

**THE BOOK-LOVER: A
GUIDE TO THE BEST
READING, PP. 16-201**

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The Book-Lover: A Guide to the Best Reading, pp. 16-201 by James Baldwin

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JAMES BALDWIN

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THE BOOK-LOVER.

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THE BOOK-LOVER.

A Guide to the Best Reading.

BY

JAMES BALDWIN, PH. D.,

AUTHOR OF "ENGLISH LITERATURE AND LITERARY CRITICISM,"
ETC., ETC.

Whoever acknowledges himself to be a zealous follower of truth,
of happiness, of wisdom, of science, or even of the faith, must of
necessity make himself a Lover of Books.

RICHARD DE BURY.

Fourth Edition.

CHICAGO:

JANSEN, McCLURG, AND COMPANY.

1886.

PK

LC

NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

CONSIDER what you have in the smallest chosen library. A company of the wisest and wittiest men that could be picked out of all civil countries, in a thousand years, have set in best order the results of their learning and wisdom. The men themselves were hid and inaccessible, solitary, impatient of interruption, fenced by etiquette; but the thought which they did not uncover to their bosom friend is here written out in transparent words to us, the strangers of another age. We owe to books those general benefits which come from high intellectual action. Thus, I think, we often owe to them the perception of immortality. They impart sympathetic activity to the moral power. Go with mean people, and you think life is mean. Then read Plutarch, and the world is a proud place, peopled with men of positive quality, with heroes and demi-gods standing around us, who will not let us sleep. Then they address the imagination: only poetry inspires poetry. They become the organic culture of the time. College education is the reading of certain books which the common sense of all scholars agrees will represent the science already accumulated. . . . In the highest civilization the book is still the highest delight.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

A GREAT book that comes from a great thinker, — it is a ship of thought, deep-freighted with truth, with beauty too. It sails the ocean, driven by the winds of heaven, breaking the level sea of life into beauty where it goes, leaving behind it a train of sparkling loveliness, widening as the ship goes on. And what a treasure it brings to every land, scattering the seeds of truth, justice, love, and piety, to bless the world in ages yet to come !

THEODORE PARKER.

WHAT is a great love of books? It is something like a personal introduction to the great and good men of all past times. Books, it is true, are silent as you see them on their shelves ; but, silent as they are, when I enter a library I feel as if almost the dead were present, and I know if I put questions to these books they will answer me with all the faithfulness and fulness which has been left in them by the great men who have left the books with us.

JOHN BRIGHT.

I LOVE my books as drinkers love their wine ;
 The more I drink, the more they seem divine ;
 With joy elate my soul in love runs o'er,
 And each fresh draught is sweeter than before !
 Books bring me friends where'er on earth I be, —
 Solace of solitude, bonds of society.

I love my books ! they are companions dear,
 Sterling in worth, in friendship most sincere ;

Here talk I with the wise in ages gone,
And with the nobly gifted in our own :
If love, joy, laughter, sorrow please my mind,
Love, joy, grief, laughter in my books I find.

FRANCIS BENNOCH.

BOOKS are the windows through which the
soul looks out.

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

BOOKS are our household gods ; and we cannot prize them too highly. They are the only gods in all the mythologies that are beautiful and unchangeable ; for they betray no man, and love their lovers. I confess myself an idolater of this literary religion, and am grateful for the blessed ministry of books. It is a kind of heathenism which needs no missionary funds, no Bible even, to abolish it ; for the Bible itself caps the peak of this new Olympus, and crowns it with sublimity and glory. Amongst the many things we have to be thankful for, as the result of modern discoveries, surely this of printed books is the highest of all ; and I, for one, am so sensible of its merits that I never think of the name of Gutenberg without feelings of veneration and homage.

JANUARY SEARLE.

THE only true equalizers in the world are books ; the only treasure-house open to all comers is a library ; the only wealth which

will not decay is knowledge ; the only jewel which you can carry beyond the grave is wisdom. To live in this equality, to share in these treasures, to possess this wealth, and to secure this jewel may be the happy lot of every one. All that is needed for the acquisition of these inestimable treasures is the love of books.

J. A. LANGFORD.

LET us thank God for books. When I consider what some books have done for the world, and what they are doing ; how they keep up our hope, awaken new courage and faith, soothe pain, give an ideal life to those whose homes are hard and cold, bind together distant ages and foreign lands, create new worlds of beauty, bring down truths from heaven, — I give eternal blessings for this gift, and pray that we may use it aright, and abuse it not.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

BOOKS, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good ;
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

PRECIOUS and priceless are the blessings which books scatter around our daily paths. We walk, in imagination, with the noblest

spirits, through the most sublime and enchanting regions, — regions which, to all that is lovely in the forms and colors of earth,

"Add the gleam,
The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration and the poet's dream."

A motion of the hand brings all Arcadia to sight. The war of Troy can, at our bidding, rage in the narrowest chamber. Without stirring from our firesides, we may roam to the most remote regions of the earth, or soar into realms where Spenser's shapes of unearthly beauty flock to meet us, where Milton's angels peal in our ears the choral hymns of Paradise. Science, art, literature, philosophy, — all that man has thought, all that man has done, — the experience that has been bought with the sufferings of a hundred generations, — all are garnered up for us in the world of books. There, among realities, in a "substantial world," we move with the crowned kings of thought. There our minds have a free range, our hearts a free utterance. Reason is confined within none of the partitions which trammel it in life. In that world, no divinity hedges a king, no accident of rank or fashion ennobles a dunce or shields a knave. We can select our companions from among the most richly gifted of the sons of God ;