

far worse condition of commencing to believe in one's own universality of knowledge and infallibility of judgment is not difficult of accomplishment. The multiplicity of cheap magazines and the strong public demand for them is evidence of this. Let my reader pick up any ten-cent periodical and casually glance over its contents, and he will find a wonderful range of subjects dealt with in an elementary and (occasionally) lucid manner. The vast majority of those who peruse that magazine will probably in a short time commence to launch their ill-assimilated scraps of knowledge upon an innocent and unsuspecting audience, and gradually persuade not only themselves but their unfortunate listeners that they have a thorough grasp of the subject which they have been discussing. I have heard impressive disquisitions and criticisms upon theosophy from persons who in fact and in deed, have never proceeded further than the acquiring of a few stock phrases and a totally erroneous conception of the rationale of the cult!

It is too often forgotten that the brain power of the average man or woman is limited, and the result of reading, or attempting to read, all and sundry of the books, newspapers and periodicals which are offered to the public cannot but result in confusion of thought, misapprehension of information and inadequacy of conception. We cannot all be Macaulays or Gladstones, and it has been seriously suggested of the great English statesman that his life's work would have been grander and more enduring had he but restrained his desire to probe

into so many varied studies. But perhaps more serious warning can be taken from a contemplation of the fate of Lord Brougham. He was a man of great intellect, an orator of the first class, a statesman, author, scientist, and Lord Chancellor of England. Yet in spite of all this his name will never be associated with any great political measure, he never made any great scientific discovery, he was not a great lawyer, and his writings are never read now. The reason of this lies simply in the fact that instead of concentrating his abilities upon any one study, he dissipated his energies upon innumerable subjects and achieved permanent renown in nothing.

By all means do as much reading and studying as you like, but let there be some method in it. Do not let your reading be scattered, desultory, or aimless. The man of to-day, in order to come to the front, must be a specialist, and ill-directed reading will never enable anyone to become specially distinguished in anything. A mere veneer of superficial learning is a very despicable possession.

We must remember, as Cowper says, that "Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much:

Wisdom is humble that he knows no more."

So much for the evils of desultory reading, but I cannot bring this article to a termination better than quoting a passage from "Paradise Lost", which may serve as a guide to our limitations so far as reading capacity is concerned:-

"Knowledge is as food, and needs no less