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Miscellaneous Mention.

Books are now so cheap that it is no longer a question what we can afford to buy, but rather what we can take time to read. Half a century ago, or less, there might have been good reasons why a person was ignorant of the writings of most of our best authors. Now he must be poor indeed who cannot have at his command good books, in fact the very best. True, they may not be bound in calf or morocco and have gilt edges, but the matter is all there, and that is all that is necessary.

The educational endowments of this State comprise common school land, 2,443,148 acres, subject to sale and lease, the (capital proceeds being funded), and income only used. Agricultural college lands, 89,452 acres; University land, 45,219 acres; Normal School lands, 12,800 acres, and the school fund in money which now amounts to \$1,294,137. The revenue applied to common school purposes for the year 1880 amounted to \$1,108,617.23.

If students who are studying languages would, when they look up a word, learn all of the ways in which it is used—in short, add it to their vocabulary—soon they would have little trouble in translating their Latin, Greek, German or French. Usually, however, the student only looks for the meaning of a word for the particular connection in which it is used. The next day he may meet the same word with a slightly different meaning and he has no idea of its use or derivation. It is an entirely new word to him. It seems like folly for any one to spend five or six years on a language and then not be able to translate a single page without the aid of a grammar and a lexicon. But it is owing to the manner in which each day's lesson is learned. Was each word mastered so that it would be recognized wherever seen, classical graduates could translate any page of Latin or Greek as readily as they do now a page that they translated while at college.

Frequently some revolting murder or horrible crime startles a community. When the culprit is questioned, often it

is found that the desire to commit the act was engendered by reading some yellow-covered blood and thunder pamphlet of the day—such trash cannot be dignified by the name of novel. The fame and notoriety of some outlaws or desperate characters allure him to commit the deeds that, as he supposes, made them great. The youth of our cities need no stimulant to nerve them to lives of sin and crime. They have within them germs that ought not to be nourished by the history of such a man as Jesse James. Those newspapers that so lavishly and intemperately narrate the fearful deeds of the dead outlaw know not, or at least heed not, the responsibility that rests upon them. Morally they stand convicted of guilt. By trying to throw the mantle of the hero and greatness around him, they encourage cranky and desperate characters to follow his calling.

In the practical conjugation of life's chief verbs, no mood is so unpleasant to most scholars as the imperative. In the school room, in the home, in society and in the work-shop, verbs conjugated in this mood rouse only opposition, wilfulness, hate and rebellion. Strikes, insurrections and mobs are the natural results. Truants from school, runaway boys from home are the supplement to such a grammar. Kindness, gentle and cheery words, open hearts and doors as though with magic keys. It takes so little time and trouble to be polite and kind. So many pleasant words and acts follow as the result of our own gentleness, that we wonder sometimes why we are not all gentlemen and gentlewomen, and that old-fashioned word "gentlewomen" should be rescued from the ignominious position into which it was forced by its use and abuse as applied only to those of noble birth in England. To be a gentlewoman or man in the highest and best use of either word, we should make our object of our education. Culture and knowledge, talent, wealth and place are all adorned by perfect manners and without manners culture is, or ought to be, impossible, and wisdom and talent go without those pleasant colorings which so heighten and intensify the effect. Position and influence, without them, are ridiculed

and lose largely of that potent influence which they otherwise would possess.

The *Journal* of a late issue has an editorial on spelling reform. The word "colonel" is taken as a representative of a class of words whose spelling is not in agreement with the pronunciation. The *Journal* says, "The explanation of this case, like perhaps the most of those apparent orthographical eccentricities in our tongue, is that once 'colonel' was pronounced just as it is spelled, but that the habit of the busy Anglo Saxon has made universal of clipping down his words and saving time in speech, has reduced it to 'kernel.'" Now, spelling reformers desire that English words, like German, be spelled as pronounced. The *Journal* accounts for this difference by the fact, or theory, "that the German language had taken a permanent form before Germany had a literature. But this was not the case in France and England. It is very possible that when the French became a written language, and scholars commenced to spell its words, the spelling corresponded to its pronunciation, and that the deviation now arises from the universal degeneracy of pronunciation and not from any original fault in those who made the orthography. Next to the French literature, the English is the oldest in modern European tongues, and the deviation comes from the same source, though it is not so wide, because universal education tends to prevent the vulgarizing of old words into clipped and mutilated forms." This is a very ingenious theory and accounts for all the facts in the case. Let it then be accepted as true. What effect does this have on the *Journal's* conclusion that a change in our spelling to conform to pronunciation would "merely bedevil and destroy the mother tongue?" Does it not destroy it altogether? Surely the English language has as "permanent a form" now as the German had when "the scholars commenced to spell its words." And as "universal education tends to prevent the vulgarizing of old words into clipped and mutilated forms," why would it not be a good plan to spell words now as they are pronounced? If ever a language was settled, our's surely is.