

## CONCERNING APPLAUSE.

We quote from the Christian Work and Evangelist:

"Two D.D.'s—Decorum and Dignity—have served to keep applause out of the churches. Every once in a while someone rises, and having cleared his throat, remarks, 'Why shouldn't we have applause in churches to stimulate the preacher?' So the discussion is on, which after a while will die down, until the next brother rises on his number 9's and addresses the chair. The subject has just broken out in Chicago, where the stalwart organ of Western Presbyterianism, the Interior, takes it up and says: 'Nay, but we will not have applause in churches.' 'The best tonic,' it says, 'is a good conscience.' Sometimes, though, a good conscience, subjectively, is not so good objectively: besides, added to a good conscience, a preacher must have some evidence of having the approbation of his people; without that even a good conscience will not save him. Really, though, one of the best arguments advanced against applause is that it is apt to be bestowed at the wrong place. We have seen not a little of that; and we note that audiences have a cruel way sometimes of purposely applauding at the wrong place when they are tired of a speaker: we have known a lovely Presbyterian minister to be silenced and cruelly forced to his seat by an unfeeling audience in Carnegie Music Hall, this city, and it was a Presbyterian missionary meeting, too. When the Interdenominational Evangelical Alliance met in this city thirty years ago, Professor Christlieb remarked that it would be better if not another book on theology was published for a century; and the theologian and lay solons all applauded—some with hands, some with their feet and others by wagging their heads up and down like a wooden Chinese mandarin in a tea-store show-window. Well, what of it all? This: that among the very wise, very good, very helpful utterances that fell from the lips of Professor Christlieb on that occasion, this was not one. The utterance could not be defended, for we needed and still need theological books, and some very fine, helpful ones have been published since our Bonn professor spoke, only to mention the books of Stanley, Uthorn, Allen, Morris, Fairbairn, Dodds, Gordon, Prest, A. H. Strong, Jordan P. Bronne, and others. Yet the assembled audience foolishly and thoughtlessly applauded Professor Christlieb's utterance, which many of them did not accept, and all because it served as a peroration or climax and was delivered with unusual force. Of course, we recall that the people shouted and applauded when Ambrose spoke—advocates of applause should not fail to quote Ambrose. But the great man has long been confined and dead: applause in his time does not justify applause now.

"A word more: once admit applause in the churches and what sort of a man would he be on Monday who had written special sentences to make room for the applause that never came to punctuate that Sunday sermon? No, no; it will never do."

## LITERARY WORK IN SHANGHAI\*

Shanghai is the literary, as well as the missionary and commercial centre of China. As London is the producing and publishing source of the books which influence England and all English-speaking lands, so books prepared and issued in Shanghai reach all China, and indeed the Chinese, in whatever land they dwell. God gave us the printing press and steam to multiply the human voice in its proclamation of the good news. China is so large and populous, that every agency must be used in the tremendous task of letting all the Chinese hear the gospel. Moreover, when won to Christ, the Chinese Christians must be fed and built up with healthy literature, like Christians everywhere else in the world; hence the need of suitable books and papers, both for the heathen and for the growing Christian community.

There is an immense opportunity in China for the dissemination of good literature. Dr. J. C. Gibson estimates that there are 11,250,000 men and 1,125,000 women in China who can read. Until very lately 700,000 candidates every two years tried for their B.A. degree, while every three years 190,000 B.A.'s tried to get their M.A. Besides these, another million of students tried their matriculation examination in various matriculation centres. In all the universities of Europe together there are less than 110,000 men. But the opportunity in China is now the greater, because the government has recently abolished all these examinations and has said that it would substitute modern schools. Some of these will have to be of monstrous size to accommodate the crowds which will rush for admission; for in China all offices are given only to those who pass very high in their examinations. If there are 12,375,000 readers now, how many will there be twenty years hence, when China starts schools everywhere?

The recent change has produced a crisis in the history of the nation. The whole country has turned its back on the old system, which really bound them to the past, steering their hearts against all things new, including, of course, the new religion which we bring them. Now their minds will be free to take in everything new that comes along. How important that they should be filled with what is true and useful, before Satan introduces what will degrade and destroy!

Up till 1887 there had been Tract Societies in China, but their publications, through lack of funds and other causes, were confined to expositions of the gospel. They provided nothing for the general reader about the world in which we live. They simply printed tracts, which were purely and wholly evangelistic. In 1887 the late Dr. Williamson, of Scotland, saw that China, a great literary nation, would eagerly read history and science, when they would not read anything directly evangelistic. In this way their prejudice might be disarmed, and often they could be reached indirectly by the gospel. He therefore founded the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge among the Chinese, (S.D.K.) which was pledged to print all kinds of literature provided it was based on Christian principles.

After Dr. Williamson's death, Dr. Timothy Richard was asked to take the leadership. Associated with him are four others. These five are all supported by various missionary organizations.

Rev. Donald MacGillivray is the representative of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, which provides for his support. From 1888 to 1890 Mr. MacGillivray was a member of our Homan mission staff, but since the latter date he has been permitted by the Foreign Mission Committee of our church to give himself to literary work. He has translated into Chinese more than a dozen important books, including Bushnell's Character of Jesus; Bruce's, The Kingdom of God; The Life

of Dwight L. Moody; and Andrew Murray's The Spirit of Christ, and is now engaged in translating S. D. Gordon's popular books on Prayer and Power. Besides this work of translating, Mr. MacGillivray has written a book on the Holy Spirit, of which 200 copies were ordered at one time by one Mission. The other members of the translating staff are:—Rev. Dr. Y. J. Allen, of the Methodist Episcopal Church (South) in the United States; Rev. W. A. Cornaby, English Wesleyan Mission; and Rev. W. Gilbert Walshe, Church Missionary Society.

The society has home auxiliaries, which raise money to pay rent of office, printing of books, hire of Chinese assistants and general running expenses. Merchants and missionaries of China also give money. The salaries of the translators, including the rent of houses, is paid by the various organizations who lend the men for this literary work. The books bring in some revenue, but that in the meantime is very little. Large profits cannot be made if the books are to have a wide circulation. Since its beginning in 1887 the S.D.K. printed about 180,000,000 pages, most of which have gone forth on their holy errand of enlightenment. These pages, divided among the 12,375,000 readers, would give each about fourteen pages, not a very liberal supply. Much more remains to be done.

What is the fruit of all these things? Missionaries have preached and doctors healed, and schools have been taught, and books have been scattered—these and other great influences have been steadily at work. The good seed has been sown and there has been the expected harvest. There are over 150,000 Christians in China; a little flock, but it is the Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom, and thousands will soon enter into it. A whole nation has been roused from the sleep of ages, and is shaking herself from the shackles of a dead past. These are wonders which God hath wrought, so great that we can not take them in, any more than we can really take in the vast figures of the distances of the stars from the earth in astronomy.

We are looking forward to the starting of new schools all over China. Instead of only 12,000,000 who can read and write, we hope to have to see the time when there will be 268,000,000. When that time comes, our present efforts will seem insignificant in comparison with what those now growing up in Christian lands will be doing to provide these vast millions with the bread of life.

## THE CAPE TO CAIRO TELEGRAPH.

A writer in the Glasgow Herald states the line has now reached Ujiji, on the eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika. Construction work is a-credited, while the route northward is carefully surveyed and the sections of the line erected are got into working order. From a purely commercial point the line is fully coming up to, if not exceeding, the expectations concerning it. The engineers, however, face a difficulty in their preparation for carrying it forward from Ujiji, the country for nearly 100 miles through which the line would have to pass being very swampy and unfit for the erection of a telegraph pole. It was at first thought a wide detour would have to be made in order to escape this region, but other counsels have prevailed, and a much more daring experiment is likely to be tried. This is the installation of the Marconi system of wireless telegraphy, in order to bridge over this belt. This combination of an African jungle swamp with the latest triumph of scientific discovery is only another instance of the onward march of civilization.

## DAILY READINGS.

M.—Knowledge and peace. Isa. 11: 1-9.  
T.—A great light. Isa. 9: 1-7.  
W.—Learning His ways. Isa. 2: 1-5.  
Th.—Lack of knowledge. Hosea 4: 1-9.  
F.—Bad books destroyed. Acts 19: 13-20.  
S.—Idolatrous became ignorant. Isa. 45: 20-25.

Sun. Topic.—Literary Work in Shanghai. Acts 17: 16-34.

\*Monthly Topic, June 24, by Rev. Donald MacGillivray, B.D., Shanghai.