

One of the peculiarities which distinguish the present age is the multiplication of books. Every day brings new advertisements of literary undertakings, and we are flattered with repeated promises of growing wise on easier terms than our progenitors. How much either happiness or knowledge is advanced by this multitude of authors, is not very easy to decide. He that teaches us anything which we know not before, is undoubtedly to be loved as a benefactor; and he that supplies life with innocent amusement, will be certainly caressed as a pleasing companion. But few of those who fill the world with books, have any pretensions to the hope either of pleasing or instructing. They have often no other task than to lay two books before them out of which they compile a third, without any new materials of their own, and with little application of judgement to those which former authors have supplied. That all compilations are useless, I do not assert. Particles of science are often very widely scattered upon topics very remote from the principal subject, which are often more valuable than formal treatises, and which yet are not known because they are not promised in the title. He that collects those under proper heads is very laudably employed; for though he exerts no great abilities in the work, he facilitates the progress of others, and, by making that easy of attainment which is already written, may give some mind more vigorous or more adventurous than his own, leisure for new thoughts and original designs. But the collections poured lately from the press have seldom been made at any great expense of time or inquiry, and therefore only serve to distract choice without supplying any real want.

The title: No knowledge despite new books

Publication of more books discerns this era from the previous ones. In fact, it is beneficial for humans if a writer teaches novel things and gives pleasure through his new books. However, presently, writers' purpose is to read previous books and out of them make new ones, instead of providing new knowledge or pleasing the people. This practice is, to a certain extent, fruitful. The reason is that many topics of science are not under the specific headings. And one, who does so, does a great job because he makes work easier for the people.

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