

POPULAR EDUCATION.

THE common school brings boys and girls only a part of the way through a course of study. The vast majority drop out before they finish the common branches, and a comparatively small number enter the high school. The girls are in the majority in the high school graduating classes, while the boys are in the minority, and this disparity increases from year to year. Thus we are left to face the unwelcome fact that the greater part of the young people of this country are not receiving even a good common-school education. There is a great gulf fixed between the condition in which we find the masses of our common-school people when they quit school and the higher institutions of learning, which latter seem to exist for the purpose of educating men and women to the highest degree for the various vocations and professions in life. It is between the common school and the higher institutions of learning where popular education should come in and meet a real need in our civilization.

"Popular education" is a euphonious term, designed to describe a system of instruction which is adapted to people who are engaged in regular daily employment, and who left the common school in early life, but who have not had the privileges of education in a college or a university. The necessity was laid upon them to earn bread, the school with its books may have been distasteful to them, or parents may not have held them to their daily task in the school-room; whatever the cause that operated, they dropped out of school, engaged in business, joined in a marriage contract, or went in other ways, till it was too late to retrace their steps in an educational way. But now, in mature life, they have been touched

by business obligations, social demands, calls from a church or a political party, and when they undertake any of the duties to which they aspire they find themselves deficient in literary culture, and then sigh for the learning of books, for the inspiration of a teacher, or are goaded by a hunger for education.

This is the intellectual condition of a great mass of the American people. The picture is not overdrawn. It is common for educated men in their struggle to establish higher institutions of learning, to overestimate the culture of the masses. The former create an atmosphere about themselves which is fast becoming the aristocracy of education, and thus divorce themselves from the people. Therefore popular education is a great necessity in the United States; and we mean by popular education information on all lines of useful knowledge that the average American ought to possess to make him an intelligent business man, a knowing citizen, or a capable man of affairs. In a word, he should be the possessor of a variety of knowledge essential to the success of a man of common sense.

This education must be prepared in such form, in books and magazines, that the average man may comprehend it without the presence of a living teacher. Because the teacher cannot go with his book to the student, the author must prepare in popular language the text for the average man; technical terms must be eliminated, Latin and Greek, German and French and higher mathematics must be tabooed. We have reached a time when history may be written in a very plain vocabulary; this is true also of works on literature, science, art and religion, and it