

your plans for self-improvement to be the best advantage. You are to be comfortably housed, in rooms well heated and ventilated, and properly furnished. In a peaceful locality like this the distractions are not likely to be too numerous, unless, poetic-struck, you should become infatuated as lovers of nature, and take to singing verses before your time; though you may be sure that I for one will never feel ashamed of any of you nor speak spitefully of your efforts, should you succeed in getting into the poet's corner of the *Stanstead Journal* or take to writing for such a creditable periodical as the *College Clarion*.

And this brings me to my last word. To be able to do a thing is better than only to know how to do it. Hence the knowledge you acquire from books will never become assimilated knowledge, part and parcel of your own mental outfit, unless you learn to make a practical use of it. If you leave school or college without having acquired the practical, actual, well-assured power of expressing yourself in your native tongue, written or spoken, you will have failed in your work here, even if you have not forgotten an item of the knowledge you have collected in your classes. When called upon to address you this evening, I first thought of taking up the whole of the time placed at my disposal to emphasize this phase of a practical education, so impressed am I with its importance. Before you can use your mind aright you must know something of the workings of your mind, and to know the workings of your mind you must watch the effects it produces in thought developed into speech. There is no other way of getting at a practical knowledge of your own mental powers; and the very first step in your school education is the careful

examination of the sentence. To be a botanist you must know how to turn a plant inside out and explain its organic parts, and before you can enter upon scholarship you must be able to treat the sentence in the same way as an organism made up of words. The sentence is the tangible form of the thought it embodies, and you must know the one if you would know how the other acts in order to produce the right effect. Get therefore to your sentence-making at once; for practice in that will lead to perfection in the product of thought. Now do not make little of this, I beseech you. You will never amount to much in this world as a right kind of agency among men unless you have trained yourself either to speak correctly or to write correctly. By a practical daily drill in composition, you will come to study systematically, independently and exhaustively, and more than that we do not expect from you. You study your Latin with zest only when you know the power of the sentence as a medium of thought. You become anxious for the hour of the French exercise only when you know what a sound English sentence means from a sound French sentence means in its fullest. Your historical studies have a new interest for you when you know you can fluently, and in correct speech, reproduce the knowledge you have acquired. I never felt prouder than when I could go through a proposition in euclid without figure or blackboard as if I had been making a carefully thought-out speech in appropriate language. And so it is with all your school studies. There comes to you an enthusiasm in your student's work when you know what strength every study brings to your linguist powers and through them to your mental activities. And hence I have no fear of antagonism