

Pleasures of Reading No. 1.

The aggregate of our researches would be a very scanty stock, if detached and cut off from the communications and aids of other hands. If, for instance, we advert to the peculiar features, products, laws, customs, and costumes of different countries, how few have opportunities for a wide range of personal observation; but the tourist, or the traveler, enters into our assistance, and so of every branch of knowledge how few have the means or ability necessary to acquire a wide range in any one branch, apart from books. And what a blank, to many, would human life be without books? How valuable, diversified, and lasting, the pleasure we derive from them! Yet there are some, even in the respectable classes of society, who show an invincible antipathy to them; although nature has given such a degree of extent to our curiosity, and such very narrow limits to our knowledge, that much cannot be acquired without time and patient labor.

Many delights sought by the young, while they raise the animal spirits, fail not to subvert the intellectual powers and vitiate the taste. Reading, provided it be select, imparts a satisfaction far higher in kind and more adapted to a rational and reflective creature, than any which the varieties of fashion and luxury can boast. We gather the rich fruits which other men have planted. Good books contain the substance of what wise men have diligently collected; and the essence of their stores, refined by study, is given us in a narrow compass, and portable form. Yet there are thousands who would laugh at all the arguments and anecdotes which could be produced, to recommend intellectual improvement. But the perfume of ignorance and conceit, or the ebullitions of levity and ridicule are not worthy of a moment's notice. Nothing, truly good, is the worse in itself because some can neither realize it, nor perceive its true value.

With resources so rich and diversified, as the present age affords, a man of exuberant mind, sound judgment and correct taste, can never feel that loathing of life, or fear those dreaded horrors, with which the idle and voluptuous are so often oppressed and agitated when left alone. "These studies," says the great Roman orator, "instruct youth, delight old age, adorn prosperity, afford relief and comfort in adversity; are pleasant at home and abroad; they are agreeable companions at night, in our travels, and in our rural retirements." Yet there are indeed too many, who, with every facility for consulting original sources, at the first-class, read nothing but reviews, magazines, abridgments, extracts, or worse, the uninteresting and vitiating novels. As a certain writer says, "They would purchase knowledge without paying for it the fair and lawful price of time and industry. The appetite for pleasure, and that love of ease and indolence which is generated by it, leave little time or taste for sound improvement; while the vanity, which is equally characteristic of the existing period puts in its claim also for indulgence, and contrives to figure away, by those little snatches of reading in the short intervals of successive amusement."

Those who know how to profit by books will acknowledge that they impart a pleasure as durable as it is valuable. We are refreshed and invigorated, while we are conscious of being instructed and improved. By their aid we can enter the fair temple of science, and explore its wonders, or visit the region of the muses, or listen to their sweetest harmony and sublimest strains; we can accompany the hardy and enterprising traveller to distant climes, and mark their products, institutions, manners and habits, without either loss or hazard.

M. S. J.

Brantford, Ont.

LENGTH OF SERMONS.—A little discussion? (some what one sided) has appeared in the city press on the above subject. We are disposed to think that sermons should not be measured by their length. A sermon should be the "square thing" measured by the cubic foot, if it has no depth, it ought to have no length not even "twenty minutes."

SPECIAL OFFER FOR THIS MONTH.—We will mail the *Methodist Monthly* for the next six months to new subscribers for 25 cents! Will our readers kindly show this number as a sample and secure for us one new subscriber each? There is not a paper published in Canada offering so much excellent reading as the *Methodist Monthly* for the money. Try it for six months and be convinced. Send your address and subscription to Mr. Charles Piewes, acting Business Manager, for Mr. J. N. Peet, who is absent in Winnipeg for a few weeks on business.

Christian Liberty

During the last few months we have had a pleasing exhibition of Christian liberty, while with comparatively little effort, and in a very quiet way, the magnificent sum of \$6,400.00 has been so generously subscribed by the members of our church and congregation. It is of course considered fashionable and proper for all churches, laying any claim to respectability and standing in the community, to be encumbered with an awe-inspiring mortgage. But sometimes the sentiment may be carried to excess and then the weight of the debt often presses too heavily upon the pillars and supports of the church thereby causing a crash, which in time occasions an "impulsiveness" in the church. We do not say there was any such danger in the case of our church which we love so well, but the fun of carrying the thing year after year was found to be wearing away, and it was wisely thought best to make an effort and keep it under control.

The wisdom of the action taken by the Trustees Board is very manifest, as the interest on the church debt, which was very considerable, will, on account of the great reduction in the amount of the debt, be now kept under control, and met when due without difficulty.

The way in which nearly all of the subscriptions towards the reduction of the debt and the purchase of the new organ were handed in speaks volumes for the generous heartedness and liberality of the people. Our church now stands financially in a good position and as it is considered architecturally one of the prettiest churches in the city, we are enabled to hold our associations and love its courts with increasing fervor. When the magnificent new organ already ordered from Hook & Hastings of Boston, is placed in position, the service of song will doubtless be much improved. But with all our liberality we have good grounds for giving.

"But what or who are we, alas!"

That we in giving are so free? Time once before our offering was, And all we have we have from thee.

For we are guests and strangers here, As were our fathers in thy sight; Our days but shadow-like appear, And suddenly they take their flight.

Yours &c.

Brantford, Aug.

J. S. C.

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