

Literary culture and effort are facts in the question of personal preparation for the highest service. Are we not sending out to distant lands men and women who are equipped with the latest achievements of our scholarship and culture?

Paul was not less but more useful because his learning was in advance of that of the rest of the disciples. John Wesley and Martin Luther were not less but vastly better prepared to serve God and the world by having received the Divine call while standing within college halls. We should be false to our professed appreciation of what Christian culture and Christian teaching have been to others if we did not seek to inspire the young people of our day with a desire to gain knowledge.

Literary pursuits open to the Leaguer a new world, in which he finds new light and royalty of true wealth that makes him a richer and a nobler soul. Superficial thinking leads to superficial work, and an empty head is closely related to an empty hand and heart.

There is no habit of our lives about which we are less careful than that of reading, unless it be the habit of talking, and I expect if in the latter particular we feel ourselves to be sinners, the cause might be traced back, in some degree at least, to a want of carefulness in the former. Who can measure the delight and blessing that reading gives to our lives? What enjoyment, what elevation, what instruction, what inspiration come to us from the printed page? The best thought of the great minds of all ages preserved to us.

Of more importance than our manner of reading is the matter we choose. The average small boy set before a well-filled table, with unrestricted powers of selection, will, in nearly nine cases out of ten, reach for the pie or tart. Are we not much like him in helping ourselves from the vast spread of literature. Do we not generally reach for the literary pie—the book that tickles the taste, that excites the fancy and feeds the imagination? Witness the records of our public libraries. Which class of literature is most patronized? Is it not fiction? To devote one's self to that class of reading is like deciding on a diet of pastry, and very poorly cooked pastry at that.

Thank God there are presses at work on pure, wholesome literature. It is a matter of congratulation that wise provision has been made for mental culture in the operations of the Literary Department of our Epworth League. In the reading of such a book as "The Young People's Wesley," by W. Macdonald, the Leaguer's heart will have kindled under the glowing story of magnificent courage, heroic sacrifice, energetic aggression, untiring zeal, miraculous success and sweep of world-wide conquest of the great itinerant of the last century and his coadjutors and successors.

"A knowledge of the real things in the objective world about us and the laws that govern them in their inter-relationships is of practical value to every man." Interest and pleasure will also be derived to enhance the value of such a study. "Nature's Miracles," by Elisha Gray, Ph.D., LL.D., cannot do otherwise than lead every reader from nature to nature's God.

"A Help for Common Days," by J. R. Miller, D.D., seeks to show why it is worth while to live earnestly at whatever cost.

This year we in Canada will study three books, which comprise our Reading Course:

Volume II. of "Nature's Miracles," by Elisha Gray; "Lessons in Life," by Timothy Titcomb; and "Our Church," by Jesse Lyman Hurlbut.

Broad is indeed the scope of such a set of books. In the reading of such literature, in the careful study of the same, we cannot as young people but be more spiritual, more evangelistic, more fraternal, more intelligently loyal, more widely and truly cultured, more delicately attentive in the Spirit of Christ to all whom winsome, consecrated youth may win to Christ and the Church. These ends, if attained, and this training, if it accomplish what it was intended to do, will entail effects far beyond those originally sought for.

League training seeks to make culture spiritual and infuse spirituality with the highest information and intelligence. So, trained in systematic reading, the Leaguer will have acquired familiarity with the volumes, with their contents, and will acquire knowledge as well as zeal, and be broadened himself. The thought has often occurred to me that it might oftentimes be better if some of our League meetings were diminished and a more frequent gathering take place to study some good

book, and master the study of same. Let us remember that all our works, although it is our bounden duty and privilege to perform them, have no saving virtue in themselves, and have not been the means of procuring our inheritance for us; for it is by His grace we are saved, through faith; and that not of ourselves. "It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."

We, as Epworth Leaguers, have a great and glorious work before us. The soldier requires training before he can face the enemy, and so the Christian soldier requires preparation before he can go forth into service, for he has an enemy who is very sure to find the smallest break in the armour into which he may send his fiery dart; for "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the ruler of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

God never places us in a position where we cannot grow and develop. When we are not sending branches upward we may be sending roots downward.

The spirit that should permeate all our work is "to have none of self and all of Christ," that He may mould us to His will and make the fruit of each life to come forth perfect, rich and full. For His work it does not need that we should be great or one known of men. The sweet wood-violet nestling by the brook-side is fulfilling the mission of its Master as well as the most stately garden flower.

"Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters."

Toronto, Ont.

My Fleet.

My gallant bark sailed out at morn,
Out on the tide;
Fair blew the wind, serene the skies,
I laughed in pride.
The welcome waves like faithful friends
Rolled in its track;
The ship was youth—I watched in vain,
It came not back.

Still brave of heart, a second craft
I sent to sea,
Wealth, friends, and honor from afar
To bring to me.
A passing captain spoke it once,
Such is report;
Though signalled off, my ship of Hope
Comes not to port.

Then, feeling deep and anxious still
To do my best,
A loyal fleet, with captains bold,
Sailed to the west.
The big four-masters, "Industry,"
"Economy,"
"Ambition," "Fame," they too were lost;
Alas for me!

But faith unmoved persuaded me
To try again,
And so the ship of love I sent
Across the main.
Quick the return, and loaded deep
With charity;
O happy ship, fitted to bear
Life's argosy!

—The Outlook.

A MAN and a woman and a little child boarded a street car. The conductor missed them in collecting the fares. The little child began to call the attention of the woman to the oversight, but the woman shook the child and enjoined silence. And yet some day the man and woman will wonder why their child turned out a liar and a thief! Is a child without discernment and susceptibility? It is drinking in standards and conceptions through every pore. Every act of deception to which it is a party is a lesson leaving its enduring imprint. Let us show a child nothing that ought not to be incorporated in its life.