

**WHAT TO READ, AND HOW TO
READ: BEING CLASSIFIED LISTS
OF CHOICE READING, WITH
APPROPRIATE HINTS AND
REMARKS**

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What to Read, and how to Read: Being Classified Lists of Choice Reading, with Appropriate Hints and Remarks by Charles H. Moore

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CHARLES H. MOORE

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CLASSIFIED LISTS OF CHOICE READING,

WITH

APPROPRIATE HINTS AND REMARKS,

ADAPTED TO THE GENERAL READER, TO SUBSCRIBERS TO
LIBRARIES, AND TO PERSONS INTENDING TO
FORM COLLECTIONS OF BOOKS.

BROUGHT DOWN TO SEPTEMBER, 1870.

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

THE title-page of this book indicates, with perhaps sufficient exactness, the chief points in its *aim and plan*. A glance through the Table of Contents, and the Synopsis, will give a still clearer and fuller idea. It will be seen that, in order to add to the efficiency of the classified lists as exhibited in the synopsis, an effort has been made to adapt them to readers of different ages; also, to those whose leisure is more or less abundant. The importance of this feature need not be dwelt upon.

The *utility* of some guide to the inexperienced reader to direct and shape his studies amid the immense mass of literature now before the public, is something so evident that it is unnecessary to enter into any labored argument in its proof. To parents also, who may not have time or ability to select properly the reading of their children, the benefits and convenience of a work like the present are undeniable. But, as regards utility, there is another view still more significant. The deplorable effects of modern sensational literature upon the *intellect* as well as the morals of the present generation, is a matter of common

observation. To counteract the influence of vile or worthless books, something better must be offered, something which will please as well as instruct, which will refine the taste and evoke the nobler emotions. In the present volume something has been done, it is hoped, toward attaining this end.

However unpretending this manual may be, the author is not the less sensible of its liability to unfavorable criticism. It may, especially, be objected that the question, *How to read?* has been treated too cursorily. In explanation, it is proper to state that the work has been written subject to various antagonistic conditions. For instance, the author aimed to make it sufficiently large to be of substantial service as a catalogue for subscribers to libraries, etc.; at the same time small enough to admit of being published at a moderate price. Again, while seeking to embrace the really standard literature in the English tongue—as far as adapted to the general reader—regard had to be paid to the accessibility of the books cited. At all events, whatever may be its defects, the author can say with truth that he has spared neither time nor conscientious care. Should it succeed in affording assistance to the aspiring student, or in tempting others to exchange the vicious or the unprofitable for something of enduring worth, he trusts that the good thus effected will win indulgence for venial errors.

H I N T S .

1. RIGID "plans" and "courses of reading" are seldom of use. In fact, they are, in general, positively injurious; for, as they are rarely carried out, they disgust the reader with system in any shape, and dishearten him for further efforts. If formed at all, programmes cannot be too simple and elastic. They will then stand some chance of being followed. We have the authority of two great names for this piece of advice—Dr. Johnson and Sir Walter Scott.

2. Upon commencing any book, it will be found highly useful to have a sheet of blank paper upon which to mark the number of the page, and, if needed, the paragraph, where any thing is met demanding further investigation, or re-perusal. If the reader keeps a commonplace-book he will find this by far the most convenient mode for entering any thing desired.

3. Have always a book or two, to take up at intervals of leisure. The odd minutes thus employed will count profitably at the end of a year, and will pleasantly occupy time which might otherwise be spent impatiently, or with *ennui*. Some French author, whose name has escaped me, was enabled in this way to compose a work of high reputation.

4. Devise some plan by means of which you may stow up in compact and systematic form the fruits of your reading, observation, etc. This is a great help to the memory, and a valuable aid to our researches upon any particular subject.

5. A few books—but the *best* and *slowly read*—will be found more profitable than ten times the number badly selected, especially if read hastily.

6. Choose some one book to be read over and over. Let the