

John Bright, by the help of good books, is in the best sense of the word well-educated. Such libraries as this furnish the means for this self-education. On these shelves are the silent teachers who shall take by the hand the enquiring student denied the advantages of university training, and shall guide his steps through the wonder world of science, and through the lofty realms of intellectual and moral truth.

I am glad that in this library such ample provision is made for instruction in technology, in the arts and sciences and handicrafts of life. The needs of the intelligent artisan and hand-worker are duly recognized. In an industrial community like ours this class is, in a very literal sense, the bone and sinew of society. I doubt not that in a short time all the cost of this library shall be more than recouped through the increased skill and increased value of the labour of the intelligent workingmen of this community, to which it shall very largely conduce. Such has been abundantly the result where similar libraries have been established in manufacturing centres elsewhere, and such, I am sure, will be the result here.

But there are other and higher uses of this library. Its best results are not reached if its books be regarded only as a set of tools for making money. They are also means of intellectual and moral education. "Reading," says Addison, "is to the mind what exercise is to the body; as by the one is health preserved, strengthened, and invigorated, by the other, virtue—which is the health of the mind—is kept alive, cherished, and confirmed." I prefer to consider reading as something more than mere mental exercise; as the very food of the mind, the very condition of intellectual life; and thought and study, as the assimilation of that ali-

ment which alone can satisfy the hunger and thirst of the soul. As well starve the body, which is but the servant of the mind, as suffer the nobler, the truly regnant part of man, to pine and perish for lack of mental, of spiritual food.

"God be thanked for books," says Channing. "They are the voices of the distant and the dead, and make us heirs of the spiritual life of all past ages." By means of this free library the poorest man among us, the friendless, and the solitary, may find spiritual friendships and perpetual solace, and succour and delight. He may hold converse with the mighty dead, and range throughout the wide realms of creative thought, of poetic fancy, of scientific exploration. Though he dwell in the humblest cottage, the "myriad-minded Shakespeare," the majestic muse of Milton, the great poets and philosophers, and sages and seers will come beneath his roof and give him companionship with the noblest spirits of all the ages. Their high thoughts or sweet fancies or curious lore will lighten the burdens of toil, and brighten dark days and gladden sad hours, and lift his mind above the dull and sordid drudgery of life. These books, let us hope, shall in many cases prove to sorely tempted men an attraction more potent than the tavern or saloon, and give to the domestic fireside a brightness and a gladness long unknown.

To busy toilers in life's hive this well-equipped reading-room will give an outlook on the world around us that must greatly broaden the horizon and liberalize the mind. The pictured papers of many lands which shall lie upon these tables, by the help of the artist's cunning skill will present a continuous panorama of the world's progress, of its great events, and of the achievements of art, science, and industry everywhere, such as