

## RELIGIOUS TRACTS.

ON THE UTILITY OF  
DISTRIBUTING RELIGIOUS TRACTS.

*The Distribution of Religious Tracts* has many and peculiar advantages for doing good.

1. It is a cheap and easy method of diffusing saving knowledge, especially amongst young people, and the poorer classes of society. What is a Religious Tract, but a select portion of Divine Truth, laid down with simplicity and plainness? To give it greater effect it is sometimes illustrated and enforced by anecdote or narrative. It may be procured at a small expense; and any one who will devote even a trifling sum, either annually or otherwise, to the purchase of Religious Tracts, may thus become the instructor of hundreds or of thousands.—A half-penny, which would afford but a scanty relief to the bodily wants of the indigent, will purchase a Religious Tract, which through the blessing of Almighty God might prove the instrument of salvation to a sinner. It would be difficult to point out in what other way there is a probability of doing so much good at so small an expense. Besides, this is an easy method of being useful. Difficulties might arise either from natural diffidence, or a supposed want of ability, which would greatly hinder or entirely prevent us from conversing on religious subjects, especially with strangers; but these are hereby obviated, and an easy method of communicating instruction and reproof is presented to us. It will cost you little effort to choose, from your Collection of Tracts, one which you may judge adapted to the state of the person you wish to instruct or warn;—and to present it to him, saying, "My Friend, Do me the favour of reading this; I recommend it to your serious consideration." This may, perhaps, procure you an opportunity of conversing with him afterwards; but, should this not be the case, if you accompany your present with your fervent prayers for a blessing upon it, you will have the satisfaction of knowing, that you have brought the means of instruction, reproof, and correction, within the reach of one who needed them.

2. This is not only a cheap and easy method of doing good, but it is farther recommended, on account of its being modest and unobtrusive, and likely to avoid giving offence. Human pride would, in many cases, be wounded by the presence of a person who presumes to give instruction, admonition, or reproof; and would, probably, partially defeat, if not render entirely useless, the best-meant efforts employed in conversation. But a Religious Tract may be perused in the bosom of our families, or when alone, where no eye is present, except God's, to witness the effect it produces. The little silent monitor counts a tear, it remarks no blushes, but leaves the awakened sinner at liberty to yield to his convictions, and to give full vent to the feelings of his burdened heart. Uninterrupted by the presence of a spectator, the penitent can form his purposes of amendment; and, by solemn prayer, seek assistance from God to carry them into execution.

3. It is calculated to reach those cases which appear to be almost unprovided for by any other means. They who inhabit those regions of moral darkness and death, into which the rays of Divine Truth have seldom penetrated, in general, see no need of Religious Instruction, nor feel any desire to obtain it. The Sabbath is hardly known to them, except as a day of amusement or pleasure; and they have so long forgotten to assemble themselves with God's people, in his house, that at length it never enters into their mind that it is their duty to attend a place of worship. Did their salvation depend on their seeking after the means of acquiring religious knowledge, their condition would be nearly, if not altogether, hopeless. It is therefore necessary to seek them out in their own dwellings; to rouse them from their slumber by repeated calls; and to force, so to speak, the truth of God upon their attention. But what is better calculated to do this than the means here recommended? Let zealous and active Tract-Distributors enter the abodes of darkness, carrying in their hands their little messengers of mercy: the presenting of a Tract frequently opens the way for Religious Conversation; and affords an opportunity of inviting to God's house him who has long neglected Public Worship.

4. This method of Instruction has peculiar conveniences. A Religious Tract is short; it is soon

read; and its contents are easily remembered. This suits the convenience of mechanics and labourers, who have little inclination to read whole volumes, and little time to spare from their worldly occupations; and its brevity will frequently secure it a perusal, when larger treatises, however excellent, would be laid aside and neglected. Even instruction by preaching and conversation can only be received at stated times; and frequently, if forgotten, cannot be recalled; but a Tract may be read at our convenience, and perused as often as we please. Memory is thus assisted, and good impressions rendered permanent.

5. The Distribution of Religious Tracts forms an excellent accompaniment to other means of doing good. If, in the common intercourse of life, you meet with a person who appears desirous of instruction, what can be more proper, after having conversed with him, than to present him with a Tract, saying, "Here is a little book which will give you additional information on this subject; read it, and pray to God for his blessing." If, in conversation, you observe the mind of a person impressed by Divine Truth, will it not conduce to deepen the impression, if, at parting, you put into his hands a Tract, with these words, "My friend, this will more fully explain the subject of our conversation; it is the truth of God." Should you meet with a person who proposes to you the momentous inquiry, "what shall I do to be saved," can your pious counsel be better followed up than by a Tract, directing the wounded soul to the blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanses from all sin? To those who are accustomed to visit the abodes of wretchedness, for the purpose of relieving the poor, the sick and, the dying, a Religious Tract will be found a useful auxiliary; and to the person who receives it, it will often prove a precious boon superadded to the temporal relief which has been administered.

6. To persons whose avocations lead them to travel, either in this or in foreign countries, the distribution of Religious Tracts will be found a convenient method of sowing the seed of eternal life *beside all waters*. Let, therefore, Travellers by land furnish themselves with a proper selection of those portions of divine truth. Innkeepers, Waiters, Coachmen, Fellow-travellers, as well as other persons with whom they come in contact, will furnish an ample field for their circulation. Let Supercargoes, Captains, Mates, and Seamen, about to visit foreign countries lay in a sufficient stock of Religious Tracts; by their distribution they may introduce the light of salvation into some distant region, and be the instrument of bringing souls to Jesus from the ends of the earth.

7. There is at the present moment an imperative call on the religious public for the greatest activity in this duty. The exertions of pious and benevolent persons have done much towards rendering education general, but the talent of reading, thus so widely diffused, will if not properly directed, be prostituted to the service of sin, and, instead of proving a blessing, will be a curse. How necessary therefore is it to furnish those who have been taught to read with books, calculated to instil into their minds the pure principles of religion, and to teach them the practice of relative and social duties; and how imperative is the call on all those who are engaged in the instruction of Youth, to put into their hands such short and easy directories: especially,—

8. When it is considered what a flood of infidel and licentious Publications is poured into this country. These publications are written in a popular style: they are seasoned with vulgar wit, and are calculated to engage the attention of the simple, and to beguile the unwary. They are sold cheap, and circulated with the greatest activity. But their design is infernal; it is nothing less than to blot out our Faith, to bring all Government into contempt, and to overturn the foundations of civil and social Happiness. We therefore need an antidote to this evil; nor can we think of any thing better adapted for this purpose, than the means which it is the design of this Address to recommend. Thus we shall meet the enemies of truth on their own ground, and repulse their attacks in their own mode. The recollection of the inroads they have already made, and the ravages which they threaten, should rouse into action our utmost energies, in order to raise an efficient barrier against their further progress, and to deliver the prey from the jaws of the Destroyer.

## MISCELLANY.

*From the New-York Evening Post.*

ON THE COMPRESSION OF THE WAIST IN FEMALES.  
BY THE USE OF CORSETS.

We have been favoured with the perusal of an interesting essay on this subject by a medical gentleman, which has more fully opened our eyes to the mischiefs resulting from the compressed waists now in fashion—mischiefs which, in the paper before us, are exposed with a clearness and weight of evidence that must carry conviction to the mind of the most incredulous. The paper is so ably written and conclusive, that we should have been happy to print it entire, had its scientific form not rendered it too learned for the readers of newspapers. In the abstract of its contents which we shall submit, the author's statements must lose something of the precision and force which the introduction of anatomical details, with a frequent reference to plates, enable him to bestow upon them; but we think we shall be able in a general way, to show young ladies what injury to health their compliance with the present unnatural fashion, if persevered in, is certain to entail upon them.

Fashion lives on novelty, and we have on this account much charity for its wanderings and eccentricities. Bonnets with a snout as long as an elephant's proboscis, or a margin as broad as a Winchester bushel, are merely ridiculous. Shoulders that look like wings, and sleeves as wide as a petticoat, we think are not particularly graceful; but they have at least the merit of being airy, and we take no offence. We cannot, however, extend our indulgence to the compressed waist which is the rage at present. We know that as often as the waist is lengthened to its natural limits, this tendency to abridge its diameter appears; and we confess we are puzzled to account for the fact; for surely it is strange, that a permanent prepossession should exist in favour of a mode of dress which is at once ugly, unnatural, and pernicious. Were fashion under the guidance of *fast* the principles of drapery in painting and sculpture would never be lost sight of in its changes. The clothes that cover us may be disposed in an infinite variety of forms without violating those rules which the artist is careful to observe. The true form of the body ought to be disclosed to the eye, without the shape being exhibited in all its minutiae as in the dress of a harlequin; but in no case should the natural proportions (supposing the figure to be good) be changed. Ask the sculptor what he thinks of a fashionable waist, pinched till it rivals the lady's neck in tenuity; and he will tell you it is monstrous. Consult the physician, and you will learn that this is one of those follies in which no female can long indulge with impunity; for health and even life are often sacrificed to it.

We ought to mention, that the writer of the paper before us, has taken for ground work an "Essay on the use of Corsets," by the celebrated German physiologist Soemmerring, but with the statements of that author he has combined many valuable remarks of his own.

Corsets are used partly as a warm covering to the chest, and partly to furnish a convenient attachment to other parts of the female dress. This is all proper and correct; but to these uses fashion superadds others, originating in fantastical notions of beauty. Corsets are employed to modify the shape, to render the chest as small below, and as broad above, as possible, and to increase the elevation, fullness, and prominence of the bosom. To shew how this affects the condition of the body, we must begin by giving a short description of the thorax or chest, which is the subject of this artificial compression.

Every one who has seen a skeleton knows that the chest consists of a cavity protected by a curious frame work of bones. These are, 1st, the backbone (consisting of *vertebrae*, or short bones jointed into one another) which sustains the whole upper part of the trunk; 2d, the breastbone, about 7 or 8 inches long, and composed of three pieces; and 3dly, the ribs, of which there are generally 24. The twelve ribs on each side are all fixed to the backbone behind; seven of these, the seven uppermost, are also attached to the breast-bone before, and are therefore called *true ribs*. The eighth rib has its end turned up and rests on the seventh; the ninth rests in the same way on the eighth; but the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth, are not connected with one another in front at all. The fore extremity of each rib consists not of bone, but of an elastic substance called cartilage. The elastic-