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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12th, 1888.

THE American Presbyterian Church received 1,200 ministers from other Churches during the last eighteen years. If these figures are correct—and they come from a trustworthy source—about one-fifth of the ministry of that great body has been trained in other Churches. That is to say, the American Church depends on other Churches for one-fifth of its pastors. Assuming that the number of ministers is not greater than the Church needs, the supply would have been 1,200 short had the Church depended on its own colleges. The inference seems to be that young America does not take kindly to the pulpit.

As a specimen of the dignified and impartial way in which religious journals in the United States treat the retaliation question we take the following from the *Interier*:

Doubtless the legislation demanded would be no less a blow to the interests of the interior United States than to Canada, for its provisions, if carried into effect, would prohibit exports from this country across Canadian territory and so paralyse that portion of our commerce which has its shortest transit by that route. But the maximum of injury cannot be inflicted upon Canada without proportionate cost to the United States, and the legislation asked for is only the logical sequence of the policy marked out by the Senate. At the same time, it is apparent that the country cannot afford to enter upon such a policy, and that while the move of the President is a clever one, it is strictly a political one and made solely for political effect. Nevertheless, the spectacle of a Democratic President and a Republican Senate dragging the fame and dignity of the American Government through the mire of politics is a humiliating one though it is gratifying to note that our unstatesmanlike conduct has found little favour throughout the country. How beautifully that contrasts with the jingo utterances on both sides of the lines!

THAT solid, old, religious journal, the *New York Observer*, thoroughly understands the Fisheries dispute and the motives that gave rise to the Retaliation message. The *Observer* says:

The question is one for diplomats and statesmen to settle, and not for politicians and partisans. The latter are chiefly responsible for all the confusion and unseemly squabbling that has accompanied the discussion of the fishery troubles in this country. For want of other political capital, they have seized upon this question, and, by a course of wilful misrepresentation and persistent falsehood, have at last worked a great many people up to the belief that there is really a very serious difference of opinion existing on the subject. The condition to which affairs have now been brought is humiliating and disheartening to every unprejudiced and self-respecting American citizen. We are free to say that the retaliatory policy seems to us a crude, harsh and barbarous resort. It is a policy unworthy of an enlightened and Christian nation. Its enforcement can only result in arousing a feeling of bitterness and enmity between us and our Canadian neighbours. It is a movement of unfriendly and hostile intent, and it carries danger with it. We hope that Congress will at last rise above the plane of narrow and petty partisanship, and devise some wiser and more dignified method for the settlement of this difficulty. So long as such views as these are held and fearlessly expressed by good men on both sides of the lines, there need be no fear of war between the two countries and very little of retaliation. The politicians and partisans who are trying to make capital out of this question for the Presidential contest, by "a course of wilful misrepresentation and persistent falsehood," should be taught that other citizens of the Republic have votes as well as Fenians. If the respectable people of the Commonwealth declare that retaliation is "crude, harsh and barbarous," the politicians may suddenly find that their little game is not as clever as they thought it was.

It is impossible to say what truth there may be in the rumour that the Imperial Government has requested the Dominion Government to yield a point on the Fishery question and allow American fishermen to transport their fish over Canadian railways. On general principles we should say that the British Government would not ask Canadians to sacrifice any real interest or do anything that would injure our national self-respect. To ordinary mortals, not skilled in diplomacy, it would seem that sending fish by rail is a simple matter of business to be settled by the sender and the railway. The more fish carried the better for the railway. There were no railways in that part of the world in 1818 when the famous treaty was framed about which so much diplomatic and newspaper dust has been raised. When Talmage was preaching one of his early sermons a fly went half-way down his throat and remained there. He says he did not know whether to swallow or eject the intruder, as the Synod of Dort had given no deliverance on such matters. A case of that kind had never been authoritatively settled. Well, the diplomats of 1818 had nothing to say about railways, for there were no railways in existence down there to carry fish or anything else. If Lord Salisbury should tell Sir John Macdonald that on the whole he thinks it better that our railways should carry fish, we don't think the heavens would fall or the Dominion go to pieces. The railways will no doubt see that the fare is paid. Why should the commerce of two Christian countries be endangered by such a question as carrying a few fish by rail? Simply because reckless politicians wish to make party capital out of the question. Is that a sufficient reason? Sensible people the world over will say, No, and say it with great emphasis.

#### NOVEL READING.

UNDER the title "Literary Anodynes," in the new number of the *New Princeton Review*, Andrew Lang writes an easy-going, yet withal graceful, essay, suggested by the novels that find popular acceptance at present. Being a sensible man, he shows no desire to place all novels in the Index Expurgatorius, nor does he get ecstatic over the fiction that finds favour for the moment with the gentle readers that can be counted by millions. The work of fiction has its place, and its uses in the republic of letters. It has an influence in shaping human lives, and helps to enliven the tedium to which few are altogether and always strangers. The day has gone past when even good people indiscriminately denounce fiction as such. They have discovered that such a position is untenable. So long as the "Pilgrim's Progress" exists, and that will be while the English language lasts, it will be demonstrated that fiction properly used can wield an influence for good that cannot be measured by the most skilful expert.

The fields over which writers of fiction roam are limitless. They wander over worlds of their own creation, which they people with imaginary beings. They ransack the world of human experience and dissect all possible and impossible emotions. Every realm of human thought has been traversed by the novelist, and some of them have gone ever so many leagues under the sea, and made journeys by easy stages to the moon. Religious and moral systems, social theories, political policies, business affairs, and the under worlds of crime and vice have found treatment at the hands of modern novelists. It cannot be but that such profuse writing which finds its readers by the million, will exercise a perceptible influence over the thought and lives of men and women.

In the domain of fiction, as elsewhere, there is a close relation between supply and demand. It might hardly be correct to say that the market value in every case determines the kind of novel that an author will produce. It is, nevertheless, a powerful factor. If a writer succeeds in the production of a book that strikes the popular fancy and secures a wide circulation, it will at once be followed by a host of imitations that sooner or later cause a feeling of revulsion. Some few authors of eminent ability may and do strive to give to their readers the very best they can achieve; they may not be indifferent to the market value of their productions, but that is neither the first or the chief consideration that influences their writing. They desire to interest, instruct and elevate their readers. The writers of average novels cannot afford to set a high standard for themselves; they can rarely rise to a higher standard than

that occupied by average readers. Hence to every class special appeals are made, so that in the world of fiction, as elsewhere, good and evil grapple.

Mr. Lang in the paper referred to looks at the novel as affording relief and relaxation for a brief season from the worries and anxieties and stern realities of every day life. This certainly is its legitimate mission, and in these days of ceaseless activity and unrest "literary anodynes" will become increasingly acceptable. He accords no enthusiastic welcome to the morbidly metaphysical novel, which revels in introspection, or which portrays with microscopic minuteness the symptoms of existing moral maladies. He has no kindly encouragement for the unhealthy and ostentatious display of emotion and sentimentality. There are three kinds of novel, yea four, which are an abomination to him. These he designates as "the novel of the new religion, the novel of the new society that declines to have any religion, the novel of dismal common-place, and the novel of the divorce court." In this antipathy he will find that many sensible people agree with him. There are two kinds of fiction that receive his approbation, and here, too, he will have many sympathisers. Fairy tales—the opposite remove from some of the realistic novels that now find favour—and fictions that abound in incident and stirring adventure like the *Waverley* novels will always find numerous and gratified readers. "Sinbad," he says, "has outlived a thousand tales of analysis, or of realism, or of religious mauling, and will outlive them all. The eternal child in the human heart will never cease to demand this sort of entertainment, and there will always be somebody to take the child on his knee and tell him a story."

While it may be true that the chief mission of the novel is to afford relaxation, and that the novelist need not set himself up as an exalted teacher, it does not follow that he may be indifferent as to the tone and consequences of his work. Who would have the hardihood to affirm that some of the typical French novels of recent years were harmless since they were only written for amusement? They are worse than the germs of the most loathsome and infectious of physical diseases. Except among those in whose minds they awaken feelings of loathing and disgust they disseminate the poison of immorality. Even the reading that is designed to occupy a leisure hour and tranquillize an overwrought system should be of the kind that makes for righteousness.

#### MISSIONS TO THE JEWS.

WHILE it might not be difficult to account in a general way for the antipathy with which the Jewish race is regarded in Christian countries, it is strange that the prejudices against them should be so deep-rooted and persistent. Their code of business morality, especially in relation to their Gentile neighbours, explains much of the dislike that falls to the lot of the descendants of Abraham. It is, however, difficult to understand why in Central Europe there should be a determined anti-Semitic movement, with a Prussian court preacher at the head of it. In various parts of Russia, Germany and Austria the condition of the Jew is rendered miserable by the persecutions of his so-called Christian neighbours. With a feeling of antagonism those who are animated by the Christian spirit can have no sympathy. We owe the Jews too much to treat them badly. Gratitude for what we have received through them ought to restrain us from harsh treatment and urge us to do what we can do to bring them to the knowledge of the Messiah—their Lord and ours.

Among popular but erroneous beliefs must be classed the notion that missions to the Jews is a thankless and profitless work. Recent experiences distinctly disprove the impression that they are impervious to the Gospel. From the fact that in common with Christian people they receive and venerate the teachings of the Old Testament, it might be expected that they are in a great measure prepared for the reception of the revelations of the New Testament. Recent events, especially in Southern Russia, though not these alone, show that adequate efforts to reach the Jewish mind have been productive of most remarkable results. The many thousand copies of Dr. Delitzsch's Hebrew translation of the New Testament which have been purchased and read with avidity in Eastern Europe and Siberia, have brought light and life to multitudes of the dispersed of Israel.