

cured, which will enable the science students to continue some of their work for this term, but the natural science course will never be what it should be until suitable rooms and apparatus are supplied in a building specially adapted for carrying

on experiments and practical work to the best advantage. All the students in the university would participate in the benefits of such a building, and surely, when it has been so long talked of, now is the time to build it.

READING

We are very particular about the people with whom we associate. There are few things which more agitate the minds of Anglo-Saxon parents in our day than the society in which their children are to move. About the principle of discrimination it is not necessary to say anything. We all have some principle of our own. There are people whom we want to know; there are others whom we treat with reserve; there are some again whom we keep at arm's length. This is the essence of our dignity, or let us call it self-respect. When our principle of discrimination is sound, when we want to know the good and noble, and are indifferent to the vulgar distinctions of wealth and spurious rank, the soul becomes sound and pure by virtue of its discerning choice, and our rigorous self-restraint in the matter of companionship. We may observe, however, a difference as our character ripens and our moral form becomes set. In youth we must shun the vicious and weak, counting their very breath a miasma; later on we can pass unharmed among men of any sort, securely assimilating what is good and rejecting what is bad; at last we may become so firmly knit in all purity and truth and charity that our presence among men of the most degraded type will be harmless to ourselves but serviceable to them.

We are all agreed, then, that the society we affect is not a matter of indifference; it must be at all times wisely chosen; its effects upon us must be scrupulously watched; its tendencies to deflect us from the appointed way must be rigorously checked and valiantly frustrated.

Now, the object of the present essay is

to show, as briefly and as clearly as we can, that in the power of reading we have admission to society of all kinds; to society of all ages; that our intercourse with men and women through the written page is often more intimate than that which we hold with living people; that the influence which these invisible minds exercise over us is incalculable; and that therefore the choice which we must bring to bear on the selection of what we read, should be even more intelligent, more earnest, and more severe than that which regulates the selection of our companions and friends.

While readers were chiefly and entirely the cultivated few, who approached books with carefully trained intelligence, and with the composure and fastidiousness of culture, the caution was hardly needed; but when everybody reads, when books are as free to us as the air we breathe, when all of us are thrown into the crowd of authors, who jostle one another in the crowded thoroughfares of literature, it is necessary perhaps to caution the unwary against those besmirching persons, who may rub against them unawares, and to suggest by what methods it is possible to quit the mixed throng of the thoroughfares, and to find in quiet and wholesome places the companionship with the good and great by which the soul can thrive.

There is a society continually open to us all, of people who will talk to us as long as we like, whatever our rank or occupation; talk to us in the best words they can choose, and with thanks, if we but listen to them. And this society, because it is so numerous and so gentle, can be kept waiting around for us all day