

WELL WORTHY OF CAREFUL THOUGHT.

By Ulster Pat.

Sty—"The words of the wise are as goads; and as nails well fastened are the words of the collectors of sentences which are given from one shepherd. And as for more than these, my son, be warned; of making many books there is no end; and much study of them is a weariness of the flesh." The late Rev. Dr. Watson, of Beaverton, one of the most scholarly ministers of the Auld Kirk in Canada, told me that at that time, and he was well past middle life, he had read but one novel. The circumstances were, as I recall them, a parishioner on his death bed told him that he had read so much fiction that he could not regard even the Bible as anything more than a tale written for the entertainment of its readers. In order to realize, if possible, the position of the sick man, the good pastor got one of Scott's novels and read it, with the result that he could not conceive of anybody writing such a book when it was not true. This is an extreme case, no doubt. But is not it a fact that the novel is to-day more widely read, more carefully studied, more influential, and more generally quoted than is the Bible, which is the word of God? Even in the pulpit, the writers of the "many books" against which the wise man warned his son, are quoted oftener than are those who collect "sentences from the one shepherd." And with what result? Lack of definite thinking, loose views of theology and doctrine, confused ideas of truth and error, an easy-going impression that "one religion is as good as another," and a happy-go-lucky assurance that so long as a man "does his best" God will not be severe in judgment of what "mistakes" he may make. Many "religious" publishing houses are turning out and pressing the circulation of works that are undermining spirituality in the church, and refusing to issue orthodox writings because they "will not pay" so well. In one of these "popular" novels issued lately a trick is attributed to the Moderator of a western presbytery the counterpart of which occurred in the Canadian Parliament not long since, and was there characterized in words that were true, but which would no doubt be declared "scandalous" were I to apply them to members of a church court. And adherence to the Westminster confession is scoffed at in a manner that can afford satisfaction only to the enemy, or to those guilty of the offence made so little of. While I regard the Bible and the Bible only as the religion of Protestants, I still think that those who are associated for the promulgation of the gospel must agree as to what that book teaches, for unless they be agreed they cannot walk, much less labor, together.

One frequently hears good people lament the prevalence of novel reading. Often these come within the scope of Cowper's lines, "each thinks his neighbor makes too free, yet likes a slice as well as he." But are not our Sunday schools among the active agencies for cultivating a taste for fiction? and this unnecessarily as well as unwisely. In adventure, thrilling heroism, narrow escapes, and wonderful pluck, energy and enterprise, missionary truth is stranger than fiction, and its relation more attractive and entertaining. Make up the Sunday school library of the works of Paton, E. R. Young, Macdonnell, Grenfell—narratives of deep sea missions, Missions in the New Hebrides, South America, China, Japan, India, etc., and I'll warrant the boy who reads such will be more manly and imbued with a deeper missionary spirit than the one who reads the most popular—and consequently, of course, the best—novels, however "religious" they may be. Then there is the Sunday school paper. The Canadian Presbyterian will probably find nothing better suited to his requirements than

East and West, and other publications of his own church. But if he desires anything supplementary to these, let him look to the motherland. Above all things beware of the cheap—and nasty, I had almost written—papers pressed upon him by "enterprising" publishers in the neighboring republic. I lately had submitted for my perusal, by a young teacher in a neighboring Sunday school, a monthly "help" magazine for adult class teachers. From beginning to end the god most praised was "success." Whole pages of description—one of them from a class in Canada, I am sorry to say—told of pleasant entertainments, popular schemes, numbers and attractions, but God was almost forgotten—He was neither praised or His glory mentioned, and as for seeking His guidance or direction, it never seems to have occurred to one of these zealous workers that they needed such a thing. To-day I have examined a girl's weekly by the same publishers, and though it is a Sunday school paper nominally, I had gone over seven pages, four columns to the page, without seeing the slightest reference to God or the Bible—I beg pardon, on page seven I did read that Thales, who lived six hundred years before Christ, discovered electricity; but so far as fixing a date it would have been quite as accurate—and Biblical—to say that that great Greek lived six hundred years before Judas Iscariot or Pontius Pilate. On the eighth page, God is mentioned less than a dozen times, in two Sunday school lessons, but the third, the international temperance lesson writer, skillfully avoids any reference to the Deity. Then there is a "hide and seek" puzzle competition, in which no mention is made of Bible or God. Two novels with titles not suggesting any sort of "religion" are offered; and there are two advertisements, in one of which the doubtful "learning" of "imitation jewellery," appearing as good as the real thing—a suggestion of deception is offered to the young, and the other offers a dollar on easy terms to those who should be learning the dignity of honest labour and the joy of God-fearing independence. The lessons are rubbishy and indeed so is the whole production. Mr. Editor, I am weary of the task of examining the thing—won't you let me leave comment to the intelligent readers of The Dominion Presbyterian?

The 'Missionary Review' tells of a new form of collection adopted by Korean Christians. The offering is the pledge of a certain number of days to be devoted to evangelization. Both men and women contribute. In one Christian congregation of a few hundred attendants over thirteen hundred days were offered for such work. One man gave thirty days and others gave a week's or two or three days' time, as they could spare. By the terms each one who contributes is to go a distance from home to some wholly heathen locality, and to spend the full period of the designated time in preaching the gospel to those who have never heard it. Without any other aid than that of passive encouragement from the missionary force, this movement has come to be one of mighty power among the churches, and already eight or ten thousand days have been pledged and most of them worked out faithfully. Aren't there many Christians in the home churches who might make like offerings, redeeming their pledges of work in needy countries not very far from their own homes?

The Shah of Persia lives and dies "in the midst of splendors that defy description." Besides the \$10,000,000 peacock throne there is the terrestrial globe which his father had constructed of pure gold with 51,000 precious stones, used to indicate the conformations of lands and sea. The oceans and seas are of emeralds, Persia is marked with turquoise, India with amethysts, Africa with rubies, England and France with diamonds.

HATRED OF BRITAIN IN INDIA.

Mhow, 14th January, 1907.

Rev. Dr. Mackay, F. M. Secretary, who is visiting our mission stations in India and China, sends us the following interesting and suggestive notes:

Dear Mr. Robinson,—I find it harder than I expected to implement my promises as to correspondence. The time is shorter and the work more widely distributed than I anticipated. Yet I enjoyed every hour of it, so far. Not only is the welcome cordial, but the country is fascinating and the work encouraging. It is indeed necessary to see it in order to know how encouraging it is. Statistics give us inadequate idea of the results. Of course baptisms are interesting and they are growing too. I spent a day last week with a missionary who baptized 600 last year; and another, in the same mission, baptized 1,700. But even that is not all. The numbers make it more easy for others and engage attention. I heard a missionary the other day at Bareilly address the native witnesses of a Christian service, and one of the Mohamedans "spoke out in meeting" and said "the whole country is coming over to you." They feel that the crust is cracking under their feet. There will some day be a great upheaval, a new India it will be.

But what kind of an India will it be? I have had in different quarters conversations with young men, the educated young men—and almost invariably they hate their British rulers. It is very outspoken and very bitter. If what I have seen is at all representative of what prevails generally elsewhere, then there is trouble ahead.

Nobody can honestly deny the fact that Great Britain has brought peace and prosperity here; yet in their hatred they will, if not deny, try to minimize explain away. It is true that they are helpless; but not more so than the Russians, under the heel of a cruel and despotic administration.

Why this hostility exists towards a government that can fairly be called righteous and beneficent, may be hard to explain. Of course an educated citizen of a country having a population of 300,000,000 resents being ruled by a paltry 1,500 Britishers, representing the British crown. That is not the chief difficulty, however. It is the haughtiness of the Britisher that is resented. One man who does business in London told me "I like the English man at home; he is courteous and gentlemanly; but I hate him in India, he has left his manners behind him."

That possibly as much as any other cause explains the present ominous conditions. Certainly they are ominous, and the schools and colleges are the hot beds. Not Christian schools; and that the authorities do not seem to recognize. The Government tries to be impartial and usually is, but when any favours are going they usually go in the other direction.

However I did not begin this letter with this discussion in view, yet it is ever before me. No man who loves the British Empire as I do, can fail to feel somewhat concerned. What will help to save this situation at present is a large diffusion of Christian ethics, along with the rapidly extending secular education. India is a great country. Some day she will rule herself, but it should come naturally and the separation should be with good will on both sides, Yours sincerely, R. P. Mackay.