

you are preparing to manage a suit at law, to cut off a man's leg, or to make a pudding.

It is obvious that even to the most diligent man, profitable reading must be very limited if we compare it with the quantity written, and this disproportion is daily on the increase. Of the enormous number of books published every year there are many one would like to read, but even if we confine ourselves rigidly to a special subject it is very difficult to keep up with the current literature of the day. The elder Stevenson, a man of genius practical and profound, used to say that the book was a very bad one out of which you could not get five shillings' worth. This is a very true saying to guide one as to buying books, but I should be sorry to be led by it in the books I am to read. It may be exceptional, but there are bad books which do not contain five shillings' worth of knowledge, and there are very many indeed that are not worth reading for the five shillings' worth they contain. The direction of a young man's studies is thus ever becoming more difficult, and the necessity of systematic teaching more obvious. The choice of the books to be read by a law-student is therefore a matter of great moment, and it is probable that at some part of your course a few lectures will be given on legal bibliography. The subject is an entertaining one and readily attracts the attention. In my days of studentship, over thirty years ago, there was no regular teaching. Anything we learned was picked up by the practice we saw in an office and the books we chanced to read. I was dismayed at the endless rows of dingy books, then rarely enlivened by the gay morocco backs of the *nouveau droit*. I had, however, the advantage of being the pupil of the present learned Chief Justice of the Superior Court, and to him I applied for advice as to what I should read. He told me of "Pothier's Obligations." From the moment I opened it, the dread of the dryness of law disappeared as by enchantment, and starting from one word rolled forth a perfectly clear explanation of the whole scheme of legal rights and liabilities.

The word "obligation" is defined and limited to its legal sense—