

duction. She (of course such a "young person" is feminine)—she must be singularly obtuse who cannot see how shallow, mean, sordid, and base is the life of Rhoda Somerset and her class; and who cannot appreciate how powerfully the story teaches the lesson that they enter upon a fatal and perilous path who begin to do evil that good may come.

This being the ultimate moral of his story, it makes little difference to our mind what instrument he uses in working it out. If there is one principle which has been evolved from the complexities and jargon of literary criticism, it is that an author shall have the liberty of choosing what material he likes, and that we shall judge his work by its results. Of course it is at his peril that he commits offences either against good taste or good morals; but we believe the principle as we have stated it, is now one of the canons of "the gay science." It would be well, too, for the public to recollect when their ears are confused by a clamor like that recently heard against Reade, that the very critics who have raised it have probably taken occasion more than once to wreak their scorn upon the "bigoted stupidity," which in the case of Shakespeare has given rise to "expurgated" editions.

Coming now to the artistic aspect of "A Terrible Temptation," we are quite willing to concur in the opinion that the *kind* of use which Mr. Reade has made of Rhoda Somerset and the other complications of his story is unmistakable indication of decaying powers. There must have been a very marked declension from the Reade of *Peg Woffington* before the same author could descend to the charts and other sensational machinery of the "Temptation;" and the characters which figure in the more recent story have little of the vital personality of the old. The style, too, from being crisp, and clear, and terse, has become simply snappish; and the egotism which at first gave a peculiar and not unpleasant flavor to Reade's work has recently attained to the enormous.

Having spoken as one having authority on pretty much all the questions that have agitated society of late, he has now given (what of course in his opinion no one else living was capable of doing) an estimate

of himself; and it is to be hoped he will now rest for awhile. As it is, we feel a terrible temptation to throw his latest production out of the window, or at least to exclude it from the company of the other well-used volumes by the same author which lie upon our shelf. The book is interesting enough and innocent enough, but as a work of art it is very far below the level of its author's earlier writings.

SONGS OF THE SIERRAS. By Joaquin Miller. Toronto: The Canadian News and Publishing Co.

In the words of a contemporary, "this is a truly remarkable book." A few months ago Mr. Miller was unknown, to-day he occupies a prominent place in the foremost rank of living poets. The book before us was published in England last spring. It immediately attracted notice, was most favorably reviewed in all the leading magazines, and was widely read. As the title indicates, it is a picture of life in the far west of America, where, as he tells us in his preface, Mr. Miller has lived for many years. In every respect, the book is a peculiar one: it breathes the spirit of true poetry in every page, yet the style is unlike that of any other poet either English or American. The fact that the "Songs" have been so favorably received across the water, is sufficient evidence of their worth. No poems of the day, not even those of Tennyson, or Swinburne, have been spoken of in such high terms of praise by English reviewers.

MY WIFE AND I, OR HARRY HENDERSON'S HISTORY. By Harriet Beecher Stowe. Toronto: Canadian News and Publishing Co.

This story was originally published in the *Christian Union*, and, like everything from Mrs. Stowe's pen, was read with intense interest. It has been reprinted in the United States, and in order to meet the demand for it in this country, the present edition has been issued. It is a charming tale, and fully sustains the world-wide reputation of the author. Its main object is to show the absurdity of the Woman's Right movement, and paint in their true colours those unwomanly