The Potter Journal.

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VOLUME X.-NUMBER. 26. COUDERSPORT, POTTER COUNTY, PA., THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1857. TERMS.--$1,25 PER ANNUM.

THE POTTER JOURNAL,

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY MORNING, BY

Thos. S. Chase,

To whom all Letters and Communications should be addressed, to secure attention.

Terms--Invariably in Advance: $1,25 per Annum.

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A. P. CONE,

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R. W. BENTON,

SUSVEYOR AND CONVEYANCER, Raymond P. O., (Allegany Tp.,) Potter Co., Pa., will attend to all business in his line, with care and dispatch. 9:33

W. K. KING,

SURVEYOR, DRAFTSMAN AND CONVEYANCER, Smethport, M'Kean Co., Pa., will attend to business for non-resident landholders, upon reasonable terms. References given if required. P. S.—Maps of any part of the County made to order. 9:13

O. T. ELLISON,

PRACTICING PHYSICIAN, Coudersport, Pa., respectfully informs the citizens of the village and vicinity that he will promply respond to all calls for professional services. Office on Main st., in building formerly occupied by C. W. Ellis, Esq. 9:22

SOLLINS SMITH. E. A. JONES.

SMITH & JONES,

DEALERS IN DRUGS, MEDICINES, PAINTS, Oils, Fancy Articles, Stationery, Dry Goods, Groceries, &c., Main st., Coudersport, Pa. 10:1

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DEALER IN BOOKS & STATIONERY, MAGAZINES and Music, N. W. corner of Main and Third sts., Coudersport, Pa. 10:1

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JEWELLER, Coudersport, Pa., having engagged a window in Schoomaker & Jackson's Store will carry on the Watch and Jewelry business there. A fine assortment of Jewelry constantly on hand. Watches and Jewelry carefully repaired, in the best style, on the shortest notice—all work warranted. 9:24

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DEALER IN STOVES, TIN & SHEET IRON WARE, Main st., nearly opposite the Court House, Coudersport, Pa. Tin and Sheet Iron Ware made to order, in good style, on short notice. 10:1

COUDERSPORT HOTEL,

D. F. GLASSMIRE, Proprietor, Corner of Main and Second Streets, Coudersport, Potter Co., Pa. 9:44

ALLEGANY HOUSE,

SAMUEL M. MILLS, Proprietor, Colesburg, Potter Co., Pa., seven miles north of Coudersport, on the Wellsville Road. 9:44

TWENTY-FIVE miles west of Fort Laramie, flour is selling at $38 per hundred weight. That's what we call "high living in the rural districts."

Choice Reading.

LITERATURE AND THE TIMES.

A LECTURE,

Delivered at the Quarterly Meeting of the Library Association, Coudersport, November 7th. 1857, by

REV. C. M. BLAKE.

[PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.]

In beginning to address you, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Association, allow me first, a few moments,

I. To remark upon the TIMES—the world-wide panic and revulsion in business circles and interests, which now so occupies the minds of men. The times are portentous. Thoughtful persons have fancied that they saw shadows passing over the world's great dial some time before the great crisis approached us.—And like a vast eclipse it now holds, not our land alone, but the civilized and commercial word beneath its pall.

Exchange on the United States in Chili, formerly at a discount of five and even ten per cent.; last year at par, and at the beginning of this year at four per cent. premium, went up to twelve per cent. in July last; and at the latest dates in August, could hardly be obtained there at any price. That country after a six years' calm, was on the eve of a revolution.—What was this but one of the fore-shadowings of disorder? And it is by no means our own country alone that is affected and involved in the disorder. England with her vast business transactions, not only with us, but in every part of the earth, at the latest dates was beginning to feel the afflictive stroke. France, with her credit *mobilier*--and a very *mobile* and uncertain scheme of business it seems to be, was yielding to the pressure; and throughout all the chief capitals of Europe similar results were ensuing. A crisis, an epoch, of no ordinary interest, appears once more to have come over the affairs of men. (Note 1.)

I believe in Epochs, periods, as the word signifies, *which arrest attention* and cause thinking men *to hold on*, to pause and reflect. An epoch is a readjustment of affairs, when it would almost seem that the complicated machinery of the Great Universe was wound up and set running again, or overhauled and refitted for newer and more surprising developments.—Like Prof. Babbage's wonderful Calculating Machine, mundane affairs sometimes appear to go on, with all their complex movements. The great pendulum for long periods wags backwards and forwards with perfect regularity, no jostling, no friction, no loss, no hindrance; until it appears that the mechanism is perfection itself. Men think it will run on so forever. It does seem as though it would. And thus it goes on, and on, until it reaches the three hundred and thirty-nine thousand billionth combination, performing all its difficult calculations in figures, and its varied adjustments with unerring exactitude; when—presto change! A readjustment occurs in a moment. No one dreamed of it. No one but the inventor knows how it was done; or when it will take place; but at this precise point it takes on new powers. All the old movements are lost. All the old systems of combination are no more. It develops itself in entirely a new series of numbers, performs altogether a new and more brilliant set of examples, and thus goes on with like unvarying uniformity as with the first series; until a new readjustment, which, together with the former. was all provided for in the original draft of the calculating machine.

Such an epoch, in some degree is the present one in business. But its effects are not limited to the affairs of trade alone; nor need we feel much terror at it. The Great Architect, who attends to the readjustments all for us; and provided for them all in the outset, who knows perfectly their limit and power and meaning, affects now the world with His matchless wisdom and skill. We feel His hand hold of the mechanism, and rejoice to know and believe that "He ordereth all things well." He is now touching some of the higher laws of causation, and is about setting in motion some new combinations of His Infinite mind.

2d. Here then, we have some lessons to learn. We are at this time sent back to first principles once more; and by the commercial crisis, no less than by the season of the year, the long evenings, the decaying foliage, and the wealth of happiness in our own hearts and homes, if we will seek it there from God, are we reminded of the new duties, occupations, delights, which the bountiful Creator has placed within our reach. *Home*, that magic Anglo-Saxon word, unknown in all the languages springing from Latin; unknown, too, elsewhere throughout the world, except in our own dear mother tongue and its sister languages, the German, &c.—HOME, fond name!—let us turn to thee!

"O friendly to the best pursuits of man!
Friendly to order, virtue, love and peace;
Few know thy beauties and few taste thy sweets!"

Our quiet domestic life and joys, ladies and gentlemen, no less than the world without, the revulsions in trade, the disappointments in business; the storms and rude blasts of approaching winter, all counsel us to use that beautiful pious phrase of the Friends, to *look within*.—Let us do it. Let us seek here, and we we shall find; knock and it shall be opened to us. Let us come back willingly from the mad strifes of the world, and find peace, and love, and home. Let us be willing to take up again with simple things, and learn again *first principles*. Go to your books, I say. Not as a frowning master to his pupils, do I say this. But as one with you, I say, let us go to our books, friends, once more and see what we can learn there with them. Let us then turn to a second topic of remark --to

II. LITERATURE; as this AND THE TIMES is the subject which I proposed to myself to bring before you more fully this evening. I have already spoken of the latter—of the "times;"—and now I wish to apply my thoughts to the former. Cicero has well said of study and literary pursuits: "They delight us at home; they do not hinder us abroad. They accompany us in our travels; they abide with us by night and by day, wherever we remain. In prosperity they make us thoughtful, and in adversity they comfort us." And a greater than Cicero—King Solomon—has said: "That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good." "Till I come," says Paul to Timothy, "give attendance to reading." But we need not go to the writers of antiquity, sacred or profane, for warrant as to the necessity, pleasure, or importance of the objects of your Association. To thinking beings, "life without letters is death," as the ancient orator has rightly styled it. Existence without duties is a blank; and a soul without knowledge like a pile without inhabitant—a waste to ruin runs.

Let us then look at some of the aspects of Literature at the present moment, as connected with the times. And

1st. I would remark upon *its inflation*. I mean by this the *vast bulk it occupies*; and which has become so enormous that we cannot if we would, read everything. The literature of to-day needs condensing. We need *less* books, less periodicals, less newspapers, than we have—less by three-fourths; and better ones than the best of them by one half, as we should then have. The mass of what has been written and published in this country the last ten years, and especially during the last five years, has not been worth the paper on which it has been printed. Let me say to you: Don't read it—don't try to read all that is printed, nor the quarter part of it, if you could. It has been boasted that this County is intelligent; that vast quantities of newspapers and periodicals are taken here. It is true, I believe, that there is much intelligence in Potter county; and that the quantities of mail-matter distributed here and widely elsewhere, throughout our country, are truly astounding. But I don't believe that it is salutary, so much and such kind of reading. It is the rank overgrowth of the swamps and fens of the world of letters, exposed to the fierce heats of a tropical sun,—so much politics and so many "isms" and so much party strife as we have in literature, are;—rather than the modest and tasteful arrangements of horticulture, which would make the world as the "Garden of the Lord."

Vast floods of prurient fiction, the merest shams of sentiment, truth and love; heavy tides from dream-land—literary and philosophical nonsense, have again and again overflowed and deluged the land, and subsided like the Nile, leaving us thick-covered with the slime, but not the fertility of Egypt! What shall we do with the like another time? We hope another such time will never come upon us to curse us. It is the ebb now. Far out towards the sea, on the long reaches of mud-flats, now bare of the tide-waters lie the richly freighted argosies of dream-literature and nonsense, which have formerly floated over the misty deep to us, all stranded now! And the whole shore is strown over with the wrecks! Well! let them lie there; and and let the reflux tide cover them; and the next ebb sweep them out into the abysses of the vasty deep. It is a pleasure to think that we have not even to behold the face of many of them again.

Without a metaphor, then, let me say, that the world of letters will suffer no loss, it seems to me, by the "failure," the utter annihilation, which the present times will cause, of a great portion of the trashy literature of the day, whether in newspapers, periodicals, or books.

2nd. But what can we, and what ought we to read? Something, to be sure. Surfeited and diseased as we have been hitherto, what correctives shall we make use of? What tonics and alteratives shall we proceed to try, to accomplish a cure? Shall we read phillipics on the causes of the present evils, and write ourselves all down as donkeys—"fools and blind," as some have been doing of late? This will not do the work of a cure. It is only evidence of the mania which has been upon us. Sober second thoughts will follow this. "I will arise and go to my Father" said the prodigal, when he came to himself. He "has bread enough" in His house "and to spare." Why then shall we either feed on husks, or stay where we are and perish with hunger? "I will arise and hasten to Him," let *us* say.

READ TRUTH then, let me say, first of all. I see young people here—I wish to speak to them to-night. Read Truth. The universe is full of truth, and the world is full of error. We cannot stop to busy ourselves with the latter. Let us seek after the former. In newspapers, politics, art, religion, *read both sides*. Neither one has the whole truth. Hear the other party, "one thing is good till you hear the other." Read both then. A good progressive, and a good conservative newspaper, it is the duty of every man of intelligence to read. *Truth does not lie in the extremes. The middle ground is safest.* It is the only safe one. The need the extremes, however, always to enable us to find the mean. The conflict of principles is a necessary one, to eliminate Truth. After the smoke of the battle is over, and both parties have retired from the field, peace with her olive-crown and sober joys is soon in possession of the spoils. Neither party gains all the advantages. Man gains them. We children of the victors and those of the vanquished enjoy them together, each one under his own vine and fig-tree with none to molest or to make them afraid. It often takes a generation, though, to accomplish this, like the clearing up of your primeval forests; the resounding of sturdy strokes of axes, the crashing of fallen trees through the deep old woods, must first be heard. Then the smoke, and black logs, and stumps, and grime, and sweat and life-toil of a whole generation, are necessary before we can see the smiling farms, and lowing cattle upon a thousand hills, and sheep, and tilth, and plenty everywhere. So in literature, there is a conflict of principles first to be encountered. Hard arguments are to be used. Hard names may sometimes have been called. But when this is over, there is peace. Let no perpetual animosities be waged. Let no eternal warfare be cherished; for both belligerents are in part wrong, and it is not for war but peace that we contend.

And there is Truth enough, I remark again, to be read. The great deep sea of Truth has not yet been sounded. All the navies of the earth may float in it forever, and rarely meet each other. Beyond our horizon are other ships; and still beyond others, and others still further on. And as we sail on over "life's solemn main," how little do we know of its tides and currents, its storms and calms; how here the compass varies to the east and there to the west! How little do we know too of the history of those about us, or of our own mysterious craft in which we sail! How little again, do we know of the strange depths beneath us—of the deep sea soundings of the sea of life! Or, again, of the still stranger and vaster depths above us; of the silent stars, and worlds, and constellations in the heavens over our heads, all of which we can see and some important part of which we are! And then the Infinite unknown—whom the pagan Athenians worshipped by erecting a dumb altar to Him—how little do we know of Him! Read truth then I say. There is no lack of it. Read History, Travels, Biographies, Researches in Science, as much as you please. But "beware of men," as our Saviour cautioned His apostles. Do not pin your faith to any man's sleeve. Go to God for this, and to Him alone. And beware of philosophy—"oppositions of Science falsely so called." This is of men. True wisdom comes from God. In all your reading then lightly esteem the opinions of a *man*, as such. The opinions of men—the "voice of the people, which is the voice of God,"—if you can distinguish this uttering, amid all the jargon "attending a certain sound;" if it harmonizes with right reason in your soul, and with revealed Truth as it is in the Holy Scriptures, hear it—hear them.

Besides the right Books and Newspapers, then, let me say, you should read something of Reviews and Periodicals. These hold a middle ground between the two former. And between the two an effort has been made to crush them out. A part of them might as well have been crushed out long ago. Putnam has already been consolidated with Emerson; and the Knickerbocker, Democratic Review, Atlantic Monthly, (just started) and Harper's Magazine; with Godey, Little's Living Age, the Eclectic Review, and various other American publications, all put together into two good periodicals—six or eight into two—would give us what we need. These two, or three, with the N. Am. Review, Christian Review, and several Religious and Theological Reviews, making six or eight in all, instead of twenty or thirty as we now have them, would well represent this department of American Literature. As in Great Britain, the four Reviews, (Edinburg, London, Westminister, and North British) and Blackwood's Magazine—five in all—represent all the phases of British thought; so here, among a larger community of readers, some six or eight *sterling* publications should suffice for all our wants. And it must and will come to that. As among the Juveniles already, Uncle Merry's Museum, and Woodworth, and Uncle Cyrus, and Phillip's, and Abbott's Stories, I believe, have all united into one; so among their seniors, the pondrous wheels will not long revolve until there is a new combination. The times favor the change, and the consolidation will undoubtedly take place.

Let me commend to the Library Association then the propriety of subscribing to the Reviews when thus combined. For years past the four British Reviews and Blackwood have been reprinted in New York, on that cheap and useful scale, that $10 has been the price for them all, costing $30, or over in Great Britain. Probably you could not obtain so much and so varied, and so useful reading any where, as by subscribing for these. A similar amount of money—$10 ($20 in all) would furnish your Library every year with needed American publications; and the same remarks and even stronger ones could be made as to the value and necessity of these. American Periodicals you must have.

I hope you will be willing to do something continually for the increase of your Library. You cannot buy everything it is true. Buy then the most necessary, the best. I am happy to see on your shelves so many and so well selected books. I am delighted to hear of the origin of the Library. They who were last at the cross and first at the tomb of Jesus, have been patterns for us men more than twice. Can we the men, not aid in enlarging and enriching what has so well been begun. Let the ten, or fifteen subscribers in this place to Harper's Magazine, unite in taking, say *two* copies of that, and give the surplus to something else. Let every reader then dispatch the same, in the first perusal in one day, or less, and how much more good could be accomplished with the same amount of money than at present. And this leads me to speak of

3rd. HOW WE SHOULD READ? As we cannot read everything, and it becomes important to know what to read; so we need to know how to read. I will speak now to the younger persons present, and give them some practical directions on this point, drawn from my own habits and experience. I hope it may prove useful. Let me say then under this head: Some books should be read fast. The newspapers always be read hastily, we have no time to waste upon them. Other books should be read very slowly and thoughtfully. It is impossible to read a book full of thoughts very rapidly. And such books full of thought you need to read. Then we should read sometimes fast, sometimes slowly, according to the subject in hand.

Again, we ought not to pass over portions of the book because we cannot fully understand them. Read it over again until you do understand. But pass cursorily over portions of it very easy to understand, or in which you feel less interest because of its unimportance.

Again, read by subjects. One thing illustrates or unfolds another. Keep this in mind as you read continually.

Make it also, your endeavor to learn something from everything you read. I do not doubt that something may be learned from a very poor book. If shut up to it on a long voyage, as I have been, a book otherwise worthless, will afford you not only amusement but instruction. Out of all the mass of trash of which I have spoken, something useful may be gathered, as the bee extracts sweets out of most noxious substances and putrifying bodies. But as you can in ordinary life read but little, at most a few hundred volumes out of all the thousands and millions printed, I would not advise you to waste much time on indifferent literary productions.

Make note of what you read. I do not say spend much time in writing out the contents of your books. But keep them in mind while you are reading, that you may digest the whole mass of it together when you have done with the book. Read then with pen, or pencil, in hand.

But do not expect to remember all you read. This is not the object of reading, any more than the object of eating is to keep forever in the stomach what we put into the mouth and swallow as food. Understand, then, that reading is taking food; and meditation, noting down the points in it, reflection upon it, are digestion. Digest what you read. Assimilate the good, that which you approve and love, into your own mental structure, and cast the bad, the refuse, away. Always think for yourselves. Do not let others think for you. Thus will you grow in knowledge and every mental and moral grace and beauty continually. The great and the good of past ages will look down upon you from their hights above with favor and affection. You will be their associates, and they yours. You will, too, be becoming more and more, ever more and more, like them. Franklin and Washington, Newton and Bacon, Shakespeare and Milton, Montesquieu, Fenelon, Madame de Stael, Socrates, and the blind old Bard of Samos, no less than those "holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," will then be your instructors and friends; and in every lineament of your spiritual nature will be found the strokes and features of that Great Master Mind, who first raised these men up to be your teachers and kindred and companions forever.

One remark more, as to how you ought to read. Do not read merely for the present pleasure and gratification of it. Have a high moral aim in it, that you may be made by it, good and wise; and if it please God, great also. Read that you may know how to benefit others, and not merely for self alone. Read that you may become a model of excellence in your own person, wiser and better men and women than those who have gone before you have been; and knowing God and His Universe better than your predecessors. But in all this be not proud, but humble, meek, gentle, without guile, or deceit. Preserve your innocence and always remember that he that humbleth himself, in learning as well as in society, shall be exalted. Take not then the uppermost room at the feast of intellect. Let politicians exalt themselves and boast of their merits and achievments. But be not like unto them. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

4th. I ought to say a few words as to HELPS IN READING. The greatest and best help that I know of is a genuine eager unquenchable Yankee curiosity—an awakened mind, a growing appetite—

"The wish—the dream—the wild desire,
Delirious, yet divine, TO KNOW."

If you have this, I had about said, you have enough. But it is not quite so. There are certain books you ought to own—you must own them, and have them by you and consult them perpetually. Let me name some of these which you are not to go to any library for, but to your own, however small that may be. First, then, have a reference Bible. Then a good Dictionary of Words and Definitions—proper names, Geographical, Historical and Personal—a full vocabulary of them. Then an Atlas of the World is indispensable. A Biographical Dictionary, a Dictionary of Dates, (Haydon's is the best, and it is almost unknown in this country,) a Geographical Gazetteer, and a good Outline History, are all needed. If, besides these, which I regard as indispensable to every one who would understand what he reads, you can have in some Library near you, a good Encyclopœdia to consult occasionally, I do not see what would be lacking. And then, the books I have named are not expensive. They would cost $10 to $15, perhaps. And on how many centre-tables, in icy cold and rarely seen parlors, do we meet with trumpery in gold and blue, if not *green*, which has cost twice that amount, and is worth nothing either as matter of tasteful ornament or literary excellence.

One word to you, ladies and gentlemen of the Association, as to an ENCYCLOPŒDIA, of which I have spoken, and which it seems to me is well worthy of your attention. A new Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* is now in course of publication in London and Edinburg. It will probably be completed within the next two years, before 1860. Fifteen volumes are already published. Twenty one volumes complete it. It is by far the best work in existence in any language. The first edition, published fifty years ago, was so, in the opinion of Wilberforce. Stoutly and handsomely bound in cloth, royal octavo, it will cost here about $4 per volume. The whole in twenty-one volumes will then stand you at $84, which you will be obliged to raise between this and 1860. With the narrow resources at my command, I should be glad to be one of the twenty one persons who should purchase this great and excellent work for your Library—a volume apiece! Who will buy the other twenty volumes? One hundred and thirteen men in Chili, English and Americans, had each of them bought a set of this Encyclopœdia for his own use, before I left that country. And cannot we in Potter County, all of us, do as much as to purchase one copy for ourselves? [See note 2.]

5th. It is fitting on an occasion like this, tha something should be said on *the advantages of reading*, literary culture, taste, and refinement. Those present who would best appreciate remarks upon this subject, are the ones of all others who are not in need of them. In this case it is literally true that "they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." But there are always some present at a literary festival who need a word