

be more such men, if education in our common schools were, as it well might be, of a higher order; and if common school libraries, well furnished, were introduced into every district, as I trust, in due time, they will be. It is surprising, sir, how much may be effected, even under the most unfavourable circumstances for the improvement of the mind, by a person resolutely bent on the acquisition of knowledge. A letter has lately been put into my hands, bearing date the 6th September, so interesting in itself, and so strongly illustrative of this point, that I will read a portion of it; though it was written, I am sure, without the least view to publicity.

'I was the youngest,' says the writer, 'of many brethren, and my parents were poor—my means of education were limited to the advantages of a district school, and those again were circumscribed by my father's death, which deprived me, at the age of fifteen, of those scanty opportunities which I had previously enjoyed. A few months after his decease, I apprenticed myself to a blacksmith in my native village. Thither I carried an indomitable taste for reading, which I had previously acquired through the medium of the society library; all the historical works in which I had at that time perused. At the expiration of little more than half my apprenticeship, I suddenly conceived the idea of studying Latin. Through the assistance of my brother, who had himself obtained a collegiate education by his own exertions, I completed my Virgil during the evenings of one winter. After some time devoted to Cicero, and a few other Latin authors, I commenced the Greek. At this time it was necessary that I should devote every hour of day-light and a part of the evening to the duties of my apprenticeship. Still I carried my Greek grammar in my hat, and often found a moment when I was heating

some large iron, when I could place my book open before me against the chimney of my forge, and go through with *tupto, tupteis, tuptei*, unperceived by my fellow-apprentices, and, to my confusion of face, with a detrimental effect to the charge in my fire. At evening I sat down unassisted and alone to the Iliad of Homer, twenty books of which measured my progress in that language during the evenings of another winter. I next turned to the modern languages, and was much gratified to learn that my knowledge of the Latin furnished me with a key to the literature of most of the languages of Europe.

'This circumstance gave a new impulse to the desire of acquainting myself with the philosophy, derivation, and affinity of the different European tongues. I could not be reconciled to limit myself in these investigations to a few hours after the arduous labours of the day. I therefore laid down my hammer and went to New Haven, where I recited to native teachers in French, Spanish, German, and Italian. I returned at the expiration of two years to the forge, bringing with me such books in those languages as I could procure. When I had read these books through, I commenced the Hebrew, with an awakened desire of examining another field; and, by assiduous application, I was enabled in a few weeks to read this language with such facility, that I allotted it to myself as a task, to read two chapters in the Hebrew Bible before breakfast each morning; this, and an hour at noon being all the time that I could devote to myself during the day. After becoming somewhat familiar with this language, I looked around me for the means of initiating myself into the fields of Oriental literature, and to my deep regret and concern, I found my progress in this direction hedged up by the want of requisite books. I immediately began to devise means of