

and strength from the earth, the air, the renovating showers, and the warm rays of the sun, kept continually expanding and unfolding until it came into that condition which caused it to burst into bloom, sending forth fragrance and beaming in the sunlight a visible song of joy. Different plants require different conditions. I have read that when a cactus will not blossom, if boiling water be poured upon it it will blossom very soon. The elements of the blossom are there, and the boiling water only serves to bring them out. If you should pour boiling water upon a cabbage plant for a whole year it would not burst forth into a cactus blossom. There are some plants that never blossom until they have grown and flourished through one hundred years. Thus it is with the elements of religion; implanted in the nature of every human being, yet requiring different conditions to bring forth its development. The savage Indian, in his own rude way, worships the Great Spirit with as much sincerity as does the most cultivated mind. We should make the best use we can of all our faculties, drawing in all we can of the light, and joy, and wisdom that pervades the universe, that our capacity for receiving and enjoying them be increased, and we daily find some new truth revealed, new cause to exclaim in the fulness of joy, Great and good are all Thy works, oh! Father! Now, do you not agree with me that what is called an instantaneous heart, is, in reality a gradual growth?

JULIA M. DUTTON,

Waterloo, N. Y. June 19th 1874.

Note: In looking over this earlier expression of my Faith, it occurred to me that if Friends would throw around the little ones the proper atmosphere of warmth and loving appreciation, they would not shoot off in divers directions, but would blossom more to their liking. If all Friends were like some Friends I know, their children would not join the other churches. So

much has appeared that is good in your paper of late, on this subject, that I feel like saying more than just "Amen."
J. M. D.

THE VALUE OF GOOD READING.

The plaster or clay in the potter's hands is not more pliable than the human mind under the influence of good literature. Leigh Hunt once said that the very back of a book was the inspiration of wisdom, and permit me to add that the matter between the covers may be sufficient to mold a human life into the finest cast. I would as gladly force the evil literature from the face of the earth as Cicero would have forced Cataline from the gates of Rome. Bad reading ruins the mental digestion as bad food does the physical. Thus it behoves us to choose the healthiest and most invigorating books, books that will give the mental system a delightful tone. Choose your books as you would choose your friends: always take the best. It has been my experience that life is too short and good literature too plentiful to ever select that which would fail to meet my subtlest feelings.

Refinement follows in the train of good books as surely as the sunshine follows the rain, and it is undoubtedly true that no man or woman ever sees the subtlety of refinement without a knowledge of polite thought in the minds of great men. Our strongest characters in history or in romance have been those who knew how to refrain from vulgarisms. Gentleness of speech has always brought with it a large percentage of peace. It costs no more to study a certain delicacy of expression than to permit ourselves to indulge in phrases which are stained with any sort of coarseness. Books pure in tone will help us to raise our standard upon the elevation of true refinement. We may breathe if we will the untainted atmosphere of noblest thought by spending