

cannot fail to arouse, instruct, and quicken even the most sluggish mind. The foremost journals of the world will help to bring us abreast of the great movements of the age. The study of the conflicts of opinion and collisions of thought will tend, as the elder Disraeli has said, to make men less narrow, more tolerant of the opinions of others, more receptive of new ideas, more willing to look at questions on all sides, and better fitted to discharge their duties as citizens, as subjects, as patriots. The reference library of costly books on fine art, on technical science, on foreign lands, with their wonders of nature and triumphs of architecture, will bring within the reach of the poorest among us privileges which hitherto very few even of the rich have been able to command. Here I should acknowledge the distinguished liberality of our townsman, Mr. Hallam, in his gift to this library of 1,600 vols. of valuable reference books, many of them of a very rare and costly character. I hope that not a few other public-spirited citizens will imitate this generous example.

It may perhaps be thought that I have been anticipating purely ideal results from the establishment of this library. But they are at least possibilities, and in many instances, I doubt not, will become actualities. It may be asked, however, Is there no obverse to this medal—no other side to the subject? There is. "Books," says Emerson, "are the best things, well used; abused, they are among the worst." There is such a thing as the abuse of books. Many make their minds the conduit through which pours a flood of trashy or pernicious reading, the effect of which, besides the waste of time and enfeebling of the mental powers, is to leave an inveterate taint behind. Of distinctly pernicious books, I hope that we shall in this library, have

none. Of the frothy and frivolous, the sort of which young ladies in Paris, let us say, get a volume every day, and two volumes on Saturday, I hope the patronage will be small.

"But even the fool's best book," says the genial Autocrat at the Breakfast Table, "is a kind of leaky boat in a sea of wisdom, some of the wisdom will get in anyhow." It will be a poor book from which something cannot be learned. Let us hope that the reading of even poor books may lead in time—if only through the weariness and disgust that they cause—to the reading of better books; and good books will be a most effective safe-guard against idleness and vice. "My early and invincible love of reading," wrote Gibbon, "I would not exchange for the treasures of India." Though I live myself in a very modest home, it contains one room—the room lined with my books—that I would be willing to exchange for very few rooms in this city, unless indeed it were for this library. And this magnificent library, to become every year more magnificent, is an *annex*, an apartment of every home in this city, even of the humblest; and every member of every household is free to share its priceless treasures. I rejoice that this is emphatically "the people's library." The poor man delving in toil's dark mine, who can scarce get food for his body, but who yet feels in his mind the sacred hunger, the quenchless thirst for knowledge, may drink deep draughts at these fountains and satisfy his soul with wisdom.

"A great library," some one has cynically said, "is a vast mausoleum, in which lie embalmed, each in his narrow cell, the mummied dead of bygone ages." I do not think that this is at all a good comparison. No man is ever so much alive as when speaking through a good book. Death smites at him in vain. He "cannot all die." He still lives long after his