

hour, is it not for popular handy-books, manuals for the million, dictionaries of daily wants, and such works as shall succinctly and, if possible, reliably compass the matter sought after? Corner Cupboards, Inquire Within's, Reason Why's, Refer to Me's, and such like baskets of broken food,—these are the demands of our busy age; and of such, to a marvellous extent, is the literature of the day.

Hence, also, cometh the epitome, the digest, the abstract, and such like dilutions and disintegrations of books which have their birth in the necessities of our busy age. Their necessity and purpose, we presume, must be admitted, though we cannot but regret that the readers of our time should be so driven that they must needs seek their intellectual sustenance in such *pot-pourris* of information, where often-times an author, or a fact recorded by him, is partizandy rendered, according to the idiosyncracies of his epitomist, and where, at best, the reader is but treated to bare facts, or to limited and illiberal views of an author, irrespective of the considerations of fact, or reasonings which the full context may reveal.

Still, it must be conceded, that such books are intellectual conveniencies, and while abbreviating labour, they facilitate research and enquiry.

The literary wheat from the storehouse of knowledge, which used to be garnered up in the few book worms or leisurely scholars, is now the daily food of the million readers, and the intellectual activities are fed from an abundant press. Whether wisdom will be justified of her children, from this wholesale reading and general gathering of information, remains to be seen, or whether it may be proved that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, a future day will tell. If it help, while chasing ignorance from the world, to elevate and strengthen, to enoble and christianize, each man his fellow man, the age will not bear its bright characteristic unworthily.

#### A PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR THE CAPITAL OF THE PROVINCE.

We regret that the remarks we made in the June No. of THE CANADA BOOKSELLER on the necessity for the establishment of a public reference library in Toronto, has evoked no response, nor incited any active efforts towards the formation of such an institution as we indicated the necessity for.

In a city rapidly becoming a great centre of commerce, notable for its high literary status, and the position it holds as the seat of the chief educational institutions of the

country, it is discreditable to the intelligence and public spirit of its inhabitants that it should not possess a really valuable and important public library.

We had hoped to have seen our Provincial Executive, with the ample exchequer at its command, devote an amount commensurate to the foundation, at least, of such a library as Toronto occasionally enjoyed under the perambulating system of the old regime; or that they would have so expedited the settlement of the account between the Provincial and Dominion governments, on the score of the library joint-interest, that we would now have had, at any rate, the prospect of possessing a respectable provincial library.

Surely our legislators who are content with the meagre literary sustenance and limited reference facilities provided within the walls of the parliament buildings, do not realize the value and importance to the community of public libraries, and cannot recognize the influence that books and their society exert on the people.

The stimulus to mental power and moral energy that a wholesome nutriment of books afford is incalculable; and, certainly, the united wisdom of our legislative halls should not be so indifferent to this fact.

We presume, however, our legislators acquit themselves of their short-comings in this matter by voting the annual bequest to that mausoleum of antiquated books and other literary relics—the education book depository.

But what are our citizens doing in regard to this important matter? Is philanthropy dead among us, and all public spirit utterly dormant? In the rapidly lengthening list of our wealthy capitalists and well to do business men, who find thousands for railway and bank stocks and less important investments, are there none who recognize the good that an investment will effect for their poorer fellowmen, the student, the mechanic and the artisan, in the endowment of such a people's boon as a free reference and lending library. Have we not an Astor, a Cooper, or a Peabody among us who will lead the way towards establishing in Toronto such a library as is the property of almost every leading city in both the old world and the new?

We do not seek that the city shall possess, as yet, an institution which shall rival the libraries that adorn the cities of New York, Boston or Washington; but we desire, at least, to see the nucleus formed of such a library as will creditably represent the intelligence and wealth of our western capital, and not do disgrace to the city in comparison with such cities as Buffalo, Detroit, and Chicago.

And looking to the old world, are there no