

2. RELIGIOUS AND INSTRUCTIVE LITERATURE.

The magazines of the last generation, such as "Blackwood," "Fraser," "The Monthly," &c., were of a secular character, and largely composed of light reading. They never inserted an exposition of scripture, or grappled directly with the vices or infidelity of the day, or called upon a soul to repent and believe. And this class of magazines continues and has its uses. But a new class of periodicals has appeared, of a decidedly religious character, which rivals the former in ability, and, we believe, surpasses it in circulation. "The Family Treasury," "Evangelical Christendom," "Christian Work," (formerly "The News of the Churches,") "Good Words," "The Sunday Magazine," "The Leisure Hour," "Sunday at Home,"* and others of the same class, have enlisted in their service writers of the most distinguished ability and reputation, and give as much reading as the old magazines, and as good, even in a literary point of view, for about one-fourth of the price. Some of these latter publications also have a great advantage over the former, inasmuch as they are first issued in weekly parts, at one penny, and then in monthly parts, with a cover like the monthly magazines. The importance of these religious magazines, who can over-rate? There is scarcely a Christian family in Britain, probably, that does not read one or more of them, and by their means sound principles and scriptural knowledge are most widely diffused. The religious newspaper has not attained, in Britain, the same development as the religious magazine; whereas, in the States, it has long occupied the whole ground. English religious newspapers confine themselves very much to news, secular and religious, and to reports of religious meetings, with an editorial or two on the questions of the day. They have little or none of what is familiarly known as family reading, or of articles and selections of the useful knowledge class, in both of which American religious papers abound. Neither in America nor England, however, has the religious paper ventured to issue oftener than once a week, except in some few cases where the ordinary matter of a newspaper greatly preponderated. The *Scottish Guardian*, a very excellent paper, was long issued twice a week in Glasgow; but it sunk, for want of support, in the midst of hundreds of thousands who must have been favourable to it. The *Edinburgh Witness*, issued thrice a week, had more vitality so long as its celebrated founder, Hugh Miller, lived, and it even ventured, at one time, upon a daily issue, but the experiment proved a failure, and, after returning to its previous shape, it lingered awhile, and also disappeared, although, probably, one-half of the population of Scotland loved it.—*Montreal Witness*.

3. MAGAZINES IN ENGLAND.

It has recently been stated on good authority that the number of weekly and monthly magazines issued in England has increased from 600,000 to 6,900,090 per annum since the year 1831; and that the number of newspapers has increased from 38,548,000 to the almost incredible number of 546,000,000. Who can doubt the assertion that "The Pen is mightier than the Sword" in its influence upon the minds of the English nation? All these publications must find readers, else there would be no demand for their existence. Judging from these items, British literature is highly esteemed abroad and is not without its admirers at home. Intelligence cannot but characterize that nation which can furnish such an immense amount of reading matter for its people. The onward march of modern civilization is constantly facilitating the means of spreading knowledge amongst all nations of the earth, and it becomes Christians to avail themselves of these facilities, and especially that of the Press, in order to spread the glad tidings of the gospel and to infuse its noble principles into every heart and every nation.—*Woodstock Times*.

4. PERIODICALS IN SWITZERLAND.

There are now in Switzerland 345 periodicals, 185 of which are political, 22 literary and scientific, 20 religious (15 Protestant and 5 Catholic), and ten agricultural; 231 of them are published in the German language, 103 in French, and 8 in Italian; and 39 newspapers appear from six to seven times a-week.

5. WRITING FOR CHILDREN TO READ.

There is a great deal of writing done for children. It would not be easy to count all the grandfathers and uncles and aunts and cousins and sisters who have put their pens in motion in the hope "of entertaining and instructing the young," and perhaps turning an honest penny for themselves. The success of some has excited a brisk competition, and as the difficulties of the task have not been appreciated either by authors or publishers, it has come to pass that

a great deal is afloat in the shape of books and papers which considerate parents would not wish their children to read. Wrong notions of one's capacities in this line may perhaps be engendered in girl's boarding-schools, where trials of skill in the art of composition take place, and a standard of merit is established which is not recognized in the larger and more mixed school of the world.

The rapid multiplication of publishing agencies of various kinds may have stimulated the desire to be useful as authors, and the unhealthy craving which exists for novelty and excitement in the publications to which we refer, naturally suggests the style and materials to be employed.

The various religious publication offices—(each of the principal denominations of the country having one, and some two or three or more)—must be supplied. Many booksellers have gone largely into this class of books, and have liberally encouraged those who are disposed to add to the stock, so that in no single branch of book making, except perhaps text books for schools, are there probably so many pens engaged in writing, or so many presses in printing, as in the department of books for children and youth. And we may add that in no other class of publications are there as many instances of missing the mark as in Sunday-school library books. Among the common defects of such books are artificialness, or puerility of style; false views of the emotions and associations of childhood; lack of ingenuity in the framing of a story; improbability; monotony; but chiefly patch-work, by which we mean an unsuccessful attempt to dove-tail religious and moral truth with the incidents of child-life.

Some one says, "Books are often spoiled by over-intrusive morals, or a too patronizing air; and perhaps the worst of all are those fashionable stories which introduce charming children, who gallop about on white ponies, and lecture and convert everybody in their villages, especially 'the oldest inhabitants.'"

We may not like this sweeping animadversion, but we must admit that the pictures of child-life which are exhibited in the common "run" of Sunday-school library books have been drawn with very little reference to any originals that we meet in town or country. Children themselves will tell us that if boys and girls who come to them in books should come to them in real flesh and blood, there would be no end to the curiosity with which they would be gazed at and followed.

Were all religious and charitable people that are surveying our work or machinery, we might perhaps be less concerned about our verdict; but we must submit to its examination by those who have no strong sympathy with our avowed object, and who form their judgment of what is unseen by what they see.

One of these lookers-on cautions us against "attempting to cheat children into religion. 'Let us, above all things,' he says, 'determine to deal truthfully in this matter. Let us put before them images of the sort of excellence which they can attain, and warn them against the faults into which they are really liable to fall. Do not let us set before them imaginary goodness and vice, or talk which they cannot imitate without hypocrisy. There is not in the world a sight more beautiful than a Christian (?) child, filled with love and reverence, and just beginning, however faintly and fitfully to desire a knowledge of God and of His will. But such a child will not and cannot be the talkative and self-conscious little personage who figures so often in juvenile memoirs and obituaries. Nay, in just the proportion in which he is impressed with the sacredness of divine things, will he be absolutely disqualified from ever becoming such.'"

To whatever exceptions the reviewer's criticism may be open, there is enough of truth in it to make it well worth sober reflection.

Whether the kind people who are employed in writing what they want children to read will improve their handiwork, or whether good-natured children will take what is given them, asking no questions for conscience's sake, we shall see in due time. Perhaps in so laudable an effort fail us not.—*S. S. World*.

6. HOW TO SPEND WINTER EVENINGS.

The Caledonia Society at Montreal celebrated Hallowe'en by a grand gathering at the Crystal Palace. An interesting letter was read from the Hon. Mr. McGee, as to the best mode of spending the winter evenings, in which he says:—

"These long winter vacations of ours ought to bring in their own harvest, sown in the minds and memories of men, there to blossom and bear fruit while life may last. John Milton found, as he told his nephew Phillips, that his 'veins never flowed so freely' as between September and March, and that in a latitude not further south than ours. If, for us, also, this should be a season favorable to the cultivation and growth of thought and knowledge, we cannot certainly plead want of leisure as an excuse for remaining at a stand still."

* The *Sunday Magazine* and all of these magazines may be obtained from Messrs. W. C. Chewett & Co., and of the other booksellers in Toronto.

*London Qu. Rev., vol xiii, 497,