

of epistolary correspondence that has come down to us from antiquity.

Thus it appears that many of the slaves of the ancients were men of education, and the market value of these was increased in proportion to the extent of their acquirements.

This use of educated slave labour in writing, rendered books comparatively cheap among the ancients. We learn from Plato that in his time, the works of the philosopher Anaxagoras were sold in the theatre at Athens for a drachma, or about 17 cents of our money, and even if as some of the commentators think, only a single treatise of Anaxagoras is spoken of, this is cheaper than the rate at which opera librettos or other printed pamphlets are sold at our places of public amusement at the present day. The poet Martial tells us that his works were sold in distant Britain, at a price quite as low as a good copy of them could be bought for to-day in London. It is difficult in these instances to estimate in modern currency the actual value of books or other articles of sale, on account of the variation in the value of the precious metals at different periods. Some writers on political economy have assumed the market price of wheat as a standard of comparison in measuring the values of other commodities at different historical periods, but as the price of flour within the recollection of this generation has fluctuated between the extreme limit of \$4.50 and \$20 per barrel at retail, this standard can scarcely be accepted as a sound basis for very accurate calculations. Besides, the values of the ancient coins differed at different periods, and if it be stated that the price of a particular book was a *drachma*, we are at a loss in determining whether reference is made to the *drachma of the fathers* or a *trade-drachma*. But without engaging in such abstruse calculations, it is enough to know that books in the brilliant Athenian period, and under the Roman empire were much