

stimulated to greater mental activity and enjoyment. The books could be distributed at a week-night service, and thus relieve the Sunday-school of an ungrateful and incongruous task.

THE MARRIAGE QUESTION.

THE columns of one of our great dailies have been filled to repletion day after day with letters upon this important question, and one of our city pastors has made it the subject of a special sermon. The contagion has spread to the country press, and vast has been the amount of writing and reading which it has occasioned.

This is a question that concerns everybody. "All over the land," Dr. Talmage recently remarked, "there are thousands of people marching single file who ought to be keeping step with some one on the right or left." The question is, how all these people may find their affinities, be brought into rank, and keep step together down the march of life.

The recent discussion arose from a letter by "an Artizan," complaining of the frivolity, indolence, and slavery to fashion, of young ladies, as serious impediments to matrimony. The ladies retorted that they tried to be fashionable because the gentlemen would have them so, and that their frivolity was often assumed to please their equally frivolous admirers. The shafts of badinage flew thick and fast, often barbed with sober truths, and many words of wit and weight and wisdom were uttered on both sides. The correspondence on the whole was characterized by great good sense. There was comparatively little of mere romancing or effusive sentimentalism, little of mere mercenary utilitarianism, and a great deal of practical common sense. The absolute necessity of strong and fervent mutual affection as the prime essential to happy marriage was abundantly insisted upon. It was amply demonstrated

that marriage was cheaper than celibacy—that young men who could or would scarcely live within their income, after marriage managed to save money. The benedicts took especial pleasure in contrasting their domestic happiness with the comfortless experience of their "single misery," and it was shown that quiet home joys far transcend the feverish pursuit of pleasure in which many consume their time and energies.

We are inclined to think that the ladies had the best of the argument, and they certainly wrote the best letters—the most piquant, bright, quick-witted, and altogether most readable and sensible. The impediments to marriage are less with them than with the young men. Who are they that maintain by their prodigal expenditure the hundreds of drinking saloons that disgrace our cities? Who are they that crowd the galleries of the theatres and the exhibitions of every troupe of strolling negro minstrels or mountebank performers? Who are they that support the numerous tobacconists' shops and purchase those costly carved pipes? Who are they that parade their Adonis perfection in fashionable suits for which their tailors are not paid, nor are likely to be? Who are they that loaf around the street corners, and reel homeward in the small hours, making night hideous with their drunken songs or foul-mouthed talk? Who are they that do worse things than these, of which we may not even speak? Are they not largely this very class of young men who "can't afford to marry, the girls are so awfully extravagant, you know."

Young men, instead of railing at the fair sex—no very good sign in a man of any age—might be better employed in making themselves worthy of the love of a noble-hearted woman.

Our girls may be often idle and frivolous, but theirs may frequently be an enforced idleness for want of some noble ambition or aspiration.