

masses. In instituting a general library system, we create, or rather put in circulation, the first really popular literature, beyond that contained in the newspaper, and in the books of the Sunday-school. Can any one doubt then, that we have reached a point or phase in our civilization which demands the exercise of a provident care, an anxious, if not a timid circumspection?—*New-York Annual School Report*.

#### INFLUENCE OF SUITABLE LIBRARIES ON THE YOUNG.

Books adapted to the understanding of the young furnish profitable subjects for conversation and reflection, afford pure and chaste language for the expression of their thoughts, and would serve to elevate their minds above the disorganizing and petty strifes of seeing who should rule in school,—the master or scholars. The mind of man and child is so constituted, is of such a nature, that it is constantly drinking in, and appropriating to its use either for good or evil, whatever comes within its reach. Surround it with good principles, nourish it with wholesome, with moral and scientific food, and it will exhibit the products of such nourishment. But feed it with low and debasing thoughts, schemes and plans, and the legitimate fruit of such food will certainly show itself in the conduct and character of the future life.

Your committee consider the establishment of school libraries as one of the best provisions ever made for the improvement of the young. The books are much read, and their interesting and instructive character is too well known to need any comment; here the children of the poor and the rich are alike privileged, and will learn much that is useful and important to fit them for the active duties of life. For this they will honour the land that bestowed it, and reward its liberality with gratitude.—*Massachusetts School Report*.

#### CICERO ON BOOKS.

"Their study is the nourishment of the mind of youth, and the delight of that of old age. It is the ornament of prosperity, the solace and the refuge of adversity. Book studies are delectable at home, and not butenious abroad; they gladden us at night, and on our journeys, and in the country." And D'Israeli says, "Amidst all his public occupations and private studies, either of them sufficient to have immortalized one man, we read with astonishment in the Familiar Epistles, of the minute attention he paid to the formation of his library and cabinet." And when sending his small collection (small, relatively, we mean) to any one of his several villas, he calls it "infusing a soul into the body of his house."

WORKS OF FICTION.—Many works of fiction may be read with safety, some even with profit; but the constant familiarity, even with such as are not exceptionable in themselves relaxes the mind, which needs hardening; dissolves the heart, which wants fortifying; stirs the imagination, which wants quieting; irritates the passions, which want calming; and, above all, disinculcates and disqualifies for active virtues and for spiritual exercises. Though all these books may not be wicked, yet the habitual indulgence in such reading is a silent mining mischief. Though there is no act and no moment, in which any open assault upon the mind is made yet the constant habit performs the work of a mental atrophy—it produces all the symptoms of decay; and the danger is not less for being more gradual, and therefore less suspected.—*Hannah More*.

#### THE ORIGIN OF CERTAIN BOOKS.

The incidents and thoughts which have induced various authors to commence their works are, in many cases, somewhat interesting, and I think a note on this subject may be well adapted for *Notes and Queries*. And, if I may be allowed to throw out a suggestion, I would say that it would be far from useless if correspondents were to embody in a note what they might know of the immediate motives and circumstances which may have induced various authors to write certain works. Thus Milton's *Comus* was suggested by the circumstance of Lady Egerton losing herself in a wood. The origin of "Paradise Lost," has been ascribed by one to the poet having read Andreini's drama of *L'Adamo Savra Representatione*, Milan, 1633; by another, to his perusal of Theramo's *Das Buch Belial*, &c., 1472. Dunster says that the *prima stamina* of "Paradise Lost" is to be found in Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas's "Divine Weekes and Works." It is said that Milton himself owned that he owed much of his work to Phineas Fletener's "Locusts or Appolyonists." "Paradise Regained" is attributable to the poet having been asked by Elwood the Quaker, what he would say on the subject. Gower's "Confessio Amantis" was written at the command of Richard II. who meeting Gower rowing on the Thames, invited him into the Royal Barge, and after much conversation, requested him to "book some new thing." Chaucer, it is generally agreed, intended in his *Canterbury Tales* to imitate the "Decameron" of Boccaccio. When Cowper was forty-five he was induced by Mrs. Unwin to write a poem, that lady giving him for a subject the "Progress of Error." The Author of "The Castle of Otranto" says in a

letter, now in the British Museum, that it was suggested to him in a dream, in which he thought himself in an ancient castle, and that he saw a gigantic hand in armor on the uppermost bannister of the great staircase. Defoe is supposed to have obtained his idea of "Robinson Crusoe" by reading Capt. Rogers' "Account of Alexander Selkirk in Juan Fernandez." Dr. Beddoes, "Alexander's Expedition down the Hydaspes and the Indus to the Ocean" originated in a conversation in which it was contended that Darwin could not be imitated. Dr. Beddoes some time afterwards, produced the MS. of the above poem as Darwin's and completely succeeded in the deception.—*Notes and Queries*.

#### THE CONNEXION BETWEEN SCIENCE, LITERATURE, AND RELIGION.

A lecture delivered in Exeter Hall, London, December, 1848, by the Rev. GEORGE GILFILLAN, the distinguished author of "Literary Portraits," &c. Mr. GILFILLAN having been introduced by Lord ASHLEY, said,

The subject of the following lecture was certainly too wide and vast for a single lecture; volumes might be worthily occupied in treating of the various and intimate relations in which Science, Literature, and Religion stood to each other. He designed therefore to bring before them a few of the more simple aspects of the subject, principally for the purpose of proving at least the distinct approximation towards such an union, and that such an union might be the subject of general hope, and the bright herald of a future age. His leading propositions then were, that Science, Literature, and Religion are connected or related in their nature,—they are connected in their tendency and effect,—they are, to a certain extent, connected with God's special revelation to man,—they had been connected in the persons of several illustrious individuals,—and the greatest evils had been produced by their partial severance and apparent misunderstanding. In the first place, they were connected in their nature,—they were the various phases of the human mind. Science was the mind, as intellect or understanding contemplating nature, as a great series of phenomena dependent on one another, linked together by forces which it was its part to discover and disclose. Literature was the human mind surveying nature as a varied collection of beautiful and sublime objects, which exist in the mind of man; and it was its part to reproduce and combine that two-fold class of elements into union and noble forms. Religion was the mind, as faith, contemplating nature, man, and itself,—nature not as a series of successive changes or a magnificent apparition of loveliness, but as an institution proclaiming the perfections, and supplemented by the word of God. Thus they were the one mind under different aspects of contemplation, and using different degrees of light. Science held a torch of trying light, clear, stern, and searching:—Literature was surrounded by a subtler and warmer effulgence; while the light of Religion mingled with that which ever shone. They put him in mind of the three fair graces described by St. Paul, Faith, Hope, and Charity. There stood Faith with eagle eye contemplating the invisible; there Hope, looking beautiful and happy, as if a breeze from heaven was glowing around her temples and stirring her golden hair; and there Charity weeping over a perishing world, and looking all the more lovely for her tears. They might look at Science, Literature, and Religion, as three noble sisters. One arrayed with severe simplicity, her eye was piercing, her air was masculine; one hand leaned upon a terrestrial globe, the other uplifted a telescope to the stars: her name was Science. The other was more gayly and gorgeously attired, her cheek was tinged with a finer bloom, her mouth was radiant with a sweeter dimple; one hand rested on the open page of imagination, the other held a pen which seemed to drop sentences of gold: her name was Literature. The third was a more mature and matronly form:—

"Grace is in all her steps; heaven in her eye;  
In all her gestures, dignity and love."

A dark but transparent veil enveloped her majestic form,—one hand was laid on the open page of the book of God, the other as it was lifted upon high appeared to beckon to brighter worlds and point the way. But while they might choose either of these holy three in the sisterhood of grace, the greatest of them was charity. They were all beautiful and noble, and, better still, the choice of one did not imply the refusal of the others; all might be equally and eternally their own. Again they were connected together in their tendency and effect. There were indeed some few men still who frowned upon Science and Literature, as if they necessarily interfered with the higher claims and nobler affections of that "wisdom which cometh from above." Surely such a feeling was one which separated that which God had not sundered,—which established barriers which God never erected; and threw a stain on the character of Religion, as if she was a monster of