

But how many dwelling all their lives amid the "grass of the field" never stop to note the glory and the beauty with which God "so clothed it," and of those who do pause to admire the Solomon-surpassing glory of the lilies, how few realize that the command is, not to wonder and admire but, to "consider how they grow."

To my fellow teachers working in the common schools both mixed and graded, this subject presents strong claims. Its educational benefits will show themselves in every other subject. It is said of that great student of facts in Nature, Agassiz, that his perception was so wonderfully acute, that things in which others saw nothing worthy of notice, often became to him the eloquent exposition of deep and far-reaching scientific truth. All our pupils ought to develop something of this power. Another leading benefit is the habit of methodizing their acquisitions so as to be available to themselves and others.—*E. Richardson in N. Y. State Educational Journal.*

RULES FOR RECITING.—1. Give your entire attention throughout the recitation.

2. Stand or sit erect, and move quietly and quickly.
3. Be independent, and answer in your own words.
4. Raise your hand promptly whenever prepared to answer or criticise, but never speak without permission.
5. Speak distinctly, energetically, and in a pleasant tone of voice.
6. Ask help only during recitation.
7. Criticise closely, but kindly; discuss earnestly, but honestly; and yield gracefully when convinced of error.
8. Speak briefly, stick to the point, and avoid side issues.

One of the English School Inspectors, in his recent report, says that his custom is to examine the first class in reading in one of the newspapers of the day, and with generally satisfactory results.

IV. Papers on Literature and Science.

MR. LOWE ON CHEAP LITERATURE.

Lately the Right Hon. Mr. Lowe presided at the annual debate of the University College Debating Club, when the question discussed was, "Is the spread of cheap literature, on the whole, a benefit to the community?" At the close of the debate the right honourable gentleman said, he had listened very attentively to all that had been said on both sides. Before voting on the question it was desirable they should understand what the issue was. In the first place, what was literature? Then, was literature desirable? The next question was, as to the spread of literature, and if literature was a good thing, he did not think any one would say the spread of literature was bad. Therefore, they got this length, that they were all agreed that the spread of literature was desirable. Now came the question, whether literature being of benefit to the community when it was dear, it would still remain so if it was cheap. This was the only point on which they were disagreed, and he hoped it would also be decided in the affirmative. "Adam Bede" was a charming novel and a masterpiece of writing, now that it cost 5s. Suppose it were to be reduced to 3s., would it become an evil? Wherever the evil of books was, he really did not think it could be in their cheapness. They might be objectionable because they were coarse, vulgar, or stupid, or had a bad tendency; but not because they were cheap. That practically disposed of the whole question. But he did not wish to confine himself to that. As to the influence of what was popularly known as cheap literature, he agreed with a lady who had spoken, that books might be vulgar, stupid, and have all sorts of faults, so long as they were not immoral, and yet not produce any bad effect on the person who read them. The working classes, for whom the literature in question was provided, had probably no great desire to go back into the past in their reading. Their feeling was, that they did not know the age in which they lived. Their whole desire and aspiration was to know what was going on among the people above them. It would be preferable—and he dared say they would prefer—if they could get their knowledge from the best novels and histories; but the dearness of these books prevented that, and their longing was, legitimately, as he thought, satisfied with a coarser literature which was more accessible. What appeared vulgar and stupid to educated people might not do so to those who were less fortunate in this respect, and it was quite possible this literature they looked down upon might inspire in the working classes new ideas and opinions which might tend greatly to the benefit of the community. He decidedly thought it was, above all things, desirable that they should have some cheap literature not in itself base. If such literature could not be got legally, they might depend on it the cravings of the people would be satisfied by a contraband

literature of a disgusting and disgraceful character. The question was not between cheap literature and something better, but between that and something worse, and, that being so, he thought they could have no hesitation in preferring the cheap literature.

THE VALUE OF LITERATURE TO TEACHERS.

It must be admitted that in this age of universal reading, teachers should not fall behind in this intellectual race which seems to be urging us forward at such rate of speed as almost to take away all power of thought. When we see men, women, and children, issuing from the public library of the town or city our first impression is that we are a remarkably literary people. And if the reading through volume after volume—mostly works of fiction—is an indication of our literary taste, we are so most emphatically. But is there not another view of this subject?

Grant that *quantity* is something, yet *reading* alone does not make a people literary. It does not even create a literary taste, though it does generally produce a restless, morbid sentimentalism which is injurious to a healthy tone of mind and morals. Sound literary judgment and correct literary tastes do, in great measure, depend upon the *quality* of the reading, and the thoroughness and reflection given to the subject.

A large majority of the books published are not deserving of a careful perusal; there is hardly an idea in them worth preserving; consequently it is worse than a waste of time to read them. What books we should read, and what we can do without, is an important and perplexing question, and which no person ever can decide for another; but out of the great number and variety that are influential for good, we should select those best adapted to our special necessities, those that are most potential in elevating and enlarging the mind and reforming the feelings, and those that treat of such subjects as are matters of daily conversation and use.

Now, in the world of thought, or literature the medium of thought, there are pictures so grand in conception, so beautiful in form and colouring, so rich in ideal, that they inspire us with a deeper reverence for nature's work in the kingdom of the mind than for her developments in her domain of matter. The region of literature is almost boundless, and all that lies within the capacity of any one, is merely to gather a few grains of gold from its abundant store-house.

Although there are at the present time many books published, and there cannot be time to read all, yet if those who assume the responsibility of guiding the education of others, do not have a tolerably extensive acquaintance with books, both of the past and present time, are they not to be classed among those who are weighed in the balance and found wanting?

Scarcely a lesson is heard in which there is not the need of literature, science, or art, to explain the figures and allusions not understood by pupils, but which have become interwoven with all branches of education. Take, for example, an ordinary reading lesson, prose or poetry, selected from any school-book in common use, especially those used by the more advanced classes, and how many questions might be asked by an inquisitive pupil which would puzzle a teacher to answer if not well protected by the breast-plate of knowledge.

It is not easy to conceal the poverty of an impoverished mind from the penetrating eyes of a bright class, and do you not think that the teacher who failed to answer the questions would suffer in the estimation of the pupil?

But it may be said that pupils are not expected to understand these things, that they do not trouble themselves about the sense of the author, but read merely to acquire facility in pronouncing words. Then if this be the case, the efforts of pupil and teacher have been in a great measure misdirected.

Taste, perception of the good and beautiful in literature and art is, for the most part, the result of cultivation; it is not the spontaneous growth of undisciplined minds; hence a child must be led gradually to see the beauty and fitness of language, and must be taught to understand and admire the noble thoughts of others.

The question then arises, can any one be better adapted to conduct the young learner into the wide and fertile fields of literature than the teacher who day after day is leaving the impress of her mind and character upon those under her instruction? Is any teacher discouraged at the pressing demands made for the mental preparation of the school-room, and at the seeming impossibility of meeting them? No doubt such discouragements have met every teacher, but instead of deterring her from duty they ought to incite her to establish habits of reading thoughtfully some of the best authors of our language, and translations of the best from other languages, unless she is so thoroughly educated as to be able to read them in the original.

Aside from professional reasons, teachers at the present day should