

The first advantage which occurs to me—I take them as they come, not in any supposed order of merit—is the acquisition of improved mental eye-sight. The skilled reader has his power of vision magnified; and just as the telescope brings before the gaze of the astronomer planets and stars, which eluded his unassisted eye, although they were there all the while, so the skilled reader sees, in every page and in every sentence, much that the eye of another would never detect or else pass over as unmeaning. To the one there is, as the case may be, pathos in a comma, humour in a parenthesis, sadness in a colon, and mirth in a dash; to the other these marks are just commas and colons, and devices of the printer. To the one, inverted commas may, on occasion, be very grins of laughter, lurking in the page—to the other they are only a sign that the writer is borrowing an idea, and has the honesty to confess it. There are countless little advantages which the eye of the artistic reader gives him. There is no danger of any idea ever being expressed too clearly in print. Every body knows how expression loses in clearness, in being transferred to paper, i. e. every body who writes Magazine articles. It is astonishing to those who know it, how ideas, which, in the brain are so distinct that they seem like a new mintage, when put on paper have lost their edginess, and are rounded off, and have faded away, down a perspective of modifying clauses and parenthetical phrases. Now bringing the main idea back into prominence, through these intervening subordinate clauses, is just the test which tells who is the man of skill, and who is the ordinary reader. The one will give you a due subordination of clause to clause, a proper allotment of emphasis, a right modulation for each modifying idea, until at the end, the one main idea is as one impression on your mind. The other, in reading the same sentence, will give you a series of *dissecta membra*, clauses thrown together with no apparent connexion, united only by neighbourhood, until you are left to make use of your logic, before you can determine what was the point. And he may or may not see the point himself: it all depends upon his logic being better than his reading. Any one who has thought upon the subject will admit that I am not overstating the case; and yet all this comes from the bad reader, by which I mean the ordinary reader, i. e. nine out of every ten readers, never having acquired the necessary rules of their art. Now this is in the highest degree practical.

Another advantage which comes from an artistic study of reading, is the formation of a habit of immediate mental analysis. It strengthens the reasoning faculty, it improves the power of mental arrangement and division. I assert this after comparing the result of my own experience with that of others. It should be an important part of every boy's edu-