

## BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.

*The Quarterly.*

Hamilton: Collegiate Institute Literary Society.

At the close of its fourth volume the "Quarterly" retains the freshness and vivacity of its younger days while the character of its heavier matter is much improved. The article on "Greek Religion and Christianity," in the number for January 1879, evinces extensive reading and just thought. There is also a prize essay on Decision of Character.

*Vick's Publications: Floral Guide, Illustrated Monthly.*

Rochester, N.Y.: James Vick.

Vick's "Illustrated Monthly" is "a thing of beauty," and a vehicle of useful information on all matters connected with flowers and garden work. Each number, besides many engravings, contains at least one colored plate; and the number for January 1879 has two colored plates—one, a group of roses, and the other illustrating holiday decorations. The "Floral Guide" is a very handsome seed catalogue of 100 pages, and contains one colored flower plate and 300 illustrations.

*The Westminster Teacher.*

Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication.

"The Westminster Teacher" is what we are to have henceforth instead of "The Presbyterian at Work." We cannot say that it is the old publication under a new name and in a new shape, for there is a change of purpose and contents as well. "Lending more general topics to the weekly religious press, it devotes itself to the service of the teachers and officers of our Sabbath schools, especially in the study of the Bible Lessons of the International Series." Thus to withdraw from the field of general religious literature and single out a special department is a change that will increase the usefulness of the magazine. For the preparation of the lesson helps for 1879, the valuable assistance of Dr. Duryea, Dr. Herrick Johnson, and Mrs. G. R. Alden has been secured. The January number is now before us, with the lessons for that month under the following sub-headings: Introduction, Critical and Expository Notes, Teachings of the Lesson, Additional Thoughts, Test Questions for the Teacher, Black-board Illustration, Catechism, For Teachers of Little Folks. There is also a valuable article on the "Restoration," (that is the return of the Jews from captivity; by Rev. Sylvester H. Scovel, covering the ground occupied by the lessons for the month.

*Sunday Afternoon.*

"Sunday Afternoon" for January has the opening chapter of a new serial by the author of "Tom's Henthon," which Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe commended so highly. It is entitled "Colvin the Sinner." Rebecca Harding Davis has a short story, and there are two others, "One of the Converts," and "Mrs. Wilkin's Duty." E. E. Hale's serial, and "Fishers of Men" are concluded. Prof. George P. Fisher of New Haven, in an article on Witchcraft, tells us that disbelief in it was considered by religious people two hundred years ago a great sin. Rose Terry Cooke gives advice to young ladies as to literature as a profession. George M. Towle gives, with comments, an account of the present status of Socialism, more particularly in Germany and Russia. Rev. Dr. E. A. Washburn of New York, translates from the German an account of the confirmatory evidence in the Egyptian antiquities of the early Jewish history. Miss Helen Campbell writes of one of Jerry McAuley's "Experience Meetings." J. B. T. Marsh, David Kor and Charles Caverno have contributions, and there are poems by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Ray Palmer, and Lucy Larcom. The following extract is a specimen of the sort of writing that is generally to be found in the department called "Editor's Table:"

"A fair specimen of the *odium theologicum* lies under our eye. It is a letter printed in the organ of one religious denomination, bringing to light certain alleged disreputable doings in two other denominations—doings connected with the passage of one minister from one of these denominations to the other. We shall not recite the story, because we do not wish to abet the scandal-mongers. But all the circumstances of the case, as they are brought to light in this narration, show that it was one of great difficulty and delicacy, and lead us to respect the motives of those concerned in it, who have sought to prevent it from becoming a public matter. What these Christian brethren have thought best to be silent about, this man makes haste to proclaim upon the house-tops. It is true that he does not mention names; anonymous stabbers of his sort never do that; but he leaves

no one in doubt as to the identity of the persons with whom he is dealing. And the motive of this performance is only too plain. It is the outcome of sectarian rancor. This correspondent would never have written, this newspaper would never have published, a letter like this relating to irregularities or misdoings in their own sect. But here is a fine chance to pick out the frailties of two sister (?) churches; to call attention to the bedraggled skirts of the one and to a rickety old rip in the robe of the other; and your genuine sectarian never misses such a chance. If he can make a point for his own sect by dragging to light troubles in other sects which those immediately concerned do not wish to make public, he feels that 'the interests of pure religion' require him to do it. This is the law of love as he understands it in its application to Christians of another fellowship. And it is just at this point that the sect spirit reveals itself as the antithesis of the Christian spirit; and that the sects are all the while showing themselves to be the enemies of Christ."

## RENOUNCING THE WORLD.

To renounce the world in one way is the most commendable act of a man's life; to renounce it in another way is a very dangerous thing, if not a positively injurious one.

The old English question asked of a candidate for baptism inquires whether he is ready to "renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the wicked world, with all the covetous desires of the same." Such things as these the Christian must renounce before he can be a Christian at all. There can be no half-way business about it. Compromise with the downright wickedness of the world is fatal to the godly life. A partial surrender gives up the whole.

There is, however, another and very prevalent idea of the renunciation of the world, which is materially different from the abandonment of the thoughtless or deliberate acts of the unrighteous children of this life. It is something more than abandonment, it is separation. Taking a Pilate's wash-bowl, many persons purify their hands, and then declare that they have nothing further to do with sin. To them, the text "Come out from among them, and be ye separate," means not only the abandonment of sin, but the desertion of sinners. In the endeavor to keep themselves pure, they give up efforts for the reclamation of those who are stained with guilt. They build convent walls, and immerse themselves within their dim recesses. In order to remove the possibility of relapsing into evil ways, they seek to banish the possibility of temptation. If they are never tempted, they never fall. Persons of this way of thinking are by no means confined to the Roman Catholic Church. The monastic tendency exists where monasticism is unknown. The desire to make an object of one's self, or to do some startling thing, is universal. "If I could get dead drunk, and lie in the gutter, with my pockets turned inside out, I think I should be satisfied," says one. "If I could be known, the world over, as a marvel of purity, I could rest content," says another. The world is full of people who, like the little girl in the nursery rhyme, are "very, very good" when they are good, but "horrid" when they are bad. Of course it is more pleasant to be a model of excellence than a model of vice; and so, in their zeal to renounce the world, men swing on hooks, or climb St. Simon Stylites' pillar, or vow to read no book but the Bible, according to their several religious faiths. It is the same world they all seek to abandon, though their methods vary. It is the secret plaudits of their own hearts that they value even more than the world's astonishment or reverence. Each of them deliberately makes up his mind, like the boy in the juvenile story, to become a "blighted being."

After all, it is Christian work that approves the believer. Positive virtue is a very different thing from negative innocence. The Christian organization is the church militant, not the church contemplative. One man's duty is not another's; but certainly few persons are so isolated, by nature or by circumstance, as to be exempt from all other duties than that of self-culture. The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost. His followers can hardly excuse themselves for abandoning efforts in the same direction. The fear of falling, the delights of spiritual piety, or the benefits of religious culture, are not valid reasons for abandoning the world to its fate. The New Testament lays a great deal of stress upon Christian endeavor, but says very little about the cultivation of a mystical spirituality unconnected with active effort in such fields as seem to lie around each individual. It is the laborer who is worthy of his hire.—S. S. Times.

It is good for us to think no grace or blessing truly ours till we are aware that God has blessed some one else with it through us.—Rev. Phillips Brooks.

## WORDS OF THE WISE.

Even the weakest man is strong enough to enforce his convictions.—Grotius.

That is the best part of beauty which a picture cannot express.—Rassau.

Few persons have courage enough to seem as good as they really are.—Hart.

The sublimity of wisdom is to do those things living, which are to be desired when dying.—Johnston.

It is always safe to learn, even from our enemies; seldom safe to venture to instruct even our friends.—Cotton.

A good conscience is a continual feast; and a mind at peace through Christ is the antepast of heaven.—Bishop Reynolds.

As my own self is present to me in an incomprehensible manner, so God is present to me likewise, in an incomprehensible manner.

A contemplative life has more the appearance of a life of piety than any other; but it is the Divine plan to bring faith into activity and exercise.—Cecil.

Men are every day saying and doing, from the power of education, habit and imitation, that which has no root whatever in their serious convictions.—Channing.

There is none made so great but he may both need the help and service, and stand in fear of the power and unkindness, even of the meanest of mortals.—Seneca.

Every good and holy desire, though it may lack the form, hath, in itself, the substance and force of a prayer with God, for He regards as prayer the moanings and sighings of the heart.—Rush.

There are three things which the true Christian desires with respect to sin:—justification, that it may not condemn; sanctification, that it may not reign; and glorification, that it may not be.—Cecil.

An old man was dying who had long served Christ, when one asked him: "Can you rest a little now, father?" "Dear child," he said, "it is all rest; for the everlasting arms are underneath me."

If we would become Christians of strength and maturity, we must undergo severe trials. What fire is to gold, so is affliction to the believer. It burns up the dross, and makes the gold shine forth with unalloyed lustre.

The Church needs the help of all. The young, the old, the rich, the poor—all are called to the work, to contribute what they can. Nor is there any one who is useless, if he will but employ the talents given him and embrace the opportunities put within his reach. If all are to work, there is work for all, and the reward will be given both to him who does little and him who does much.

Contentment is a blessing, and it is within the reach of all, but it will not be found by him who goes out to seek it. It is something from within, and until the heart is right all effort after it must be in vain. Paul says, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content." It was something that came to him as he served his Master and imbibed his spirit. When the soul is filled with the love of Jesus, and when His will is the rule of life, discontent will have no place, and the peace that passeth all understanding will be the Christian heritage.

The frosts have not of themselves made the autumn woods so beautiful. Their office of crisping, deadening and destroying is not one of embellishment, but rather of distortion and spoliation. But the sunshine and air, acting in concert with the frost, have turned the whole landscape into panoramas of beauty, which no artist's skill can imitate. And when God sends us His rod it will not of itself bring us blessing. It may only harden and deform. It is when He accompanies it with the Sun of Righteousness and the dew of the Spirit that it produces the loveliness of a soul that is sweetened and sanctified.—United Presbyterian.

If we only agree to do what we like to do, our lives are likely to be barren. If too much indulgence will spoil a child, so will humoring a mind and soul beget in it a disposition lacking in what is noblest, and wanting the qualities from which result the highest forms of beneficence. It is when the water is meeting with opposition from rocks and other obstructions lying in its way, that it purifies itself and deepens its channel. And it is when we go on our way, acting against the indispositions which attempt to fetter and impede us, that we strengthen our minds and characters, and do good service in the cause of the Master.

A chief reason why so many believers fail to attain an exalted type of Christian character is because they do not receive Christ as a living, indwelling, personal Saviour. Religion is, to them, an abstraction, rather than a reality. They have faith, but it is a dead, intellectual exercise, rather than a life-giving power begotten in the soul by the Holy Ghost, through the Word of God, "which liveth and abideth forever." We may, we must possess Christ if we would be His. In the Bible, a crucified Christ; in the heart, a living Christ; in heaven, a glorified Christ; in the future, a coming Christ—Christ in life, Christ in death, Christ in a coming judgment—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

Men often give in the hope of receiving again; their charity is bread cast upon the waters that they hope to find somewhere after (or perhaps, before) many days. Of charity that has not paid, many bitter complaints are heard. But God's ways are not our ways. He gives in the hope of giving more. That is his object in giving. "Grace for grace," grace upon grace, is his method; one gift is sent to make room for another. As one day's dew and sunshine enables the flower to take more dew and sunshine the next day, so all God's spiritual gifts enlarge the spiritual nature to the end that more grace may be bestowed. If we have received any good thing from Him it is not a sign that He wants anything from us; it is a token that He wants to give us something more.—Sunday Afternoon.