

proves that some parents at least, are alive to the fact that a healthy moral development is incompatible with indiscriminate novel reading; that they are aware that the elements necessary to form the characters of good men and women are not to be found in the great mass of popular novels. Indeed the novels that may safely be placed in the hands of a young person can be counted almost on one's fingers.

The vast majority implant in the minds of their young readers "absurd ideas of love and friendship, of society and parental authority, of unrestrained freedom and liberty of action." The religious element is rather avoided than thrust upon the reader, and where it is dwelt upon it is more apt to undermine than to strengthen the faith implanted by the care of a thoughtful mother. As shall be shown this applies in a particular manner to Catholic readers. As for morality as inculcated in these productions it is generally of a very questionable character. Virtuous principles wither away under the influence of the continued reading of these books; unlawful attachments are associated with depth of passion and devotion; false maxims are taught, and wrong principles that will inevitably bear their unwholesome fruit are instilled into the mind.

The class of reading commonly known as light literature appears under the form of novels, novelettes and story-papers. It is only too

true that the general effect of such publications is injurious.

They teach that riches may be acquired without toil and economy; that one may be attractive and amiable, though the very incarnation of hypocrisy and selfishness; that happiness both in this life and in the next may be obtained without living so as to deserve it in either. The effects of this reading are deplorable. It makes a father rude, vulgar, supremely wicked, and unable to entertain his children with one elevating thought; it renders a mother incapable of fulfilling her divine mission; it trains the son to be an incendiary, a robber, a despiser of law and an enemy of God; and it prepares the daughter for a life of infamy and shame by weakening her virtue till, no longer possessing a will of her own, she plunges headlong into that valley of despair whence so few ever return. There she passes her miserable existence despised even by those to whom she could point as the authors of her downfall. It has been said: "One can never see a bale of books or papers of this sort without thinking there goes a package of the seeds of robbery and lust. It were almost better to import living lecturers in behalf of sensualism and crime, and furnish them with pulpit and hall, for then we should have the disgusting facts of sin to give the lie to its flattering words."

L. E. O. PAYMENT, '99.