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"MANY SHALL RUN TO AND FRO, AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE INCREASED."—DANIEL xii. 4.

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GENERAL LITERATURE.

EFFECTS OF NOVEL READING.

A FACT.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Advocate of Moral Reform* relates the following thrilling fact, as a warning to the reader against contracting a passion for novel reading:—

When visiting, in my tract district, about two years since, I met with a lady in a small and scantily furnished apartment, in whose history I at once felt a deep interest. Every thing about her, though perfectly clean and orderly, indicated the most abject poverty, while the style of her conversation, and the spirit she manifested, betokened one who had moved in refined and intelligent society, and who had also learned of Christ, and drank deeply of his spirit. She had evidently known sorrow, and I inferred that domestic troubles were the cause of her sadness. I tried to draw from her the history of the past, but she seemed studiously to avoid alluding to it; and while she conversed with the utmost freedom upon religious subjects, I was unable to learn the cause of her sadness.

Not long after my acquaintance commenced, her first-born, a lad of ten or eleven years of age, was drowned. While playing, in company with some rude boys on the dock, some difficulty occurred which occasioned a scuffle, in which he was precipitated into the water, and before aid could be obtained, life was extinct. The mother's heart was overwhelmed with the deepest anguish. "The loss of her son," she said, "in itself, was nothing, compared with the agonizing circumstance attending his death. The thought that he had been hurried from a scene of strife and guilt into the presence of his Judge, was the bitter drug in her cup of sorrow." I saw her frequently about this time. Afflictions, new and soul-subduing, seemed to break down the barriers of reserve that she had reared around her domestic history, and she freely opened to me her whole heart, and told me of her past errors.

She was a native of England; the child of Christian and influential parents, who watched over her childhood with the greatest care, and spared no pains or expense, in their efforts to make her all that is lovely and valuable in woman. Surrounded as she was by a large circle of intelligent and affectionate friends, with all of worldly good that she needed, her life ran smoothly and prosperously along, and she ripened into womanhood, with fair prospects for happiness and usefulness.

She enjoyed great advantages for reading, and cultivating her mind. It was her father's delight to see her with a book, and he never thought that money misapplied that was spent in the purchase of books. She said, "As I was leaving a school where I had spent two years, my teacher, for whose opinions I entertained a high respect, and who appeared to take a deep interest in my future progress in literature, proffered me some advice res-

pecting my reading, and laid down some rules for the regulation of my time. He concluded his advice by recommending to me the perusal of the writings of Sir Walter Scott, and a few other works of the kind. I had never been indulged in novel reading, and looked upon it as a forbidden pleasure; but with the sanction of my teacher, I purchased and perused the books without scruple. A bias was thus given to my taste, which I readily found the means of gratifying. I became a subscriber to magazines and periodicals that were filled with tales of romance; every novel that issued from the press found a place in my library. My substantial and useful reading was gradually relinquished, the novel reading became with me an all-absorbing passion; my views of life were totally changed; every thing that pertained to the common duties and occurrences of life was tame and uninteresting. I was restless and often unhappy, without any apparent cause. I was constantly longing for adventure, something to interrupt the smooth current of life."

The result of all this was, an elopement on her part with a man, of whose character and fortune she knew nothing, except from his own lips; one whom her parents judged to be worthless, and forbade her receiving his attentions; one who was evidently far below her, in intelligence and refinement. A few days after their clandestine marriage, they sailed for America, and for a time she thought she was experiencing the fruition of her hopes. A few months only had rolled away, before she found to her sorrow that she had linked her destiny to one who was utterly worthless; with no property to depend upon, and no profession by which to support himself and wife honorably; one who drank deeply of the inebriate's cup, and who was, in every respect, an adept in the school of vice. Years rolled on; poverty and disgrace, loneliness and sorrow were her portion. Little ones gathered around her, and cried for bread. He who should have provided it was often absent from their miserable home, for weeks and months together, and during these periods, and often at other times, all she had with which to feed and shelter herself and babes was the scanty pittance she earned with her needle. "O! how different," she exclaimed, "are the stern realities of a *life of incidents* and adversity, from what I imagined when poring over the adventures of imaginary characters." She had none to whom she could go with her sorrows, save the Friend of Sinners, and to him she had no heart to go. Friends at home looked upon her as a disgraced outcast, and her proud English spirit prevented her seeking from them supplies for her wants, or sympathy for her distresses.

About two years before I saw her, she had hopefully found Him who came to seek and save the lost and wandering. Since that time, though her worthless husband has been more neglectful and abusive than ever, her peace had for the most of the time been as a river, and her faith strong and unwavering. The support of her little ones devolves upon her,

and her needle is employed most diligently early and late. She has written to her parents, seeking their forgiveness, and making a full disclosure of her circumstances, and of the history of the past twelve or fourteen years. She has not heard from them, and fears they are dead. Her greatest distress and anxiety is respecting her children, lest they grow up in ignorance and vice. She said, after concluding her narrative, "I trace my filial disobedience, and all my consequent troubles, to the influence of novels. I wove a beautiful veil around my imagination, and fancied that the more full of romance my life was, the more of happiness it would yield me; but I have discerned my folly when it was too late to prevent its effects."

Could the youthful readers of this article have stood with me in that lonely dwelling, and heard from *her own lips* the account of her trials, her miseries, and her utter desolation, and then heard her plead with the visitor to warn the young against the unhallowed page, they would methinks, fear to do violence to their moral constitutions, as she has done.

This case is but one of a thousand that falls under the observation of the tract visitor, where abject poverty and deep misery are the result of wrong views of life, and where those views are obtained from novels.

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LITERATURE OF THE BIBLE.

SOME critics of distinction have proposed, as a convenient test of poetical merit, the method of selecting from writers whom we would compare, those passages which describe the same, or similar objects; and it stamps the Bible with evident superiority. How majestic is the description of the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea!—

"With the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together;
The floods stood upright as a heap;
And the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea!"

Such is the grandeur with which the scene is introduced. The host of Pharaoh pursue into the midst of the sea—the children of Israel are safe on the opposite shore. The triumph of Moses and the song of Miriam continue:—

"Thou didst blow with thy wind:
The sea covered them.
They sank as lead in the mighty waters!"

The sister of Aaron concludes with a strain of victory:—

"Sing ye to the Lord,
For he hath triumphed gloriously:
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea!"

The host of the redeemed throw up a shout to heaven, which makes the hills of Aialy tremble; and the obedient waters roll in upon chariots and horsemen, and cover them with everlasting oblivion. We find not to the judgment of scholars, whether the entire circle of the classics can furnish a parallel to this passage.

Thomson, who wears the laurel in descriptive poetry, has paraphrased a part of the