

to ignorance, but if wisely directed it is power of self-control; it is power over material nature; it is power over mind and will. It is the avenue to truth, to all truths; and if rightly followed out it is the rendering of an obedience to the maxim of divine wisdom, by which alone its realization can be hoped for. "Get wisdom, with all thy getting get understanding."

THE HON. MINISTER OF EDUCATION ON THE STUDY OF HISTORY.

The people of Ontario were proud of their school system, and himself was exceedingly pleased to see the free libraries that were being instituted all over the country, supplementary to the Public Schools, and affording to all the opportunity of following out their desire for knowledge. And now having obtained the library, the question arose—what should be read? He had not seen the catalogue of the books contained or to be contained in the library, but in his idea a very important department should be that of history. And in studying history it was all-important that Canadians should make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the history of England and of Great Britain as a whole. If philosophy was anywhere to be learned from history surely it was from the history of the greatest Empire of ancient or modern times. Above all things was it necessary that Canadians should study thoroughly the history of their own country. If there was one thing more than another that was studiously avoided in the educational system of this country it was the study of its history. Even in the Public Schools, the history of their own country—this fair Canada of ours—which it behoved them all to know and understand, was almost totally neglected. But besides the history of their own country Canadians should read the biographies of great men of all times, of men foremost in art, in arms, and in song, giving inspiration from one to another till a race was reared worthy of the race from which we sprang. The speaker instanced the biography of Hugh Miller as one that deserved being studied carefully and thoughtfully. His life was an example of what perseverance and plodding would accomplish. His was an example that would serve to fire youthful ambition and to stimulate youthful energy.

THE REV. DR. WITHROW ON THE USE AND ABUSE OF BOOKS.

The Rev. Dr. Withrow said: I regard this library as in a very important sense the complement of our Public School system. Only a few of our young people can pass from the Public Schools to the colleges or universities of the country. But these free libraries, which I hope to see multiplied throughout the land, are the people's colleges, where the poorest lad or the toiling artisan shall enjoy the best teaching in the world. "The true university of these days," says Carlyle, "is a collection of books." All education that is worth anything must be largely self-education. I am sure that the learned president of University College will agree with the opinion that many a self-taught man—who has never seen the inside of a college—self-taught like John Bright, by the help of good books, is in the best sense of the word well educated. On these shelves are the silent teachers

who shall take by the hand the enquiring student, denied the advantages of university training, and shall guide his steps through the wonder-world of science, and through the lofty realms of intellectual and moral truth.

"Reading," says Addison, "is to the mind what exercise is to the body; as by the one is health preserved, strengthened, and invigorated, by the other virtue—which is the health of the mind—is kept alive, cherished, and confirmed." I prefer to consider reading as something more than mere mental exercise; as the very food of the mind, the very condition of intellectual life and thought and study, as the assimilation of that aliment which alone can satisfy the hunger and thirst of the soul. As well starve the body, which is but the servant of the mind, as suffer the nobler, the truly regnant part of man, to pine and perish for lack of mental, of spiritual food.

"God be thanked for books," says Channing. "They are the voices of the distant and the dead, and make us heirs of the spiritual life of all past ages." By means of this free library the poorest man among us, the friendless, and the solitary, may find spiritual friendships and perpetual solace and succour and delight. He may hold converse with the mighty dead, and range throughout the wide realms of creative thought, of poetic fancy, of scientific exploration. Though he dwell in the humblest cottage the "myriad-minded Shakespeare," the majestic muse of Milton, the great poets and philosophers, and sages and seers will come beneath his roof and give him companionship with the noblest spirits of all the ages. Their high thoughts or sweet fancies or curious lore will lighten the burdens of toil and brighten dark days and gladden sad hours, and lift his mind above the dull and sordid drudgery of life. These books, let us hope, shall in many cases prove to sorely tempted men an attraction more potent than the tavern or saloon, and give to the domestic fireside a brightness and a gladness long unknown.

THE ABUSE OF BOOKS.

It may be asked, however, the speaker continued,—Is there no obverse to this medal—no other side to the subject? There is. "Books," says Emerson, "are the best things well used; abused, they are among the worst." There is such a thing as the abuse of books. Many make their minds the conduit through which pours a flood of trashy or pernicious reading, the effect of which, besides the waste of time and enfeebling of their mental powers, is to leave an inveterate taint behind. Of distinctly pernicious books, I hope that we shall in this library, have none. Of the frothy and frivolous, the sort of which young ladies at Paris, let us say, get a volume every day, and two volumes on Saturday, I hope the patronage will be small. "But even the foolishlest book," says the genial Autocrat at the Breakfast Table "is a kind of leaky boat in a sea of wisdom, some of the wisdom will get in anyhow." It will be a poor book from which something cannot be learned. Let us hope that the reading of even poor books may lead in time—if only through the weariness and disgust that they cause—to the reading of better books, and good books will be a most effective safeguard against idleness and vice. "My early

invincible love of reading," wrote Gibbon, "I would not exchange for the treasures of India."

TRUTH UNDYING.

"A great library," continued the speaker, "has been cynically called a vast mausoleum, in which lie embalmed, each in his narrow cell, the mummied dead of bygone ages." I do not think that this is at all a good comparison. No man is ever so much alive as when speaking through a good book. Death smites at him in vain. He still lives long after his body has turned to dust. Indeed he multiplies himself a thousandfold and speaks, it may be, in many lands and in many tongues to multitudes who never could have heard his living voice. "Books are not dead things," says Milton; "they do contain a potency of life in them, to be as active as that soul whose progeny they are. As good almost kill a man as kill a good book." I hope, therefore, that in time every "live" book, whether I might agree with it or not, will find a place on the shelves. I am not at all disturbed by the conflict of opinion that is going on around us. I have no fear of the discussion of the profoundest and most fundamental questions that agitate men's minds. I prefer to say with the great apologist for a free press 200 years ago, "Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so truth be in the field, we do injuriously to misdeed her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple; whoever knew truth put to the worst in a free and open encounter?..... For who knows not that truth is strong, next to the Almighty?" I have the most serene confidence that, through the good providence of God, as the result of all the discussions and conflicts of the ages, Truth—fair, free, immortal Truth—shall be gloriously and forever triumphant.

PROF. GOLDWIN SMITH ON THE FOUNDERS OF CANADA.

Prof. Goldwin Smith said they had entered into an heritage prepared for them by other hands who had gone before. He was of the opinion that the noblest history of the pioneers was written in unmistakable words in the great and limitless heritage they had left behind them for coming generations. The noblest and greatest pioneers of the land had never found a biographer. Their deeds were untold and unwritten. Often had he looked with reverence on the graves of those men who struggled for the early life of the country. The buried inhabitants of the city of Toronto, who took active part in the early wars, performed deeds which had never been recorded in books.

There was always some amount of anxiety on the occasion of the opening of an institution of such a character as that with which they were now concerned lest there should be any expression of an opinion in favour of limiting freedom in the choice of the books wherewith the library was to be filled. But the address of Dr. Withrow had satisfied them on this point as far as the Toronto Free Library was concerned. The learned speaker exemplified the value of freedom in this respect by an allusion to its effect upon modern theological controversies. Materialism, for instance, was now in full retreat from the very prominent position it held a few years ago, and

he contended that this retreat had been brought about almost wholly by the free circulation of the writings of its advocates. The speaker concluded by echoing the prayer of Dr. Withrow, that the library might enjoy the utmost degree of prosperity and success.

A BOTANICAL LESSON.

MRS. Professor addresses her class
"Now, mark well my lecture, each good lad and lass.
If you take this small seed and deposit it quite
Far down in the earth, away from the light,
One slight green shoot will presently show
That the germ has begun to bud, you know.

"Why does it bud?" "Because it draws
Now life from the earth, by natural laws."
"How does it draw new life, my dear?"
"Well, that indeed—does not clearly appear;
But watch it awhile, and you shall see
The small shoot grow to a young rose-tree."

"How does it grow?" "Ah! yes, the cells
Are filled with sap that steadily swells
Those delicate tissues, and then behold
The leaf and the perfect flower unfold!"
"How does the sap get into the cell?"
"So far the wise men have failed to tell."

"But oh, the wonder that gleams and glows
In the sweet white miracle of the rose,
Whose every leaf has a velvet side,
With the colour of rubies, glorified."
"How is it coloured?" "It takes its hues
From the sun-rays. Yes, each rose can choose

"The red or the gold ray, or hold them all:
Each sweet-brier that garlands the gray old
wall,
Each violet flecking the earth with blue
Draws from one palette its own glad hue."
"But who carries her flush to the cheek of
the rose,
Her blue to the violet?" "God only knows!"

And therefore wise people never will ask,
But now I have nearly finished my task,
And you, my pupils, will readily see
How the small seed changes to flower and tree;
And how fully, clearly, science can show
That the law of growth is—ahem—to grow."
Fannie R. Robinson.

The New Hand-book of Sunday-school Addresses. Edited by the Rev. Robert Tuck, B.A. Pp. 276. London: Elliott Stock. Toronto: William Briggs. Price \$1.

This is a series of nearly three hundred brief addresses for schools, anniversaries, teachers' meetings, junior and senior classes. They are brief, pointed, pithy, and well calculated to give valuable suggestions to teachers and others whose duty it is to address young people.

A GENTLEMAN writes to us wishing to know if the smoking car is considered fit for second-class passengers, or if, when there is no smoking-car, the users of the weed are allowed to indulge themselves in the second-class car. Not only our correspondent, but a lady with children, were forced to inhale the poisonous fumes from the tobacco of several smokers who had come in from the first-class carriages, and who added to the comfort of their poorer fellow-passengers by indulging in a generous rivalry as to which of them could make the biggest and the blackest pool of expectoration on the floor. Such beastliness ought not to be permitted. If there is no smoking car attached to the train, then the practice should be rigidly prohibited. Mulish disregard of the comfort of others is a distinguishing characteristic of the average tobacco smoker, and unless compelled, he will indulge his depraved appetite even in the presence of delicate women.—*Globe*.