

library. Other devices quite as necessary in the library economy as those already named are of no practical moment to the user of the library, so long as he remains a reader only. But all these become necessary in the popular libraries, if the great numbers who frequent them are to be aided and served promptly. Their employment in these libraries was attended with such manifest advantage that the libraries of deposit and reference have been steadily adopting them. They thus save the time of the scholar who, in this busy age, lives at almost as high pressure as the other members of the community, and "help to make the acquisition of knowledge less cumbrous and tedious" than in former times. There is, perhaps, a tendency nowadays to lay rather a strong emphasis upon this side of library work, indeed Mr. J. W. Clark, in his lecture on Medieval and Renaissance Libraries, calls the working library "a gigantic mincing-machine into which the labours of the past are flung, to be turned out again in a slightly altered form as the literature of the present." But, after all, who (even the most practical among us) can enter a fine library without experiencing, at least to some extent, the sensation to which John Bright gave utterance at the opening of the Birmingham Free Libraries?

"Books, it is true, are silent as you see them on their shelves, but silent as they are, I think—to me it is so—that when I enter a library I feel almost as if the dead were present, and I know if I cou<sup>ld</sup> put questions to these books they would answer me with all the faithfulness and fulness which have been left in them by the great men who have left the books to us. Have none of us, or, may I not say, are there any of us who have not felt some of this feeling when in a great library—I don't mean in a library quite as big as that of the British Museum or the Bodleian Library at Oxford, where books are so many that they seem to overwhelm one—but libraries that are not absolutely unapproachable in their magnitude? . . . There are hundreds of libraries throughout this country which are of the kind which I describe—such, that when you are within their walls, and see their shelves, and these thousands of volumes, and consider for a moment who they are that wrote them, who has gathered them together, for whom they are intended, how much wisdom they contain, what they will tell to future ages, it is impossible not to feel something of solemnity, and of tranquility, when you are spending time in rooms like these. You may have in a house costly pictures and costly ornaments, and a great variety of decorations, yet, so far as my judgment goes, I would prefer to have one comfortable room well-stocked with books, to all which you can give me which even the highest art can supply."

C. H. GOULD.

