

BAD BOOKS.

Whilst a prolific press is sending forth in rapid succession valuable works in every department of useful knowledge, the great enemy is using the same mighty engine for the worst of all purposes—the degradation and ruin of our race. It is admitted on all hands that the press exercises an incalculable power for good or for evil. Of what consequence is it then, that it be employed in counteracting the baleful influences of that licentious literature, the productions of which is one of the worst features of our age. We have in view especially that class of cheap publications which is hawked about through the country, and is thrust upon our notice at almost every turn of the streets by some impudent pedlar, or by a glaring advertisement. It is particularly annoying to be beset on board of steamboats and in the principal thoroughfares, with the vendors of such moral poison. The corrupting influence of this species of reading may be slow, but it is not the less dangerous and fatal in its effects—perhaps the more so from the secrecy with which in most cases it is prosecuted. Few of those who indulge in reading immoral books do so publicly. Nor do these books appear in the book-case or in the drawing room. The outward respect that virtue extorts even from the libertine, causes them to be concealed and read stealthily.

With what horror does an affectionate parent, for the first time, behold the staggering step and flurried countenance of a beloved boy, and by every means that parental duty and affection can suggest, set himself to reclaim him from the woful fate of the drunkard! And should he be less alarmed when he finds his son polluting his susceptible mind with the rankest impurity—reading infamous books privately, which shame would prevent him from exhibiting openly. Parents and guardians have need to exercise the utmost vigilance over the young committed to their care—to see not only that they do not read such books as are calculated to corrupt their morals, but to provide suitable reading. And the young, as they value their own welfare, their character and usefulness, should shun, as they would the plague, the trashy reading which is thrown in their way. As a general rule, that book is not fit to be read which has to be hidden, or which one could not put into the hands of a mother or a sister.

The following passage from Todd's Student's Manual is appropriate—we recommend it to the attentive perusal, particularly of our young readers:

"Some men have been permitted to live and employ their powers in writing what will continue to pollute and destroy for generations after they are gone. The world is flooded with such books. They are permitted to lie in our pathway as a part of our moral discipline. Under the moral government of God, while in this state of probation, we are to be surrounded with temptations of every kind. And never does the spirit of darkness rejoice more, than when a gifted mind can prostitute itself, not merely to revel in sin itself, but to adorn and conceal a path which is full of holes, through which you may drop into the chambers of death. Books could be named, were it not that there is a possibility that even the information conveyed in naming them might be prevented and used to obtain them, which, seemingly, could not be excelled by all the talents in hell, if

the object were to pollute and to ruin. These are to be found every where. I do entreat my young readers never to look at one—never to open one. They will leave a stain upon the soul which can never be removed. I have known these books secreted in the rooms of students and lent from one to another. They are to be found too frequently. And if you have an enemy, whose soul you would visit with a heavy vengeance, and into whose heart you would place vipers which will live, and crawl, and torment him through life, and whose damnation you would seal up for the eternal world, you have only to place one of these destroyers in his hand. You have certainly paved the way to the abodes of death; and if he does not travel it with hasty strides, you have, at least, laid up food for many days of remorse. What shall be said of those who print and sell such works to the young?—of those who go out on purpose to peddle them? They are the most awful scourges with which a righteous God ever visited our world. The angel of death can sheath his sword, and stay his hand in the work of death. But these wretches! they dig graves so deep that they reach into hell. They blight the hope of parents, and pour more than seven vials of woe upon the family whose affections are bound up in the son who is thus destroyed. In connection with these books, allow me to lift up a loud voice against those ravings of the imagination, by which the mind is at once enfeebled, and the heart and feelings debased and polluted. It is almost inseparable from the habit of reverie; but, in this life, a heavier curse can hardly hang upon a young man than that of possessing a polluted imagination. The leprosy fills the whole soul. Time only increases it, and even the power of the gospel can seldom do more than restrain, without subduing, when the disease is once fixed."

"Suppose you were attempting to grow in moral character and worth, and yet should, now and then, indulge yourself in reading a bad book. The book seems to have fallen into your hand by accident. You do not often read it, but sometimes look into it; or, if you do not own it, some one may, who offers to loan it to you. Here is a temptation thrown before you. You may never know what that book contains, if you do not now learn it; and should you not know what such books contain, in order to warn others against their influence? I reply, beware; and yield not to this temptation. One yielding, when thus tempted, may be your ruin; or if it be not, it will take you a long time to recover from the mischiefs which you are bringing upon yourself. Temptations should be met at a distance; if you see the bird once gaze upon the serpent, she begins to fly round and round, and at every revolution coming nearer and nearer, till she falls into the mouth of the devourer."

SCOTLAND.

The following curious question has been propounded. How Scotland should be at once the most church-going, and yet the most drunken of all nations? The following solution has been given:—

"Old Scotland, the Scotch of old national habits, have long been a most church-going people. Being such, the poorest among them as naturally rise into the higher ranks as oil above the water. Those Glasgow weavers who, just a century ago, were the strictest church goers in Europe, and who with wages varying from 7s to 10s a week, kept a press going printing the most profound theological works of the 17th century, could not possibly leave successive generations of poor weavers to succeed them. Their descendants are now the aristocracy of the West. But, of course, as these church-going Scots moved up slowly, but steadily, and as with the growth of their wealth, not only their own places, but many

more had to be supplied in the ranks of their simpler kind of labour, a totally new people rushed in—a people with out any ancestral respect for the Sabbath,—a people thrown into circumstances peculiarly unfavourable to the formation of a fixed moral character,—a people for which the country had no institutions, such as they peculiarly needed,—a people, therefore, which just as naturally and inevitably fell into barbarism and drunkenness, as those, whose places they occupied, rose into opulence, either retaining settled virtuous habits, or only falling, at least, into the more decent vices of covetousness and worldliness. This new and almost vicious population threatened to swamp the country with their numbers and their vices."

UPPER CANADA TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY.

The eighteenth report of this Society has just been printed. It is a valuable document, and clearly establishes the claim of the Society, to the increased support of the churches. The receipts of last year are above those of the preceding, by £500, and the issues of books and tracts exceed those of 1848, by 25,638. We would cheerfully extract the whole report into our pages did space permit. The following portions of it are sufficient as specimens, and, we must say, we feel specially gratified in observing the strong hold which the Society has taken of the Students and ministers of our own Church:—

"For three years in succession, the Students in Knox's College, had persevered in the work of Tract distribution, and much of the field which had thus been occupied by them, has been of late taken charge of by fellow-labourers; and thus scarcely any part of the city has, during the last season, been unoccupied by Tract distributors from one or other of the evangelical Churches.—One of the young men who took a prominent part in the labour of Tract distribution, has kindly furnished the Committee with the following statements:—

"The number of our Students engaged in the City Mission and Tract distribution work, last winter, was twenty-five; to whom we may add Dr. F., of the British Rifle Brigade, whom we found to be a most valuable assistant. Many others, I believe, would have been engaged in the work, but the field was occupied by others. We can assure our Christian friends that we rejoice to think the principal part of the city was last season, taken up by Tract distributors from one or other of the evangelical Churches."

"Those of the Students who were engaged in the work, last winter, were principally occupied in breaking up the fallow-ground, in fields which had hitherto been entirely neglected. To discover such dark corners, an 'exploring expedition' was undertaken by some of our number, at the opening of last session, to search the land and report the portions of the city which no distributor had yet visited; and which, in some cases, I believe even the city missionary had not been able to overtake."

"These districts were immediately taken up, so that at the opening of the present year, 497 Tracts were distributed every two weeks, and a corresponding number of families visited, as a tract was left in each family. Ten weekly prayer meetings were sustained, with an average attendance at the whole of 147. By means of our Tract distribution visits, many of the most wicked characters were induced to attend these meetings. In one district, a poor woman who had not for a long time listened to the sound of the Gospel, was induced, not only to take a tract, but also to come to the meeting. In consequence of doing so, she suffered so much persecution from her neighbours, that she was obliged to leave her lodgings, and go