

**SOME OBSERVATIONS ON  
BOOKS AND LIBRARIES IN  
GENERAL AND ON "THE SACRED  
BOOKS AND EARLY LITERATURE  
OF THE EAST" IN PARTICULAR**

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Some Observations on Books and Libraries in General And on "The Sacred Books and Early literature of the East" in particular by Frank Crane

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**FRANK CRANE**

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*Some Observations*



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By Dr. Frank Crane

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## I

### THE LIBRARY

Every man of taste wants a Book.

Every man of taste, and some means, wants a Library, a room of Books, a Book temple, a private chapel where he can retreat from the world and hold communion with the imperial past.

Here are his silent counsellors, his friends, each with its priceless wisdom enclosed in its covers, never intruding, waiting to be consulted, ready and willing to impart their garnered wisdom of heaven and earth.

Without a Library the most sumptuous home is coarse and common.

The Library is the touch of culture, the mark of genuine good breeding, the one guaranty of a real aristocracy of spirit.

When you enter the house of the successful man, it is not the gold furniture of his

parlor that impresses you, nor his tinted boudoirs, nor his regal halls and stairways, nor his baronial dining room, nor his expensive paintings and curios; it is his library. That is the touchstone of his quality. That will show you whether he is a cheap money-maker who has hired experts to decorate his chambers, or a superior soul to whom riches mean the expansion of his finer self and the gratification of its nobler wants.

Books are books, whether in pamphlet form or levant. But while it is the contents of the book that count and not its binding and decoration, still there is something profoundly gratifying in a good book worthily made up. The real book-lover not only likes to read his book, but he loves to handle it, to have it in such print and paper as shall appeal to his sense of richness, to look at it as it lies upon his table or stands on his shelf so bound and stamped that it sheds dignity and strength.

The veriest democrat wants to be aristocratic in his books.

And what jewel of crafty workmanship, what dress of rare fabric, what piece of furniture or statue or painting, can compare with the luxurious flavor of a lordly book!

It combines the genius of craftsmanship with the stuff of mind. Fingers and fancy have joined to produce it.

Upon my library table is my latest acquisition, "The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East." They are beautiful volumes. I fondle them as a miser his money. I pick at them, dip into them here and there, pilfering a paragraph, peeping at a page, surreptitiously antedating the time when I may gorge.

The advent of a book into the house is like the birth of a child. It fills you with dreams, anticipations. You wonder what your new son will become. You plan already his college, his career.