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I.—LITERARY.

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THE TESTING SYSTEM FOR MINISTERIAL STUDENTS IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND.

The testing system for ministerial students in the Southern Presbyterian Church is far from giving universal satisfaction. No proposed changes have met with a favorable reception at the hands of the majority of our rulers. But all parties are ready to admit that practically the examining of our candidates is very often most imperfect and unsatisfactory. Laxity is the common characteristic of most of the examinations conducted by the Presbyteries, while incompetence on the part of the examiners is not unheard of.

We are not concerned here to inquire whether the trouble springs from the requirements of the Book, or from the nature of the personnel of the Presbyteries—whether the standard set up in our Constitution is too high, or the material of our Presbyteries too low. We merely affirm as an acknowledged fact that there is dissatisfaction with the system by which we test the students' qualifications for the work of the ministry.

This being so, it may be fairly assumed that an account of the testing system in application in a sister church of noble repute will be received with interest. We do not think of advocating the adoption of the Irish scheme by our own church. We hope simply to stir up the minds of our brethren, by giving them a new plan to think on, to the bettering, in a way which shall seem good to them, our testing system.

But the book is very good nevertheless. It holds one's interest to the end. One feels that he is being brought into contact with our Lord. It should lead to a perusal of the Gospel. We commend it to parents and Sunday Schools as quite useful and worthy.

August 26th, '96:

THOS. C. JOHNSON.

**THE PRINCESS ALINE.** By *Richard Harding Davis*, author of "The West from a Car Window," "Our English Cousins," "The Rulers of the Mediterranean," "Gallegher," "Van Bibber and others," &c. Illustrated by C. D. Gibson. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1895.

This is a charming story for an idle half hour of rest. It is sparklingly written. It is simple, straightforward, piquant; full of love and full of incipient and travel. Its hero is an improbable but lovable man of the world—led by whims but amiable, intelligent, kindly, companionable. Its heroine is a beautiful and sprightly American girl, of sweet character from a worldly point of view. The Princess Aline is kept at a respectful distance as behooves princesses.

In some of these latter assertions is alleged by implication the greatest defect of the book. The author has no high moral purpose. Cicero believed that only a good man could be a real orator. Only a Christian painter can reach the highest perfection. Another may have the most exquisite mechanical skill, but he will fail of the right expression. He can not put the soul into eyes and face and bearing because it is not in him. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*. The same is true of the novelist. No novelist can do a perfect piece of work unless he is a Christian and unless he carries positive Christianity with him as he produces his work. We know nothing of Mr. Richard Harding Davis's religion. But in this story he sets forth his characters as if they were out of relation, at least so far as consciousness went to God. God does not seem to be in all Mr. Davis's thought as he writes. He writes for the respectable worldling.

We should have literature as restful with this finer coloring and tone in it, something which will appeal not merely to the natural but to all that is best in the spiritual man.

**IN DEFIANCE OF THE KING, A Romance of the American Revolution.** By *Chauncey C. Hotchkiss*. New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1895.

This is a thrilling war story; as full of adventures as an egg of meat. It is the work of a good story-teller. Its occasional pictures of historical characters are well sketched. Its pictures of local conditions of the times vivid and historically true. Its references to historic events generally correct. But the author makes no effort to teach history. His purpose is to tell a story. Nor does he forget that purpose.

It is full of war, fire, and blood; but on the side of all the author's approved characters the war is open, and the blood that spilt in open

honorable warfare. It will be hard for bright boys to lay aside this book till it has been read from front to back.

It will serve a useful purpose with boys whose reading is directed with any degree of wisdom. It will enhance the value of cool clearheadedness, of quick-witted resourcefulness, of frankness, openness of heart, manly courage, in their eyes. The honest, faithful, noble-hearted old Jacob Moore; and the patriotic, chivalrous, resourceful Dr. Gresham will not be an infrequent visitor to the mind once made acquainted with their history as detailed in these pages; and they will not make the mind more ignoble, to say the least, by their coming.

Let us have more of such stories.

Orlando, Fla.

THOS. C. JOHNSON.

THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN HORN. *By Frank R. Stockton.* Pp. 404. 12 mo. Price \$1.50. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1895.

In the publishers' notice it is asserted that this work is unlike any novel that has hitherto appeared from this popular writer's pen, and is a romance of the most adventurous kind, whose events, born of Mr. Stockton's imagination, are wholly extraordinary, and yet, through the author's ingenuity, appear altogether real."

It is a most enjoyable book. One expects that from Mr. Stockton. This more than meets our expectations. The episodes are sufficiently frequent to make the reader feel he always has something fresh. Marvelous experiences are heaped on one another. The author brings them all together in such a way as to make them seem not at all impossible. We grow excited over captain Horn's great discoveries and over his battle with pirates as if they were real.

We are carried from Peru, round the continent of South America to Marseilles and Paris with a hero, of consummate magnanimity, generosity and manliness. We are carried with the heroine from Peru to San Francisco, to New York, Paris, and Italy and back to Paris again. And while she is not an ideal woman, her beauty, loveliness and devotion to her affianced lover grow on the reader all the while. The silence of these lovers about their love—their whole manner of expressing themselves or rather not expressing themselves about their love, each for the other, gives a sort of unique pleasure producing power to the story.

The best thing in the book is the simple humour that is always bubbling out. It comes out whenever Mrs. Cliff appears. Poor soul! she has no humour: but the writer who created Mrs. Cliff has. We laugh at that good woman as she struggles to keep secret her good fortune, whether we will or not. We laugh at her again, when she waits till Edna has read the captain's letters and she may read the news or get it by hearsay from the younger woman's mouth. We laugh at her suspicions of the magnanimous captain. There are so many Mrs. Cliffs in the real world too. A blessed thing many a poor woman finds it, to be able "to say what we please." Mrs. Cliff deserves to live longer than Captain Horn himself.

Orlando, Fla.

THOS. C. JOHNSON.