

hand. There are places in every city, which under the guise of news-stands, are depots for all the vile literary poison in the market. These places are as harmful to the young as the saloons themselves, but it does not seem possible to close them up, or even check them in their career of mischief. We have laws, more or less enforced, which forbid selling intoxicating liquors or deadly weapons to children or youths; similar laws should be enacted against the sale of literature that is as sure death to the young mind and heart.

The great danger in this matter is found in the fact that it is so generally overlooked, indeed almost wholly forgotten by the parents. Many who in other respects look after their children's welfare and direct their plays and their study, pay no heed whatever to the matter of their reading. They never *think* that here is a wide-open door through which evils of the most base character may enter unchecked. They never take the trouble to note how much peril to young minds, aye, and young bodies, too, there may be in this reckless and evil reading. The children of to-day learn to read very young, and their tastes in books are very precocious. When the parent thinks they are still being interested and instructed by the books of the nursery, they have grown far beyond these, and are deep in the adventures of "Roaring Jack of the Grizzlies," "Wild Bill of the Plains," etc. A very much greater proportion of the young people of to-day read than formerly; this is shown by the increased amount of juvenile literature that yearly issues from our presses. The publishing of young people's literature is a new and very profitable business. If it were confined to the issue of harmless literature the fact would be one of great promise for the superior intelligence of the next generation. But the profits of the business have brought into it those who, by means of the general education that makes all the children readers, bring to themselves advantages at the cost of demoralization and injury to the unsuspecting and the youthful.

We have said that there is no means of punishing these human vampires, nor yet

any adequate means of checking their career of mischief. There is only one remedy; and that is, that parents occupy the ground with good seed before the emissary of evil arrives to sow the seed of evil and of shame. Parents, provide your children with good reading. There is no lack of it now, the market is always overstocked. Let be always interesting as well as instructive. Our children to-day have caught their elders' impatience under sermonizing. Do not inflict on them much of this kind of reading. Give them plenty of stories, by all means. The appetite for stories belongs to all ages, races, and climes. But let the stories be good, pure, ennobling. These will form in the children a taste for good literature, which is the best safeguard against a love for the vulgar and sensational style in which the most of the pirate and Indian tales of the day are written. Have books that are well illustrated, too: all young people love pictures, and it is by means of these that the evil publications referred to largely increase their wicked influence. Take some good children's magazine. Have also good young people's books, and make a practice of giving books to them on birthdays and holidays. These will serve as the germ of a library for the younger ones, and awaken in them a desire to keep their books from injury or destruction. If a good book does not seem to have taken hold of the minds of the children, for some reason, read it with them, and talk about it, and help them to understand it. This will help both of you, no doubt.

Parents, note what we have said. Know what your children read, and keep from them the accursed abomination—the dime novel of blood and thunder. But remember that to keep them from evil books is not all your task, but to supply them with good books, and teach them to love them. Thus, you have raised a barrier between them and some of the most dangerous temptations of life, and insured, for both parents and children, further than any other one act could accomplish, the purity and happiness of your home.
—*The Present Age.*