

one ; while Stephenson was jeered for bringing forward a scheme which in fifty years has produced changes in the commerce, the manners and customs of the people, so vast, so portentous, as to be almost incredible. In philosophy, changes as great have also taken place. Recalling these matters, and noting how many thousands of earnest, honest men have suffered and died, have persecuted and been persecuted, in support of ideas which subsequently proved to be false, how essential is it that we should carefully study every question from various points of view, form an opinion about it, and, if necessary, maintain it—not dogmatically, but with reason; not arrogantly, but with dignity, admitting the difficulty of forming a correct judgment, and giving to our opponents the same credit for honesty in the search for truth that we claim for ourselves. From our reading, then, we should find that it is no sign of wisdom to form an opinion hastily, or of determination to hold to it firmly when it has been proved erroneous, nor of earnestness and singleness of mind when we turn to accuse those who differ from us of foolishness or dishonesty. But there is a further benefit in the pleasure we derive from books. Life was not meant to be passed solely in eating, sleeping, and working. To the man who considers it should be so, life becomes a servitude, his work a drudgery, and at last he breaks down under it. We are better able to go on with our work when a little pleasure is mixed up with it; and what pleasure can equal that derived from books? What friends have we better than books? They never leave us; they never change; nor do they fail to satisfy our cravings after knowledge. Do we want to learn about our bodies and their functions, or of the stars and the earth? in science we can satisfy ourselves. Do we wish to

study the lives of nations, the theories of government, the habits and manners of people of all ages and countries? history will unfold her panorama and teach us. Do we wish to turn our imagination to lofty thoughts and noble deeds? we have our poets. Not only are they our friends to help us, whatever the line of our duties, but they are our friends whatever may be our humour. Are we gay or light-hearted? we may laugh at Mrs. Malaprop, enjoy the fun of Mark Twain, or amuse ourselves with "Falstaff." Are we sad?—

"We may read from the humbler poets,
Whose songs gushed from their hearts"—

read until

"The cares that infest the day,
Fold their tents like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away."

Are we weak, faint-hearted, weary of well-doing, troubled about a thousand and one vexations and trials? we may take our histories and biographies, and read how good men and true, firm of purpose and strong of heart, struggled with temptations greater, trials more numerous and disappointments more vexatious, and died triumphant, leaving their names blazoned on the book of Fame—read till our minds are inspired and our wills strengthened, till our troubles have disappeared, and we have resolved that though ours be not the good fortune to make a name in history, we will do our duty as earnestly and faithfully as those whom fame has declared most worthy of a world's honour. And what shall we read? Read all the best books we can obtain. I believe with Lord Brougham that "everyone should know a little of everything, and everything of something;" and in the present day, with good literature so cheap and abundant, it is possible for all of us to acquire, through home reading, a large fund of general knowledge.