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## PUBLIC SCHOOL LIBRARIES FOR WINTER.

As the usual period of the year for establishing or replenishing the Public School Libraries throughout Upper Canada has now arrived, we desire to call the attention of the school authorities to the subject.

The approaching long winter evenings will afford ample leisure for reading as well as for study. The perusal of good books will be at once a stimulus and a relaxation, as well as an intellectual advantage to the pupils themselves, while it will doubtless also be no less a source of pleasure and profit to their parents and other rate payers, who have the right of free access to the public school library, under the regulations provided by law.

Painful evidence has already been afforded in Canada of the evil effects upon young persons of an acquaintance with that pernicious class of the lighter literature of the day only, which, in the absence of some controlling influence and better tastes, young people are too apt to seek out and to read with avidity. As an illustration, we would refer our readers to the painful narratives on this subject contained in the *Journal of Education*, for April, 1861, pp. 49-51. The article also on a kindred subject, in the last number of this *Journal*, are also worthy of attention.

Most of our public schools, chiefly in cities, towns, and villages, have by their excellence created a taste for reading and intellectual culture, which, after a time, the ordinary instruction of these schools, without the aid of a suitable library, especially among the more advanced pupils does not

fully meet. Having acquired in the school a taste for reading, these pupils will necessarily seek to gratify it. How important it is, then, that this taste for reading should be rightly directed, or, what is better, gratified in a legitimate way in the school itself. It should be remembered, too, that teachers labour under serious disadvantages, and are less effective in their instructions where they are unable to supplement their labours by means of a library of reading and reference books. It is therefore the more necessary, both for teachers and pupils, that this indispensable adjunct to a good and successful school should not only be provided, but that it should be well kept up, with a continuous supply of the more valuable and attractive books as they issue from the press.

The facilities afforded by the Educational Department for the carrying out of this important object are now most ample. An abundant supply of appropriate books has been procured to meet the winter's demand. The terms upon which they are furnished to municipal and school corporations will be found on page 176, and are worthy of the consideration of the school authorities.

As it may be interesting to know how far the people, through their school trustees, have availed themselves of the facilities provided by the Department, we may state that from 1854 and up to the end of the year 1861, the number of public school library and prize books sent out from the Department amounted to 260,345 volumes, viz., 193,217 library and 67,128 prize books, besides 7,815 volumes to mechanics' institutes, &c. Fuller details on the subject will be found in the *Journal* for March, p. 33-35.

## 2. GIVE YOUR CHILDREN BOOKS.

Books are the cheapest teachers, and often the best. He who would have his children become good scholars and grow up thoughtful and intelligent men, should provide them with books; not mere school books, nor learned treatises on religion and government: but books such as children can understand, and as they grow older, larger works of history, biography, travels, science, and philosophy. Five dollars well spent for books will often advance a family of children more than a whole year's schooling. I well remember with what a wild joy I once, in boyhood, greeted my father's return from a visit to the city where at an auction he had purchased a bundle of new books. Among them were *Sherwood's Stories*, *Robin's Journal*, and two volumes entitled *Scenes in Asia* and *Scenes in America*. How through the long winter evenings I pored over these