

Of all the opinions as to the choice of books quoted by the *Westminster Review* none seems better suited for the young or those who are the educators of the young than the advice of Carlyle given to the students of Edinburgh University: "Learn to be good readers," said the great scolder, "which is, perhaps, a more difficult thing than you imagine. Learn to be discriminative in your reading—to read all kinds of things that you have an interest in, and that you find to be really fit for what you are engaged in." With regard to what is called desultory reading, there is often more system in it than at first appears. "The word desultory," says Lord Iddlesleigh, "is of Latin parentage, and it was applied by the Romans to describe the equestrian jumping-actively from one steed to another in the circus, or even, as was the case with the Numidian, from one charger to another in the midst of battle. That certainly was no idle totering. It was energetic activity, calculated to keep the mind and body very much alive indeed. That should be the spirit of the desultory reader. His must be no mere fingerling of books with no thought how they can be turned to account."

To very many people not specially gifted in any one direction the interest in knowledge is general and they may seem to be pursuing an entirely desultory course of reading, surrounding themselves with numerous books from which they get a diversity of opinion perhaps on varying subjects—but which, nevertheless, eventually may be interwoven into such a variety of knowledge as to surprise even the reader himself. With speciallists, it must, of course, be different. Their course of reading and choice of books has really been determined for them by dame nature herself. And yet education can do much in teaching the young to be thorough in this matter as in all others, and to those whose inclination leads them to a mixed rather than a special kind of knowledge the opinion of Dr. Arnold, as quoted by Lord Iddlesleigh, will be of value:

"Keep your field of men and things extensive," says Dr. Arnold, "and depend upon it that a mixed knowledge is not a superficial one. As far as it goes, the views that it gives are true, but he who has read deeply one class of writers alone, gets views which are almost sure to be perverted and which are not only narrow but false. Adjust your proposed amount of reading to your time and inclination. This is perfectly clear to any man; but, whether the amount be large or small, let it be varied in its kind, and widely varied. If I have a confident opinion on any one point connected with the improvement of the human mind it is this."

We are cautioned by many to distrust the latest books, to cling to the old writers whose worth has been proved and whose merit cannot be rivalled. But is there not a sense in which the latest book may be of more value than all that have preceded it? Are we not to believe in the progress of the human mind? There are books which seem to include all that has been said upon their subject—adding thereto the deeper insight of the later writer who has profited by "all the good the past has had" and can, therefore, lead us a step further by reason of his greater knowledge. Such a book, for instance, is Mr. John Fiske's "Idea of God," which reveals to us the whole development of this idea as brought out by the different nations from the childhood of the race. And this book, if read carefully, will lead the reader into a vast field of enquiry, with which the author himself must be familiar in order to produce what seems an easily written treatise upon this great subject. And so the latest fiction may have more interest for us at times than the ancient since the follies and weakness which it exposes are more immediately interesting than the more remote ones of antiquity. But in all our reading if our aim is to gain knowledge, the choice of books will be a matter safely left in the hands of the individual.

Patience in this as in all matters, will finally lead to satisfactory results, if we pursue each subject that claims our attention until we have obtained some reasonable understanding of it. F.

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UNSEEN LESSONS.

The teacher, in the exercise of his office, is constantly parading before his pupils, facts, appearances, habits, methods of thought, and styles of action which are assimilated by his hearers. Each one is involuntary or unconsciously laid away in some mysterious hiding place, each one helps in the formation of character, and all combined unite in thus affecting the happiness and well-being of the coming man.

The fact exists, unquestioned and unchallenged, that unseen lessons are constantly given by every teacher, the exercises therein are constantly made, and the averages properly recorded for the inspection of all.

The justice and equity, the truthfulness, and frankness, the fidelity to promises made, the trustworthiness exemplified in the everyday work of the teacher in his intercourse with parents, trustees and pupils, leave an impress upon the easily affected minds of the pupils, which, deepening day by day, with each recurring word or fact, becomes at last rooted and fixed, with a strength and power that years of effort cannot remove. So, these unseen influences mould the character for good or for evil; so these wavering uncertain feet, are placed in paths which lead to ban or blessing.

On the other hand, your habitual shortcomings will in like manner be presented in the after life of the pupil. Do you act as though your public duty was a certain, indefinable something which can be put on or off at pleasure, or for which you are paid a certain sum per diem or otherwise? Do you slice off ten or fifteen minutes at each or either end of your day's work and then vainly suppose that the public-spirited citizens who are now your pupils will not do the same? Do you take a day or days for pleasuring, receive pay for the day so taken and the duty so unperformed, and then do you think that the men and women who now sit at your feet, will consider public duty a public trust? Do you do insincere, superficial work, where you know the prying eyes of investigation come next, and then blame your pupils for similar actions under similar circumstances? Do you use slang or uncouth expressions while professing to teach a "pure well of English undefiled," and then expect a product of refinement and culture?—*Philadelphia Teacher.*

HINTS ON SCHOOL MANAGEMENT.

The tendency of young teachers is to give almost entire attention to those children who are naturally bright and attentive, passing over those who seem dreamy or uninteresting, hoping that they will come around all right in the course of time. Such hope is vain. Unless efforts are made to cultivate habits of attention in all from the first, the teacher finds, at the end of a month or two, perhaps one-half her school far in advance of the others. What shall she do? She cannot begin over again on account of the bright ones; she cannot go on allowing the others to fall still further behind. Thus the inexperienced teacher finds herself in deep water and altogether discouraged.

The old maxim, "Haste makes waste," is eminently true in low-grade work. By teaching slowly it do not mean that a teacher is to weary her pupil day after day with the same old lesson until every child knows it. That would be worse than useless. An ingenious teacher is constantly inventing new methods for presenting old subjects. After the traditional "cat on a mat" has done service, banish him. There are numerous pictures of cats with balls, cats and rats, cats with milk, etc., to interest children and hold their attention until the form of a word is fairly fixed in their minds.

A mistake frequently made is in dwelling too long at a time upon a subject when it might better be given in several shorter lessons. Little folks fresh from the nursery are not used to keeping at one thing very long. They soon tire if compelled to sit in one position any length of time. The natural activity of childhood should be kept in mind, and simple gymnastic exercises frequently given during

lessons. Five minutes of rapid, energetic work is worth more to a child than a whole day spent in a lazy, bungling, half attentive manner. In schools where long lessons are given, even though well planned, it is impossible to hold the attention of the class. Children will get restless and out of order, and the teacher is likely to become worried and impatient, making everything a dismal failure.

Sacchini says, "Instruction will always be best when it is pleasant." "That which enters into willing ears, the mind, as it were, runs to welcome, seizes with avidity, carefully stores away and faithfully preserves." Little folks are quick to appreciate a teacher who has the faculty of making things run smoothly. There is a pleasure in being held to work gently but firmly.

The children like to feel when school is over that they deserve their play. They hasten home with light hearts, and with great respect for themselves, the school, and its teacher.—*New England Journal of Education.*

COURSE IN ENGLISH.

*** But the feature in the curriculum of the University of New Brunswick chiefly deserving of comment is the course of study in the department of English. This subject is compulsory during the whole four years, except in the case of those talking honors in other subjects. In the first year there was laid down three plays of Shakespeare, poems from Burns, Cowper, Southey, Scott, Coleridge, Lamb, Moore, Hood (taken from Palgrave), Tennyson's "Aylmer's Field," "Enoch Arden," "Guinevere," "Rizpah," Rossetti, "The King's Tragedy," one of Scott's novels and one of George Eliot's, four of Macaulay's essays, two essays of Matthew Arnold, two from Ruskin, with some of Cobbett's English grammar, part of Brooke's primer and a part of Green's "English People."

As is a variegated list—perhaps too variegated. Lamb, Moore, George Eliot, Hood, Rossetti, even Tennyson might, one would think, be left for individual reading and not occupy the time which might more profitably be spent on a careful and critical study of Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, and those who have been placed by posterity in the first and second ranks of English men of letters. Nevertheless this English course is a broad and a liberal one. An error in broadness is perhaps better than one in the opposite direction. It is a sin of commission rather than of omission, and in time to come perhaps by means of this very broadness the University of New Brunswick may become conspicuous among the sister universities as one devoting her energies chiefly to the mother tongue. Despite the true significance of the term, it is difficult for any university to be famous in all departments of learning. It is well that each should strive to shine in some one branch. The goal of New Brunswick seems to be English.—*Educational Weekly, Toronto.*

MATTHEW ARNOLD, in a recent address, said, "In America, in the colonies, and finally, in our own country, also, the tendency will rather be, it seems to me, to strengthen and enlarge, more or less, the instruction given in the schools which we call elementary, schools for the mass of the community,—to say that that instruction, indeed, is indispensable for every citizen, that this is all the instruction which is strictly necessary, and that whoever wants more instruction than this must get it at his own expense as he can. Under these circumstances, the future of high culture and high studies must depend most upon the love of individuals for them and the faith of individuals in them. Perhaps this has always been their best support, and it is a support which, happily for mankind, will, I believe, never fail. In communities where there are no endowments these will be the only support of high studies and fine culture. But human nature is weak, and I prefer, I confess, that these supports, however strong and staunch they may be, of high studies and fine culture should not have the whole weight thrown upon them, should not be the only supports. Here is the great advantage of endowments, and public foundations fix and fortify our profession of faith toward high studies and serious culture.