Reading for Amusement.

BY G. A. WALKER.

According to the reports of the public libraries, most of the books taken from them are novels. The per centage of works of sterling quality-books of science, ethics and even biography-drawn from these popular institutions is very low indeed. It is true that the public libraries are designed to provide reading for the people at large, while in most cities there are libraries provided for the use of scholars. The Athenæum, in Boston, is an aristocratic institution designed for the use of the cultivated and literary classes. The Astor Library, in New York City, is the resort of students and specialists, and the books most called for in institutions of this kind are of a sufficiently substantial character to satisfy the most exacting. Still it is unquestionably true, that most of our people read for entertainment and not for improvement; and those who read works of a serious character do so to fill the vacancies of idleness with divertisement rather than for serious ends.

But I am not sure this is an evil to be deplored nor a vice to be condemned. Reading is a form of amusement, and a vastly wholesomer and more elevating pastime than many popular recreations. It is the only amusement thousands of people can indulge in. The novel is the chief pleasurable resource of thousands who have no gay and joyous society, no brilliant and fascinating entertainments, no exhilarating excursions into the country nor indulgence of musical and artistic tastes, no admission to the favored company of the great. The novel creates an ideal world for their enjoyment, introduces them to the society of kings and nobles, and surrounds them for the time with an atmosphere of poetry and enchantment. It stimulates the feelings through the imagination, and sometimes excites the faculties as wine. To the poor, overwrought and unfortunate, the sick and the solitary, the value of this source of ideal enrichment and exhilaration cannot be estimated, and its moral importance in preventing dangerous dissipations has been overlooked by most ethical writers and exhorters. The more reading the less rioting. Romance is vastly better than rum. Story reading is a marked advance on idle gossip and scandal-mongering. The shop girl or the servant girl who finds relief for weariness and a retreat from bad conditions in the splendid picturings of fiction, till arrangement that they can be enshe forgets her lot in the play of joyed. passions and fancies her real life furnishes no scope for, is vastly better off than her sister who has Torch of Reason Song Book, No. 2. no taste for reading and is too They are only 10 cents each.

often drawn into questionable excitements and companionships. The mechanic who finds delight in the pages of Dickens and Shakespeare is not likely to lose himself in the dissipations of the gaming table or saloon. And often those who begin reading for mere entertainment continue for serious ends. The taste it cultivates is refining. The habit it forms is improving and insensibly awakens a love of knowledge. Flower gathering often leads to a study of botany. The chase after butterflies frequently ends in zoology. Waverly and Bulwer are introductions to history, and George Eliot invites her readers to science, philosophy and ethics.

The moral value of recreation is only half suspected by too many of our religious teachers. Dr. E. H. Clark says that when a circus company applied for a license a second time it was opposed by only two classes, the clergy and the rum sellers. The former objected to it for its supposed immoral tendencies; the latter opposed it because it drew customers from their bar. It was a rival entertainment, and emptied their saloons. Reading, as a mere amusement, has the same effect. Nor is it, as some persons seem to imagine, a bad thing that people are more bent on entertainment than improvement. It is unnatural and unwholesome to keep the mind keyed up to a moral pitch all the time; and the man who is perpetually on the stretch and strain for self-culture seldom, if ever, gets the best culture. The richest, the finest, the highest personal qualities are not achieved in that way. "Culture is a kingdom that may be conquered by force, but can never be possessed by it." Improvement is a good thing to seek, but obedience to the laws of the universe is infinitely better. The object of life is living, not the working of one's self up into this or the other sort of creature. Whoever lives, totally and grandly, realizes his destiny. Our teachers are just beginning to learn that education should be made a pleasure instead of a penance. Knowledge should be absorbed, instead of being rammed into the mind like a bullet into a barrel that is too small for it. The reading of even the best books should be an entertainment and recreation in order to absorb and assimilate their contents, just as eating should be spiced with conversation and laughter that the food may digest and contribute its utmost nutriment to the body. And books of substantial quality and scholarship should be made as interesting as possible in style and

You should have a copy of the

Library of Liberal Classics.

Fac-simile of the Illuminated Paper Fac-simile of the Cloth Editions of

Covers of the

LIBRARY OF LIBERAL CLASSICS. LIBERAL CLASSICS.



PAPER EDITIONS

Paine's Age of Reason Paine's Rights of Man .. Paine's Religious & Theological Works. Ills Paine's Principal Political Works. Illus..... Rousseau's Vicar of Savoy, and A Search for O Truth, by Olive Schreiner ..

Rousseau's Social Contract feslier's Superstition in all Ages. Portrait Medlier's Gianbe und Bernunft, Portrait Dickens' Sunday Under Three Heads. Illus. Bulwer's History of a False Religion. Illus. Taileyrand's Letter to the Pope. Portrait... Gibbon's Birth and Character of Mahomet... Higgins' Horæ Sabbaticæ
Higgins' Apology for Mahomet, the Illus.
Reasons for Unbelief. By Louis Viardot.....

Father Tom and the Pope at the Vatican..

Voltaire's Zadig, or Fate; and The White The Wan of Forty Crowns; and The

Huron, or, Pupil of Nature........... Micromegas; The World as it Goes; Plato's Dream; Jeannot & Colin, etc. Voltaire's Romances, containing the above 4 books in one vol. Profusely illustrated. 11

Letters on the Christian Religion..... Philosophy of History....... Ignorant Philosopher.....

Chinese Catechism. Voltaire's Essays and Criticisms contains the above 4 books, profusely illustrated Renan's Life of Jesus. Illustrated. Schopenhauer's Wisdom of Life. Portrait ... Counsels and Maxims. Religion: a Dialogue & Other Essays.

The Art of Literature.

Studies in Possimism

's Life and Immortality of Man 'a Canon of the Bible. Darwin's Origin of Species. Hypatia By Charles Kingsley Bacon's Paradoxes. Portrait The Scientific Religion By Maniel Sands. ngersoll's Controversy & Christmas Sermon Gods and other Lectures. Ghosts and other Lectures

Some Mistakes of Moses.

Interviews on Talmage

What Must we do to be Saved?... Man, Woman and Child. Portrait. Shakespeare, a Lecture. Portrait. About the Holy Bible, a Lecture... Voltaire, a Lecture. Portrait... Field-Ingersoll Discussion. Ingersoll-Gladstone Controversy .. The Christian Religion. Foundations of Faith.

How to Reform Mankind Essays and Criticisms The Truth, a Lecture. Crimes Against Criminals..... Abraham Lincoln, a Lecture. Por. Which Way? A Lecture. Myths and Miracles. A Lecture. Patriotic Addresses. ome Reasons Why

Rome or Reason On the Devil. Thanksgiving Sermon Vindication of Thomas Paine. Is Suicide a Sin?

Why I am an Agnostic.

Limitations of Toleration. sanas' Discourse About Immortality. God Conduct. The Law of Success and Failure of Things

Liberty in Literature

Individuality

Opposites in General Keeler's Short History of the Bible Gardener's Men, Women and Gods Asmodeus, or the Devil on Two Sticks. Illus. Bachelor of Salamanca. Illustrated. Vanillo Gonzales, or the Merry Bachelor. Illa.

FOR SALE BY

THE TORCH OF REASON. THE TORCH OF REASON. Silverton, Oregon.



the Famous

LIBRARY OF

CLOTH EDITIONS. PAINE'S COMPLETE WORKS.
Paine's Political Works.

2 vol. aine's Theological Works Illustrated Paine's Miscellaneous Works. 1 vol. Paine's Life. By Cho Rickman Edition. Paine's Life. By Che Rickman and the editor of The National. Profusely illustrated. 1 vol. 5 vol. Paine's Age of Reason.
Paine's Rights of Man.
Paine's Crisis.
Paine's Life, by ed National. Profusely illus.
Paine's Complete Life, by Clio Rickman and the editor of the National.
Paine's Principal Political Works (1 vol.) Paine's Principal Political Works, (1 vol.)... 1 00 Paine's Political Works, Complete, (2 vols.)... 2 00 Paine's Religious and Theological Works. 1 00 Gibbon's History of Christianity. Illus...... 2 00 Gibbon's Birth and Character of Mahomet... 54



Rousseau's Vicar of Savoy. Portrait. Cloth 50 Rousseau's Social Contract. Portrait..... 75 Meslier's Superstition in all Ages. Port.ait. 1 00

Meslier's Superstition in all Ages. Port.ait. 1 00

Weslier's Slaube and Bermanft. Portrait 1 00

Volney's Ruins of Empires. Illustrated..... 75

Volney's New Researches in Ancient History 1 50 Reade's (Winwood) Martyrdom of Man... Hæckel's Visit to Ceylon. Portrait.... Dickens' Sunday Under Three Heads. Illus. Higgins' Horæ Sabbatica Higgins' Apology for Mahomet, the Illus. Büchner's Force and Matter. Portrait Büchner's Man in Past, J Rochefoucauld's Moral Luxins... Comte's Positive Philosop y. Postrait 4 00 Goodloe's Birth of the Republic. Portrait ... 1 00 Fawcett's Agnosticism. Bulwer's History of a False Religion. Talleyrand's Letter to the Pope. Portrait... Reasons for Unbelief. By Louis Viardot..... Father Tom and the Pope at the Vatican..... Ingersoll's Lectures, vol. I, cloth..... vol. I, full shee full sheep vol. I, half morocco... Second volume in preparation.) Ingersoll's Prose Poems. Portrait. Cheaper Edition .. Gods and other Lectures Ghosts and other Lectures .. Some Mistakes of Moses Interviews on Talmage Field-Ingersoll Discussion....... Ingersoll-Gladstone Controversy The Christian Religion Shakespeare, a Lecture. Portrait. Renan's Life of Jesus. Davidson's Canon of the Bible. Apocryphal New Testament Morehouse's Wilderness of Worlds. Illus. Taber's Faith or Fact. Keeler's Short History of the Bible. Spencer's First Princip'es. Spencer's Data of Ethics Education. Darwin's Descent of Man. Darwin's Origin of Species. Proctor's Other Worlds than ours Kingsley's Hypatia. Schopenhauer's Essays O'Meara's Napoleon, 2 vol., Boxed. Las Casas Napoleon, 4 vols, Boxed Illus Cobbett's English Grammar. Macauley's Lays of Ancient Rome. Illus Shakespeare Portrayed by Himself. OLD SPANISH ROMANCES. Don Quixote, 4 vols Lazarillo de Tormes, 2 vols. 48 Etchings Asmodeus, 1 vol.

crown 8ve, Bachelor of Salamanca, 1 vol. Vanillo Gonzales, or the Merry Boxed \$18.00 The Same 12 vols., Half Calf, Boxed. Don Quixote, 4 vols., with Etchings, Boxed.. 6 00 Adventures of Gil Blas, 3 vols., POPULAR CLOTH EDITIONS. Adventures of Gil Blas, 3 vols. Illustrated...\$3 • Popular edition 1 Asmodeus, or the Devil on Two Sticks. Illus. 1 00 Don Quixote, 4 volumes in 1. Illustrated ..

FOR SALE BY

Silverton, Oregon.