on. 'You surprise me, I had no idea you went around leaving flowers and your love with old ladies.'

'Just with one old lady,' laughing. 'You see, it is this way. When I was a boy, this dear old lady's son and I were chums. We were going away to school. I was an orphan. I left the house, where I had been boarding, with a heavy heart. No one cared that I was going away, no one would miss me.'

'I stopped for Dan, that was my chum's name, on my way to the station. As I entered the yard, he and his mother were saying good-by. The hot tears rushed to my eyes as I saw Dan's mother kiss him.'

'Good-by, my boy, God bless you,' I heard her say.

'No one had kissed me. No one had asked God to bless me. Well, God was not blessing me, I said to myself bitterly, and then my tears vanished. I felt defiant and set my lips hard. Then Dan's mother looked up. She must have read my feelings in my ugly face.'

'"Good-by, Davie," she said, gently, holding out her hands to me. I knew my face looked stern and hard. I pretended not to see the outstretched hands, and I wouldn't look into her face. I was turning away without a word of farewell, when she called, oh, so sweetly, I can hear her now, even after all these years, "Davie, my dear boy, aren't you going to say good-by to Dannie's mother? Aren't you, Davie?" I turned and took her hands, the loving compassion in her voice had won me from myself and my despair. I held close to her while she kissed me. Then gently loosening my grasp of her hands, she threw her arms about me.'

'"Good-by, Davie," she said, "I love you, too, my boy, and may God bless you."'

The gentleman's lips quivered.

'The world grew bright to me then and there,' he continued. 'I had something to live for, and I did my best in school and in college. Over and over that tender good-by of Dan's mother rang in my soul. "Good-by, Davie, I love you, too, my boy, and God bless you." God has blessed me.'

'Where is Dan?' asked his friend.

'Dan died six years ago; that is his little girl who came to the door. It was an awful blow to the dear old lady when Dan died, and she has never been strong since that dark day. But she has been so good as to tell me that I bring much sunshine into her life, and I thank God that I am able to do so.'—N. Y. Observer.