BOOKS AND READING.

BY REV. PROF. WILLIAM CLARK, TRINITY COLLEGE, TORONTO.

THIS is one side of the question, and it is of great importance, especially with beginners, that. the inclination should be consulted. But there are dangers in the way, and we have solemn and earnest warnings on the subject of those dangers to which it would be well that we should give heed.

Thus Sir John Lubbock, who himself advised the reading of what we like, elsewhere remarks : "Our difficulty now is what to read, and not, like the sailors of Ulysses, take bags of wind for sacks of treasure, not only lest we should even now fall into the error of the Greeks, and suppose that language and definitions can be instruments of investigation as well as of thought, but lest, as too often happens, we · should waste time over trash. There are many books to which one may apply, in the sarcastic sense, the ambiguous remark said to have been made to an unfortunate author : 'I will lose no time in reading your book.'"

Still more strongly writes Mr. F. Harrison : " A man of power who has got more from books than most of his contemporaries once said : 'Form a habit of reading, do not mind what you read, the reading of better books will come when you have a habit of reading the inferior.' We need not accept this *obiter dictum* of Lord Sherbrooke. A habit of reading idly debilitates and corrupts the mind for all wholesome reading ; the habit of reading wisely is one of the most difficult habits to acquire, needing strong resolution and infinite pains ; and reading for mere reading's sake, instead of for the sake of the good we gain from reading, is one of the worst and commonest and most unwholesome habits we have."

In a previous part of the same essay he had said, " We who have wandered in the wastes so long, and lost so much of our lives in our wandering, may at least offer warnings to younger wayfarers, as men who in thorny paths · have borne the heat and burden of

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