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BOOKS AND READING.

The season for excursions and pic-nics, together with their invigorating influences, has glided away once more into the irrecoverable past: and now, the cold nor'-wester or chilling drizzling rain—warning of the near approach of winter—render the roof of home more pleasurable than the arched canopy of nature. The ramble through the woods, the moonlight sail on the silvered lake, the hasty exciting railway trip—aye, and even the voyage to and fro upon the mighty Atlantic—are all forgotten in the zest with which the enthusiastic reader pursues in the track of the daring Livingstone through the dark jungle of interior Africa. In short, all classes have observed and learned by personal contact with men and things during the summer months; but now, they increase their knowledge by viewing objects of interest through the medium of the printed sheet.

Unfortunately, however, the most current literature of the day, so far from increasing the powers of intellect and exciting a healthy curiosity, stimulates the passions to inordinate manifestation, and robs the mind of its proper balance. Hence, a potent cause of vice in various forms, and of the frightful increase of lunacy amongst civilized communities. Youth, the time of life which should be devoted to systematic, physical, and mental training, is, alas! too often idly wiled away in aimless pursuits. Reason, the rightful sovereign of Cranium, is slighted, and not unfrequently ultimately dethroned. Now, to prevent this unhappy result, as well as to ensure continuous development of healthy mentality, should be the cause of anxiety, and the subject of cool deliberation.

In hope of affording some assistance to the reader in the formation of his character upon a sound basis, a few suggestions are offered in this paper, with regard to the appropriate subject-matter of reading; throwing out, as well, some hints respecting the most advantageous methods of thus obtaining information.

Man, a being of superior creation, has a physical system whose object is not to grow and in course of time become the provender for some other creation; but it is the abode of a spiritual

principle, called the "soul" or "mind." In this unity we view much that is incomprehensible: yet there are certain facts quite clear to the most superficial thinker—facts having an immediate bearing upon our subject.

The material becomes inanimate when separated from the immaterial. Neither can the immaterial accomplish anything in this world of matter apart from the material. In fact, the one—is the instrument; the other—the agent. The both united form the complete being, a being to whose wants and desires all terrestrial things are made subservient—not only in supplying the necessary food to sustain and develop his physical organization, but also to administer to the requirements of his mental system, by affording him subjects of thought and objects of contemplation. And here the indebtedness of the intellect to the body is perceivable. Every particle of information is received through the medium of flesh and blood. By the organ of sense, facts are discovered, premises are then recognized, and eventually either logical or illogical conclusions are inferred.

Much, therefore, may be learned by observation. But to become conversant with the customs, manners, and ideas of the people belonging to past ages, or of those contemporary with ourselves, yet inhabiting different portions of the globe, we cannot by personal observation. Verbal tradition would, in a measure, have obviated this difficulty with regard to preceding ages—yet with great uncertainty; for, oral narration is subject to much perversion—a second-hand story invariably differing more or less from the occurrence of which it pretends to furnish a correct statement. That the progression of civilization has, amongst other blessings, at a very early stage of the world's existence, produced the art of writing, and at a comparatively late period that of printing, are causes of hearty congratulation. The philosophers of old committed their ideas of nature and human nature to books of parchment; the rulers of the separate realms in antiquity had recorded the important events transpiring in connection with their individual states; the biographer of the brave Grecian or equally renowned Roman, has left in manuscript form the eulogism of his favorite hero. These have all been collated by the modern antiquarian, committed to press, and thenceforth is presented to the public the history of the human race from almost the first hour of its existence, containing, as such a history does, mines of mental gold and treasures of wholesome experience.

But leaving the historian to trace the rise, progress, decline, and fall of mighty empires, and the