

# **THE CHOICE OF BOOKS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649243990

The choice of books by Charles F. Richardson

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**CHARLES F. RICHARDSON**

**THE CHOICE OF  
BOOKS**



THE  
CHOICE OF BOOKS

BY

CHARLES F. RICHARDSON

NEW YORK:

JOHN B. ALDEN, PUBLISHER,

1883.

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## THE CHOICE OF BOOKS.

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### THE MOTIVE OF READING.

“OF making many books there is no end,” said the wisest of men three thousand years ago; and he added the equally true statement that “much study”—that is, much reading—“is a weariness of the flesh.” A fourteenth century commentator, in considering this text, drew the conclusion that no books may rightly be read save “the bokis of hooli scripture,” and “other bokis, that ben nedeful to the understanding of hooli scripture.” Modern readers, reared outside the close atmosphere of mediæval cloisters, are of course not so narrow in their interpretation of this text; but all will agree that a wise choice must be made from the great stores of literature that the ages have accumulated, from the days of papyrus scrolls and birch-bark writings, to these times, when scarcely any country town is without its

printing-press. "We are now," says Disraeli, "in want of an art to teach how books are to be read, rather than to read them; such an art is practicable."

The very first thing to be remembered by him who would study the art of reading is that nothing can take the place of personal enthusiasm and personal work. However wise may be the friendly adviser, and however full and perfect the chosen hand-book of reading, neither can do more than to stimulate and suggest. Nothing can take the place of a direct familiarity with books themselves. To *know* one good book well, is better than to know something *about* a hundred good books, at second hand. The taste for reading and the habit of reading must always be developed from within; they can never be given from without.

All plans and systems of reading, therefore, should be taken, as far as possible, into one's heart of hearts, and be made a part of his own mind and thought. Unless this can be done, they are worse than useless. Dr. McCosh says: "The book to read is not the one that thinks for you, but the one which makes you think." It is plain, then, that a "course of reading" may be a great