

dingy back street; and it seems to have been as comfortable as poor working people in the city could make it. This was his first crime, and neither want, ignorance, nor bad company had led him to it. How then shall we explain this little fellow's declension? In one sense it is fortunate that the knitted brow, stern countenance, and sharp questioning of the magistrate forced from the youth the truth. The boy had been a diligent student in the annals of crime. Lives of pirates, thieves, footpads, and highwaymen had kindled in his breast a fiery admiration of their deeds, and he was beginning to imitate the heroes whose adventures he had studied, when fortunately the law stepped in and stopped him, just when he had passed across the threshold of crime.

It is a well-known fact that every week or month the printing press supplies, at a low cost, a mass of reading which may be termed criminal literature. It is used in numbers, very cheap, and its attractiveness is increased by a profusion of wood-cuts. The heroes who figure in the criminal calendar are described with a power, spirit, and piquancy worthy of a better theme, and this criminal literature, lying in a fascinating way in the windows of shops in cities and towns, is eagerly bought up and as eagerly read. In winter evenings, when snow falls, and blustering winds outside, shake the door fastenings, and youths are confined to the house, these penny or half-penny numbers are brought out to be thumbed and pored over, nay devoured; and as they are periodically issued, they are always replenished. Even if there be no candle, the fire light falls flickering upon the page, stirring the wood-cuts into life almost, and the very room seems to the young reader to be peopled by heroes in the work of crime. There is a grim fascination in this class of literature—an almost Satanic influence about it, and even older and better readers may think themselves fortunate if it leaves not a poison behind.

The law has not prohibited this kind of literature, and will not do so; but it is surely true wisdom to provide an antidote to the poison which lies at its heart's core. If the young are taught to read, it surely is necessary that they should have good reading, and not poisonous literature, for their spare hours. At the same time the reading should be such as will make spare hours pleasant hours, otherwise Jack Sheppard and Dick Turpin will assuredly be pressed into service. It is not by filling books intended for spare hours with scientific descriptions of levers, wedges, syphons, tubes and telescopes, or by describing a cat and labelling it the *felis domesticus* of Linnaeus, that Dick Turpin is to be kept out of the minds of the young. This can be done in treatises to be studied. The young want something in spare hours which they can read.

Here it may be noticed that periodicals are for this purpose superior to books. Books are now cheap and numerous; but when read through once or twice their novelty and interest pass away, and books are not easily replenished. Periodicals, however, coming often, have a freshness which is their charm, if so be that they are simple and attractive in style, and the subjects presented therein are wisely chosen.—*National Society's Monthly Paper.*

3. EFFECTS OF NOVEL READING IN BELMONT.

Some months ago, when the "Gift-book enterprise" was more in vogue than at present, an influx of trashy American literature and sensation novels took place into this country. One of the latter class, bearing the enticing title of the "Scalp Hunter," found its way to the domicile of a young farmer residing in Belmont. Eagerly devouring its contents, his mind became filled with exciting incidents and hair-breadth escapes, in which red men and bowie-knives figured conspicuously. Unaccustomed to this kind of mental pabulum, what wonder that the subject was re-produced in his dreams, and that, in the quiet night, with his wife and babe slumbering peacefully beside him, he seized the partner of his bosom by the throat, and, with desperate clutch, imbedded his nails around her wind-pipe, threatening speedy strangulation. The cries of the awakened babe happily recalled him to wakefulness, and saved his loving spouse from further injury; who, we may be sure, by no means relished being choked and scalped in lieu of the red man of the woods. One woe was passed, but another was to come. On the second night, the excited man, deeming himself again among his wily foes, repeated the operation, but, happily, with no more fatal effect. The third time is said to bring the charm, and the suffering wife, unwilling to trust the fatal number, introduced her mother to the scene, to do watch and ward, lest more serious consequences might ensue. **MORAL.**—Beware of trashy stories and sensation novels.—*Peterborough Review.*

4. THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK ON WORKS OF FICTION.

At a soiree in Huddersfield, on October 31st., the Archbishop of York spoke of the daily educational influence exerted by books and periodicals at the present day, and how the teachings supplied at

school were supplemented by the teachings which each one gained for himself from the literature he had access to. He defined useful study as that which enlarged their sympathies for their fellow-creatures over the whole world, and which enlarged their knowledge of the world as it was governed by God. In order to understand what useful reading was, he thought he might venture to look at what was useless reading. Every working-man would be likely to fall in, no doubt, with the newspaper for one thing; and, for another, with those stimulating narratives which went now by the somewhat barbarous term of "sensational stories." These sensational stories were tales which aimed at this effect, simply: of exciting in the mind some deep feeling of over-wrought interest, by the means of some terrible passion or crime. They went to persuade people that in almost every one of the well-ordered houses of their neighbours there was a skeleton shut up in some cupboard; that their comfortable and easy-looking neighbour had in his breast a secret story which he was always going about trying to conceal; that there was something about a real will registered in Doctors' Commons and a false will that at some proper moment would tumble out of some broken bureau and bring about the denouement which the author wished to achieve. This was the sort of food supplied in almost every kind of publication, from the penny story to larger and more important works. In point of truth they entirely failed; they gave distorted views of nature, and while they enlarged upon its crimes and weaknesses, forgot the rich chapter of silent homely sympathies, the pious mothers training their children, their secret nightly prayers for them, and the hints and helps to duty which they strewed in the paths of these children. Such as these were not stimulating enough. Always they would observe in this kind of fiction some great passion was supposed to take possession of a man; it was love, or jealousy, or what not, and it was enough to state that the man was stricken by this passion to be sure that his destruction was settled beforehand by the writer of the fiction, and that there was no possibility of escape. If he was not greatly mistaken, this tone had strongly reacted upon society itself, and in some of the great crimes perpetrated he seemed to see the influence of this kind of feeling. And it was also false because of its associating crime with a certain grand strength. It was some great and strong or beautiful person who was generally the hero or heroine of these tales of horror.—Could they suppose anything more dangerous to the young and to the weak and half-formed mind than the contemplation of this kind of creation of the writer? It was entirely false. Some of them had read that day the conclusion of one of those tragedies in the conviction of a most miserable man for a most atrocious murder. But there he thought there was indeed a moral, for in the first place detection has followed guilt, and in the second place they had laid before them the weakness and the contemptible folly and misery of such a crime as that of which they had read the history. It would be found invariably, he might say, that crime was the offspring of a broken nature, not of a nature in its strength. Our emotions were given us for a practical end, and apart from any other bad result whatever, he was sure that the working constantly upon peoples' emotions, without giving them the opportunity to put in practice what the emotion suggested, was itself a great evil, because it wore out the man in the finer part, and he was, so to speak, jaded and palled, and unfit to do the thing which he was intended by his Maker to do. The object of education was practical truth. They were being taught by every day, by every book they read, even though they did not agree with it—taught by every social influence brought to bear upon them, and by every opportunity of good when they made use of it.—*Montreal Witness.*

5. YOUNG MEN AND THEIR READINGS.

At this season of the year, when the lengthened night affords to our mechanics, artisans, and general toiling populations, leisure and opportunities unknown to the busier and more exhausting months of summer, it may not be considered as out of place if we offer a few suggestions upon a subject perhaps not sufficiently pondered. Few there are of the class referred to, who have not facilities, more or less, for vast mental and moral improvement; and it would seem that nothing tends with greater directness to this devoutly to be wished consummation, than an enlarged acquaintance with our soundest literature. Were but a portion of the time which is so studiously devoted to less worthy, not to say questionable pursuits, but once and fairly redeemed, and turned into self-improving material, the ultimate effect upon personal and social life would be at once both marked and beautiful. And more especially does this subject assume an aspect of importance when viewed in its relation to the young men of our Church, to whose increasing moral power, and to whose growing religious influence she is looking forward with such yearning anxiety.

Whatever tends to the expansion of the human intellect, the refinement of sensibility, and the augmentation of mind power, must