

Talks about Books.

AS the meal and the oil of the widow of Sarepta suffered no diminution from day to day, so, in spite of the monthly inroads upon our book wealth, the table remains full, although no money buys nor publisher sends for review. Perhaps our case is one of the Faith class, represented by Müller of Bristol, and, in ancient time, by Francke of Halle. At first Providence interposed specially in answer to prayer, but afterwards mediately, through good people who thought it their duty to help the believing. Thus it is that good friends keep the Talk-editorial table supplied with books. An excellent book is "The Life and Letters of Dr. W. Fleming Stevenson" by his widow, who is the sister of my good friend of twenty years ago, Thomas Sinclair of Belfast. What a pleasant time, he, and the now Rev. Benjamin Bell, who was once in Friockheim, and Seymour of Madoc, and Robinson of Gravenhurst, and I, had in Muskoka these twenty years ago, that seem like yesterday! As cheerful, buoyant, happy, and devout a soul as Sinclair, his brother-in-law Dr. Stevenson seems to have been. Give us a sanctified Irishman for the bright side of Christian life! One reads with great pleasure the story of his youth and college life, his German experiences crowded with the names of Germany's best thought and culture, his pastoral devotion, his zeal for missions in Ireland, India, America, his literary work that gave to the world "Praying and Working" and much beside; and regrets the interminable burdens imposed by his Church, by the University, and by Societies innumerable that shortened his useful days. I want those soulless writers, who seek to dry up active living spirits into barren sticks like themselves, to ponder the words of this great and good man, if there be any capacity for pondering in them, save as their taskmaster directs. "Exegesis" is the other study which I have set apart chiefly for this winter, and a most valuable one it is, though, unfortunately, apt to be neglected where a pure form of religion has for a lengthened period prevailed, and the people, accustomed to the form, have grown more careless about the spirit; where Christianity has been drawn away from the inexhaustible well of the Bible, and emptied into the pitchers of Confessions and Catechisms, and Church constitutions, from which alone the people have drawn until the supply has been exhausted, and now, when they go for water, the pitchers stand empty. In many countries and in many ages of the Church, this has been more or less the case. Happily the restless spirit of enquiry which is now prevalent gives promise that it may not occur again, at least in our day." Irishmen will read Dr. Stevenson's life for very pride in their great countryman, but he belongs to the whole Church of God, and his record is an inspiration for every minister of Christ's gospel.