

### The Diffusion of Knowledge.

Man is first a speaking animal, and next a writing animal. Each word that he uses expresses some meaning. Each word stores up an indefinite amount of experience. All men may pour into it their experience, and by it recognize the experience of others. The art of writing at once increases infinitely the possibility of intercommunication, because it preserves the experience recorded for persons widely separated in space, and far removed in time. The experience of each man—what he sees, and feels, and hears,—is communicated to his fellow men, so that each one shall have the experience of all. Not only what is perceived by the senses, but also what the activity of reflection arrives at, shall be recorded and distributed for the use of other and succeeding generations.

When man can only speak—when oral intercommunication only can be carried on—the individual is limited to what he experiences of life in his own person, or in the comparatively few persons whom he sees daily, or lastly, to what he hears from the traveler. The nature of this process of obtaining experience of human life, is so defective, that it leaves the individual immersed in his own special atmosphere. He is unable to increase his views in comparison with other men's. He is unable to comprehend and understand, or even to know, the life of the various countries, or even the remote parts of his own country. It follows that he has no idea of government and lacks patriotism. The limiting of one's knowledge to what can be perceived by the senses, gives a narrowness to one's ideas and prevents the perception of such processes as institutions, and hence there is little or no knowledge of those phases of life which embody human or divine reason.

Therefore the condition of mankind is improved when he is able to find out the experiences and results of the thinking of others. The discovery of paper manufacture, and the invention of printing have aided the recording of men's experiences and thoughts wonderfully. Before printed books and newspapers were known there was an age of intellectual darkness and confusion. This dark age was the separating period between ancient and modern civilization. Justice and liberty were unknown terms in those days. The world's chief occupation was quarreling and fighting. A man's power was determined by his physical strength and by the lands he possessed. From the poor peasant to the king no person was secure; plots and insurrections disturbed every nation from within, while from without frequent invasions of barbarian hordes devastated the lands. Learning was at a standstill. Then came the revival of learning. It was largely by means of the invention of printing that this great revolution was begun. Literature