

desired by large numbers, and he may be confident of a cordial welcome.

The life and vigor of the author's own untrammelled style are seen when he actually gets to work, as in the criticism on Gibbon, and Hume, and the Reviews in chapter VI. Here, indeed, the book really begins. The first five chapters we think might, with great advantage to the volume, be condensed into a briskly moving introduction.

The volume begins to put out its tendrils and take hold upon us when it enters upon the subject of "The influence of books and reading on the opinions and principles." The discussion of this is carried through four interesting and very earnest chapters. When he speaks of reading fiction the author strikes, we judge, the golden mean. He puts into convincing form the reasons against the old-fashioned sweeping condemnation of it, while he reprobates, in most energetic and pungent words, the pernicious trash which the "dime novels," the "yellow-covered literature," and many of the serials thrust upon the public.

"Next to falling in love with one who is worthy of the first and best affections of the lover," he genially says, "should be ranked in its influence for good, the first really good novel or poem which takes a strong and permanent hold of the heart and character. There is a charm investing this ideal world for the first time unveiled to view, and a superhuman elevation in the beings who live and move in it, a purity in their tones, and a weight and sacredness in their words which hold the young reader as by a spell and lead him a delighted captive." He accepts this influence, wisely qualified, as a powerful auxiliary in waking up the minds and the hearts of the young, quickening their aspirations, and inspiring them with enthusiasm for that which is noblest and best in human life. The discriminating remarks in regard to what novels and poems should be rejected as pernicious, are replete with Christian wisdom: There is a temptation to quote offered by almost every page. And apart from the judicious advice which is given much scholarly and admirably worded criticism of prominent authors is incidentally brought into the discussion.

When he turns to speak, in passing, of the so-called "low-priced literature," he seems to hit with some hard blows others than the dime novelists and sensational tale writers. Perhaps even the popular Bret Harte might wince a little when reading some sentences among such true words as these: "Writings of this class lead men to believe that they can be rich without toil or saving; that they can be amiable and attractive, and yet be intensely hypocritical and selfish; that they can have exquisite moral sensibilities and lofty moral aspirations, that they can be profanely blasphemous, and yet fervently religious; in short that they can be successful for the present and the future life without complying with a single condition of success for either." In discussing the value of "a Christian literature" further on, the author aims a hearty blow or two in the same spirit at those pantheistic and skeptical writers who yet assert their claims to be called Christian. "The literature alone is Christian," he affirms, "which recognizes Christ as the object of trust and reverence," as "Master and Lord." It is a necessity, and no discourtesy to exclude others, and "If it is true as they insist," he sharply writes, "that those who adhere to the old faith in Christ's personality, are blind to argument and ignorant of history, that they know nothing of criticism, and are unacquainted with philosophy, it would be a matter of humanity at least to leave such to the quiet