

GENERAL READING

THE YEARS.

Silent—silent! like God's blessing, on a
 sin bewildered earth!
 Coming, coming, with a glory and a pro-
 mise at their birth!

Wondrous, wondrous, white-winged her-
 alds, with a wordless mystery,
 Bearing with them gleam and glimmer of
 the far off "jasper sea."

Swiftly, swiftly, down our earth-way
 bringing treasure all unknown;
 Reaching out still hands to touch us with
 the radiance of the Throne.

Silent—silent! going—going—out beyond
 our utmost reach!
 Bearing with them so much sweetness,
 scarce we knew they came to teach.

Swiftly—swiftly—while we struggle for a
 little less or more,
 Down their tide dear footsteps vanish,
 leaving ours upon the shore!

Calmly—calmly—while our pulse beat to
 ev'ry siren tune,
 On their waves our sunlight trembles and
 our day grows dim at noon!

Onward!—onward—ending ever at God's
 footstool! Ah will he
 Merge these weary fragments into His
 serene Eternity!

N. Y. Evening Post.

HOW TO READ BOOKS.

Everybody finds it necessary to read a great deal in these days, because it is impossible to hold any position unless well informed; and even in social intercourse those who are not well-read find themselves placed at an immense disadvantage. The number of actual situations which can only be occupied by educated men and women increase daily: and, indeed, literature becomes more and more a part of the business of life. There is a common but most erroneous impression that knowledge must be obtained by the perusal of a vast quantity of books. This is not so; it is not the number of books perused, but the way in which they are read. To read successfully requires a system, and when once the mind has acquired the habit of organizing its impressions, ten books will impart more instruction than the desultory perusal of a hundred. It has been said that all the general information needed by ordinary people may be obtained from about 500 standard works; some reduce the number considerably, and it is obvious that much must always depend upon mental calibre. The judicious choice of books is, in itself, an art; the following remarks pre-suppose that a choice has been made.

There are several classes of readers. First, those who read for pleasure only, and confine themselves chiefly to light literature, and do not come under the scope of this article. Secondly, those who read for general information. Thirdly, those who are studying science or some special subject; and lastly, there are some who, from time to time, are anxious to "hunt up" a particular matter, and to post themselves in every scrap of knowledge relating to it.

All readers, even those who scan the newspapers, will do well to bear in mind Lord Bacon's saying, that the most advantageous method of reading was to apply everything to oneself, to mentally ask the question, "Does this concern me in any way—does it throw light upon what I have been seeking, or will it assist me in the pursuits of my life?" Unconsciously newspaper readers have a certain method of selection; they choose those paragraphs the headings of which are most attractive to the bent of their minds, a fact well known to editors, who spend much care over these head-lines. Something of the same kind of selection should be used in reading books; those portions most useful in furthering the end in view should be marked off with a light pencil stroke upon the margin, if the book belongs to the reader; if not, the number of the page can be noted on a slip of paper, and the passage re-read in a day or two. The very act of marking the passage impresses it upon the memory.

Those who read novels and similar literature for pleasure, resign the mind as it were to the story; but if a book be read for instruction, the reader considers each sentence, and re-arranges the contents to suit his particular study. Suppose a student of military science reads Grote's "History of Greece," his proper course is obviously to avoid burdening his mind with political affairs or literary disquisitions, and to confine himself to the details and plans of battles and movements of troops. On the other hand, a student of pure literature should pass these, or look upon the description of a battle as a piece of writing only; he must more carefully attend to the chapters on Socrates. Both of these students have to re-arrange the history in their minds.

While proceeding from page to page, make short notes of passages that impress the mind; then think a moment, and ask the question, "Have I ever read anything elsewhere resembling

this, or casting another light upon it?" If so, note it, and add the reference to the summary. This is annotating. Most great authorities have made a constant practice of annotating; Macaulay is said to have done so to every book he read. It may be laid down as an axiom by those who wish to really read, to always have a pencil and sheet of paper handy. The comparison of one book with another has a most beneficial effect, and should always be done when practicable. One writer never exhausts a subject. However comprehensive his view, another will always see something he has missed. Very frequently two authors writing upon the same subject do so with diametrically opposite ends in view, and their conclusions are tinctured with prejudice. By perusing and comparing both a true conception of the matter is obtained. Here it may be said that a reader should always peruse the works of those who are eminent for the expressions of opinions distasteful to him. You cannot properly see the house you are building unless you go outside and view it from a little distance. The ideas which are welcome to you will from this process acquire a sharper definition; you will understand what you mean yourself. Many persons will express their feelings very strongly upon some topics; yet, upon being questioned, may seem to have a very indistinct idea of what they mean.

The end of education is the power of appreciation. Science, for instance, in its general application, is too vast for one mind to entirely grasp. What is wanted is a condition of the mind by which it is able to understand or appropriate the learning of others. One should be enabled to say to Tyndall, or to Owen, "I am not a master of Anatomy as you are, nor have I thoroughly investigated the phenomena of light, but I can honestly avow that I have fixed the fundamental principles in my mind; and I have exercised my faculties that I can bring an intelligent appreciation to bear upon whatever you may tell me. Further, when I have heard your discourse, I can arrange the principal points in my mind, and store them up for future use." Therefore, in reading books the prime object is not this or that particular date, or set of statistics. People often say it is no use their studying, because they cannot remember dates or statistics, or similar hard matter. This is a great mistake. Dates and figures are, nowadays, usually easily accessible in the elaborate books of reference issued upon almost every conceivable subject. It is a waste of time to attempt to remember them with such things; if necessary to remember them jot them down—paper is cheap enough. The chief object of the reader should be to grasp the leading ideas of the book perused; so to educate his mind that wherever placed he may be able to bring an appreciative conception to all that arises. A high authority said that if one only got a single new idea or new fact from every book one read immense progress would be made. This is strictly true. If the reader reads with a system, even the most flimsy books will be found to teach something. There will be one gem in the heap of litter; but that gem would never be perceived were it not for a method in reading. And here, again, it is desirable to remember Lord Bacon's remark—which really contains the very essence of the art of reading books—always ask yourself, "In what does this passage apply to me?"—*Cassell's Magazine.*

A SHORT METHOD WITH UNIVERSALISTS.

"I am a Universalist," says G. K. boastingly, "and you Orthodox are not fair in saying that our system is inconsistent with reason." This he addressed to one who held an opposite system.

"But I will prove the irrationality of our system," said his friend. "You believe that Jesus Christ died to save all men?"

"Yes, I do."

"And you don't believe there is a hell?"

"No, I do not."

"No, I do not; men are punished for their sins in this life."

"Well, now let us put your 'rational' system together, if you can. It amounts to just this, that Christ the Saviour died to save all men from nothing at all. Not from hell, because, according to you, there is none; not from a punishment in a future state of being, for he receives his whole punishment in this life. Yours is the absurd spectacle of ropes and life preservers thrown at an immense expense to a man who is on dry land, and in no danger of being drowned. Let me tell you that your religion is stark infidelity. If you heartily believe the Bible, you could not believe Universalism."

They who are ignorantly devoted to the mere ceremonies of religion are fallen into thick darkness; but they are in still thicker gloom who are solely attached to fruitless speculations.

WANTED—A MINISTER.

He must be a man mature in intellect and ripe in experience, and yet so young and beautiful that all the young will rush after him.

He must be quick, ardent, flashing, nervous in temperament, so that he can kindle quick and burn bright; prompt, ready, and wide awake, and yet a man of the most consummate prudence, whose nerves shall never be unstrung nor out of tune.

He must have the power to awaken and arouse the church, and yet let them be quiet and look on while he does all that is done for Christ—or in other words, he is expected to build up the society, as a whole, without urging individual growth in grace.

He must be strong and original in the pulpit, and bring none but beaten oil there, and yet be at leisure to receive any call, any interruption, be prepared for any emergency, and, like the town pump, never sucking for water nor giving out dry.

He must be a workman who shall go down deep into the mines of truth and quarry out its pillars and set them up, and make men come and wrestle around them, and yet be the most gifted man in light conversation, and all that floats in the every day world around him, and visit three hundred and sixty-five and a fourth days a year.

He must have health so his body never wearies, his nerves never quiver, a real specimen of muscular Christianity and yet be a hard, severe thinker, a close reasoner, and a most diligent student, getting his books from any quarter.

He must be poor in this world's goods, to show that money is not his object, so that he can sympathize with the poor and so that he can feel humble and dependent; and yet his family must be the most hospitable, and entertain more company than any other in the community; his children must be second to none in education and training; they must always be respectably dressed, and, notwithstanding the thousands invested in a college-course and the rejection of the money profession, he must give more and more cheerfully than any man in the place—not excepting Esquire Millionaire himself; and his family must be models, in all respects, in the community.

He must be a man who can remain three years and his congregation must hear the same voice and the same general subject several times a week; and yet he must come every time as original, as fresh, as glowing as if it were done but once a year; in short, although every patent right agent, book-peddler, beggar, social-tramp, and story-spinner shall feel himself at liberty to come and go from the parsonage when he please, yet must our minister each week get up a discourse or two far surpassing any sermon we can read or any lecture upon which a whole year has been spent in preparation.

He must be able to live in a glass house, always acting in public, coming in contact with all sorts of men and prejudices, so original that all will respect and fear him, and yet never odd, eccentric, morose, repulsive or awing in his manners. He should have the lofty attributes of an angel with the sympathies, the gentleness and softness of a little child.

He must be always ready keyed up to the best possible pitch, and yet so calm in spirit, and word and look that nothing can disturb his repose—not even the hundredth advent of a three-hour gossip, when, after a day of fasting, meditation and prayer, he has just gotten into the spirit of a pulpit theme and written one line.

He must do all he can to hasten the millennial glory—serving God and opposing Satan with all his might, yet, so as not thereby to offend any one, but to have all men, even ruffians, dancers, gamblers and misers speak well of him—a key so large and yet so small as to fit every lock.

He must never preach so the people are not proud of him, when they have a stranger in the pew with them, so that the echo of his sermon shall not come back when he goes abroad; and yet every sermon must, especially in voice and action, be so beautiful that all the young people will admire it, and wonder over it all his stay each year, or at least during his stay among us, to set forth clearly all the important or leading points of our system of Theology, so as to educate our younger members and persuade outsiders who have none of our books, over to our belief and church, and yet his sermons must be so brief that Mr. Full-of-the-world, and Mrs. Novel-dresser, and Mr. and Mrs. Noddy, and Baby Thimble-measure can return and digest it all, and, perhaps, a six-hour story or gossip's concert in the afternoon besides; and finally he must preach with the eloquence of a six thousand dollar minister, and yet willingly give his services for six hundred a year, and never, like Paul, turn aside for a moment to tent-making. Let him look for Elijah's ravens when the comest-crested property of the church fails, and, if he starve like Lazarus and Mary, he will find an abundant reward in heaven.

FAMILY READING.

THOU KNOWEST.

BY CLARE EVEREST.

I do not know, I cannot see,
 What storms are gathering ahead,
 What foes may lie in wait for me,
 What sterile paths my feet may tread;
 But I would leave it all to Thee,
 And in this knowledge still my dread,
 Thou knowest.

The future may be fair and bright,
 Unsaddened by a funeral knell,
 Or shadows of unbroken night
 May ever on my pathway dwell,
 And shapes of ill my heart affright;
 I do not know, I cannot tell,
 Thou knowest.

The souls who seek their help from Thee
 I know that thou dost ever guide,
 I know that Thou wilt care for me
 Whatever evil may betide,
 And ever most abundantly:
 With this one thought I'm satisfied,
 Thou knowest.

MR. MOODY'S BROTHER

The following story, which Mr. Moody told at one of his great meetings in London, at the Haymarket Theatre, shows how he uses anecdotes for illustration, which he often introduces with wonderful effect:

The first thing I can remember in my life was the death of my father, he died suddenly one beautiful day in June. He fell dead upon the floor, and it gave me such a shock that I never forgot it. The next thing I can remember was the sickness of my mother, and the third thing was my eldest brother becoming a prodigal. I will remember how that mother mourned over that boy—how she used to send us off to the post office, a mile and a half from where we lived, to see if there was not a letter from him, and how we used to come back day after day bringing the sad tidings, "No letter." I remember how we sat round the old family fireside and talked about our father—how he looked and what he used to do. Mother would tell us what he said, and we would sit there as long as she would talk about him; but if any body mentioned the eldest brother all would be hushed, for the tears used to flow down my mother's face at the mention of his name, and sometimes I would see her turn away to wipe her eyes while she was busy at work; and sometimes she would say: "Oh, that I could near he was dead. It would be such a relief. I do not know but what he may be in want in some foreign land."

The house in which we lived was on a hill, and when the wind used to blow mother used to be more sad. She would say: "Perhaps he is on the ocean, and there may be a gale. He may be exposed to fierce winds to-night." Many a time I woke up past midnight, and listening, I have heard her pray: "O God, save my boy! O God, bring back my boy!" Year after year the mother pleaded to God for the boy, and on Thanksgiving Day, when the nation gives thanks to the Almighty, it is a customary thing for the families of the United States to gather round their boards, as we used to do so, mother always placed one vacant chair for her absent boy. "Perhaps," she said, "he will come back to-day;" and we used to go and watch at the window and see if he was coming.

Long years passed away, and the hair that was once so black began to turn grey, and the step that was once so firm began to tremble. I could see that her trouble was bringing her down to an untimely grave. She was indeed just going down to the grave with a broken heart, such was the love and pity with which her heart used to yearn over the boy. I often thought she loved him more than all the rest of us. The other children grew up and passed away from that village. Her two youngest children were sitting by her side one day, and there was a stranger seen outside the house, and without going upon the piazza he stood looking in upon that mother that he had not seen for years, and when the mother saw him she did not know him; but when she saw the tears trickling over the long black beard that had grown in the interval—in those tears she recognized her long-lost boy. She sprang to the window. She said, "Oh, my son, is it possible you have come back? Come in, come in." But there he stood, and he said, "No, mother, I will never cross your threshold until you forgive me."

Young men, do you think that mother forgave that boy? Ah! there was not anything in her heart that she wanted to do so much all these long years. She had forgiven him all along, and had not anything to forgive now. She ran to the door, she met him upon the threshold, and threw her loving arms round his neck; she pressed him to her bosom and wept over him. She would not bear a word of self-reproach from him; she was only too glad to have him back. When the news reached me in a distant city, I can't tell you how my heart leaped within me for joy; but the joy that it gave us as a family is nothing to the joy that will be in heaven to-night if you will only come to Christ.—*Exchange.*

PROFIT BY KEEPING THE SABBATH.

BATH.

Sabbath keeping benefits both the body and mind, and thus must also tend to increase the worldly estate; for who does not know that a sound mind in a body is all important to the success of his business! For what say facts here? They say that those who work six days will do more work and do it better than those who labor seven. Cases in proof of this to almost any extent, might be mentioned if space were allowed. Two or three must suffice. At a Sabbath Convention in Baltimore, which was attended by one thousand seven hundred delegates from all parts of the United States, a great drover from Ohio stated that he had made more money by resting on the Sabbath with his droves, than he would if he had kept on seven days. His cattle and sheep always brought him a better price than others which were constantly kept travelling. In one case where the neighbours could not find a market, in consequence of the cattle having been over driven, he cleared five hundred dollars, and this he attributed to resting on the Lord's day. A salt-boiler tried the experiment of resting on the Sabbath, which it was thought that business would not admit of; but he found, at the end of the season, that he had made more salt than any of his neighbors, with the same dimension of kettles, while his whole expense for breakage and repairs was only six cents. Some years ago, after a long wet spell in harvest, came a clear Sabbath, when many farmers hurried in their grain, which, from being housed before it was fully dry, was greatly damaged; while others who feared God and kept his commandments, were enabled to gather in their's in good condition. No doubt money is sometimes made for a time by Sabbath labor, as to the case of those who, in violation of the laws both of God and man, sell liquor on that day, and find perhaps, more customers than on any other day; but the sad history of such men, and their families too, shows often that they only "earn wages to put it in a bag with holes," and that the curse of God upon their ill-gotten gains. A friend in an adjoining county once remarked that he had, for a long time, made careful observations on this subject, and had never known any permanent advantages to arise from projects planned or carried out on this day, but often serious losses to have followed them.—*British Workman.*

SCRIPTURAL CASES OF IMMERSION.

—We have in our city a colored barber who is a very enthusiastic Baptist, and frequently engages in theological discussions. I approached him one day while entangled in one of these discussions with an old German from the country. The barber had evidently been advocating rather strongly the doctrine or practice of immersion. "Well," said the German, "I do not remember but three places in the Bible where immersion is mentioned at all—only three. The first was where the Egyptians were pursuing the Israelites through the Red Sea, and the Lord caused the waters to flow back on them, and they were all immersed. The second place was where the Lord commanded Noah to take all his family into the ark, after which he caused it to rain forty days and nights, and all those outside the ark were immersed. The third place was where the Saviour caused the devils to go into the herd of swine, and they rushed down a steep hill into the sea, and they were all immersed." The only reply the barber made to this was, "Yas yas! yas!"

PLEASURES FOR A CHILD.

Douglas Jerrold wrote thus pleasantly of a child-life: "Blessed be the hand that prepares a pleasure for a child, for there is no saying when and where it may again bloom forth. Does not almost everybody remember some kind-hearted man who showed him a kindness in the days of his childhood? The writer of this recollects himself at this moment, as a bare-footed lad, standing at the wooden fence of a poor little garden, in his native village where, with longing eyes, he gazed on the flowers which were blooming there quietly in the brightness of a Sunday morning. The possessor came forth from his little cottage; he was a woodcutter by trade and spent the whole day at work in the woods. He was coming into the garden to gather flowers to stick in his coat when he went to church. He saw the boy, and breaking off the most beautiful of his carnations, which was streaked with red and white, he gave it to him. Neither the giver nor the receiver said a word, and with bounding steps the boy ran home. And now, here at a distance, after so many events of so many years, the feeling of gratitude which agitated the breast of that boy expresses itself on paper. The carnation has long since withered, but now it blooms afresh."—*Selected.*