

into that state of improvement that will enable us to act intelligently in all the matters of our every-day business, without some kind of cultivation, without effort on our part to that end? While we labor in cultivating the soil the greater part of the year, that we may reap abundant harvests, during which time we necessarily find but a limited amount of time for study and reading, though excellent opportunities for reflecting upon what we may have already learned, and for putting the same to practical uses, why should we not eagerly seek, during the comparative leisure of the remainder of the year, for opportunities to improve the *mind*, the guide and director of all our operations?

*Progress* now seems to be the order of the day, in everything. We live in an age of inventions; in the age of steam and electricity; in an age when every one must be up and *stirring*, to keep up with his generation; and finally in an age when great improvements are made in every department of the arts, in a single generation. Improvements are made, and great improvements are to be made, in Agriculture; and the farmer, to keep up with his time, must keep thinking, as well as stirring. Agriculture is a vast subject, to which nearly all the Sciences minister. It is not merely to plow, and plant, and hoe, as our fathers planted, and plowed, and hoed, and to gather what chances to grow from such a course. Our lands in New England by exhausting methods of culture, are becoming poorer, the virgin soils, in a great many instances, have been cropped to excess, and it is our business, then, to study methods whereby we may not make them hold their present condition merely, but improve them. To this end I would counsel the study of standard agricultural books, in these spare moments; take and *read*, perhaps, another agricultural newspaper during these months, and think, and devise experiments to be put into execution the ensuing summer; not to any ruinous extent, however, should they prove of no economical value, but moderately, and *perseveringly*, and so add your mite to the general cause. Agricultural reports of States and counties are of great interest and importance, and should not be omitted in agricultural reading. I need not remind you of your duties and *privileges* in the "Farmers' Clubs."

Several of the natural sciences are so interwoven with agriculture, as geology, botany and chemistry, and perhaps I might add meteorology and mineralogy, that some knowledge of them is of great importance to every agriculturist; and this knowledge is more easily acquired than is imagined by many. It is not above the capacity of any; and every farmer's son who has improved the opportunities for a *good*, common-school education, should not rest satisfied till he has devoted the leisure he may find in one winter at least, to the careful perusal and study of works on one, or more, of these sciences, which, in all probability, must create a thirst for higher attainments. Some knowledge of these sciences is quite necessary to read understandingly some of our agricultural books and reports; and ten dollars cannot be better expended yearly, by the farmer, than in the purchase of agricultural books, and papers, and scientific text-books. Take botany, for instance, the present winter, and make that a speciality, procure "Wood's Class-book of Botany," or some of Prof. Gray's botanical works, and in your leisure, master as many of its principles and terms as you can; then as spring opens seize the first flowers and apply them; in the few spare moments that you can find in summer, make a collection of plants for a *herbarium*, and my word for it, if your nature is in any wise like that of the mass of people, the pleasures you will derive from the science will amply repay you for all the hours of patient study, and serve as an incitement to further exertion. But do not be too hasty in your anticipations; if in two or three years, with the time you would naturally get, you can seize upon any wild flower of the field, and readily analyze the same, you have accomplished not a little.