

and trains the pupil to read by setting him lessons consisting of extracts from literary works of art. These are selected for their intensity, and for their peculiar merits in expressing situations of the soul brought about by external or internal circumstances. Language itself contains the categories of thought, and the study of grammatical structure makes one conscious of phases of ideas which flit past without notice in the mind of the illiterate person. Literary genius invents modes of utterance for feelings and thoughts that were hitherto below the surface of consciousness. It brings them above its level, and makes them forever after conscious and articulate. Especially in the realm of ethical and religious ideas, the thoughts that furnish the regulative forms for living

and acting, literature is pre-eminent for its usefulness. Literature may be said, therefore, to reveal human nature. Its very elementary study in school makes the pupil acquainted with a hundred or more pieces of literary art, expressing for him with felicity his rarer and higher moods of feeling and thought. When, in mature age, we look back over our lives and recall to mind the influence that our schooldays brought us, the time spent over the school readers seems quite naturally to have been the most valuable part of our education. Our thoughts on the conduct of life have been stimulated by it, and this ethical knowledge is of all knowledge the nearest related to self-preservation.—*Wm. T. Harris, in the Atlantic Monthly.*

CHRISTMAS GIVING.

HAPLESS is the lot of that man who, in this Christmas-time, has no gift to give or no gift to receive. Melancholy must claim him for her own, and life to him must be a condition of utter and unrelieved cheerlessness. Now, when the Christmas fires are kindled on countless hearths, when all mankind is given over to merry-making and well-wishing, when Kris Kringle usurps all other rule, he who has no home is indeed a woful wight; and he who has a home and yet provides no Christmas-tree is a wretch for whose neglect there is no extenuation.

It sometimes goes hard with those who cling to the notion that Christmas Day should be an occasion of quiet, devout, contemplative religious ceremonials, that the popular observance is marked by feasting, hilarity, good-humor, and the giving of gifts.

Such persons are not your true philosophers. Christ himself declared that His followers would be known by the fruits of their devotion. And generosity is most assuredly a Christian grace. Because there may appear a very long stretch of sequences between the Adoration of the Magi and Mr. Pickwick's frolic under the mistletoe, they are sequences, nevertheless; for, while the solemn ceremony of the one was a recognition by direction, the other was a recognition by indirection—in the one case there was kneeling in the presence of the Christ-child; in the other, a manifestation of that temper of kindness which is the sweetest illustration of the Christian spirit.

The interchange of tokens of affectionate regard on Christmas Day is quite in accord with the injunction to love our neighbors as ourselves. The