

childhood with venerable folios and quartos, quaint, dumpy, vellum-bound 17th century tomes of divinity; Hooker and Jeremy Taylor, Leighton, Baxter, Owen, Erskine, and Blair. There, too, were the Religio Medici of Sir Thos. Browne and Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, George Fox's Journal, Defoe's History of the Union, and old folios of a like kind. I refer to them now because I regard it as a valuable piece of education for any youth to be familiarized with such venerable representatives of 16th and 17th century literature. The mere handling of the ponderous folios, and reverently turning over their leaves impresses the youthful mind in a way inconceivable to readers of the cheap, double-columned reprints of our American piratical press. But apart from the mere form in which such authors first appeared, it is well that old and young should have free access to an ample range of literature. The quaint folios and quartos run no great danger of being unduly thumbed or dog-eared; yet such substantial tomes have charms for a larger class than the inexperienced critic is apt to fancy, and are an invaluable antidote to the fascinating temptations of modern fiction. Some space, therefore, I trust will be spared on the shelves of our city library for a choice selection of such old literature in its original substantial form.

The archaic diction of the Canterbury tales and the still less attractive aspect of such antiquarian folios as Weever's Ancient Funeral Monuments, or Dr. Stukeley's "Itinerarium Curiosum," would be considered ample guarantee for their remaining unheeded by the most book-loving youth. Yet the access of Chatterton to those old folios of Mr. William Barrett, the Bristol antiquary, was the source of his familiarity with Chaucer, Lydgate, the factitious Richard of Cirencester, and the heraldic geneal-

ogics of Weever. The free range of that library of antique literature gave archaic verisimilitude to the creation of the inspired charity boy, whose whole schooling was the mere rudiments of English, learned in the Bristol Bluecoat school. Alexander Smith, whose poetic gifts found free play while drudging as a clerk in a Glasgow warehouse, thus pictures, from his own experience, the charms of literature to one doomed to city life and born to toil:—

"Books were his chiefest friends. In them
he read
Of those great spirits who went down like
suns,
And left upon the mountain tops of death
A light that made them lovely."

Such examples might be largely multiplied. Let it suffice to say that, so long as a judicious care is exercised in excluding impure and infidel literature, it is difficult to fix a limit to the range of books fitted for a free public library. All tastes must be cultivated, and the wants of the few, no less than the demands of the multitude, catered for. Mr. Hallam, to whose persistent zeal and liberality, the establishment of this library is so largely due, has deemed it necessary to enter on the defensive in reference to the assumed predominance of novel reading. "Many persons," he remarks, "object to free public libraries because a large percentage of the books taken out of the lending department are novels, forgetting that a great number of the books in our Sunday school libraries are works of fiction, moral and religious stories, drawn with a delicacy of touch on the line of novel land—'Truth severe by fairy fiction dressed.' The type of novels in these libraries is best represented by 'The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain,' 'The Dairyman's Daughter,' 'Cœlebs in Search of a Wife,' etc. These are novels in every sense of the word—novels with a purpose to teach religious and moral