

But, in whatever way the young minister settles the question of marriage, we will assume that he is determined to have a library even at the cost of rigid domestic economy, that he is resolved not to suffer himself stagnate or fossilize, that he considers books almost as essential as clothes, and that he will scrupulously reserve part of his income for this purpose, because he knows that he must buy his books or go without them. Indeed, he should have the nucleus of a library before he has finished his College course, for, although he had access to the College library and may have done much of his reading in that connection, yet, under the stimulus of university training, he could hardly fail to recognize that there are some books which an educated man should have, just as there are some things which any educated man should know.

When Omar Caliph conquered Alexandria he destroyed the famous library of the city saying (so runs the story) that if those books of the Greeks were contrary to the Koran they ought to perish, and if they agreed with it there was no need of them. Some have foolishly spoken in that way about the Bible, as if it made all other books unnecessary, and, with misplaced admiration for the man of one book, have argued that there is no need of studying any but the Book of books. But the Bible, unlike the Koran, is the productive source of literature. It does not swallow up all books; it begets books. It has created libraries. It has produced reformations; it has enlarged man's outlook, and widened his horizon, and quickened his mental activities, so that he who has most experience of its power desires to commune with his fellow-men of all generations, to learn what the leaders of the race have thought and said, and to be in touch, as far as may be, with every disclosure of truth.

Our books are to be looked on as friends, and, when a man has a well-chosen library, it is as if he had selected from among his fellow-men some of the wisest that have lived in the world of letters and had gathered them round him, so that, when he will, he can hear them speak to him. They are the friends of his choice, and he shews his own folly if they be not wisely chosen, for the number from which he can select is almost unlimited. Not only so, but just as when you are intimate with a company of friends they will often introduce you, if you wish, to their