

answers to questions which would put to the blush many boys of sixteen or eighteen years old. The replies showed a most extraordinary familiarity with philosophical and literary and religious subjects. Nor were the ordinary branches as taught in public schools neglected, drawing, mathematics and the dead languages also received due attention, Miss Peabody's especial care being the Latin class. The children were not crammed, nor forced. Their progress was but the natural result of the peculiar system in operation. We can count on our fingers the precocious boys who could read books at four and five years of age and enjoy them, but these, you know, are the Johnsons, and Chattertons, and Macaulays and Whipples of history. Mr. Alcott had thirty children in his school who could not only read and understand such books as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Krummacher's *Fables*, *Æsop's Fables*, Wordsworth's *Poems* and many others, but they could even criticise the thoughts and meanings of these authors with rare and judicious perspicacity. Let me give you an example. Reading one day Wordsworth's great ode—the Lakeside poet's masterpiece and the poem which will outlive all his other work, as Tennyson's *Idyls of the King* will survive his dramas and other poetry,—Mr. Alcott stopped at a verse and asked the little group before him what effect the rainbow, the moon and the waters on a starry night had on ourselves. "There are some minds," he went on, "which live in the world, and yet are insensible; which do not see any beauty in the rainbow, the moon, and the waters on a starry night." And he read the next stanza, that glorious burst that tells of the animation and beauty of spring, and pausing at every line he asked questions. "Why are the cataracts said to 'blow their trumpets?'" said he. A little girl replied, "because the waters dash against the rocks." The echoes thronging through the woods, led out to the recollections of the sound in the woods in spring; to echoes which they had severally