

Calvin enumerates many of the principal relics which notoriously were exhibited in Popish churches at the time when the Reformation commenced. And it is very interesting to notice in surveying his enumeration, that many of the identical relics which he describes as exhibited three centuries ago still subsist, and are still held up to the veneration of the faithful. One curious specimen of this may be mentioned, as illustrating the identity of the Church of Rome in Calvin's times and in our own day. Calvin mentions a thing as quite notorious in his day, that our Saviour's seamless coat was to be seen at Argenteuil, near Paris, and also at Trèves, in Germany. Whether or not it is still found at Argenteuil, we are unable to say. But all the world knows, that in 1844, the Trèves one was exhibited with great solemnity, in the cathedral of that city, by the authority of the archbishop, and that above half a million of pilgrims from almost all Popish countries resorted thither to be edified by the sight of it. These people of course were expected to pay, in some way or other, so far as they could, for the privilege they enjoyed, and were taught that they would derive spiritual benefit from it. And all this took place near the middle of the nineteenth century, in enlightened Germany, under a Protestant sovereign, and with the full sanction and encouragement of the ecclesiastical authorities. Many of the relics that were exhibited in Popish churches when the Reformation commenced, and some that are mentioned by Calvin, have since disappeared or been destroyed. In our own country, the public exposure of the gross frauds practised in regard to relics and miracle-working images, contributed greatly to the spread of the Reformation. The grand relic of which Geneva boasted, when the Reformation was first introduced into it, was a bit of the brain of the Apostle Peter. But when it fell into the hands of Protestants, and was subjected to examination, it proved to be a piece of pumice-stone. This, however, could be easily dispensed with, as they still have at Rome his whole body, his chair, his chain, and his staff. A few years ago, the Archbishop of Paris exposed to the veneration of the faithful in that enlightened city, an extraordinary collection of relics, far too precious to be exhibited in general or upon ordinary occasions, including our Saviour's crown of thorns, which was palmed upon St. Louis as a genuine relic in the time of the Crusades. And a few months ago, a splendid ceremonial was got up and performed at Amiens, in which Dr. Wiseman and many other eminent ecclesiastical dignitaries took part, to do honour to the translation, that is, the removal from one place to another, of the relics of St. Theodosia.

These facts prove that the Papists of our day are not in the least ashamed of the wholesale system of falsehood and fraud connected with the subject of relics, but on the contrary, still find it, or at least believe it, to be for their interest to carry it on with as much effrontery as ever. The practice of venerating pretended relics, in the genuineness of most of which no man of intelligence and common sense can believe, prevails so generally over the Church of Rome, as to form a legitimate characteristic of Popery, and to involve the Church in the guilt of the vast accumulation of fraud and imposture which it implies. And then, besides it is to be remembered, that the churches and chapels at Rome, which are under the immediate and absolute control of the Pope himself and his advisers, are the great storehouses of these pretended relics. When these masses of trash and trumpery, of filth and fraud, are openly exhibited in the principal churches at Rome, we are fairly entitled to hold the Pope and the college of cardinals as guaranteeing their genuineness, and as thus deliberately and habitually practising what they know, and what every man of sense knows, to be gross falsehood and imposture. When the Pope recently, as the newspapers informed us, sent, as special marks of his affection, a tooth of the Apostle

Peter to the Emperor of Austria, and a bit of the manger in which the infant Saviour lay to the Duke of Brabant, the heir to the crown of Belgium, his Holiness must be regarded, in common honesty, as having pledged his infallibility to the genuineness of these articles. Many Protestants would probably pass by the record of these facts with a mere smile at their ridiculous absurdity, but if they would consider more deliberately what such transactions really imply and plainly indicate, they would see that they involve a fearful amount of iniquity and effrontery; and that they are fair specimens of the shameless fraudulency which is a pervading characteristic of the whole system of which the Pope is the head.—*Bulwer.*

Beware of Bad Books.

Why, what harm will books do me? The same harm that personal intercourse would with the bad men who wrote them. That "a man is known by the company he keeps," is an old proverb; but it is no more true than that a man's character may be determined by knowing what books he reads. If a good book can be read without making one better, a bad book cannot be read without making one worse.

Lord Bacon makes the pithy remark, that "in the body there are three degrees of that we receive into it, aliment, medicine, and poison; whereof aliment is that which the nature of man can perfectly alter and overcome; medicine is that which is partly converted by nature and partly converteth nature; and poison is that which worketh wholly upon nature, without nature being able to work at all upon it; so in the mind, whatsoever knowledge cannot at all work upon and convert is a mere intoxication, and endangereth a dissolution of the mind and understanding."

Here we have a definition of what we mean by "bad books;" whatever books neither feed the mind nor purify the heart, but intoxicate the mind and corrupt the heart. Works of science, art, history, theology, &c., furnish "aliment," or "medicine;" books of fiction, romance, infidelity, war, piracy, and murder, are "poison," more or less diluted, and are as much to be shunned as the drunkard's cup. They will "bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder."

Books of mere fiction and fancy are generally bad in their character and influence. Their authors are commonly bad men, and wicked men do not often write good books. A stream does not rise higher than its fountain. Their principles are often corrupt, encouraging notions of chivalry, worldly honour, and pleasure, at war with the only true code of morals. They insult the understanding of the reader, by assuming that the great object of reading is amusement. The effects are such as might be expected. Familiarity with popular fiction gives a disrelish for simple truth; engenders a habit of reading merely for amusement, which destroys the lover of sober investigation, and blasts the hope of mental improvement; renders scientific and historical reading tedious; gives false views of the perfectibility of human nature, thus leading to disappointments in the relations of life; and dwarfs the intellectual and moral powers, except the imagination, which is rendered morbid and unhealthy by constant excitement. The Bible becomes a wearisome book; spiritual classics, like those of Baxter, Bunyan, Flavel, and Doddridge, though glowing with celestial fire, become insipid and uninteresting; and the influence of the pulpit is undermined, by diverting the attention from serious things, and lessening the probability that truth will take effect upon the conscience; or if it does for a time, the bewitching novel furnishes a ready means of stifling conviction and grieving away the spirit of God. A merchant in H. was under conviction for sin, during a revival of religion. A pious friend called, and, to his surprise, found him en-

gaged in reading a worthless novel. To his remonstrance against such trifling, he replied, "I'm so interested in this book, I must finish it; and then I will attend to the affairs of my soul." He finished the book. He attended to the concerns of his soul—never. Thousands have perished by similar seductive influences.

Beware of the foul and exciting romance. All that is said above will apply with tenfold intensity to this class of reading, for which it paves the way. The writer of modern romance chooses his scenes from the places of debauchery and crime, and familiarizes the reader with characters, sentiments, and events, that should be known only to the police. Licentious scenes and obscene imagery are unblushingly introduced, and the imagination polluted by suggestions and descriptions revolting to the pure in heart. "Public poisoners" was the title long since justly given to writers of this class. It was lately testified in open court, by the father of one whose guilty course has brought ruin upon herself, disgrace upon her family, and death upon her lover, that all was occasioned by his daughter's "reading the impure works of Eugene Sue and Bulwer." To yield to such a hellish charm is like the voluntary sacrifice of one's body and soul on the drunkard's altar. Mental delirium tremens is as sure a consequence of habitual intoxication from such reading, as is that awful disease the certain end of the mebrute. Beware of it!

Beware of books of piracy and murder. The first thought of crime has been suggested by such books. The murderer of Lord William Russell confessed on the scaffold that the reading of one such book led him to the commission of his crime. Another, who was executed for piracy, was instigated to his course by a book of piratical tales. The prisons are filled with criminals who were incited to crime by similar means. They stimulate the love of adventurous daring, cultivate the baser passions, and prompt to deeds of infamy. Away with them!

Do you still need to be persuaded to beware of the poison that would paralyze your conscience, enervate your intellect, pervert your judgment, deprave your life, and perhaps ruin your soul!

Beware of bad books, because if you, and others like you, will let them alone, they will soon cease to be published. Every such book you buy encourages the guilty publisher to make another. Thus you endanger not only your own morals, but pay a premium on the means of ruining others.

Beware, because good books are plenty and cheap, and it is folly to feed on chaff or poison, when substantial, healthful food may as well be obtained.

Beware of bad books, because they waste your time. "Time is money;" it is more—it is eternity! You live in this world for trial, and it is worse than folly to fritter away the period of probation in mere amusement. God did not bring us into being, and sustain that being—the Redeemer did not shed his blood a ransom for sin—the Holy Spirit has not bestowed upon us the Scriptures, that we might sit from flower to flower like the butterfly, neglecting all the ends of rational and immortal being, and go to the judgment more triflers.

Beware of bad books, because principles imbibed and images gathered from them will abide in the memory and imagination for ever. The mind once polluted is never freed from its corruption—never, unless by an act of boundless grace, through the power of the Spirit of God.

Beware of them, because they are one of the most fruitful sources of eternal destruction. They are read in solitude. Their ravages are internal. Foundations of morality are undermined. The fatal arrow is fixed in the soul, while the vicim only sees the gilded feather that guides its certain aim. He is lost, and descends to a hell the more intolerable, from a contrast with the scenes of