

The Klondyke craze that has turned the heads of so many people in the past six months is a subject nearer home, and perhaps of more immediate interest. The mines may be a source of enrichment to the public treasury and to the Dominion at large, but what of the men who go there? Probably about one-fourth of the population of our country would go to the Yukon to dig gold *if they only could*. Now, that signifies a condition of affairs that is not very flattering to our people. No man, if he has any manhood about him, would care to acquire money purely for its own sake, without some expression of personality in its acquirement, or the giving an equivalent in return. *E.g.*, few would like to perform the task that an old miser of Brockville once set a tramp who was inquiring for work, viz., to roll a large stone down a hill, then up, then down again, &c., for a whole day. Now even though good pay might be received for such work few would undertake it. And yet, that is what men are actually doing in this rush to the Klondyke. They are not men of a very high type of character, most of them, or they would try to earn a livelihood in some situation where their labors would be two-sided in their result, first, and less important, the providing a living for themselves, and second, the making their lives useful to their fellow-men. The gold-digger has but one object in view—self. The true citizen has a higher object—his home, his city, his country.

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In the literary world, the book that seems to have most prominence of late is Hall Caine's "Christian." Whether the criticisms of the Christian he has presented to us amount to much or not will make little difference. The criticisms do not affect the reading public very much. The majority of people begin such a book for the story's sake. When they have begun they find a book beautifully and attractively written. The sparkling vivacity of Glory's letters and her actions, the pure, sweet girlish vitality that frees her thoughts from the low temptations of the city, are the chief delight of the story. John Storm, the stern ascetic Christian, in his towering strength stands out in strong contrast to this girl from the "little oilan," who is all brightness and laughter and innocence and love. It is a love-story after all, for in the end we are led to see religion cannot and should not trample upon this bond of home and society—human love. But to leave the book to its readers, it is worth thinking over, how much literature of this class is read to-day. If all the late novels were as good as Hall Caine's it would be a blessing to the public, for the consumption of light literature of a second-rate character is unparalleled. The reading of the great mass of the

people consists of the journals and magazines, *Cosmopolitan*, *Munsey*, *M'Clure's*, etc., the latest novels of Barrie, Hall Caine and a crowd of writers less worthy of mention, together with the daily newspaper. Now, that is all very well; we should know the news of the world; there are many excellent articles in the magazines and journals on popular subjects, and certainly books by men like Hall Caine, Barrie and McLaren should not remain unread. But while that is so, we should note also that the classics of English literature, Shakespeare, Milton, Browning, Carlyle, Ruskin, etc., are comparatively unknown to the ordinary class of readers. Reading of this heavier sort is left pretty much to students and professors in the universities, just as Greek and Latin are given over to them. The education thus acquired will, I fear, bear a poor comparison to that of our grandfathers, who could quote Shakespeare and Milton by the hour. And the reason is not that what we read is not good, for there is much wholesome sound reading to be had (though indeed there is a correspondingly large amount of rubbish), but that we read so much, read so fast, and read only for pleasure and not for profit, that the result is *nothing*.

The trouble about people of our day and generation is that they want to know something about everything—the latest novel, the latest play, the latest mechanical invention, the latest discovery of science—and, as a result, they know a little about everything, and nothing about anything. They are like a man standing on a tower looking over a large city. He can see the whole city, get glimpses of the outside of factories, churches and palaces; he can even see the movements of the men away below; but of the real inner workings of any of these places he remains in ignorance. The new literature is good in its way perhaps, but the result is a rather shallow, sickly sentimentalism after all.

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But again, why should a mere novelist's conception of a Christian have such weight as to rouse the comment it has? He is no great theologian or religious teacher. Why then consider his ideas as valuable in this line of thought? It is a mark of the age, and a good one too, that it is completely democratic, even in religion. No theological aristocrat has the monopoly of saying what shall be the standard of a Christian and what shall not. The day was when theologians had a field reserved to themselves in which they could utter their views and their commands with a certain amount of authority. But that day is gone by. Neither Archbishop nor Pope can force his opinions on the public. And that is well. Every man is a theologian now. He thinks out his own doctrines, and recasts the religion