

## LIBRARIAN SPOFFORD.

PROBABLY THE MOST RAPID READER  
IN THIS COUNTRY.

Reading a Daily Newspaper—Picking Out  
the Best of a Book—A Time Wasting  
Habit—Arrangement of Books in the  
Library.

Mr. Spofford, the librarian of congress, is probably the most rapid reader in this country. The other day a reporter sought some information of him. Simultaneously, within a space of five minutes, he conversed with the reporter, "read" through completely a twelve page New York paper, dictated a letter to a stenographer and gave directions to two assistants. He commenced all at the same time and finished them together. A remark, a sentence dictated aside, a direction, a sentence dictated, a remark and so on, apparently without an effort, and all the time his eyes were running over the paper almost as fast as he could turn from page to page.

The reporter asked him afterwards how he did it.

"Oh, it comes natural for me to give my attention to two or three things together that way. I do it by a sort of intuition without thinking of it."

### PICKING OUT THE MEAT.

"But how do you read so rapidly?"  
"I acquire the subject matter," said Mr. Spofford. "I pick out the meat—the pith. I pay no attention to the verbiage. I scarcely see the words and never note the form of sentences. I have learned, by long practice and having a natural tendency for it, to get the information without the rhetoric. In this way the thought is got at a glance. It is not the words you want. When your time is all too short for your work you can't afford to waste it on words. In reading there is so much that is of no use to you—a worthless lot of verbiage. By practice you can avoid all this. Nearly all books or papers are taken up mostly with rhetoric, and have the fact and substance stored away in a very small space. If you only know how to find it. I seldom spend more than half an hour and never more than an hour and a half in reading—or reconnaissance of the largest volume. For instance, I take this," and he took a volume from the shelf. "No," looking at the title, "this is hardly the proper book to illustrate it with. This is Carlyle; he has to be read; every word. He is one of the few authors who cannot be read as I have described. You must read every word, and well it pays you for the time. But it is only such a rugged and extraordinary writer that it is necessary to read that way. All those thousands of books with smooth, easy running sentences, they are all alike, and you don't want to waste time on the language—you want to seize on the soul and devour it in an instant. Like this, now," and he reached another book (not Carlyle), and went down the pages one after another, as an expert accountant would go down a column of figures. "Nothing there I want, nor there, nor there." Then occasionally striking something to the point and getting the thought in an instant. He went over probably fifteen or twenty pages in this way in a length of time hardly worth reckoning, and without even making a break in the conversation.

"Many people," Mr. Spofford went on, "have the time wasting habit of pronouncing every word in their mind and noticing every pause and punctuation as they go along as if reading aloud. All these words and sentences, with the capitalization and punctuation—the commas, the colons, the semicolons, the periods and paragraphs, are only the signs to be followed, but not to be recorded in the mind. Many readers, perhaps most readers, chuck their heads up with commas and colons instead of thoughts."

### ARRANGEMENT OF THE BOOKS.

"It is said," suggested the reporter, "that you know every book in the library?"

"In a general way. I know where to find every book, its size and general appearance, and its subject matter. I could not tell you the contents of the books, but merely what they are about. There are some 600,000 volumes, arranged in forty-four subdivisions, which are again subdivided. I have the library arranged according to what I conceived to be the common sense plan. The books are arranged alphabetically by subject, the fiction only by authors. You are now in the alcove containing biographies of Englishmen. The alcoves are arranged alphabetically by subjects, and the books within arranged in their alphabetical order. For instance, take Cromwell; all the biographies of Cromwell are together, and next is another "C" progressively. Suppose some one wants a certain work on finance. I know it is in that alcove up there. I know what book it is by association, and just where it is. But that alcove is overflowed, and the books are all piled up on the floor and along there in front. Suppose they ask for a book of comparatively recent date. I know it is not on the shelves, because they were filled long before its publication. So it must be in that pile somewhere. I know the size of the book, and its appearance; I can recognize it, for it passed through my hands to get into the library. For the past twenty years every book that has come into the library has gone through my hands, and I remember it. In a general way I know its size and appearance, and about what is in it. Any one of them you mention I will remember it and what it is like. It is all a working of the mind by association."

"How about finding quotations?" asked the reporter.

"Well, if a member wants to use a quotation that is not in familiar quotations and is from a poet who has no concordance—Byron and Burns, for instance, have no concordance—and he wants to know the exact words and where it comes from, he will probably come to me. He will likely remember in a general way what it is—a few of the words—or what it is about and the meter. I may be able to tell by its sound, who its author is, and I can form an idea anyhow as to the period it belongs to. Then I discard all poems of an earlier or a later period, then I discard all authors I knew could not have written it, and then I discard again all poems of a different metre and all upon subjects wherein the quotation could not occur. In this way I harrow my field of research, and then I generally have little difficulty in finding what I want."

"It is the same principle throughout—discard all that you don't want."—Washington Star Librarian.

Information concerning lands, lots, and business chances in Griggs County, can be obtained from the COURIER office.



COOPERSTOWN.

In the above engraving of Cooperstown it will be seen, that the waving wheat fields, encroach upon the village green—that the suburban villas, are not as yet in *esse*—that the city is immersed in an illimitable sea of pure air, resting upon a basis of vegetable loam, of unparalleled extent, and fertility—that air and earth are shimmering continually in a proxy of mutual admiration. But for the necessary curtailment of the horizon in the illustration the honest farmers might be seen to approach the great rural trading point, from the Mouse river, on the north, to the main line of the Northern Pacific,

on the south; from the United States on the east, to where the foot hills of the great western watershed commence to pitch and roll—

Some in rags,  
And some in tags,  
And some in velvet gowns.

With a population of less than 1,000 souls, draining the trade of 1,600 square miles of richness, populated by an honest, industrious and thrifty people, it is not to be wondered at that its churches, banks, elevators, stores, hotels, newspapers, horse markets, lumber yards, coal and wood depots, architects, ministers, lawyers, doctors, milliners, dress-makers, blacksmiths, machine warehouses, are the best in the world.

In 1885 Nine Thousand Tons of wheat was marketed at this point at such a price that had the receipts been equally distributed to the people of the county, \$100 in cash would have been given to every man, woman and child. So rich and vast is the country that centres at this point, if one-half of the arable land should be cultivated to wheat, the yield at 20 bushels per acre, by close mathematical calculation would be in excess of 175,000 tons.

In addition to the cultivation of cereals, the surrounding farmers are raising horses, cattle, pigs and poultry for which they find a ready market. As a grazing country the only draw back is the exceeding fertility of the soil, for it requires moral courage in the husbandman

to graze land that by tickling with a plow will "laugh with a harvest" and that breaks a cast iron binder all up the first season. Cattle fatten at the straw stack, while barley in sixty days converts the lean "razor back" into a shapeless ball of lard. The finest breeds of Percheron and Clydesdale horses are carefully cultivated, and thrive upon the native grasses better than the best timothy or red top.

The horse, cattle and hog market of Cooperstown is a revelation to easterners.

The very best of land can be had at \$5 per acre in the vicinity of Cooperstown, while the city offers the best inducements to enterprising business men.

An improved farm of 506 acres within sight of three elevators will be sold very cheap. Every acre is first-class wheat land, except some excellent meadow. An improved farm of 320 acres—all good wheat land—cheap for cash. A magnificent improved tract of 520 acres adjoining a live town can be had at a bargain.

F. H. ADAMS.