

doing so, if I take occasion to offer you any advice, it is because I have the interests of your society at heart.

What, then, are the objects of your society? The very act of meeting and spending an evening together is no slight advantage. We are all social beings—our character is frequently moulded by the society we keep, and the more we know of human nature the less likely we are to be led astray by false models. Human nature is learned by individuals, it is by getting intimately acquainted with the actions and thoughts of individuals with whom we associate that we treasure up, it may be unconsciously, in the memory a mass of information to be used by the fully developed reason.

It is too much to expect wise heads on young shoulders; yet, notwithstanding the objections sometimes urged against so young a society, I have confidence that there is here the proper material and mettle out of which to make a flourishing society, and to carry on its sessions with due decorum, "doing all things decently and in order." Now this itself inculcates business habits of order, accuracy and of self-reliance. Nor is it a slight acquirement to become conversant with the mode of conducting a deliberative assembly. However much such public meetings may differ in object and construction, there is a recognized mode of procedure to be followed, and a practical acquaintance with the rules of procedure gives an individual a power which anyone may be called on to exert, it may be in a board meeting, a council meeting, a political meeting, or even in the legislative halls, for who knows what fate is in store for him? Perhaps one of the best effects of such a society is the mental stimulus its discussions give. How few people are in the habit of considering a subject completely, and from all sides. Our likes and dislikes give our thoughts such a bias that we are too prone to take a partial view, even when deeming ourselves most impartial. We are all, more or less, the slaves of prejudice, often to such a degree that reason is utterly impossible. Now, in a debate

all take part as judge or speakers; the question is viewed from all sides; the arguments are weighed and compared on the principle of pure reason unbiassed by prejudice, and the decision is given to the most logical, or to him who has considered the subject most thoroughly. All this is individual thought, modified by conflict with other minds; and this clash of intellect is one of the most powerful and active means of calling forth the latent energies of the mind and heart.

I might say something about the influence of debates on methodical study by reading with an object—on literary habits and tastes by making one familiar with the best models of literature. But these I will pass over in your case, as they occur in your school duties.

The main part of the literary programme will be taken up by readings, essays and the debate. Permit me to say a few words on the utility and cultivation of each of these. *Public reading* comes first, and though perhaps of the least importance, it is by no means to be neglected. Every educated person should be capable of reading correctly and tastefully in public. It is a graceful accomplishment, and is within the attainment of all. The daily practice of reading aloud has been recommended as a capital means of strengthening and training the voice and thus acquiring a good delivery. Hence, in learning to portray the thoughts of others, the young student is fitting himself in the art of conveying his own more effectively. If for no other reason, readings from classical authors should find a place on the programme, for this very reason, that they are classical. Any scheme that tends to popularize the reading of great writers is desirable. So for a mind long familiar with a high class literature light literature has no attractions. If we learn to detect and appreciate the beauties of thought and diction of a finished work of Art, we will no longer have patience with the trash that is devoured by the great mass of readers.

My advice is, then, select first-class

work  
as fr  
The  
havin  
selec  
or re  
chara  
parat  
useful

No  
subje  
advan  
our o  
matec  
ways  
know  
till we  
have  
adopt  
thoro  
from  
cultie  
that c  
is a  
much  
couch  
What  
its infl  
of esse  
mind  
essay  
to dis  
avenue  
employ  
press i  
mankin  
inform  
the wo  
duction  
use the  
ready  
the op  
the fou  
is sure  
in after

Perh  
ject is  
deserve  
power  
estimat  
"stood  
"compl  
"rance