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The Pleasures of Reading.

By WM. HARRISON.

(WRITTEN FOR THE LIBERAL.)

In the days when error and superstition enshrouded the minds of the people, when mental darkness covered the face of Europe as palpable as that of Egypt, it was sometimes thought necessary to drive away evil spirits by "bell, book and candle;" but in our day, substituting modern improvements for the light of other days, it is found that that they will do it quite as efficiently, for those who devote their spare moments to the perusal of useful and entertaining works, will have no time for superstitious thoughts or the reception of imaginary visions.

The pleasures of reading are so varied, and the knowledge obtained thereby so valuable, that we frequently wonder at those who so little prize it, as to neglect it altogether. Such is the difference it makes, that it is easily discernible between the well read man and the individual who looks upon books with indifference. How easy to discover a well read man; he has a general knowledge on a variety of subjects; if you wish to converse, he is the one to instruct you, and if you heed him it will not be unprofitable.

Reading gives us the privilege of holding communion with men of every age. To him who reads—"they being dead yet speak"—from them he obtains a knowledge of the things that were, which makes the past a continual present; and then how pleasing to dip into the reservoirs of men whose lives have been spent in the mines of wisdom. We have their reward without their labor—results of vast importance which cost the authors years of thought and study, we have for a comparatively trifling consideration. He who retires to his library is never alone. Chambers is there with his miscellany of useful information. Newton, Herschel of his mental wanderings among the stars; Leibniz and Bayald of the remains of bygone centuries, of their discoveries in the Catacombs of Egypt, or among the palaces of ancient Nineveh; and Livingston of his explorations in the hitherto unknown regions of Africa. How reputable! how intelligent his company! Surely Bacon never uttered a greater truism than when he said, "Reading makes a full man."

Books are friends to the friendless; in his library a man who has acquired a taste for reading finds those who instruct him by their wisdom, charm him by their wit, refresh him when weary, counsel him when perplexed; and those who, under all circumstances, are ready to sympathize with him. From some he hears the voice of warning, from others that of encouragement.

Poets, Lawyers, Physicians,  
Divines, Philosophers and Politicians.

All are ready to impart instruction to the mind, which solicits their assistance. The reading of history teaches us to gather wisdom from the past; if we are without this advantage our understanding would scarce exceed that of a child; for past experience teaches us not only how to improve the present, but how to prepare for the future. In it we may see thousands of examples which we may imitate, and also thousands which it is our duty to avoid. By reading we may regulate our conduct, and receive impetus in our progress onward. Huire, in speaking of history, says that "he who is acquainted with it may in some respects be said to have lived from the beginning of the world, and to have been making continual additions to his stock of knowledge century after century."

If the proper study of mankind is man, the last places to apply for examples are in novels and romances! There man scarcely recognizes himself; the heroes of fiction surpass the gods of mythology; the heroines rival angels in perfection. How can an intelligent mind be satisfied with such as this? Let an individual attempt to lecture to us on such nonsense, how long would we listen; we would turn away in disgust—yet hours are spent in the perusal of works of this stamp, which present not a single lesson of practicable utility.

He who confines himself to works of fiction lives as it were in an ideal world; to him it assumes a novel and romantic aspect, quite foreign to the stern realities of the present life. Were the plan Tom, Dick and Harry, of everyday life to mimic the chivalrous Charles, the noble-minded Henrys, or the devoted Alonzos of fiction, by falling upon their knees and gazing into the eyes of the objects of their attachment with impassioned, soul subduing, intense, and indescribable tenderness, and real heroines of the day would be apt to ridicule their position, and probably have grave doubts relative to their sanity. Fictitious works are in a great measure perused

by the young. As men grow older they lose that relish for them which they had in their younger days. They have learned by experience their practical worthlessness, and forsake them, but the danger is that by this time the mind may be so vitiated that it has no inclination to a higher standard of literature. Having, while young, perused so many fancy sketches whilst the mind was unfurnished with ideas, the principles unfixed, and before judgment had begun to extend its sway the effect has been injurious, and the mind remains unsettled. How much better would it be to store our minds with knowledge which will be of advantage to us in after life, rather than tracing an imaginary hero through imaginary scenes, and then as is often the case, have to depend on our own imagination for his finale.

The plea is sometimes urged that light reading is necessary to relax the mind after the fatigues of the day. Suppose it is, but is there nothing of this character without resorting to writings where crime is so gilded that we fail to see its criminality, where vice and immorality are dressed in such gaudy drapery that they no longer appear detestable. If truth is stranger than fiction, surely there is enough to satiate the mind which loves to revel in the marvellous and the exciting in voyages and travels. If we prefer the grand and the beautiful, objects are pointed out in Dick's Christian Philosopher, which far surpass the boldest strokes of a Dickens or a Lytton, and grandeur cannot be excelled by the productions of the most fertile imagination.

A sage once said, that "a great book was a great evil." When works of immoral tendency are in question, we would go further and say, a multitude of books are a multitude of evils, of the making of such there seems to be no end. Happy would it have been for this generation if the millions of twenty-five cent novels, which are scattered broadcast over the country, had shared the fate of many better works. The managers of our Public Library have to cater to all tastes, keeping an eye to morality and religion, but among its 2000 volumes are hundred of standard works worthy of intellectual digestion.

In the selection of reading matter let our youth choose only such as combine instruction with entertainment; and if novels are read at all, let them be of the best stamp, by authors whose aim is to raise the standard of morality, and to benefit their readers. The result will be better judgments on men and things, better ideas of their responsibilities, better instruments in the hands of God in the accomplishment of his designs. Richmond Hill, Nov. 24, 1896.

WANTED—SEVERAL FAITHFUL

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York County Council.

Resolved, That this council is of opinion that if the York roads are abandoned by the county to the minor municipalities, no more equitable distribution of the expense of keeping up the roads can be made than for each minor municipality to keep up that portion of the road within or along the municipality in which the roads are situated; that the municipalities in which the roads are most expensively maintained will benefit most largely by the abolition of tolls and market fees;

Therefore, be it further resolved, that the By Laws and Legislative Committee be and are hereby instructed to appear before the Legislature or any committee of the Legislature having charge of the matter and oppose any and all applications or petitions from any municipality for relief or assistance;

This is the resolution which carried at the end of a long debate in committee on the subject of York roads. It was moved by the Warden and seemed to express the views of a substantial majority of the council.

Mr. Davis (North Toronto) moved that the county grant relief to the extent of \$600 per annum to North Toronto and \$1,000 annually to Scarborough. Only the Scarborough and North Toronto members supported the motion. Mr. Scott (Markham) proposed that the county vote \$100 or \$64 per mile to each municipality in the county, but ultimately withdrew his motion. All material on the roads after the close of the year will be brought to the local municipalities. To bring matters to a close Mr. Evans (Etobicoke) carried a motion that the Warden sign the agreement with the city for the mutual abolition of tollgates and market fees.

Fifty dollars was voted to Markham Village on account of the expense to be incurred in putting the cells there in a sanitary condition for prisoners under

arrest. The annual grant of \$100 was voted to the Prisoner's Aid Association. Mr. Humberstone's claim of \$30 was rejected.

The county constables petition for restoration of the 25 cents per diem additional allowance was referred to the new council.

A memorial to the Dominion Government for a substantial grant to the Toronto exhibition next year was adopted.

On Thursday it was decided to construct a bridge at York Mills, and a committee went out on the Metropolitan to locate the site of the structure.

On Friday evening a banquet was tendered Warden Slater by the members of the council at the Clyde hotel, when the Warden was presented with a gold-headed cane. Among the guests of the evening were Hon. E. J. Davis, Provincial Secretary; W. F. Maclean, M.P.; Dr. Gilmour, Warden of the Central Prison.

On Saturday the council was asked for a \$100 grant for Woodbridge Public School, which school is taking up certain High School work, for which an extra teacher has been engaged at a salary of \$600. The contribution was not granted, some of the members maintaining that Stouffville, East Toronto, Mount Albert, Sutton and Schomberg were similarly situated.

Grants of \$25 each were voted to the North and South York Teachers' Institutes.

Early in the afternoon of Saturday it was evident the work could not be concluded during the day, and the council adjourned until Friday next, the members to receive in lieu of the usual mileage, the actual cost of their railway tickets, which will save one-half the expense.

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Maple

A very successful meeting of the Woman's Auxiliary of the Methodist Church was held at Mrs. T. Cousins' on Wednesday of last week. After the work of the meeting was finished, tea was served, to which fifty five sat down. A collection was taken up amounting to \$7.10.

Last Wednesday Mr. Arthur Wilson, weaver, of this place, was married to Miss Moffatt, of Blackwater. On Friday evening they were serenaded by a large crowd of small boys. We wish them every happiness in their journey through life.

Rev. A. R. Sanderson returned last Friday after spending a holiday up north. Miss Dandus, of Toronto, is visiting at Dr. Sisley's.

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EXECUTORS'

**Notice to Creditors**

In the matter of the estate of

**DAVID MURRAY,**  
Deceased.

Notice is hereby given pursuant to R. S. O. Chapter 110 and Amending Acts, that all persons having claims against the estate of David Murray, late of the Township of Vaughan, in the County of York, Farmer, who died on or about the 11th day of July, 1896, are required on or before the

14th day of December, 1896,

To send to George W. Murray, Valuers Post Office, one of the executors, or to Macdougall & Jones, solicitors for the executors, at their office 18 Toronto street, Toronto, full particulars of their claims and of the security (if any) now held by them; and that after said 14th day of December the executors will distribute the assets of the said deceased among the parties entitled thereto having regard only to the claims of which they shall have had notice.

MARIA MURRAY, ISAAC MURRAY, GEO. W. MURRAY, Executors and Executors.

By their solicitors, MACDOUGALL & JONES.

20-4 Dated this 7th day of November, A. D. 1896.

**MRS. SKINNER,**  
**Music Teacher and**  
**Dress Maker.**

Residence one door south of Dr. Hutchison's,

Nov. 12 2m