

was the flavour, that a certain sweetmeat, well known to most young people, is called a *jujube*—the name given to such shrubs, and evidently derived from the *Zizyphus* (lotos) itself.

At this 'goodly land, and pleasant,' Ulysses and his companions, in the course of their long wanderings arrived.

'A land where all things always seem'd the same!

And round about the keel, with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed, melancholy lotos-eaters came.
Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit.' . . .

The sweetness of the lotos-fruit exercised such an influence over them that they ceased, except in their dreams, to care about their native country.

'And sweet it was to dream of fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary-seemed the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, "We will return no more."'

Putting the old Homeric story into modern verse, Mr. Tennyson describes this pleasing land of drowsy-heads, and yoking his wondrous fancy to the bald and simple legend, makes the wanderers break out in choric song, commencing,—

'There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass.'

And still between the stanzas, clearing their voices with the insidiously-sweet jujube, they sing,—

Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
Let us alone.

Such was the idle expostulation, so the poet Laureate seems to suggest, with which the sterner-minded Ulysses was greeted, when he urged his companions to depart. Poor robe-making Penelope was not quite forgotten, and though the way-weary men sang—

'Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,

In the hollow lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills, like gods together, careless of mankind—

they were forced at length, however re-

luctantly, to obey their chieftain and embark once more.

It seems to us that just at this time there is a considerable amount of lotos-eating in the Christian world. The pleasant, rather than the practically profitable, appears to be, in many quarters, the thing most sought; or—if seeking be too stern a word for the lotos-eaters' vocabulary—most cheerfully accepted. Of this we have been recently reminded by a pile of books and magazines written for the especial delectation of the young people among us. Glancing, first of all, at the tables of contents, we are much struck by the circumstance that the larger portion of the heap referred to is made up of fiction—of novelettes in fact. Almost every magazine, whose *tales* are not completed within the covers of the current number has a serial story—such as 'Villaggon the traitor' (by the author of 'The Pirate of the Mediterranean,') for instance—running on through consecutive parts. The books for the young are, with very few exceptions, of the same kind—story-books, mere jujubes. In short, the literature provided for our Christian youth, even by those whose province it is to cater especially for Sunday-schools, is just another Cyrenaica, a land of sweet fruit.

'The lotos blooms below the barren peak:

The lotos blows by every winding creek:

All day the wind breathes low with mellow tone

Through every hollow cave and alley lone,
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow lotos-dust is blown.'

We are not of those who, by wholesale, would condemn what is termed *light literature*. It has many, and some of them, powerful advocates. 'We gild,' says one, 'our medicines with sweets: why not clothe truth and morals as well?' Query, however: Are not the unreflecting, indiscriminating young, more apt to be taken up with the 'pleasant garments' than with the 'morals;' and with the spangled robe of fiction, than with the 'truth' that, in the latest mode, may be thus meretriciously attired? 'Fiction,' says Madame Necker, 'is a potent agent for good.' But query again, Might not the 'good' sometimes play a nobler part than that of a tiring-maid tricking out her mistress with 'pleasant garments?' Would not the