

Adolphus M. Hart Esq

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Mercantile Library Association

OF MONTREAL;

TO WHICH IS APPENDED

AN ADDRESS,

INTRODUCTORY TO THE

WINTER COURSE OF LECTURES,

BY THE

REV. G. F. SIMPSON, A. M.

RECTOR OF THE HIGH SCHOOL OF MONTREAL.

Montreal:

PRINTED BY LOVELL AND GIBSON, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.

1844.

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St Vincent Street.



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OF

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1844.



MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

OF

MONTREAL.

Office Bearers—1844.

W. NEWHOUSE,.....*President.*
THEODORE LYMAN,.....*Vice President.*
W. C. EVANS,.....*Corresponding Secretary.*
G. H. FROTHINGHAM,....*Recording Secretary.*
GEORGE BENT,.....*Treasurer.*

Directors.

H. E. MONTGOMERIE,	J. H. WINN,
J. W. CUMMING,	H. DICKINSON,
JOHN MURRAY,	F. FROTHINGHAM,
E. T. TAYLOR,	CHARLES FREELAND,
S. L. TAYLOR,	W. M'DUNNOUGH.

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H. E. MONTGOMERIE,....*Corresponding Secretary.*
S. L. TAYLOR,*Recording Secretary.*
GEORGE BENT,.....*Treasurer.*

Directors.

J. H. WINN,	G. H. FROTHINGHAM,
PETER NICOL,	T. P. ROE,
JOHN MURRAY,	HENRY PRATT,
CHARLES FREELAND,	T. D. HALL,
DONALD FRASER,	J. J. MACKENZIE.

Honorary Directors.

JOHN YOUNG, Esq.	JAMES DOUGALL, Esq.
JOHN ARMOUR, Esq.	S. JONES LYMAN, Esq.

MERCHANTS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

NEW YORK

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LIBRARY

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ANNUAL MEETING.

THE Annual General Meeting of the MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF MONTREAL, was held in the Rooms of the Institution, St. Joseph Street, on the evening of Monday, the 25th November, 1844.

The Chair having been taken by the President, Mr. WILLIAM NEWHOUSE, the Meeting was called to order.

The Report of the Board of Direction for the previous year was read by the Recording Secretary, Mr. G. H. FROTHINGHAM ; after which the Treasurer, Mr. GEORGE BENT, submitted the annual statement of the funds.

It was thereupon moved by Mr. DONALD FRASER, seconded by Mr. T. D. HALL, and

Resolved,—That the Reports now read be received by the Association, and ordered to be printed.

On motion of Mr. W. C. EVANS, seconded by Mr. S. L. TAYLOR, it was, after some discussion,

Resolved,—That the subject for the Prize Essay be, "*The Advantages, to a Commercial Man, of a Literary Education.*"

The following Rule, of which due notice had previously been given, was ordered, on motion of Mr. H. E. MONTGOMERIE, seconded by Mr. J. H. WINN, to be added to the Rules and Regulations :

"*Sect. IV. Art. 9.* The Board of Direction shall be authorised and required, on their first meeting after election, to choose four Merchant Members of the Association, to act in concert with the Board during the year then ensuing, as Honorary Directors ; and shall have power to fill any vacancies that may occur among the same, previous to the next Annual Election."

The President having laid before the Meeting a letter from the Committee of the Montreal Religious and Commercial Newsroom, containing proposals for a junction with the Association ; it was

moved by Mr. T. D. HALL, seconded by Mr. H. E. MONTGOMERIE, and

Resolved,—That the present Subscribers to the Religious and Commercial Newsroom have free access to the Reading Room of this Association, till the 1st of May next, on the terms proposed in the letter of their Committee, dated 22d November last.

On motion of Mr. H. E. MONTGOMERIE, seconded by Mr. J. H. WINN, it was

Resolved,—That a subscription be now entered into, towards lessening the debts of the Association.

This Resolution being immediately put into practice, a very handsome sum was subscribed before the close of the Meeting.

On motion of Mr. D. MAIR, seconded by Mr. T. P. ROE, it was

Resolved,—That the thanks of this Meeting be accorded to the Board of Direction, for their services during the past year.

The Meeting was then dissolved.

W. NEWHOUSE, *President*.

G. H. FROTHINGHAM, *Rec. Secretary*.

FOURTH

ANNUAL REPORT.

Fellow-Members of the Mercantile Library Association.
GENTLEMEN,

The Report which your Board has now, in pursuance of its duty, to present to you, though embracing several matters of general importance, must necessarily be meagre and of small interest, when compared with those of preceding years. Owing to the change introduced by the Act of Incorporation, little more than nine months have elapsed since your Board were called into office, during which time comparatively few incidents, worthy of particular note, have occurred in the history of your Association. That period has embraced the busiest commercial season of the year, when every Member finds constant occupation at his office or store, and when, consequently, there is little leisure to enjoy the privileges which such an Institution affords, or to make any active exertions for the advancement of its interests.

Notwithstanding this, your Board have been gratified to notice an increasing interest in the Association, not only among the Members themselves, but also amongst others previously unconnected with it. A large circulation of books from the Library has taken place; the evenings have shewn a most respectable attendance at the Reading Room; and now, when the business season is drawing to a close, and the winter recess fast

approaching, there is observable a more anxious, as well as a more general determination, to profit by the various means of self-improvement which the Mercantile Library Association places within the reach of its Members.

The Reports of the several departments of the Institution, which your Board now proceed to lay before you, will, they trust, satisfactorily shew, that these means are amply sufficient, alike for instruction and for amusement; and that the adverse circumstances which have attended the progress of the Association, though they have, for the time, embarrassed its finances, have yet failed to circumscribe its sphere of action, or check its innate energies. In no department has there been a falling off during the last year, and that which first falls under review presents a very large increase.

Library.

The last Annual Report recorded the circumstance of an agreement having been concluded with the shareholders of the Montreal Library, by which the remaining portion of that valuable collection of books was to pass into the possession of your Association. Some time elapsed, however, before the legal proceedings necessary for a transference were completed; and it was not till after the Association had removed to its present Rooms, that the books were delivered over to your Board, and the shareholders of the late Library admitted, under terms of the agreement, as Life Members of your Association.

The Library Committee of your Board found it ne-

cessary to make a new arrangement of the works thus acquired, forming, as they do, only a portion of the last published Catalogue of the Montreal Library ; and they also took advantage of the opportunity, to classify, in more regular order, the books previously owned by your Association. The Catalogue thus compiled, has now been printed, together with your Charter and Rules, and will, no doubt, contribute much to the purpose held in view in its publication, namely, a more general knowledge of the valuable contents of our Library, and an increased facility of reference thereto.

Having, in pursuance of the above plan, so recently and so thoroughly examined the Library, the Committee considered it unnecessary again to check the issue of books, in order to the usual annual revision; and resolved, with the approval of your Board, to make their Report upon its condition, as exhibited in the published Catalogue. From this is compiled the following statement of the contents of the Library :—

	WORKS.	VOLUMES.
English Books from the late Montreal Library,	633	2,239
French Books from do. do.	146	741
Books belonging to the Mercantile Library Association,	381	857
Total,	1160	3837

Thus, besides the addition of 2,980 volumes from the Montreal Library, there has been an addition of 64 volumes to our original list, showing an increase on the whole of 3,044 volumes during the year.

Considering the additional debt incurred by the transference of the Montreal Library, your Board were unwilling to make any great outlay on this department. Of the volumes added to our Catalogue, however, a few late

standard works were the purchase of the Association, while the remainder were donations from Members. The number who have thus contributed are, your Board regret to say, exceedingly few; and the appeal made in last year's Report, to the possessors of volumes useless to them, but which might be treasures to the Association, has remained almost unanswered. Your Board would now renew that appeal, and they would fain hope with better success.

The Librarian's Books shew a list of 300 readers since the 1st of January last, and of 2,135 volumes successively issued, besides upwards of 200 Magazines and Reviews. There have thus been read, during the last eleven months, 349 volumes more than during the preceding twelve months,—a most satisfactory proof of the increasing taste for literary studies, which has been created among the Members of the Association.

Reading Room.

The following list of the Periodicals and Newspapers, regularly received by the Association, will show that this department has not only retained its former advantages, but that several valuable additions have been made thereto, particularly in the number of Monthly Magazines.

QUARTERLY REVIEWS.

London Quarterly Review ;
North American Review ;

Westminster Review ;
Edinburgh Review.

MONTHLY MAGAZINES.

Ainsworth's Magazine ;	Hunt's Merchant's Magazine ;
Blackwood's Magazine ;	Literary Garland ;
Bentley's Miscellany ;	Mechanic and Engineer's Magazine ;
Covenant ;	New Monthly Magazine ;
Chambers' Journal ;	Philosophical Magazine ;
Dublin University Magazine ;	United Service Journal.
Fisher's Colonial Magazine ;	
Fraser's Magazine ;	

NEWSPAPERS.

Montreal Gazette ;	Sandwich Express ;
— Herald ;	Perth Courier ;
— Courier ;	Port Hope Gazette ;
— Transcript ;	Halifax Novascotian ;
— Times ;	New York Albion ;
— Pilot ;	— Journal of Commerce ;
— <i>Aurora</i> ;	— <i>Courier des Etats Unis</i> ;
Quebec Gazette ;	Boston Evening Journal ;
— Mercury ;	St. Louis Gazette ;
Kingston News ;	Willmer and Smith's European Times ;
— Chronicle ;	London Times ;
— British Whig ;	— Atlas ;
Toronto British Colonist ;	Liverpool Advertiser ;
Hamilton Gazette ;	Edinburgh Observer ;
Cobourg Church ;	Glasgow Scottish Guardian.
Brockville Statesman ;	
— Recorder ;	

Your Board would suggest the following scheme to the consideration of their successors, as a mode of increasing this department of the Institution, at a less expense than is usually incurred. Let any Member, wishing a particular newspaper or periodical to be taken at the Rooms, request the Reading Room Committee to subscribe for it : binding himself, at the same time, to take it off their hands at half price, (if so required,) on condition of receiving each number from the Rooms, on the receipt there of the succeeding part. It will, of course, rest with the Committee to examine into the merits of such periodicals, and to determine whether it

would be for the benefit of the Association to subscribe for them.

The News and Shipping Book, kept in this Room, continues to afford a record of many matters of commercial interest and importance; and the Weather Register, which has been faithfully entered up, presents an accumulating mass of statistics, which may hereafter be made publicly available to the student of Meteorological Science.

Lectures.

Of all the departments of the Association, this, perhaps, creates the most general interest among the Members and it has this additional advantage, that its benefits are directly participated in, by a large and interesting class, who can only profit by the remaining branches of the Association through the medium of others.

The attention of the Lecture Committee of your Board, has been directed towards the framing of a Course for the ensuing winter, which shall not fall short, in attractiveness and utility, of those previously delivered: and the arrangements that have already been completed, give goodly promise of success. The Introductory Lecture will be delivered in the course of this week, by the Rev. G. F. SIMPSON, A. M., Rector of the High School; and the following gentlemen have kindly promised their aid in carrying out the Course.

REV. W. T. LEACH, A. M.
 " HENRY WILKES, A. M.
 " J. J. CARRUTHERS, D. D.
 " JOHN CORDNER,
 F. BADGLEY, Esq. M. D.

HIS HONOR JUDGE MONDELET,
 CHRISTOPHER DUNKIN, Esq.
 JOHN B. TURNER, Esq.
 JOHN DOUGALL, Esq.
 J. M. FERRES, Esq.

From several of the gentlemen, to whom application was made, no reply has yet been received; which leaves the Course yet incomplete. Amongst these are some of the most talented Members of the Legislature, and there is every reason to expect, that ere the close of the approaching session of Parliament, in this metropolis, our Lecture Hall will be honoured by the appearance of more than one of these gentlemen.

The Lecture Committee have this year departed from the usual practice, by not requiring each Lecturer at once to name his subject, but leaving him free and unfettered in his choice. The increased opportunity thus afforded, for careful consideration of the various topics, will, in the opinion of your Board, ensure the selection of subjects for which the Lecturer really feels a preference, and in the treatment of which he will be thoroughly at home. The following is a list of the various subjects, in as far as they have yet been determined on :

The Customs of the East.

The Influence of Cities.

The Astronomy of the Ancients.

The Study of Moral Philosophy.

General Education.

The Commercial Resources of Canada.

The Importance of Physiology as a branch of Popular Education.

The Principles and Objects of Commerce.

Since the first establishment of this Association, every endeavour has been made to induce our fellow-citizens of French origin, to join the Institution and participate in its benefits; but hitherto, your Board regret to say, with very little success. Anxious to leave no means untried to win them to our ranks, an effort was made to secure one lecture or more, in the French lan-

guage, for the forthcoming Course ; and although no definite arrangement has yet been made, your Board fully anticipate the attainment of this object. Ere taking leave of this subject, your Board would once more earnestly entreat the co-operation of our French Canadian brethren; assuring them that the following extract from the Committee's Report, accurately conveys the principle by which the Members of the Association have ever been actuated, and on which all their proceedings hitherto have been based :—“Let us all, whatever be our creed, our country, or our descent, assist each other heart and hand in the search after knowledge ! Let all spirit of nationality, or of party, be laid aside ; and our only emulation be, which shall outstrip the other in the race of moral and intellectual improvement !”

Classes.

As has already been intimated, it is still too early in the season for this branch of the Association to be in full vigour, but your Board have to announce that steps have already been taken towards the formation of classes, for the study of French, Book-keeping, Mathematics, and Drawing. A few weeks, they trust, will see not only these, but others likely to be of equal benefit, in active operation.

This is probably the proper place to announce that your Board have determined to give effect to a recommendation of their predecessors, by offering a Silver Medal, as a prize for the best Essay by a Clerk Member of the Association. Anxious that this exercise should be of universal interest, they leave the subject to

be chosen by you this evening.* It is requested that competitors will forward their Essays to the Secretary, on or before the 1st March next, so that the award of the judges—gentlemen who will be carefully selected by our successors—may be announced at the semi-annual meeting in May. Each Essay must be headed with two mottoes and accompanied by a sealed letter containing the name of the writer, and bearing on the outside the same epigraphs as are attached to the Essay. Of course, that letter only, which bears the mottoes of the successful Essay, will be opened; the others will be received back, together with the Essays, on application to the Superintendent. It is to be understood that the Essay to which the prize may be awarded, shall become the property of the Association, and be entirely at its disposal.

Museum.

This department may be said to comprise two sections; first, a collection of Philosophical Apparatus, to serve for the illustration of Scientific Lectures delivered before the Association; and secondly, a Cabinet of Curiosities, which should offer to the Members an opportunity for the practical study of Natural Science in its various branches, as well as present them with some of the wonders created by the magic wand of Art.

As regards the first of these divisions, comparatively little has yet been done. A few of the most useful articles of Chemical manipulation are in the possession of the Committee, and a sum has been subscribed by a few

* The subject selected by the meeting was—"The Advantages to a Commercial Man, of a Literary Education." See page 5.

of the Members, to aid in the further acquisition of Philosophical Apparatus. This sum, however, is too trifling of itself, to allow of any purchase, on such a scale as could be of real benefit, and the state of the general funds has hitherto prevented any appropriation in aid of this object.

In the second section, a pretty large collection of specimens of Canadian mineralogy has been obtained, together with several other curiosities of Nature and of Art; but the present rooms of your Association afford little convenience for their display, and they have not as yet been arranged and catalogued.

Deeply sensible of the importance of this branch of the Association, your Board look forward with pleasure to its increase by the voluntary contributions of the members; and would cordially join in the wish expressed in the Report of the Committee—"That circumstances will, ere long, allow of the Museum being opened with a sufficient collection to be of real value and utility, and will enable the future Committee to provide such Philosophical Apparatus, as may prove an important addition to the instruction and entertainment, afforded by the Lectures of the Association."

Finances.

The Treasurer's statement of the Funds of the Association, will be presented at the close of this Report; and your Board would especially direct your attention to the donation of Twenty Pounds, which the Association has received from His Excellency the Governor-General. This very handsome and unsolicited gift is only one out of many similar instances, in which His

Excellency has extended his liberal aid, towards the cultivation of a literary taste amongst the inhabitants of this Province.

The state of the Funds, as will be observed, is far from prosperous, and your Board would strenuously recommend active exertions on the part of their successors, to remedy this state of matters,—a state arising from several unavoidable circumstances, which will be afterwards alluded to, and which your Board have witnessed with the utmost regret. They would here particularise the large amount which yet remains due by Members of the Association, notwithstanding the repeated calls made on them for their subscriptions. Under any circumstances, such defaulters would merit reprehension; but more peculiarly is this the case, when, as in the present instance, the Association to which these sums are due, and which depends on these alone for its support, is struggling with such financial difficulties as now embarrass its progress.

Very soon after your Board assumed office, they received official intimation from the City Council, that the St. Anne's Market had been leased to the Provincial Government as a temporary House of Assembly, and that the rooms then held by the Association must consequently be relinquished. This occurred at a season of the year when few vacant buildings are to be obtained, and your Board esteemed themselves fortunate in procuring the premises in the Nuns' Buildings, St. Joseph Street, now occupied by the Association. Although the rent is very much higher than any previously paid, and the accommodation is only sufficient

for Library, Reading-Room and Class-Rooms, still the situation is so much more central than the St. Anne's Market, and so much more convenient of access to the Members in general, as in some degree to compensate for these disadvantages. Your Board have also rented a Lecture Hall in the immediate vicinity of these Rooms, which, they have every reason to expect, will prove convenient and commodious.

As the Members are already aware, the rooms over the St. Anne's Market, which the Association were thus compelled to abandon, had been fitted up at very considerable expense, and all the improvements effected, were of course given up on removal. Application was made by petition to His Excellency Sir Charles Metcalfe, for some remuneration from Government for the loss sustained; but your Board were informed by His Excellency's Secretary in reply, that it was not in the power of the Governor-General to accede, of himself, to the request preferred, and that nothing could be done in the matter until it were brought before the Legislative Assembly. The first meeting of that House takes place in our city within a few days, and your Board trust that their successors will lose no time in applying for that remuneration, which they cannot but consider as justly due. The Association has hitherto struggled through its early difficulties without any, even the smallest, grant of public money for its support; nay, during its only appearance before Parliament, whilst obtaining an Act of Incorporation, the same fees and expenses were incurred and paid, as are exacted from any individual procuring a legislative enactment for his own personal profit and advantage.

In requesting from the Assembly some recompense for the materials left in the St. Anne's Market, and used in fitting up the present House, your Board feels that the position of your Association would be, not so much that of one who seeks a boon from the liberality of others, as of one who requests payment of a debt,—void, it may be, in law, but undoubtedly due in honor and in justice.

On the occasion of the removal of the Rooms of the Association, a suggestion was made by some gentlemen who have ever proved themselves warm friends of this Institution, that a separate building should be erected for its accommodation. A general meeting of the Members was accordingly held in the month of April, for the consideration of the proposal. It was received with general approbation; shares were subscribed for by the members present, with a readiness and liberality that demand the best thanks of the Association; and a sub-committee was appointed to carry it into effect, if found practicable. Negotiations were entered into with the Natural History Society, which had at the same time in contemplation the erection of a building for its own use; but, although your sub-committee were met with the utmost kindness and liberality by the representatives of that Society, it was ultimately found impracticable to carry the proposed scheme into operation. Your Board have been with reluctance compelled to forego the plan for the present; but they would hope that better days may arise upon the Association, when, with funds once more flourishing, and with an increased and active membership, this project may at length be realized, and the Mercantile Library

Association may add another, to the numerous and fast increasing architectural embellishments of our city.

That one part of this wish is now in process of accomplishment, will be seen by the following abstract of the Register of Members :

Senior Clerk Members,.....	160
Junior Clerk Members,.....	68
Merchant Members,.....	106
Life Members,.....	37
Honorary Members,.....	21
— 392	

This list, though differing little in the number of Clerk Members from that presented last year, shows an augmentation of nearly forty Merchant Members since that time. This is one token of that increasing interest in the affairs of the Association, upon which your Board have already congratulated you. Amongst our Merchant Members we must look for our principal supporters, as far as the financial affairs of the Association are concerned; and under the impression that those who contribute so largely to its funds, should have some share in its management, your Board would recommend to your favourable consideration the proposal which will this evening be submitted to you, for the incorporation of four Merchant Members with your Board, as Honorary Directors.

The class of Life Members is a new one, introduced on the revision of the Rules consequent on the Incorporation of the Association. Of the number given above, one gentleman has become a Life Member by the usual course; thirty-five have been admitted, in pursuance of the agreement entered into with the share-holders of

the Montreal Library; and one, the Hon. George Moffatt, was created a Life Member by your Board, in consideration of the very handsome donations which he has, at various times, presented to the Association.

Since the last Annual Election of Office-bearers, several changes have occurred in the Constitution of your Board, which, in accordance with the requirements of your Regulations, were duly announced when made, but a recapitulation of which will not here be out of place. Mr. T. M. Taylor, long an active member of your Board, having resigned his office of Corresponding Secretary, Mr. W. C. Evans, one of your Directors, was chosen as his successor. By this removal, and by the resignation of Messrs. T. Forsyth and N. S. Whitney, three vacancies occurred among your Directors, which were filled by the appointment of Messrs. F. Frothingham, Charles Freeland and W. M'Dunnough, who have since continued to act as Members of your Board.

Actuated by the sympathy which identity of aim and object must ever produce, your Board have continued to cultivate a friendly intercourse with similar Societies, not only in this city, but throughout the Province of Canada, and in the neighbouring portions of the United States, and have uniformly experienced the same cordiality and kindly feeling which they were themselves desirous to testify. They have, in especial, gratefully to record the courtesy of the Managers of the Mechanics' Institute, in permitting your Association the free use of their Lecture Hall, for the delivery of that part of last winter's Course of Lectures, which still remained on our removal from the St. Anne's Market.

Every Report of your Board of Direction has, from

year to year, expressed an interest in the various efforts made by the Clerks in the retail stores of this city, to obtain some curtailment of the usual evening hours of business during the winter season. Your Board have now, with pleasure and gratification, to record the success of one portion of that body; the Proprietors of the Retail Dry Goods Establishments having unanimously consented to close their stores at seven o'clock, P. M., during four months of the year. This is an important step towards the social and mental improvement of the young men under their control, and your Board trust that their successors may have to announce to you the adoption of this plan (in some degree, if not to the full extent) by the other Retail Merchants of Montreal. Early shop-shutting is now usually the practice throughout the principal commercial and manufacturing towns of Great Britain; London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and many others of lesser note, have adopted it to a far greater degree than has ever been craved for in Canada, and the result has amply shown the policy of the change.* Let it not be

* The following extract from the Minutes of the Wesleyan Conference, which took place a few months since at Birmingham, shows the high importance attached to this point, by a body of men whose intelligence and zeal render their opinions of great weight :—

“ The Conference, having had their attention invited to this subject, cannot but feel that it involves, in various ways, high moral and religious considerations, and has a direct bearing on the intellectual improvement and spiritual prosperity of a large and interesting class of society, especially of respectable and well-principled young men employed in shops. They, therefore, commend the cause to the calm and kindly regard of our members and friends whom it may concern; and will greatly rejoice, if by moderation, quiet perseverance, and united counsels,

said, that the Metropolis of Canada lags behind the age!

Your Board would venture a few words of counsel to those of you who benefit by the change of hours, with the hope that the advice will be received as frankly and sincerely as it is offered. Let the time thus acquired be principally devoted, as you have virtually pledged yourselves it should, to your moral and intellectual improvement; store your minds with sound and useful information; avail yourselves of the excellent Course of Lectures about to be delivered; form yourselves, if you will, into Classes, and mutually aid each other in the progress of your studies: in short, cull from the wide field of literature presented to you, its richest flowers and choicest fruits. Do this, and you will not only acquire treasures of knowledge, which will afford a never-failing source of pleasure and enjoyment, amid the stern realities of commercial life, but you will thus ensure a continuance, in succeeding years, of the same favor now granted you, and may further contribute, by a well-regulated use of this indulgence, to the speedy acquirement of the same privileges by your less fortunate brethren.

Your Board have already noticed the increasing interest taken by the Members in general, in the various affairs of the Association; but still, they regret to say, there is wanting much of that self-dependent energy

some means shall be devised for remedying, in whole or in part, this obvious and serious evil,—so as to secure the comfort and eventual advantage of all parties, and increase, as far as may be practicable, the opportunities of a profitable attendance on the week-day ordinances of religion, and the appointed means of grace.”

so necessary to the prosperity of the Institution—nay, to its very existence. A large proportion seem to consider, that in paying their annual subscription, and vouchsafing occasional attendance at the Reading Room, Library or Lecture Hall, they have satisfactorily fulfilled all their duties as Members of this Association. Others, again, go somewhat beyond this, by a more assiduous use of the various advantages already enumerated, and are even sometimes to be seen at an Annual or General Meeting. But at this point their zeal ceases, and they seldom take the trouble of inquiring how the general affairs of the Association proceed—what is its present position—or what its future prospects. If matters go on well—“they are happy to hear it;” if ill—“it is no fault of theirs.”

Some there are, who have shown a warm and abiding interest in the welfare of this Institution, who have lent their cordial aid to its advancement, and by whose unobtrusive and valuable suggestions, your Board have often been materially assisted in the discharge of their official duty. The steady and rapid increase in the number of these true friends of the Association, is one of the most cheering features of our present position, and your Board entertain an assured hope, that the spirit of co-operation will, ere long, be fully developed among our ranks, and each member consider himself as in some degree responsible for the success of our various efforts. Then, and not till then, do your Board anticipate the success of their most ardent and heartfelt wishes, in the permanent establishment, and daily increasing prosperity, of the **MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION.**

Montreal, 25th November, 1844.

Extract from the Minutes of General Meeting, held on the 2d
December, 1844.

“The following motion was brought before the Meeting during
the evening, by Mr. Montgomerie, and adopted :—

“That the cordial thanks of the Association be voted to the
Rev. G. F. SIMPSON, A.M., for the excellent address delivered
by him on Thursday last, introductory to the Winter Course
of Lectures, and that he be requested to allow the Association
to print the same along with their Annual Report.”

S. LESTER TAYLOR,
Recording Secretary.

ADDRESS

BY THE

REV. G. F. SIMPSON, A. M.

RECTOR OF THE HIGH SCHOOL OF MONTREAL.

The declining year and the shorter days, and the fall of that fleecy mantle, which so long hides the earth from our view, and the stoppage of the navigation of the river are about to introduce us again to the employments within these walls, which have beguiled many a wintry hour, since the period from which your Association dates its origin : employments which possess this peculiar recommendation, that they combine instruction with amusement, and profit while they please.

Of few gratifications, which are within our reach in this imperfect state of existence, can it be said that they are replete with enjoyment. The pleasures of sense are debasing to the mind and often leave a sting behind them ; the votaries of intemperance have no agreeable retrospect connected with their short-lived delights. Time wasted, or—what is worse—misemployed, always leaves an irksome vacuity or aching weariness behind ; but such engagements as those which invite your attention here, awaken no unwelcome reminiscences ; memory does not invoke the ghosts of these departed hours to haunt us with its appalling frown ; the gratification they afford us is unalloyed—and the benefits they confer are permanent and solid.

In presenting a few remarks for your consideration at the commencement of another session, I do not intend to enter into a circumstantial account of your Association, or the present position which it occupies. These matters of detail have already in part been presented to your notice, and will again, with more propriety, be embodied for your attention in your yearly report.

I cannot, however, refrain from reminding you on this

head, that in looking back upon your short career, you seem to have succeeded better than you had anticipated ; and to have had much cause to be grateful to many talented and disinterested friends, who have warmly and efficiently aided the objects for which you are associated, and to whom you are indebted for kind and valuable services: and in looking forward to days yet to come, you are privileged to cherish, I think—with good reason—favorable anticipations in regard to your future course.

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In obtaining from the Parliament of the Province an Act of Incorporation, you have, I trust, passed the precarious and critical period of an infant condition, and are now come forth into the vigorous energy, and the vivid expectations of the period of youth. You are in the spring tide of your existence, full of the fair buds of future promise : and I do sincerely trust that neither the chilling frost of cold indifference will blight the expected fruit ere it be fully set, nor any angry storms of fierce and violent contention roud it, whilst yet in embryo, from the boughs.

In proceeding to offer a few suggestions, in accordance with the occasion of our present meeting and with an especial reference to the audience, before whom I am standing, there are various subjects, which might profitably be presented to your notice.

I might bring in detail before you the origin and gradual increase of Associations like your own ; the objects they have in view ; the benefits they are calculated to confer ; the reception they have met with from the community ; and the conflicting statements which prevail in regard to their character and consequences. I shall not altogether omit some of these topics ; my plan, however, is not to confine myself to this view of the subject. I shall rather regard you as agents moving in a more extended sphere of duty ; as members of a large and civilized and intelligent community. I shall address you, not with reference simply to your own vocations and employments, but as possessing

mental and moral powers which admit of cultivation and improvement ; and which were bestowed upon you by the author of every good and perfect gift, for this express purpose, that you should enlarge and employ them in a way most conducive to your own happiness, and to the benefit of society.

We will take for our subject—*Knowledge*—Knowledge in its general development. We will consider both the pleasure and the moral profit, which are intimately connected with the acquisition and the right pursuit of this honorable and valuable attainment ; and you will readily see how these reflections may be brought to bear on the more confined range presented to us by this particular Association.

The human mind is a subtle essence—active, penetrating, restless : directing its powers of reason and thought to any given subject, it investigates, methodises, compounds, and avails itself of the labors of others, in its patient search after truth. Knowledge is the result of this process—the accumulated treasure of the mind ; the sustenance and food after which it instinctively pants.

Wisdom is the contrivance and skill, which plans and executes : *Knowledge* is the effect produced—the result obtained—in the mind. So that wisdom differs from knowledge, just as the instinct—which prompts the industrious bee in the collection of her golden stores, is distinguished from the luscious treasure itself. And to carry forward the illustration, *Memory*—without whose receptacle wisdom seeks in vain, and knowledge soon is dissipated—memory supplies the various cells, wherein the rich deposit is stored up and laid by for future use.

I use the word knowledge then as simply denoting that information, which under the government of our gracious Creator men are able to obtain from any source on any subject : every thing that is taught and every thing that is learnt by men in the extended range of science, literature and arts. And it will be evident from the observations that have been made, that for

the attainment of eminence in any art, trade or profession, these three combined adjuncts are essential: wisdom or sound judgment to reject the evil, and to fix upon the good—previous knowledge, *i.e.* a supply of material to work with, in the prosecution of more extended enquiries—and that most valuable appendage, which, after all, is the main instrument of most effective advancement, memory to retain and make our own—for future profitable employment—the results of former patient investigation and long and diligent pursuit.

Let me here remark on the very threshold of our present enquiry, that man, as he is now constituted, has two serious obstacles to contend with in pursuit of knowledge. The first consists in that strong temptation to pride and self-conceit, which eminence and distinction have sometimes suggested, and which originated our present lapsed condition. Our first parents ate of the tree of knowledge to their sorrow; and beings of a higher order in the scale of creation had set them the example:

“Aspiring to be Gods if angels fell,
Aspiring to be angels, men rebel.”

We know on the authority of inspiration, that “knowledge puffeth up”—not merely theoretical knowledge of doctrinal theology, contrasted with practical piety, as some understand the expression; not merely slight and superficial knowledge, contrasted with deep and extended researches after truth—as others apprehend it—but knowledge in the abstract.

We are not, I think, at liberty to qualify and make limitations, where the Apostle makes none; but we must allow in the case of beings frail and imperfect, and tainted with moral evil, as we are, that the acquisition of knowledge possesses this dangerous tendency—to lead us to think too highly of ourselves and to disparage the humbler capacities and more scanty acquirements of others. In your pursuit of knowledge, therefore, guard against this tendency. If you know yourself, which, after all, is the prime knowledge, you will be duly

sensible, that the little stock you have gained amounts to nothing, when compared with the vast mines which are yet unexplored, and which are open to your investigation. Pride will also mar your future progress. He who thinks that he already knows much, will become indifferent and less anxious to know more.

In short, humility combined with knowledge, is the characteristic of a truly great mind; but conceit of superior skill and talents will wither all your laurels, and very much impair that honor and esteem, which eminence in any branch of science would otherwise infallibly secure.

Another obstacle, which interferes with us in the pursuit of knowledge, is occasioned by the operation of the corporeal propensities of our nature on the thinking and rational part of man. The numerous infirmities "which flesh is heir to," often cramp the mental energies—the body is in various ways a heavy clog upon the mind, "*atque affligit humi divinæ particulam auræ,*" and debases on the ground his portion of the effluence of Deity.

Many a man, who, by industry, might have supported himself and family in comfort, perhaps in affluence, and whose abilities, properly applied and duly improved, would have qualified him to take precedence among his compeers, has thrown away his advantages, and made shipwreck of the fairest expectations, by habits of intemperance and excess—habits which are always the precursors of wretchedness and want.

We well know how the mental as well as the moral powers are weakened by such indulgencies: they not only unfit the mind for thought, not only occasion a waste of time, which might be turned to good account; but, moreover, they connect a man with companions, and introduce him to society, of a character and a grade, which rank very low in the scale of rational and reflective beings; whose vile and contaminating influence, like the magic wand of the fabled Circe, transforms the man into the swine, subjects thought to gross sense, and

mind to matter. In pursuit of knowledge, this fatal rock must be avoided—seal your ears against the infatuations and allurements of the syren, and then you avoid those clogs and shackles which fetter the lofty flight of genius, and escape that indolence and self-indulgence, which paralyze the efforts of talent.

Let us now briefly notice the results and effects, chiefly in a moral view, which may be expected to arise, both from the search after and from the actual possession of knowledge, according to the comprehensive definition of it already given. And amongst these, we may notice, as occupying a very prominent situation, the pleasure and satisfaction which we experience, when our faculties are engaged in the prosecution of any useful employment. I do not mean the mere mechanical operation of finishing an imposed task. The drudgery of bare performance learnt by rote—too often without any thought, like many a school boy's task, whilst the mind is stagnant all the time—is not, as we shall presently see, without its uses; yet pleasure is certainly not amongst them.

But the exercise of thought, the ardent enquiry after truth for her own sake, the successful employment of the powers of reason, in acquiring enlarged views on subjects in regard to which we were before ignorant—in overcoming the obstacles which impede our progress—in obtaining important results, step by step, from a patient and laborious process of investigation—in the discovery of the truth of facts or theorems by means to which others have not access; there is in all this a secret and intense pleasure—not readily to be defined, but which, I trust, many who now hear me experimentally understand.

As a proof of this—how rapid is the flight of time when we are earnestly engaged, and when our attention is absorbed and our faculties and energies all actively devoted to the pursuits in which we are occupied. How reluctantly do we break off from our work—how involuntarily does the mind turn to it—if we are

called to relinquish the chase before the prize is secured, and are diverted from the object of our enquiry, whilst the search is unrewarded by the elucidation of the truth.

On this part of our subject,—the pleasures which results from scientific pursuits,—instead of making any additional remarks, I will borrow the sentiments of one who writes with a glowing pen, as having himself drunk deeply of the ambrosial fountain. He represents these pursuits as abstractedly delightful, without any reference to their practical benefit, on account of the natural avidity of the human mind for information; as delightful also for the pleasant exercise of the intellect in their discovery; and for stronger reasons, still more delightful, when they lead to practical utility.

The excellence of the matter will, I am sure, be a sufficient apology for the length of the extract:—

“That there is a positive pleasure (observes Lord Brougham) in such researches and such views, wholly independent of any regard to the advantages derived from their application to the aid of man in his physical necessities, is quite undeniable.

“The ascertaining by demonstration any of the great truths in the mathematics, or proving by experiment any of the important properties of matter, would give a real and solid pleasure, even were it certain that no practical use could be made of either the one or the other. To know that the square of the hypotenuse is always exactly equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides of a right angled triangle, whatever be its size, and whatever be the inclination of the acute angles, is pleasing; and to be able to trace the steps, by which the absolute certainly of the proposition is established, is gratifying; even if we were wholly ignorant that the art of guiding a ship through the pathless ocean mainly depends upon it.

“In like manner, the pleasure derived from ascertaining that the pressure of the air and the creation of a vacuum, alike cause the rise of the mercury in the ba-

rometer, and give the power to flies of walking on the ceiling of a room, is wholly independent of any practical use obtained from the discovery. Thus again, it is one of the most sublime truths in science, and the contemplation of which—as mere contemplation—affords the greatest pleasure that the same power, which makes a stone fall to the ground, keeps the planets in their course, moulds the huge masses of those heavenly bodies into their appointed forms, and reduces to perfect order all the apparent irregularities of the system. So that the handful of sand, which for an instant ruffles the surface of the lake, acts by the same law, which governs through myriads of ages, the mighty system composed of myriads of worlds.”

He further observes—“If the mere contemplation of scientific truth is the source of real gratification, there is another pleasure alike remote from all reference to practical use or benefit, and which is obtained by tracing the investigations and demonstrations—the steps that lead *analytically* to the discovery and *synthetically* to the proof of these truths ; this is a source of pleasure, both by giving us the assurance that the propositions are true in themselves, and also by the consciousness of power, which it imparts, and the feeling of difficulty overcome, which it involves.

“We feel gratified, when we have closely followed the brilliant induction, which led Newton to the discovery, that white is the union of all colors ; and still more gratified do we feel when we have accompanied him in the series of profound researches, from the invention of a new *calculus* or instrument of investigation, through innumerable original geometrical problems, to the final demonstration, that the force of gravitation makes the comets (as well as the other heavenly bodies) defect from a straight course, and whirl round the sun each in an elliptical orbit.

“In these gratifications, derived from the contemplation and investigation of general laws, consists the pleasure of science, properly so called, and apart from

all views of deriving particular advantages, from its application to the use of man.

“But this pleasure is increased as often as we find that any scientific discovery is susceptible of practical application. Of course, the gratification is increased, if we know that individually we shall profit by it, and we may perhaps always more or less contemplate this possibility; but this is a pleasure, properly speaking, of a different kind from that which science, as such, bestows.”

If there is a pleasure in the contemplation of recondite truths, and in tracing the consecutive steps by which they are discovered—a pleasure so fully analysed in the foregoing extracts, by one who has tasted of the many streams of the waters of science, who seems to revel in every intellectual feast, and who keenly enjoys every banquet which he so well describes—we may further remark, that there is also a pleasure in the consciousness of possessing these ample resources and stores of valuable knowledge.

To be permitted to look into the *arcana* of science—to tread as it were on consecrated ground, whereon no mortal ever trod before—to have unveiled to our view mysteries hidden from the uninitiated eye and beyond the reach of thoughtless men, to occupy the lucid heights, the “*sapientum templa serena*,” the calm temples of the wise; whence, to borrow the sentiment of a Roman bard, we can look down upon the grovelling crowds beneath our feet, and behold them groping in the dark—this, in the very nature of things, cannot fail to gratify and please us: for knowledge is light and ignorance is darkness; and as the noontide beams of the glorious sun are more grateful to the eyes, and more agreeable to the feelings, than the cheerless gloom of the midnight hour, so are the rays of truth and science exhilarating to the mind, especially as contrasted with the dreary night of nature’s ignorance, which these beams of truth and science, when extensively expanded, tend effectually to dissipate.

And now let me suggest to your notice the moral use connected with this pleasure ; the practical good effect, which may result from devoting our time and attention to the acquisition of knowledge ; particularly in the prosecution of those employments which are strictly connected with our respective vocations. We have not only the gratification, which, as we have seen, the consciousness of superiority bestows ; not only the pleasure which the research itself imparts, but we have also the power, which knowledge gives—a power, which is then only wielded in a manner calculated to give satisfaction to ourselves, when it is so employed as to impart benefit to others.

It is an axiom not to be controverted—"that knowledge is power." "Give me whereon to stand," said the philosopher of Syracuse, "and I will move the world." Now knowledge supplies both the standing place, and a lever of wondrous effect. It subjects the world to its control. The mind that is furnished with stores of this precious material, possesses an influence over men, which others cannot reach, and commands a peculiar deference and respect, which, without it, at least in England—the mightiest nation in the world—rank cannot give, and wealth cannot purchase.

This influence is a talent, and for the profitable employment of it the possessor is responsible to Him who gave the faculties, by which he was enabled to acquire it. The man, who uses his knowledge aright, is elevated into the patriot—the friend of his country and his kind : he rises yet higher in the ascending scale, and becomes the philanthropist, imitating, in his humbler sphere, the glorious character of his divine exemplar, by relieving the distresses, and increasing the comforts and happiness of those around him.

Another important benefit resulting from scientific pursuits is—that they tend instrumentally to bring the passions under the control of reason, and to subject the animal to the intellectual part of our nature.

Man—in his complex character—is a strange admix-

ture—a marvellous compound of mind and matter, actuated by two distinct, or, more correctly speaking, by two conflicting principles ; in his intellectual aspirations, soaring above the skies—in his sensual propensities, sinking below the degraded level of the brute creation. One important purpose, for which he is placed in his present condition, is to endure and to practise a course of moral discipline; the design of which is to bring the baser appetites of his nature into due subordination to the controlling influence of the rational and thinking principle.

Now, though we admit it to be the work of religion to do this effectually—of the religion revealed from Heaven in the oracles of inspired truth, though the motives, by which alone the solicitations of sense can be subdued, must be sought from above, and the strength, which nerves him with the power of resistance, must come from the same sacred source ; yet still it is his duty to wield every weapon—though it be of earthly temper and fashion—which may aid him in achieving a victory so much to be desired and of such incalculable benefit.

The cultivation, then, of the mind—the pursuit of knowledge in any of its diversified paths and ramifications, has beyond all dispute this tendency ; whatever gives free scope to thought and reason, to reflection and memory—adds distinctness to the broad line of demarcation, which detaches man from the lower grades of animated but irrational creatures, and assimilates him to those pure spirits—who, we believe, rank immediately above him in the scale of sentient and intelligent existence.

It is oftentimes a bootless employment to pamper the body, it yields no adequate return ; but reason and thought are Heaven's best gift, and will repay our careful cultivation with an *ample interest* of delight and profit. The mind is the measure of the man ; it is the proper gauge of magnitude—and we cannot do otherwise than admire the pertinent reproof of Dr. Watts to

the contemptuous reflection cast upon his diminutive personal stature.

“Were I so tall to reach the pole,
And grasp the ocean with a span,
I would be measured by the soul :
The mind’s the standard of the man.”

Closely connected with this view of the subject, we may notice that beneficial effect of scientific pursuits—which consists in the discipline of the mind—the arranging or *drilling* of the ideas—teaching them to flow in a steady and consecutive current—and the power of concentrating them and fixing them connectedly for a long period of time on one subject. This is a very valuable acquirement—for how often do we find men never employing their mind at all in their respective employments ; how many are there, who do their work—even when care and thought are most required—mechanically, like horses in a mill. One of the great advantages of institutions of this and a kindred character, is to teach their members to work scientifically and not mechanically.

Another advantage of scientific pursuits, is that they encourage and form a habit of industry and attention—a most valuable habit, and full of much moral good. And here let me observe, that those parties are pursuing a most erroneous course, who would smooth down all the difficulties, which oppose the student in his educational career—strewing with flowers alone what had erst been a toilsome road—removing all asperities and making the acquisition of science a process of amusement, a sort of amusing game ; interesting of course it ought if possible to be made—but the interest ought to be of that kind, which arises from the exercise of the mind and the improvement of the faculties—and not from ingenious but somewhat absurd—so called—philosophical puzzles and toys ; which after all, as Sir John Herschel says, are only sources of amusement, and generally give inaccurate notions of what they profess to explain. The knowledge acquired by this means

—a few years ago so much extolled—is now universally admitted to be nothing more than superficial.

The Alpine snow storms, the toilsome ascent and the perilous descent of those cloud-capt steeps, made Hannibal's better soldiers—than the luxury and ease of the lovely clime which lay extended before them. The former led to the well earned laurels which were gained on Cannæ's blood-stained plains ; the latter issued in the casting of that tearful and anxious look, which the baffled general of Carthage cast on the retiring shores of Italy—then for ever vanishing from his grasp.

Rest assured, that industry and perseverance, discouragement and self-denial are a surer prelude to eventual success, than that instruction, which calls for little mental effort and whose object is rather to amuse than to edify.

The elements of all sound knowledge must be difficult of acquirement ; and often in some degree uninteresting ; and, notwithstanding the ridicule—which is sometimes thrown upon the practice of those preceptors, who enforce lessons in the elements of learning, which their pupils can, with difficulty, and perhaps not fully comprehend at the time, the practice is neither absurd, nor without its use. At the same time the lessons ought to be so explained, as to remove—so far as it can be done—all that was incomprehensible in them. If however a habit of pains-taking and patient industry be induced—of trying to overcome difficulties—of selfdenial ; if it strengthens the memory, and by reason of the resistance encountered, impress those fundamental rules, which are the elements of literary knowledge more deeply upon that organ—then one very important end of *education* or *training* is answered. It is impossible to teach children at all, if they do not learn much that at the time they do not fully understand ; and be it remembered—that as their acquaintance with the subjects,—whose principles they have learnt by rote—increases, all this previous training is brought to bear ;

it fully repays the *toil* endured by the *advantages* it confers, and the aspirant after knowledge, thankfully and gratefully remembers that drudgery by which he was thoroughly grounded in the rudiments of learning in the days of his unreflecting boyhood.

But I must beg to crave your indulgence for introducing these remarks, in which I have slightly digressed from the subject directly under consideration ; which was to illustrate the benefit of scientific and literary pursuits in forming and encouraging habits of reflection, perseverance, selfdenial and industrious exertion. On the value of such habits, both to society at large, and to the individual member of it who cultivates them—it is quite unnecessary farther to speak.

A very striking and beneficial result of the general diffusion of knowledge, in its distinct and various departments, remains yet to be noticed; though the last now mentioned, it is not the last in importance : I allude to the refinement it introduces—the civilization it imparts—the multiplication of the comforts and elegancies of life which proceed from it. These are blessings, whose value can be ascertained only from contrasting them with the wretched destitution of a horde of savages, and the deplorable ignorance of a nation of barbarians.

The very words *urbanity*, *politeness*, *civility*, in the languages from which they are respectively derived—are all connected with cities, where men do congregate and where knowledge and information are diffused—and are contrasted with *rusticity*, which savours only of the country, where knowledge is necessarily pent up and confined. These very words show us the acknowledged good effects of men meeting together, and combining their efforts for the extension of useful information and scientific instruction.

Compare for instance the state of Britain *now* with its rude condition before it owned the sway of imperial Rome ; and you will perceive at once, how much mankind is indebted to the cultivation of the arts and

sciences, for all the decencies and comforts—as well as the elegancies and luxuries—of civilized life. There is not a clime under heaven, whose treasures British wealth has not purchased, and British commerce wafted to her shores. There cannot be felt a want, which human ingenuity and skill have not been tasked to supply. We cannot picture to ourselves an enjoyment, which the invention of man has not been set to work to gratify. In literature, in science, in the elegant arts and accomplishments which adorn life, as well as in the humbler departments which minister in a thousand ways to personal convenience at home and abroad—we seem to have reached the very acme of perfection.

In former ages magicians and witches were supposed to have power over the elements, but we may now truly say that they are subjected to the control of man; and though still but in the infancy of steam—the last discovered and third great element in the civilization of the world—wings have already been added to our speed, and we bound over the waves and traverse the land with a rapidity, which the most vivid imagination, in an earlier period of our history, would never have ventured to predict or to conceive; and which ten years ago even in England was looked upon by some as impossible, by others as exaggerated, and by all as dangerous.

I will now borrow a strain from the Caledonian muse, to depict the superstition and destitution of men, in a state of nature; and I need add no more to illustrate the beneficial influence of knowledge even when confined to improvements in navigation, mechanics and science—in refining and ameliorating the condition of mankind.—

“In the deep winding of the grove, no more
The hag obscene and grisly phantoms dwell;
Nor in the fall of mountain stream, or roar
Of winds, is heard the angry spirits yell;
No wizard mutters the tremendous spell,
Nor sinks convulsive in prophetic swoons:
Nor bids the noise of drums and trumpets swell,

To ease of fancied pangs the laboring moon,
Or chase the shade that blots the blazing orb of noon.

“ Many a long lingering year, in lonely isle,
Stunned by the eternal turbulence of waves,
Lo ! with dim eyes, that never learned to smile,
And trembling hands, the famished native craves
Of heaven his wretched fare ; shivering in caves,
Or scorched on rocks, he pines from day to day
But science gives the word, and lo ! he braves
The surge and tempest, lighted by her ray,
And to a happier land wafts merrily away.”

There is one branch of knowledge, which from its importance in this particular view—in civilizing and refining the manners of society—calls for a brief separate consideration : I allude to that branch, which embraces the classical and polite literature.

Learning effects for the *mind*, what gracefulness of deportment does for the *body*. It moulds it into symmetry and elegance. Its office is to prune the natural wildness of a luxuriant imagination—and to form and improve the taste. Variety and perspicuity of thought, soundness of judgment, purity of diction, propriety of expression ; in short, beauty and correctness of style—both in writing and conversation—all flow from this source.

And if the pulpit, the bar and the senate deserve to be supported and maintained, as the ornaments and safeguards of our country, then we must not despise this armoury, which supplies with the weapons of their warfare, the distinguished orators and statesmen and divines, who have in times past adorned, or may hereafter grace the annals of History. A few years ago—owing to the political turmoil of the world, amidst the smoke of steam-engines, and the noise of wheels, and the whirl of railroads, and the enterprize of commercial speculation; and when, in some parts of the empire, the industry and activity of busy competition and advancing improvement seemed to convert whole districts into one large manufactory—these studies were,

and sometimes now are, regarded with a smile of careless indifference or scornful contempt.

The symptoms of this feeling are rapidly disappearing; though it is still not uncommon to hear the study of what are called the dead languages, *i. e.* Latin and Greek, decried as of comparatively little importance, in the extended scheme of a liberal education. But one use and value of these pursuits is well described by the poet in the hackneyed quotation :

“*Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.*”

The defence of classical learning might be based on other principles, and its utility fairly proved to the satisfaction of any candid enquirer after truth; but this is neither the time nor the place for the enquiry—and I shall content myself with observing, that most of the objections against the study of Latin and Greek have arisen, partly from a too rigid adherence to ancient systems, and still more to men undertaking to teach the use of a weapon, which they themselves had never handled.

To continue the subject—classical studies properly pursued for a sufficient period of time, and when a moderate degree of proficiency is attained, certainly produce the effect which the Roman poet attributes to them.

It is an erroneous view to suppose that the benefit consists merely in an acquaintance with the by-gone languages of Greece and Rome. These are valuable for many reasons,—but our present argument is concerned with their value, only so far as they are the vehicle of introducing the student to the deep and exhaustless mines of intellectual wealth, which are there contained, and which have conferred on these respective nations, a glory and a name which will never die.

Look at Athens in the plenitude of her literary fame, and Rome in the full blaze of that splendour which enlightened her Augustan age—and mark how learning cherished liberty, and intelligence went hand

in hand with patriotism. Persia and Carthage had more of wealth, of influence and of power; Greece and Rome had but a circumscribed territory—a few hardy soldiers and very scanty means and resources. Yet with all these disadvantages, victory hovered round their banners, and conquest crowned their efforts, till those nations—with all their vast display of commerce, opulence and power—were constrained to yield to their sway. And, even now, the heroes and poets—the orators and historians—the philosophers and the patriots of Greece and Rome live in deathless memorials, whilst of their vanquished competitors nothing is rescued from oblivion, but their name—and the principal record of their existence is bequeathed to us in the literature of their conquerors.

It was my original intention to bring home these general remarks on the pursuits and results of knowledge, in their special application to Associations like that whose members I am now addressing; but I must not trespass too long on your time and attention, and there is less occasion for this concentration of my remarks, as the design and benefits of Mercantile Associations and similar Institutions have, I dare say, been already brought before your attention in previous addresses.

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I will therefore pass on to a few brief corollaries, which I am desirous of attaching to the proposition I have been endeavouring to establish.

The first of these inferences, to which I would particularly direct the attention of the younger part of the audience, is—that commensurate with the *advantages* arising from the judicious training, and right cultivation and proper employment of the faculties of the mind—will be the *evil* inseparably appended to the neglect or mis-application of them. Of all the rational inhabitants of the world, the man, who has nothing to do, and is inclined to do nothing, is the most deserving of commiseration—I mean the idle loiterer, the drone of society, the

living lumber of the land ; the man, who has not the moral energy, or the mental capacity, to turn his talents to any profitable account.

If these unhappy triflers "*fruges tantum consumere nati* :

“ Who know no reason why they're born,
But only to consume the corn,”

belong to the wealthier classes, they may bask and sport beneath the summer's sun, and flit from flower to flower, like the butterfly, enjoying their little day ; but how little do they benefit society ? They excite the contempt of the enlightened and the compassion of the wise and virtuous members of the community, and they attach a stigma of disgrace to the fraternity, to which they belong. But if they are numbered among those, whose circumstances constrain them to earn their maintenance by the exertions either of their *head* or their *hands*—then beggary and want must be the inevitable result of their indolent habits.

In short—in either case, ignorance and idleness lead to vicious indulgence, to wretchedness, and to penury ; and the man who hides his talent in the earth, the mere cumberer of the ground, who suffers his opportunities and his abilities to run all to waste—not only mars his usefulness, but by a suicidal act destroys his happiness.

Let me attach a second corollary to the preceding observations, viz.—the vast and incalculable importance, in a national view, of carefully attending to the mental and moral culture of the middle and upper ranks of society.

The present age presents some remarkable features in regard to the general and unavoidable diffusion of knowledge. Since the day, when our first parents presumptuously dared to taste of the forbidden fruit, their children have been in a great measure, by circumstances, prevented from access to the tree, and knowledge (I am now speaking of intellectual knowledge) has been of slow, progressive and difficult attainment. A few minds only of superior calibre have successfully pur-

sued it. At no period and in no nation of the world, has knowledge been generally diffused, and placed within the reach of any but the favored few—the initiated ones—who excluded the profane and uneducated vulgar from the precincts of the temple of science, with inefable disdain and contempt. Amongst the Greeks and Romans, science and literature were confined to a very small portion of the population, and in the middle ages they may be said to have become extinct, or to have dwindled down into legends, and the metaphysical absurdities of the schoolmen. The invention of the press generated the power of diffusing knowledge throughout every gradation of society ; but not until the present time has this power been brought into active operation. But now the floodgates are thrown open to the vast masses of the increasing population of the civilized world. Men of the loftiest intellect are daily acquiring and communicating fresh stores of knowledge ; the press circulates it, like the vital fluid, through all the veins and arteries of the community. Every facility is given, every encouragement afforded, every variety of intellectual food supplied—to excite the appetite, and to gratify the peculiar taste, of all grades and classes, from the lowest to the highest. Schools, and books, and institutions for its wide dissemination, are multiplied and ramified, even into the depths of the sequestered rural hamlets ; and it remains for the next generation, to witness and experience the grand results, which must issue from the simultaneous working of this wonderful and mighty machinery.

Here then observe the great importance of training that class aright, who are—so to speak—the fulcrum, the centre of gravity, on whose right adjustment the equilibrium of the whole national fabric must rest. Education, beyond the mere rudiments, cannot pervade the lower orders ; their poverty, their locality, and the exhausting routine of their daily employment are almost insuperable barriers to their advancement. But they will be influenced by those, who are above them in the

ascending scale ; and it is in these, that the strength and the knowledge of the nation will appear concentrated in a mass. They must and will guide the machine in every thing.

How important then is it that they be rightly informed ! For the diffusion of sound knowledge amongst them, is diffusing health and happiness and prosperity through the land, and entailing the Divine blessing upon our children's children to countless generations. And, as each class will copy from those who are immediately above them ; so must the highest classes, the aristocracy of the land, take likewise a similar lesson. We would preserve the different gradations of society, and willingly render to rank and wealth the deference and respect due to the station in which Providence has placed those who possess them. But it is most certain, that men will feel more respect and esteem for those who merit them by their intellectual and moral worth, than for those who rest their single claim to superiority on title, wealth or power. The privileged orders then must join in the general pursuit ; for as to resisting the wide spread of knowledge, they might as well attempt to stop the glorious flood of light, which the rising sun pours from the golden East. The impetus has been given—the mighty current has set in—it flows with deep, expansive and irresistible flood ;—and, to continue the metaphor, “we may as well attempt to hurl back the stream of the Nile to the Nubian Mountains, the Rhine to the Rhœtian Alps, the Ganges to the Himalaya,” the St. Lawrence up the Falls of Niagara to Lake Erie—as to stem the torrent of knowledge, and turn it back into the stagnant lake of ignorance.

Suffer me to remind you, in conclusion, wherein consists the perfection of wisdom. It is when Talent consecrates its powers, when Knowledge lays its stores at the foot of the cross, when the spiritual and intellectual faculty blend and act in unison. This is not the place, I know, for theological discussion : but I think I am privileged by my office—or rather a responsibility is laid

upon me by the sacred character of that office, especially whilst I am encouraging your deep research into the mines of scientific discovery and intellectual wealth—to remind you that there is emphatically a “pearl of great price,” and that whatever advantages all other knowledge may possess—and, as we have seen, it does possess many and great advantages—there is a knowledge, unspeakably more valuable and necessary than all beside—a knowledge, which alone can make us wise for ever. Without the treasures of this knowledge, without its secret influence pervading your minds and faculties, you may be learned, but you will never be happy.

“Happy is the man that seeketh knowledge, and the man that findeth understanding ; for the merchandize thereof is better than silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.”

I will only add my best wishes for the success of your Association, and that its laudable design and object may meet with the encouragement, which they so well deserve, from all who feel an interest in the future welfare of this City. And amid all your seekings, may you find that wisdom whose price is “above rubies ;” and practically know, that “the fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.”

