

the zenith of his glory and palpitating with the sense of high intellectual power, sinks into despondency and despair—these are the cases repeatedly occurring, as I have said, from the excited condition of literary life.

3. READING FOR THE PEOPLE.

If we ascertain and well define the causes of crime, we attain the first step necessary to its suppression. That intemperance is one of the causes no one doubts; but its effect has probably been greatly exaggerated. Statistics taken of recent years in England go to justify this statement, and it is probable that we have here too often regarded as a crime what is in reality but another effect of something lying deeper in the social organism. Experience in the United States also bears out the accuracy of this view; where even in places where legislation has been had recourse to to check the use of intoxicating drinks, crime and social immorality are as rampant as in all the larger cities, except a few, such as New York and Chicago. Want of education is also a cause, but not an universal one. Some parts of Great Britain where among the general class of the population even a moderately high standard of education is unknown, and where many of the inhabitants possess only the first rudiments, some not as much, are the most free from crime of every kind. In short, there is probably no one cause which taken by itself can be alleged as the foundation of social wrongs and offences—many of which are, after all, made by society itself in what it pleases to call its higher advancement.

But there is one subject which in a consideration of this kind demands more attention than it usually receives. We refer to the prevailing taste for sensational and depraved literature. The ordinary of the great London prison of Newgate declares that this is one of the most common sources of crime. We have not in this country the immense supply of this kind of reading which is to be found in London, or in far greater abundance in the United States; but both from England and the South we receive a supply which is more than enough to produce a greater harm than we ought to allow to be encouraged. The demand for sensational literature does not seem to diminish with the spread of education, indeed there appears to be a certain point in education at which a person seems to have no taste for anything else, and the question then suggests itself whether we ought not to regard this as indicative of some defect in our educational system which needs to be corrected. The establishment of free public libraries is no doubt a most desirable object, but only when due attention is given to this matter. Persons who read little or nothing besides the trashy novels of the day would do better not to read at all; and even those books are tolerable compared with a great deal that reaches the people through the low periodical press. Yet the most popular and best thumbed works in any of our common reading-rooms are invariably those which are the most worthless—we might say the most dangerous. They are works which not only inculcate—even where the authors may not intend—a loose code of morality and a false sense of honor and of the right principles of life, but which also present society itself and its ethics in a distorted and unnatural form which is far removed from the truth.

But much of the literature which is indulged in by the great bulk of the semi-educated classes, and which they buy cheap, sustains a constant flow of the worst kind of sensational matter, replete with a maudlin sentimentality, always tending to familiarize the mind with crimes of the darkest hue against both laws, more generally creating a sympathy for the criminal than for his victim, and holding up in heroic colours characters, principles, and deeds which, but for writings of the kind, would never rise above the most degraded and most degrading depths of iniquity. By books of this sort the mind grows familiar with crime; and what it once abhorred it soon learns well nigh to reverence. It is an example where familiarity does not breed contempt, but the opposite; and, as is shown by the reports of various societies, as well as by the prison records of the Old Country, it propagates crime more abundantly than almost anything else.—*Leader*.

4. READING AND THINKING.

Bacon asserts that reading makes a full man; but without digestion fulness is dyspepsia, and creates sleepiness and inert fat, incapable of action. Hazlitt says you might as well ask the paralytic to leap from his chair and throw away his crutch, or without a miracle to take up his bed and walk, as expect the learned reader to throw down his book and think for himself. He is a borrower of sense. He has no ideas of his own, and must live on those of others. The habit of supplying our ideas from foreign sources enfeebles all internal strength of thought, as a course of dram-drinking destroys the tone of the stomach. The word of

God is pre-eminently a book for direct reading, and is never seen in its glory if we will persist in wearing the coloured spectacles of another man's comment. Pure and cool are its streams if we drink immediately from the well-head, but when the precious crystal has long stood in earthen vessels, its freshness is gone; the truth is there, perhaps, but not the life. We should let texts lie on our hearts till they melt into them like snowflakes dissolving into the soil.—*Rev. C. H. Spurgeon*.

5. MENTAL AND MANUAL LABOUR.

Professor Houghton, of Trinity College, has published some curious chemical computations respecting the relative amounts of physical exhaustion induced by manual and mental labor. According to these chemical estimates, two hours of severe mental study abstracts from the human system as much vital strength as is taken from it by an entire day of mere hand-work. This fact, which seems to rest upon strictly scientific laws, shows that the men who do brain-work should be careful, first, not to overtask the system by continuous exertion; and, secondly, that they should not omit to take physical exercise on a part of each day sufficient to restore the equilibrium between the nervous and muscular systems.—*Medical Journal*.

6. THE LITERATURE OF CRIME.

We published lately the scathing exposé by an English philanthropist of the character and contents of the "Yellow" class of literature, so abundant in England, and, we regret to say, far more prolific in the United States. As a matter of course, these cheap mis-called novels get largely circulated here, and are especially forced upon travellers by the steamboats and cars. We find in our English exchanges that Mr HUBBARD, M.P., was to ask "the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been directed to the lamentable amount of juvenile criminality, largely attributable to the spread of cheap publications and theatrical representations of an exciting and immoral character, which corrupt the children of the lower classes, and stimulate them into courses of dishonesty and vice: And whether the government will propose any remedy for these growing and most serious evils."

That some action will be taken on the subject at once, there can be little doubt, for the evil is one that requires immediately to be stamped out. It is like the canker worm eating into the very heart of society. In connection with the dissemination of this rogue's literature, a prize system is in vogue in England, and has become an institution in the United States, by which publishers strive to increase the sale of this mental poison, and add to its attractiveness in the eyes of their readers. This prize system is not wholly confined to the bolstering up of the "Yellow" covered novels, but it is made use of by the publishers of monthly periodicals. That it is in itself a great evil—being upheld on the one hand by rogues and on the other by blind dupes—the following plain statement of its working, as published in the London *Daily News*, will prove. Our readers, who have been "taken in," had better read, mark, learn and inwardly digest, while to those who contemplate indulging it will act as a warning.

For instance, there exists a weekly periodical circulating every week somewhere between sixty and seventy thousand copies, and employs on its staff some six or seven "literary" gentlemen. This periodical gives every week short portions of at least three continuous stories—which stories, on an average, run each for about twenty weeks. Thus every seven weeks a new story is commenced and an old one finished. With the commencement of each story some attraction is held out to the purchaser of the periodical in the shape of now a supplement, now a "Fine Art" picture, or now—when the "great gun" or "star" of the staff is beginning a new tale—a grand distribution of prizes is announced. This announcement is written in the most inflated style. The articles to be given away as prizes are described as "superb," "magnificent," "recherche," &c. The combined attractions of a grand new story and a new grand distribution of prizes result in an increased circulation, and things go on swimmingly until the great gun gets lazy, or is tired piling up week after week all the agony he can gather to the point of his pen, the story grows dull, the readers begin to grumble or to fall off, and the offending effusion of genius is remorselessly cut short. This is usually a matter of some two columns of printed blue-fire and general catastrophe, in which the characters are killed off or married comfortably. Then a new story is announced, in company with another new grand distribution, and the same round as before is followed.

But now comes the time when the great promises of magnificent prizes must somehow be kept. To the uninitiated this might seem to be a time of fearful trial for the impecunious publisher. Not so,