

should be acquainted with the grandest works of the best authors in our language is so manifest a truism that it needs no argument to support it. Having examined into the adaptation of the course to our work and into the benefits that we may derive from it, it next behoves us to consider the best means to be employed in order to get the most good out of it. To my mind the most satisfactory method is by means of reading circles. Firstly, because of the companionship; Secondly, it ensures more systematic reading; and, Thirdly, the necessity of expressing our thoughts on any subject requires us to think out our ideas fully and completely. All will agree that social meetings of ten or twelve people with a common object, and the conjunction of ten or twelve brains on any subject, must elucidate that subject more than one brain by itself can. Moreover, the knowledge that we are expected to take part in a discussion of a work or part of a work makes it essential that we should read the work carefully and critically, cursory reading only making us appear either ignorant of, or but superficially acquainted with the matter to be sifted and examined. To support my thirdly, I shall simply quote a saying of O. W. Holmes—a saying I most heartily agree with:

“A man must express himself on a subject to know what he really thinks.”

There should be no formality about the meetings, for formality destroys life.

In thinking over the best methods to be employed to make a circle both instructive and interesting, I came to the conclusion that the best plan would be to have all take notes of important matter while reading, but besides this that one should be appointed to draw up a short paper on each assigned lesson—the reading of this paper to be the opening of a discussion. In order to make the meet-

ings as interesting as possible, matter outside of the course that would throw light on any points under discussion should be produced by any member, who in his general reading may have discovered it, while music and selections from good authors might well be introduced to enliven the company. If it be thought that I am too sanguine as to the success of the reading circles, I can only point in justification of my optimism to the grand progress made by the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, and also state that teachers' reading circles have been established in several of the States, and are, I believe, working satisfactorily. Indiana's reading circles had a membership of over 1,100 in one year from inauguration; New York (without the city) over 1,000 in nine months; New Jersey, over 1,000 in three months, and Illinois, 3,000 in ten months; while in Iowa, Pennsylvania, New England, and other parts of the States circles have been formed, with what membership I know not, but with gratifying success. Only a week or so ago I read that even in Dacotah circles have been recently formed in the southern part. The success to be obtained is, of course, in exact proportion to the co-operation of the members. Where all do their best, attend the meetings regularly, go carefully over the work, and take part in the discussions, success is certain. But where laziness is allowed to intervene, where indifference as to what goes on at the meetings creeps in, and apathy causes irregularity of attendance, failure is just as certain. With ourselves individually and collectively the power of making our circles successful or the reverse rests; and if we are true to ourselves and our best interests we shall cordially accept the responsibility and ensure a favourable issue.

We may not be able to write “thoughts that shall the world's