

covers ten sheets of foolscap with a communication to his favourite religious paper, complaining that love stories and similar nonsense constitute the staple of the literary food issued for children by our religious publishing concerns. Again, some child, more strangely thoughtful than his fellows, reads the "memoir" of a missionary who went to foreign shores and was eaten. The memoir, except the part which describes how the savages served the missionary up, is criticised for its dismal dullness, and the criticism is frequently a fair one. The boarding-school life of the average girl or boy is generally flat stuff to print and read; and the publication of books made up of diaries and conversations of growing youth is seldom productive of any considerable amount of profit to the reader, old or young.

What is to be done? The work of the writer of children's literature is one of the noblest in Christendom. It is a monstrous pity that so much rubbish has to be written, printed, published, sold, and read.

Some rubbishy books are thrust on the market because their authors are the aunts, cousins, or other kinsfolks of publishing committee-men or editors. Nopotism reigns supreme in some quarters, in this respect.

Some are published because previous works of the same authors sold well. In some instances the author said in the first volume all he knew, and filled the rest full of emptiness, because he had run out.

Some are published because of a pious moral fond about the two hundred and sixty-fifth page, the previous two hundred and sixty-four pages being of little account, and not worth the time spent in reading them.

And some are so woefully thin, empty, flat, stale, and unprofitable, that it is hard to say why anybody outside of a lunatic asylum should write or publish them at all.

Are all library books of these sorts? Are all our libraries filled with rubbish? No; there is much that makes children better when they read it. The bother is to separate wheat from chaff.

We want a better system of selection

than has been generally introduced. A committee of revision and censorship of books to be bought, ought to be a part of the working power of every Church and Sunday-school. Time is precious; but some judicious person ought to read each and every book placed on our library shelves. We have to guard, not so much against positive viciousness in the books, as against feeble stuff and nonsense, the reading of which will do our children no good.\*

The children ask for something better than the average library book; and their demand is a reasonable one. Give them books which treat of science. Give them history and foreign travel. Give them a moderate amount of good fiction. Give them, in all these, sound common sense, and let it be well flavored with a hearty and honest religion.—*Christian at Work.*



### Modern Sunday Schools.

THE first record of the Sunday-schools in modern times is in the sixteenth century, when Martin Luther established something similar to our modern Sunday-schools; but they were not permanent. Thirty or forty years later, St. Charles Borromea, after whom one of the churches in Brooklyn is named, one of the greatest and noblest of Roman Catholic archbishops, established in and about Milan more than 700 schools, containing forty or fifty thousand scholars. Some of these were Sabbath-schools. But nowhere in Roman Catholic countries has the Sunday-school idea flourished, as the genius of that Church is not in harmony with it. Just 200 years ago, in Roxbury, Mass., a Sunday-school was established, but did not last long. In 1781, in Gloucester, England, Robert Raikes established Sunday-schools for pauper and vagabond children. He hired poor women to teach them, at one shilling a day—not mainly religion, but the rudiments of the English branches. In 1791 Bishop White, in Philadelphia, and in 1793 a poor colored woman in New York, established Sunday-schools among the colored population. In 1809 the first

\* Our S. S. Library Committee does this.

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