

should bring about at least two unlikely conversions in the course of each novel makes a serious mistake. Open moralizing is all very well in its place, but the novel in which it is not used very sparingly is certainly doomed to have few readers and little or no influence. It is not by open moralizing that uncatholic authors have succeeded in instilling their principles into the minds of the people. They have adopted a plan far more effective than this. A study of human nature teaches them that if they openly advocate their false principles they will repel the average reader. They choose rather to disguise their object and by cunning insinuations to do their deadly work. This is how the novel—especially the novel of infidel tendencies—has such an influence among all classes. But if it has been a successful instrument in the cause of error, why can it not be equally successful in the cause of truth? Already our Catholic novelists have written in this cause, but they have been comparatively unsuccessful in making their ideas felt. The reason of this seems to be that they have not recognized that the power of the novel lies not in the amount of morality dealt out, but in the manner in which it is interwoven with the story. People do not care to be presented with a sermon when they ask for a novel. As a rule, the sermon in the novel is as much out of place as the sensational in the pulpit. Until Catholic novelists recognize this fact and learn to follow the tactics of the age, that is, keeping the main purpose in the back-ground, they cannot hope for any permanent success.

It may be said that this looks like hesitating to tell the whole truth, that it is a policy unworthy of a fearless defender of the faith. Not so. It is only putting the novel to its legitimate use; it is only using it in the most effective manner—the manner in which, according to all, it should be used. The Catholic who continually harps about his faith, and who is ever ready to open a controversy on religious

subjects on the "Plain talk to Protestants" plan, well-meaning though he be, has scarcely ever any effect on those whom he would convert; but he who is a Catholic and lives up to his religion as a matter of course, he whose whole life is a practical illustration of Catholicism will have more influence on those outside the truth than would a thousand of his rabid controversial brethren. And thus it is with the novel; let the "goody goody" tenor be introduced, and immediately the average novel-reader drops the book in disgust. But let Catholic principles be skilfully interwoven in the text, let noble, manly, Catholic characters be introduced, and then there is every reason to believe that our Catholic novels will be read and will have their proper influence.

When once this much has been done the Catholic novel can accomplish a work which will make it one of the most potent factors in the hands of those who have the welfare of the Church at heart. Particularly must it aid religion in undoing what has been done by the nineteenth century novel. To naturalism it must oppose revealed religion; to sensualism, purity; to selfishness, generosity; to indifference, fervor; in a word, a Catholic tone must run throughout, opposing the thousand and one evils which the modern novel has so successfully spread among its readers. This should evidently be the true aim and scope of the Catholic novel. Already, a few have been written in this spirit, notably, those of Rosa Mulholland and Christian Reid; but altogether we have too few of the kind. The field of English Catholic novel-writing is still almost unoccupied, and the great work of "baptizing" the novel is scarcely yet begun. But those who will accomplish it will have conferred an inestimable benefit on society and on religion. To use the words of Father Barry, writing on another subject, "They will be the men of their day—neither retrograde, nor obscurantists, nor falsely liberal"

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