

YOUTH'S DEPARTMENT.

MATTHEW STACK.

A great many miles over the sea, is a country where there are no trees—no green meadows—nothing but ice, snow, and rocks. Spring, summer, autumn, all look like winter. And sometimes it is night for more than a month together. It is night, because the sun never rises, so there is no morning, and no noon-day, and no evening, nothing but night. And the poor people who live in this cold, dark country, are in another kind of night also. They know nothing about Jesus, whom the Bible calls the "Sun of Righteousness." But more of this presently.

The name of this country is Greenland, close by it is a sea, sometimes quite covered with ice, and full of large fishes, called whales, almost as long as a steeple is high; and seals, creatures which live both on land and in the water. The Greenlanders eat these seals, for they have no sheep, or oxen, nor even any corn to make bread.

The Greenlanders are very ignorant about God. They call him "the Good Spirit," but they neither know his will, nor love him as their Father. Instead of that, they are afraid of him; and you know that you cannot love any one of whom you are afraid. But I am not speaking of all these poor Greenlanders. Some of them are not afraid of God, but love him, and call him their Father, who is in heaven. And now I am going to tell you the reason of this. God loved the poor Greenlanders, though they did not love him; and he sent Matthew Stack, with one or two other missionaries to teach them about heaven and hell, and sin and holiness; but above all, about Jesus Christ. Matthew Stack and his friends had no doubt that it was the Lord's will that they should go, and therefore like Abraham of old, they left "their country, and their kindred, and their father's house," and set out towards that cold and dark country, of which I have been telling you.

On their way, some persons asked them how they meant to live in Greenland. They answered "We will build a house." But there are no trees for timber. "Then we will dig into the earth, and lodge there." Their friend was so pleased with this answer, that he gave them wood and tools to build a house, instead of living under the ground.

At length the missionaries arrived in Greenland, but they could not talk with the people, because they spoke a different language. Matthew Stack began to learn Greenlandic, and, by great labour and God's blessing, he became at last able to tell the poor savages in their own tongue "the wonderful works of God." And now perhaps you think that all is done, and that the Greenlanders will soon learn to love Jesus Christ. No! people in Greenland have sinful hearts, as well as other people; and when the missionaries wished to teach them about God and heavenly things, the poor Greenlanders, instead of listening to them, would run away, and sometimes steal their books, and pelt them with stones. But when the Greenlanders were sick, then the missionaries took care of them, and nursed them, and tried to soften their icy hearts with kindness. But for a long time they had no success.

You know how brightly the morning star shines before sunrise, but many are asleep, and never see it. Jesus, who is called "the bright and morning Star," had risen upon Greenland: but the people of that country did not rejoice in his light, because they were lying in the deep sleep of unbelief and ignorance: and in that sleep they remained until the Holy Spirit shed his bright beams upon them, and caused them to awake from their slumber. Then the love of Christ began to melt the ice and snow from their hearts, as the sun, after their long winter nights, thaws the frozen earth, and sheds abroad joy and gladness.

"Light of those, whose dreary dwelling,
Borders on the shades of death,
Come, and thy bright beams revealing,
Drive away the clouds beneath:

The new heaven and earth's Creator
In our deepest darkness rise,
Scattering all the night of nature,
Pouring day upon our eyes.—*Epis. Rec.*

HYMN.

Jesus can waken hope
In hearts where long it slept:
Jesus can make joy beam
In eyes that long have wept.

Religion makes all bright
That clouded was before;
'Tis life's best, purest gift,
And heaven can grant no more.

Jesus can cleanse the heart,
And sanctify the soul,
Give life to every part,
Invigorate the whole.—*Ibid.*

For the Colonial Churchman.

ON NOVEL READERS AND WRITERS.

I trust, Messrs. Editors, that you will arrive at the conclusion that the importance of the following extract, justifies its length. Now, perhaps, above any other period has it become necessary to guard against indiscriminate reading while the teeming press perpetually pours forth works of ill or still worse tendency, it well becomes those who love their brethren of mankind, to lift up the voice of friendly warning, and to sound the notes of alarm.

Among other works to which the above character may apply, we as Nova Scotians should feel sad, to be obliged to number, "*The Letter Bag of the Great Western*."—Written by an Author of undoubted talent, and of great powers for good or for evil,—that work must pass through many hands. Is it not then deeply to be deplored that several of these Letters are defiled by obscene remarks, and by still more obscene insinuations, while numerous passages are redolent with irreverence for the most sacred things and with matter of a tendency injurious to the mind? Neither are there many pages of a redeeming character in the work which the writer of these remarks reluctantly censures.—Of all whom he has yet heard expressing an opinion of that work, (and those opinions have been neither few nor far between) not one has praised it.—We must not forget, however, that the mere perusal of such a work affects injury, especially to the youthful mind, even although the reader may place the work on one side, with a determination not to recur to it, and it is among the prevalent errors of a very pernicious kind, that if a work do not effect some good, yet it works no harm. But a spark may set a temple in flames, and even one low idol, vividly brought before the mind may lead on to unsuspected acts of guilt or indiscretion. Although these feeble remarks may carry with them but little weight, yet I hope they may serve as an introduction to the following extract from an American paper:—

"There is a species of mental dissipation which exists at the present day, alarming both to the patriot and the Christian, and if we may judge from the increasing demand for light and frivolous works, the evil is making rapid strides toward a fearful consummation. There is too, so much of plausibility in this evil, which greatly enhances the danger. We may compare it to the insidious visit of a humorous guest, who, while he delights us with his wonderful tales, sits down to our board, destroys our substance, and wastes our time.

Let us not be understood, however, as condemning all works of fiction; were we to confine our reading to facts alone, the limits of the mind's pleasure-ground would be cramped. But what we would point out and guard against is, the habitual love of Fiction—the thirst of novel reading.

Let us for a moment look at its plausibleness.

The child is taught to believe that he is much better employed when reading than when at play; hence he grows up with the idea that if he reads, (it matters little what) he is improving his time. As he enters upon the theatre of life he sees around him much of immorality and vice. Perhaps he has no parental guide; his father and mother are dead; his brothers and sisters, if he has any, are separated from

him, or if near him, are as much in want of counsel as himself; his companions are wild and given to dissipation; a city full of temptation is before him.—In this hour of danger his thoughts recur to the past; he calls up in his mind the advice of a mother, "My son, apply yourself to books; read! improve your understanding." With a settled conviction that were he to go with his fellow-clerks he would soon become ruined, he gives up his spare time to reading.

All this is highly commendable, and did some kind friend come in now and direct the channel of his thoughts, how different might be the result. But he has no one to consult,—no one to take him by the hand.

The library from which he is to draw his knowledge, and in the perusal of which he anticipates not a little portion of his enjoyment, is corrupted with much fiction. He is perhaps aware of this fact, and its threshold is therefore entered with a cautious step; history, travels, biography, and so on like, alone attract his eye; yet what inexperienced youth can withstand the promised pleasure of romance, when the temptation is daily put before him? True, he may begin with sober truth,—he may for time nobly resist every impulse that would mislead. But by-and-by he feels as if he wanted some little recreation; the ponderous record of ages past becomes dull; it seems too much like study to pore over those time-worn pages; in short he must read something for mere amusement.

This is the first step toward a dangerous evil.

Now we will suppose that this step has thrust aside every barrier, and the youth plunges headlong into the enchantment of fiction.

For ascertaining more particularly the "profit and loss" of such an account, let us inquire first what does he gain?

1. Any thing of history? There may possibly be some dim outlines of history worked up into the fiction; general facts, as to place and date, and some incidental circumstances may have been truly laid down; yet what of these amid such a superfluity of fancy? The nicest judgment might be puzzled to sift them out; the best informed on the subject might be at loggerheads. What knowledge, then, can one entirely ignorant gain of history from such works, where truths and untruths are so incongruously mixed up together?

2d. Has he gained any intellectual matter?—There may have been many beautiful ideas scattered throughout those books; many sublime thoughts; many splendid sentences. But what does he remember of them? Has he not been entirely absorbed with the story? Did not the whole interest of the work depend upon its termination? Was he not all anxiety to see the end?

3d. Has the heart become better? Alas! it were folly to inquire what good has been done to the heart, when the mind has received so little.

Now in summing up the whole, what has he not lost?

He has lost much valuable time. Hours and days have been squandered. He has lost much real knowledge; solid information has been exchanged for chaff, which the next succeeding novel will obliterate for ever from his recollection. He has lost a contented spirit; there is a restlessness about him; he has been so much in the regions of fancy that it becomes excruciating to turn to real life; every thing around him wears a monotonous aspect; his very existence, we might almost say, has become a burden.

These are a few of the evils which result from the continued practice of novel reading. We might enumerate many others, and perhaps more important ones still, but we forbear. To parents and guardians this subject applies with more than ordinary force. If they neglect the growing disposition of the child; if they do not throw up around it the bulwark of counsel, let me ask who will? Remember, O parent! that child is to act in the great drama of life. It has a part to perform—a station to occupy. It may one day stand in the council of the nation.—But above all things, remember that it must appear before God in Judgment! Let your advice then have an important bearing toward this end; put before it such useful and instructive books as will tend