

political reform clubs, that the conception of life rises which is compelling a thoughtful consideration of a thousand social and economical questions. It has no Dante, no Milton, no Chrysostom: it is not radiant with the hue of apocalyptic visions, but it has the "beauty of the lilies"; it has no St. Louis, no St. Francis, no Brother Giles: it is not solemn with the shadows of lonely vigils, but it is solemn with moral truth. Within the heart of the age, as reflected in its religion and literature, is to be seen a philosophy of life which is growingly Christlike because increasingly directed to the masses of men.

What that philosophy is may be noted in the general tone of literature. Even a certain interest in the poetry of Robert Browning, both phases of the reception of Robert Elsmere, a large class of writings created by Chautauqua influences, are significant, together with some noteworthy features of the magazines and reviews and special book publications. A demand exists for a popularization of religious truths, which would not occur had not the humanity of Christianity already made itself felt; and the attempt to satisfy this demand reveals something at least of a true Christian conception of life. Literature reflects the moral quality of society. Life and writing react upon each other beneficially. An exalted literature can hardly emanate from impure sources. Lofty moral theories will harmonize doctrines with precepts of right living, will make doctrines and precepts mutually dependent. An elaborate and brilliant literature may flourish in the midst of popular corruption, it is true, as a rigid morality may produce a barren literature. But an agreement of the two is strong evidence of a conception of life not moral merely but true and humanitarian. The influence on the tone of literature of a people pervaded by not only religious fervor but by religious goodness will be purifying and ennobling. So the influence on the common life by a literature similarly colored will reform and uplift society. It is under such mutual influences that great evils succumb; and the fact that newspapers, magazines, books, are notably occupied in the discussion of humanitarian problems—intemperance, social purity, the social welfare of labor, African slavery, Russian government, and the like—shows that what life in the abstract is, is what life practically ought to be. It is the masses who are making literature. It is literature, reflecting from the masses what they cannot see themselves, that is largely making life.

The explanation of modern English literature will not be found without reference to the influence of Christian doctrine upon life. In fertility, in scholarship, in varied and sensitive culture, in critical acumen, in extent and in depth, and in scientific and logical truthfulness, the present century is not inferior to the most famous eras. There has never been a time when the sway of literature has been so universal and powerful, so reflective of the common life, so fully the