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"IF I FORGET THEE, O JERUSALEM! LET MY RIGHT HAND FORGET HER CUNNING."—PSALM 137, v.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

Lecture on the Pleasures of Literature.

We have much pleasure in presenting our readers with the following abstract or summary of a Lecture on the above interesting subject, delivered in the Temperance Hall, Wallace, on the 12th of March last, by our active and zealous Missionary, the Rev. George Harper, A. M., preacher of the Gospel.

The Lecturer commenced by pointing out the various departments of Literature, and showed the great advantages which we of the present day possess over our ancestors, even those of the last generation, in regard to education, owing both to the vast influx of cheap books upon all possible subjects, and the very general diffusion of knowledge among all classes of the people, from the most remote and the most improved facilities of instruction; at the same time reminding the audience that it seemed to be one of the leading characteristics of the close of the present dispensation, in accordance with the prophecy which declares, that in the last time "knowledge shall be increased." After some remarks on the state of Literature and learning before the invention of printing, Mr. Harper observed that it was a somewhat singular circumstance that, after so long a period of obscurity, the first printed book should have been a Latin Bible, published in 1460, and known by the name of the Mazarin Bible. It showed the vast assistance which the Reformation from Popery had derived from this noble discovery; observing that, as in the case of the earlier reformers, the voice of Luther would doubtless soon have been silenced by the thunders of the Pope, had that voice not been re-echoed and amplified from a thousand printing presses—a voice which, by the same means,

continued to the present hour swelling to a yet louder key, until at length, as all true men believe and hope, the lofty dome of St. Peter's, already trembling at the gathering sound, shall finally sink under its rending and irresistible power. He then went on to remark how wonderful a thing is a Book, by which a gifted author's thoughts may powerfully impress thousands who have never listened to his living voice, and may spread to the ends of the earth, and endure as long as the world. He next drew attention to that most wonderful of all books, the Bible, and said that as it was by far the oldest, so it was by far the best. It has been well remarked that it is not only the Book of God, but the God of Books. In a mere literary point of view, it certainly well deserved its title. Even in this, which was the lowest aspect, in which we could regard it, it was immeasurably above and beyond any mere human composition; and it must be gratifying to every friend of human progress, to think that this same prince of Books has long been within the reach of the poorest in the land. Irrespective of its claims as a divine record, its maxims, sentiments and precepts are so weighty and valuable—so expansive and yet so easily understood—so far beyond what any mere man could reach by the profoundest study of human nature, that they cannot frequently be turned over in the mind without greatly exalting and purifying and enriching the understanding of the student. In perusing the pages of the Bible a man as it were breathes a purer atmosphere, and escapes for a while from the mists and fogs which gather around every other production, which is of the earth earthly, the authors of which have each their peculiar crotchets to maintain and prejudices tending to lead away from the truth. It accomplishes what no other book can,—nay, what many thousands of the best could not—it supplies to the most ignorant and unenlightened, who have just ability enough to consult its pages, principles and rules of duty which are ever found to be by

far the most valuable that could be obtained, even when considered only with reference to the present world. Such is the depth of its resources, that the humblest individual who has made it his frequent study, is often indeed, on the most vital questions, more than a match for the wisest philosopher whose mind is not enlightened by its truth. Dealing with the grandest and most comprehensive principles, it throws a bright halo of light upon the profoundest mysteries of our being—and discloses secrets which are often revealed to the ignorant and foolish, while they are withheld from the wise and learned. He said it could easily be proved by numerous quotations, that not a few of the very finest passages—the most sublime and beautiful thoughts—in the best writers in our own and other languages—have been imitated from or suggested by the Bible. More than this, unlike every other book, such is its truthfulness to nature and the heart of man, that it can be translated into every tongue, and at the same time lose but little of its native majesty by the process. As an illustration of this he referred to the commencement of the 139th Psalm, beginning, "O Lord thou hast searched me &c." Proceeding with his subject, he next observed that the best writers of our language deserve of course the first and chief attention. Though the number of books is now immense, a small library could easily contain the works of the great luminaries of English literature. It is better to know a few good books well than a great number of inferior ones indifferently; and in a new country like this, where the daily business of life absorbs so much of the attention, few people have leisure to peruse many volumes: those read should therefore be worth reading. If in any case there exists the least desire for intellectual improvement, or knowledge of a higher kind than that which mere newspapers supply, it may now be gratified, as the best writers in our own language, both in science and in literature, may easily be had in a cheap and