

unfits the mental vision for the pure sunlight of grave and elevating truth. Even the tears evoked by the recital of woes, which have no correspondence in the events of real life, are of questionable good, since the benevolent affections are expended over sorrows that never had an existence. The heart must surely be hardened thus to real distress, as the tragic and exciting are not always present where humanity calls for help. Novel reading is not to be ranked as a preparation for earnest work towards the amelioration of the woes of mankind. With the Young it has the effect of unsettling the mind as to the profession or calling in life they shall embrace. Many a Youth has adopted absurd and ruinous views of life, become dissatisfied with the parental home, and wandered forth to become a fugitive and a vagabond, whose views have had their source in portraits of pirates, footpads and villains, painted as heroes, and held up to the admiring gaze of inexperience as successful in their villany. A due concern for the welfare of the youth of the country, demands of us an emphatic protest against the indulgence that would carelessly surround the path of the Men and Women of the future, with temptations to read what must enervate and blight the powers of the mind. Nor does the plea exist, that such is the dearth of interesting books, that excursions must be made into the domain of an unchristian literature. There are wide and fruitful fields, apart from questionable ground, waiting for the toil of the reaper, inviting him to fill his bosom with sheaves. There are gardens full of precious fruits and beautiful flowers. In every department of erudition, a galaxy of "Men of renown" present to us their choicest treasures. Aside from the great of other nations, our own tongue is enriched by the works of a host of intellectual giants, like the

" Stars of heaven, sown thick as a field."

To secure a preference in any mind for those books, where the Divine Spirit of Christianity casts a tender and ennobling influence on every form of thought, is a work which would well repay our attempt to induce discrimination and selection in the books we read. The authority and sway of true religion is not to be denied and ruled out in the realm of literature. What then is the Christian's test of good books? It has been well said—"The book that hath not the spirit of Christ is none of his." What volumes are we called upon by this test to lay aside and reprobate? All the *trifling* books must go. Occasional flashes of native wit and humour are admissible. They frequently light up the argument, and give a charm to the page and a zest to the reader. But works in which there is nothing but a studied attempt to excite the risible and to promote laughter, must be repudiated as incompatible with the dignity of our nature, and the solemnity of our relations. All the *prostrating* literature must go. The tendency of much of the popular writings of the day is to make the soul passive rather than active—act upon humanity, rather than to rouse humanity to act upon it. One of the greatest objections to what is called fictitious literature is not its fictitious style, for much of the Bible comes to us in that garb, but its deteriorating influence upon the mind. It is mental alcohol. It sets the mind to act in dreamy elysiums; steals from it all the necessary energies for the duties of life; makes it intensely alive to ideal sorrow and heroism, but dead to sorrows and heroism of the real world. It is reported of a popular novelist, that, after he put forth a portion of his work, and was proceeding with the remainder of the tale, he re-