

# READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

## RONDEAU.

Be self-contained—for absolution lies  
In those few words from all the world de-  
claries:

From envy, from dependence, carking  
care,

The weariness that waiteth on despair,  
From disappointment, dulness, sad sur-  
prise.

And with it comes forbearance, sweet and  
wise,

While noble thoughts on noble silence  
rise;

Untrammelled and unafraid, you dare  
Be self-contained.

It holds and helps when fondest fancy dies;  
Though hard to win, this knowledge  
ripe and rare

Is worth the wooing, stern and calm and  
fair:

You see it in the great gods' solemn eyes,  
And find it in the stillness that replies,  
Be self-contained.

—D. M. B., in the Speaker.

## THE ENGLISH PEOPLE AND THE BIBLE.

No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the meeting of the Long Parliament. England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible. It was as yet the one English book which was familiar to every Englishman: it was read at churches and read at home, and everywhere its words, as they fell on ears which custom had not deadened to their force and beauty, kindled a startling enthusiasm. . . . The power of the book over the mass of Englishmen, showed itself in a thousand superficial ways, and in none more conspicuously than in the influence it exerted on ordinary speech. It formed, we must repeat, the whole literature which was practically accessible to ordinary Englishmen; and when we recall the number of common phrases which we owe to great authors, the bits of Shakespeare, or Milton, or Dickens, or Thackeray, which unconsciously interweave themselves in our ordinary talk, we shall better understand the strange mosaic of Biblical words and phrases which coloured English talk two hundred years ago. The mass of picturesque allusion and illustration which we borrow from a thousand books, our fathers were forced to borrow from one; and the borrowing was the easier and the more natural than the range of the Hebrew literature fitted it for the expression of every phase of a feeling. When Spenser poured forth his warmest love-  
notes in the "Epithalamion," he adopted the very words of the Psalmist, and he bade the gates open for the entrance of his bride. When Cromwell saw the mists break over the hills of Dunbar, he hailed the sunbursts with the cry of David: "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered. Like as the sun riseth, so shalt thou drive them away!" Even to common minds this familiarity with grand poetic imagery in prophet and apocalypse gave a loftiness and ardour of expression, that with all its tendency to exaggeration and bombast we may prefer to the slipshod vulgarisms of the shopkeepers of to-day. Green's "Short History of the English People."

## THE MORAL RESULTS OF READING.

The moral results of reading are large, even though only secular books are read. Thomas Hood said: "A natural turn for reading preserved me from the moral shipwrecks so apt to befall those who are deprived in early life of their parental pilotage." We met a father of four boys and two girls in the public library of his village a few months after it was opened. "This is a great thing," he

said; "I know where my boys are even-  
ings now." They were at home reading  
with their sisters. The moral effect of  
breaking up their patronage of the streets  
after dark for the inspiring habit of read-  
ing, may have been worth to them all  
that real manhood is worth. Education  
being the proper development of the  
physical, mental and moral nature, is  
indirectly, if not directly, religious.

It is purely intellectual only as far as  
it makes the pupil familiar with the  
philosophy of his own mind. It is moral  
so far as it brings him to understand his  
relations to men. It is religious, so far  
as it introduces him to his relations to  
God. All this may result in a measure,  
from the careful reading of the best secu-  
lar books. Hence, it has begotten in  
many youthful hearts of both sexes, a no-  
ble aim, which has borne them onward  
and upward in correct and useful lives.  
clergyman of our acquaintance, desired  
to break the habit of several of his young  
men, who, once a week, availed them-  
selves of the "theatre train" to enjoy  
"the play" in the city. A popular book  
for youth had just been issued, showing  
the elements of true manhood, and how  
to cultivate them; he purchased several  
copies and presented them to as many  
young men.

There was a stirring chapter in the  
volume upon the dangers of theatre-go-  
ing. This chapter arrested the atten-  
tion of one of the young men particu-  
larly, all of them becoming more or less in-  
terested in its drift. The upshot was  
that it not only broke up their patron-  
age of the theatre train, but the first-  
named young man soon became a Chris-  
tian, and was followed into the new life  
by twenty or thirty of the young people  
of the town. Before reading, they were  
becoming like the fast young man who  
exclaimed: "If I were the owner of a  
million sterling, and by laying it at your  
feet, I could be transformed into a true  
Christian, I would do it cheerfully; and  
yet, before to-morrow, I may be enticed  
away by two shillings worth of sin." After reading, they could adopt the lan-  
guage of Hood, just quoted, "reading pre-  
served me from moral shipwreck."

Robert Southey's test of the moral  
effect of reading a book was this: "Would  
you know whether the tendency of a  
book is good or evil, examine in what  
state of mind you lay it down. Has it  
induced you to suspect that that which  
you have been accustomed to think un-  
lawful may after all be innocent, and that  
that may be harmless which you hither-  
to have been taught to think dangerous?  
Has it tended to make you dissatisfied and  
impatient under the control of others?  
Has it attempted to abate your admira-  
tion and reverence for what is great and  
good, and to diminish in you the love of  
your country and your fellow-creatures?  
Has it addressed itself to your pride,  
your vanity, your selfishness, or any other  
of your evil propensities? Has it de-  
filed the imagination with what is  
loathsome, and shocked the heart with  
what is monstrous? Has it disturbed the  
sense of right and wrong which the Cre-  
ator has implanted in the human soul?  
If so—if you are conscious of all or any  
of these effects—or if, having escaped  
from all, you have felt that such were  
the effects it was intended to produce,  
throw the book into the fire, young man,  
young lady, though it should have been  
the gift of a friend! Away with the  
whole set, though it should be the prom-  
inent furniture of a rosewood bookcase."  
—Boston Daily Traveller.

The secret of making one's self tire-  
some is not to know when to stop.—  
Voltaire.

Goodness answers to the theological  
virtue charity, and admits no excess but  
error. The desire of power in excess  
caused the angels to fall; the desire of  
knowledge in excess caused man to fall;  
but in charity there is no excess; neither  
can angel or man come in danger by it.—  
Bacon.

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