

Human Documents Re-read.

If you would be a well-read man, the first thing to do is to get to love one book. Then you will gather about it a mass of information that will radiate in many directions, and find new centres from which other radiations will begin. I think the first book I really came to love was Tennyson's "Idylls of the King." I know that I don't know anything at all as I ought to know it, least of all Tennyson and the things that make him. But I have a pretty decent collection of books that illuminate the man and none of them have cost me very much but hard study. No man can get a knowledge of books, just from a commercial instinct, because he wants to make money out of them. The best booksellers let every good book go with a sigh, and are on the look-out for another to replace it as soon as possible. Or, perhaps, the best bookseller is the man who knows the likes and dislikes of his customers, and puts a book on one side, saying, "I must show Mr. Smith this." The true born genius of bookseller hunts books, very much as mother cats hunt mice, with an eye for the kitten. When the mouse is caught, she sits there in supreme content watching the fun. No, nothing will take the place of individual study and love of a book in making a library. It is not supplied by copying your neighbour's. If a man wants to have the books that Mr. So-and-So has, he is born as the foolish woman is born and ought to betake himself to bonnets and not books. He will never be a student. His bargains will turn to dust and his knowledge is vanity. If there is no individuality in the book-lover, what profit hath he of all his labour under the sun? He will worship little tin gods, and boast a little tin soul.

So also, if you regard human books from the dollar standpoint you will never be a lover of mankind,

you will simply be a blind beggar in the World Beautiful and starved amidst the bounty of its bookshelves. But—here is a document the dullest scholar may read:

"NINETEEN."

There are Japanese lanterns galore on the lawn. Joining her artistic sense to the Boy's ingenuity, the little mother holds up the flimsy things while the Boy ties them to the wire. He is a head taller than she. He also claims a half inch over Dad. It has been a hard day on the Boy and his mother, but they don't mind. They are getting ready for the Boy's nineteenth birthday lawn party, which is to be an event in the family annals. Inside, the house looks spacious and empty. Things have been taken out to make room for the seventy "kids" who are coming to the party. It will require four rooms and the verandah and the lawn to hold them. In the kitchen, tables are piled with cakes and candies. Locked in the kitchen-annex is the ice cream, safe from the predatory younger set who lust after it, more for mischief's sake than appetite. People who pass by on the street, observing the decorations, say, "Having a party there, I suppose."

Father comes home from his work. At the sight of the lanterns and the Boy and his mother his eyes glisten and his face brightens and there is a little tightening in his throat. Then he gets his orders from the Boy and his mother. He helps to round up the corners in his awkward way. The Boy goes upstairs to take his bath and put on his good clothes. The tired little woman is exhorted to lie down a few minutes, but is altogether too occupied. What a wonder is the slight, sweet-faced, little mother!

Here come the "kids." They are not too old to resent the same. No