

of immoral books, newspapers and pamphlets, and as they are fully sustained in their endeavors by the local government, we may expect that they will, in a great measure, rid society of the curse under which it has heretofore rested.

Little can be said with regard to novels that has not already been said. Filthy sensationalism disguised as literature is now universally condemned, and its demoralizing effect is denied only by those whose wish is father to their thought, and who, being helpless victims to the poisonous influences of indecent literature, would like to convince themselves that it is anything but hurtful. A leading Protestant divine, however, has spoken in such a way as to place the nature of such productions beyond a doubt. "Such literature," he says, "involves the prostitution of language, the mission of which is the communication of truth that elevates the mind, purifies the heart and ennobles life. Such works act and re-act upon man's moral nature for evil, as the better literature acts and re-acts upon the whole man for good. One is for the creation of devils, the other for the creation of angels." No one who has been observant to however small an extent, can fail to see the truth of these lines. The habitual wallower in immoral literature, betrays the marks of his self-inflicted violence as truly and as clearly as the debauchee and the libertine. A genuine distaste for whatever is serious and elevating, is the first proof that the poison has commenced to take effect, but it is neither the last nor the most startling. It is generally injected when the mind is young and the character easily moulded, with the result that the almost infinite powers for good, with which man has been endowed, are changed into susceptibilities for evil, and he is reduced to the level of the brute and the servitude of Satan.

But what is surprising in all this, is that knowing it to be true, we are

content to remain inactive in the matter of removing the cause of such destruction. What adds increased importance to the movement lately inaugurated in New York, is the fact that the workers are so few in so large a field. This, no doubt, is due to the fact that our efforts in the past have been almost futile. But if we have been unable to cope successfully with the difficulty, the blame rests with ourselves and is the natural consequence of the employment of improper means for the attainment of our end. Appeals have time and again been made to legislative bodies, but to little or no purpose. In fact, instances are not wanting in which such a course was attended with positive injury. It is a question justly disputed, whether the evil contained in any particular book, is greater than that caused by the increased interest cast around it by a Government enactment concerning it. Those books whose publication and circulation are prohibited by law, are surrounded by a halo of mystery, and increased curiosity is excited which the cheap libraries afford a ready means of satisfying. Some of those who have failed to find an effectual remedy in an appeal to the legislature, claim that a refined public sentiment is the only means by which taste can be elevated and morality preserved. But public sentiment depends for its refinement, upon the purity of the source from which the social body draws its inspiration, and consequently it is absurd to look for cultured feelings, so long as the novel is the food of the multitude. Nor can we hope for any reform, until a substitute is afforded to the millions of young minds now in the receptive state and waiting to be formed. Novels are read to satisfy a thirst for information, a natural longing, which is in each one of us, to extend our sphere of thought and action. Why not then place within the reach of these young minds literature of a healthy