

PUBLISHERS' DEPARTMENT.

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BREAKERS AHEAD!!

Rev. Mr. Hepworth, the author of "Starboard and Port," when lecturing a few days ago to the young men in St. John, N.B., said that it was within the power of every one before him to have a fortune twenty years hence by following one rule. The rule given was to harvest; harvest towards God, towards their neighbors, and to themselves. In enforcing this principle, he in tender words of warning and admonition implored of them to be careful of their companionships, for on them in a very great measure depended their future career.

This matter is of the utmost importance. As the chameleon takes its color from the objects that surround it, so is a man's character tinged by his associates. There are fashions in conversation, in general bearing, in books and in thought, as well as in dress, and no young man or woman likes to be peculiar in any one of these respects more than in another. The thought controls the act, manner, conversation and dress, and the change of life through companionship, or for any other cause, is a pretty clear indicator of a change in mind and thought. It is generally found that the likes and dislikes of any "set," "ring" or "circle" are very much the same, only differing as do the dresses of followers of fashion in the way the garments are adapted to the peculiar taste of the wearer; being alike in style and material, and almost literally "cut from the same cloth."

Of all companions none exercise such an influence as those which amuse, admonish, instruct, guide either for good or evil, and quicken or deaden man's conscience of things not of this world alone, in those quiet, lonely hours when the mind is the most susceptible to outward influences, and the imagination is allowed to run riot. They are called books, magazines or newspapers—different varieties of the same commodity. Dull and prosy looking they may be, but their influence is as wide as the world itself. If their tendency is evil they may convey thoughts which the reader would not allow to be communicated through the medium of speech. Like every other habit, that of reading feeds on the food put before it, and if the food is not

adapted to the appetite, the appetite must become suited to the food. A certain class of reading may be so trashy as to be indigestible to a healthy mind, but after a little indulgence it becomes tasteful, and the mind is prepared for something worse, and, like the opium eater's appetite, demands constantly increasing quantities of that which is causing the injury. In the same manner, by reading healthy works, the mind becomes formed to grasp large ideas and grand thoughts, and feeding on them, grows strong as the athlete's muscles by continued use and exercise. The real, lasting enjoyment which the student finds in reading books whose tendency is in the direction last indicated cannot perhaps be understood by the man who reads merely for excitement or pastime; neither can the scoffer, whose pleasure turns to ashes in his mouth, ever imagine the satisfaction and comfort the Christian has in his religious exercises. But no infidel ever died for his determination to believe nothing of religious truth—it is easier for him to lie than die, but the records of religious martyrs cover the earth.

In the United States Mr. Anthony Comstock is waging a legal warfare against injurious publications, and from recent revelations it is evident that into hundreds of families supposed to have been almost absolutely separated from all outward evil influences the insidious enemy, injurious literature, has found an entrance, and has been quietly and secretly defiling the souls of many members thereof. Like the evil of intemperance, the course was a gradual one. Exciting stories and covert meanings set the imagination at work, and then apparently harmless advertisements have been the way for the admission of the more hideous form of the destroyer. The same story is often told in a different manner. A child but takes the sugar in the bottom of the wineglass, then the glass of wine; beer next and whiskey; then disgrace, and brandy and gin to drown the knowledge of disgrace; and last, death and eternal ruin, if the ruin for eternity as well as for life has not preceded death.

This being true, there is a plain, personal and national duty before all readers. This duty is to endeavor to prevent the spread of vicious literature. This can be very effectively done as