

A Short Library Parable, by Rev. Benjamin Franklin Reeve

“Seven years have passed since I left you. In that time the village has enlarged as to territory, and many new buildings have been [erected] within its [limits]; and some of them of an imposing character. You have also added to the attractions of the village by establishing a public library, the anniversary of which we now celebrate. **Some years ago, the crew of a vessel were suffering from thirst; and they hailed a passing ship and begged that they would send them some water. They sent back the response ‘You are in the mouth of the Amazon; throw your bucket overboard and draw it in.’** So we may say tonight: **You have the library; but in order to be benefitted you must dive into it. You must master its contents. You might have a library on every corner, and unless you used them they would be of no service to you; and the manner in which you read deserves consideration.**”

Source: “First Anniversary of the Patchogue Library” [excerpt]. *Patchogue Advance*, September 20, 1884: page 3.