

the age.' No doubt there are others making the same mistake. It is to such that I would address a few earnest words: in pursuance of the injunction in Zechariah's prophecy, 'Run, speak to this young man.'

The first thing to be said is that the method referred to is a wrong adjustment of means to the desired end. The character of current literature is such that the minister who devours it indiscriminately, so far from keeping well 'abreast of the age,' is sure to find himself a long ways in advance of it. No doubt there are aspiring souls who covet this distinction; but the best horses are those that neither lag nor run away but pull in harness. The old saying, 'The heretics of yesterday are the orthodox leaders of to-day,' besides being false has a good deal to answer for. The flying-machine may some time be more perfected, but Darius Green will never be up to date. Now and then dreams come true by virtue of coincidence, but the dream-book is of no intrinsic value. The best minister is the man who takes the established facts of revelation and experience as his postulates and invests them to the best advantage for the highest good of his fellows and the glory of God.

To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfil;
O may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will!

The second thin to be said to the omnivorous reader of current literature is that he is indulging in flagrant dissipation. Let any hundred books be taken from the recent catalogues, and it may safely be said that ninety-nine of them will be consigned to the limbo Oblivion in a very little while. This is a fine illustration of the Survival of the Fittest. Books die when they are not fit to live. But what of the man who prides himself on the quantity which he devours of this sort of pabulum? We have much to say about the dissipation of those who read worthless fiction; but fiction is not the only light literature. The lightest literature of our time comes from the religious press. There is less of fact, less of good rhetoric, less of coherent thought and of sound logic in the scientific and philosophic books of our time than in its novels. There is more of guess work, improbability, pure assumption and perversion of the inductive method in the Higher Criticism than in Jules Verne. Science, which boasts its derivation from a word meaning 'to know,' has a more extensive necropolis than Superstition, where its theories lie buried, row on row, with none so poor to do them reverence.

Let no man flatter himself that the reading of everything that bears the imprimatur of the schools is study. By far the largest part of it is purest dissipation; as absorbing, captivating, corrupting and enslaving as the use of strong liquor or chloral. It destroys the taste for better things and unfits the mind for the consideration of serious truth.

The third thing for this universal and indiscriminate reader to reflect upon is his fraudulent claim to broad culture. He is deluded with the idea that he is familiarizing himself with the wide field of literature when in fact he sits perched on a very small arc of a very great circle. Literature is not a mass of current publication but a library of historic masterpieces. The man who prides himself on an intimate acquaintance with contemporary volumes, while neglecting the classic productions of the past, is not a 'literateur,' but a literary ignoramus.

In my conversation with the young minister referred to in the beginning of this paper, it transpired that he had never read the 'Pilgrim's Progress!' He was familiar with Pro-

fessor Drummond's books, but he confessed that he knew next to nothing about Butler's Analogy, that imperishable masterpiece of analogical reasoning! He reveled in F. B. Meyer's devotional books, but had not considered it worth while to get and read Thomas à Kempis! Baxter's 'Saints' Rest' he frankly characterized as 'a back number.' Of the best volumes of the past generally he was proudly ignorant. All because of his resolute purpose to keep 'abreast of the age.' Intoxicated youth! It is doubtful if he can ever become a true scholar, so wholly is he addicted to his silly cups.

To say that, in these days of making many books, the only ones worth reading are those which have stood the test of reasonable time is only to repeat what has been said over and over again. If I could reach the ear of every young minister I would say: Buy for your library, as fast as your salary will permit, such volumes, bearing directly or collaterally on your work, as the years have sealed with their approval. Buy the great masterpieces and read them. Buy books of reference and encyclopedias which have been tested by earnest experience. Buy Biblical commentaries, not at random nor at the suggestion of reviewers, but such as successful ministers use and commend. Buy books, whether of science or philosophy, that found their propositions not on hypotheses but on postulates of truth. Let others experiment on the newest things; enter you on the fruit of their experimentation. The good books are so many that you are without excuse for buying or reading any other. You will best keep 'abreast of the age' by qualifying yourself to bring all the wisdom of all the centuries, the truth of this and every age, to bear upon the needs of the time we are living in.

Life Divine.

Each hour we think
Of others more than self, that hour will live again,
And every lowly sacrifice we make
For others' good shall make life more than self,
And ope the windows of thy soul to light
From higher spheres. So hail thy lot with joy.
Truth lies in intuitions of the soul,
For thee shall evermore be worlds to come
And melt the clouds in arching irises
On heights cerulean. Help every one
And hinder none: forgiveness thee forgives
And makes thy life divine.
—Hezekiah Butterworth.

Salvation not a Machinery.

(Gipsy Smith, in the 'Faithful Witness.')

'My father was frequently engaged by a gentlemen in Norwich, Mr. George Chamberlain, to do evangelistic work in the vicinity. At the time of this story there was an exhibition of machinery in connection with the agricultural show then being held in the old city. Mr. Chamberlain gave my father a ticket of admission to it, saying, "Go, Cornelius, see what there is to be seen; it will interest you. I'm coming down myself very soon." When Mr. Chamberlain reached the ground he found my father standing on a machine, with a great crowd, to whom he was preaching the gospel, gathered round him. He gazed upon the spectacle with delight and astonishment. When my father came down from his pulpit, Mr. Chamberlain said to him:

"Well, Cornelius, what led you to address the people—without any previous arrangement, too, and without consulting the officials? I sent you here to examine the exhibits."

"That's all right," said my father; "but the fact is, I looked round at all the latest

inventions, and I did not see one that even claimed to take away the guilt and the power of sin from men's hearts. I knew of something that could do this, and I thought these people should be told about it. There were such a lot of them, too, that I thought it was a very good opportunity."

'My father was on one occasion preaching in the open air to a great crowd at Leytonstone. A coster passing by in his donkey-cart shouted out; "Go it, old party; you'll get 'arf a crown for that Job!" Father stopped his address for a moment, and said, quietly, "No, young man, you are wrong. My Master never gives half-crowns away. He gives whole ones. 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' The coster and his "moke" passed on.'

How a Chinese Slave Girl Led a Friend to the Light.

(Mary V. Glenton, M.D., in the 'Spirit of Missions.')

One day last December a little girl came into the dispensary waiting-room at the Pao Ngan Gate. She sat waiting her turn as did the others and then presented her poor little swollen body for treatment. The verdict was, 'Come to the hospital; we may be able to help you; we may not; but we promise to do the best we can.'

Sometimes such a suggestion is acted upon, sometimes not, and when the girl said, 'I'll come to-morrow,' we had our doubts, especially as 'to-morrow' turned out to be a day of pouring rain. The Chinese dislike rain, and the women hate it worse than the men. So we were surprised that afternoon to receive our little girl. She had come a distance of nine li (three miles), the rain beating down on her bare head in all the fervor and vigor of a semi-tropical rain-pour such as we have quite often in the Yang-tse valley.

She improved slightly at first, but we soon discovered that this was one of the cases in which we could do nothing beyond trying to make her last days comfortable. Her owners—she was a slave—told us that if she recovered she would be taken back; if not, we might keep her. They had tried to sell her when she first became sick, but she was not considered a bargain, strange to say. When we questioned her about her family, in order to have some one to call on beside the 'yamen' people, should matters take a serious turn, she told us where to find a woman who was taking the place of a mother to her, and thereby hangs the interesting part of this tale.

The father of Lei Hsi—for that was the little one's name—was an opium smoker, very cross and cruel to his children. Lei Hsi was sent out every day to beg rice and vegetables; if she came home at night with none, she was severely beaten. When Lei Hsi's father died, the mother turned her out into the street. An acquaintance recognized her, and thinking that the little girl had either run away or lost herself, took her back to her mother, who was ashamed to own that she had turned the child out to a street life and its degradation. In about a month Lei Hsi was turned out again. This time she was recognized by someone who knew the true state of affairs, and who advised her to offer herself as slave to a yamen. She was taken and sold from one yamen to another, even spending some time in Shanghai. She was unable to tell us the name of her home city, as she had drifted round this way for five wretched years.

(To be continued.)

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