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I.—LITERARY.

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.

portion as it is read. The novelist should have a much higher purpose than to please. His work should make for righteousness. It should strike hard blows at sin. It should give the reader nobler aspirations. It should make him ashamed of all his groveling aims. Cicero taught that virtue was necessary in order to a man's becoming a true orator. The same is true of the novelist. The artist with such a conception of his art as Mr. Crawford's, can never be a Michael, Angelo, or a Raphael. Art can never fulfill its highest ideals save as guided by religious greatness. There are no affections so great as the religious. The novelist who aims simply to please is playing on the surface of things. He ought to be, if consistent, an Epicurean or a Pessimist. He may be either or both. And either is superficial. To be plain, we regard Mr. Crawford's conception of the novelist's work as unworthy in two respects: He has an insufficient sense of an author's responsibility for the moral influence of his work; and his belief that the novelist should aim simply to please will keep him forever in the lower ranks of artists. An imperfect ideal will not allow him to rise to the heights.

Mr. Crawford shows his sense of irresponsibility for the moral effect of his teaching by the perfect babel of theological babble through which he carries the reader. It is a babble without one redeeming voice. Even his own reflections, where they can be clearly referred to him, are confused and discordant. This may be "realism," but it is not high art. It is not manly manhood either that speaks in such wise. We say nothing of its unchristian character.

Notwithstanding its defects and Mr. Crawford's aim to please, the work has an interest to the psychologist. Chapter xxvii., in vol. ii., contains some striking and suggestive remarks concerning intuition—intellectual intuition—and motive.

We cannot repress the regret that our author has such a conception of his mission. With an adequately exalted conception of the novelist's responsibility, with the aim to instruct and build up the moral character of the reader, Mr. Crawford would be forced to invest at least some of his characters with a worth and dignity to which they are, as matters, are strangers to. This would by virtue of reaction lift the author till he might take a very high rank among great novelists.

THOS. C. JOHNSON.

Orlando, March 28th, 1896.

A WINDOW IN THRUMS. *By J. M. Barrie.* Author of "The Little Minister," "When a Man's Single," "Auld Light Idyles," "My Lady Nicotine," etc. Pp. 285. 12 mo. Philadelphia: Henry Altemus. 1894.

This is one of the sweetest of Barrie's books. It is a collection of stories loosely connected by their more or less close relation to Jess McQumpha. Jess is the wife of a weaver in Thrums. She has been greatly afflicted by rheumatism—confined to her room for twenty years, but she has also been greatly blessed. Her good man, Hendry, is about the simplest, purest, truest-hearted man in Thrums. God has given her three

children—Leeby, one of the most faithful of daughters; Joey, the brightest boy, and set apart to the Gospel ministry, but whom God took to Himself while he was yet a little laddie; and Jamie, a dutiful and loving son albeit of humble gifts. Moreover, Jess was richly endowed by nature. She was rich and strong both in mind and heart.

She had a very womanly liking for fine "claes," though she could not wear them out of the house. She had unbounded curiosity. She had too much pride of position. But she was very bright and sweet and lovable with all, as she sat before her kitchen window looking out on all passers by, and taking an interest in them all.

We may smile at her when "on the track of the minister," or when she is "expectin' company," or even when she is "waiting for the doctor," or when she is drawing out "The Statement o Tibbie Birse," or when she is wishing for a cloak with beads. We feel like weeping with her as she "greet's" for Joey, or as she receives her Jamie home "frae London."

Her end had seemed too sad, but for her religion. She was not the first to go. First, Leeby died—Leeby that had been her mother's help since she was four years old. Then died Hendry. Pneumonia had carried Leeby. Hendry went of fever. The son just at that time fell into the clutches of a London woman who stood between him and duty to his mother. And Jess was left alone. In such a crucible the saint of God became more saintly.

Many of the stories are very sweet and pathetic, some are very amusing. The tone of the book is eminently good, morally. We heartily commend it to all in search of such reading.

THOS. C. JOHNSON.

Orlando, April 7th, 1896.

P. S.—A further charm is added to the book when we learn that Jess is Mr. Barrie's own mother. The following clipping from the *Independent* has been going the round of the papers:

"Mr. Barrie's mother, a woman of remarkable gifts and noble character, died on the evening of September 3rd last. On the Friday afternoon previous, Mr. Barrie's eldest sister was seized with a severe illness, and by Saturday night she had succumbed. They were buried together on September 6th. The daughter, slowly dying on her feet, nursed the mother until she could nurse no more; and the mother, needing no more nursing, died not knowing, perhaps scarcely suspecting, that her daughter had but a few hours gone before her out of this world into the next. It was then disclosed and announced on authority that Mrs. Barrie and her daughter were the originals of 'Jess' and 'Leeby' in 'A Window in Thrums.' The lovely story of their lives had a beautiful and not wholly mournful end."

We are again taught that even genius writes best of that which it knows; and that if we but notice, life about us is full of bright, sweet, pure, high things.

T. C. J.