

reading of it. If there were no such object, I suppose every one would say, that it would be wrong to write or say that John Johnston was born in such a street, was a very wicked boy, was sent to prison for three years and died before the close of his period of confinement, if he never did live, act, and suffer as indicated. In fact it would be simply a lie. But

DOES THE END JUSTIFY THE MEANS ?

To me it seems sad that the Jesuitical tendency of the times should have so far influenced the Protestant mind as to accept unquestioned this position. Some years ago I knew a lad who interposed to save a smaller boy from being abused by another, for which he was in turn attacked and severely beaten, though he did his best at self-protection. With his face bleeding and bruised he turned his steps homeward. What was he to do? His father's law was, that none of his boys' must fight under any circumstances. The boy would have told everything, but he knew another punishment awaited him, even worse than he had received. So he resorted to fiction, and told about getting into a waggon to ride home, and falling out behind upon the fresh broken stones of the street, and that after lying some minutes, he got up and walked home. He escaped a thrashing which he did not deserve, but ever after felt that he had told his father a lie. Suppose a young man desirous of making an investment in a certain new company's stock came to you for advice. Would you feel justified in saying, "When I was out in the West a young man of means similar to your own, invested in just such an enterprise and lost over \$4,000, everything he had in the world, and was reduced to beggary," &c. The object, to deter him from rash speculation, would certainly be commendable, but the means would be unworthy. Besides what would be his feelings, if he afterwards found out that this was a mere invention of yours, to persuade him to keep his money. And does it give character to a book simply because it commends pious actions in an imaginary child and makes the good little fellow die happily. I have no sympathy with religious novels, they are in some respects the most dangerous of all fictions. Mr. Morton, of the Plymouth Bethel, Brooklyn, said at Toronto last fall: "The taste for reading the *New York Ledger* and *Waverly* is created by our religious novels in the Sabbath-schools."

THE INFLUENCE OF THESE BOOKS

is injurious in many respects. In nine cases out of ten the heroes of the stories are not life-like, and the incidents are extravagant and delusive. Those who read them find their own lives tame in comparison with what they have read, and are often thereby dissatisfied with life; they usually care to read no other books; indeed it is almost impossible to persuade our scholars to read a good biography, or a work on history or science. The truth is, the mental power seems to be weakened by being frequently excited without corresponding action, for when you have read a touching chapter in a novel, and then remember that it is only a piece of imagination, you will be less easily moved another time to mirth or tears.