

LITERARY IMMORALITY.

THE prevailing mania to rush into print on the least provocation has given rise to several forms of literary immorality. The great bulk of letters that appear in the daily press, if not of value for their contents, are at least interesting revelations of such mental vacuity as reminds us of Macbeth's words, "The time has been that when the brains were out the man would die." Those letters we must condemn are such as it is not possible to believe were written out of an honest and good heart, or a head well informed enough to justify a public display. They are sent by persons who assume as true that which slight trouble in study or enquiry, would convince them to be false. Two cases recently appeared in the *Mail*, the correspondence department of which is on the whole most attractive, without any rival in Canadian journalism. A discussion recently took place in Parliament on the importation of pauper children. The physicians in the House protested against this on the ground that such immigrants were morally and physically constitutionally tainted. The *Mail* in a clever article sided with the doctors. Whereupon one who is engaged in bringing out such waifs and strays, wrote to say that such children were all healthy, that they had not suffered from disease, and that the imputation against the health of pauper immigrant children was unfounded. Now this kind of letter is intolerable. It would be read in England as a triumphant reply to the strictures made in our Parliament, yet the writer suppressed all allusion to the real charge made, and spent the reply in answering a charge that had not even been hinted at!

In the same paper, on May 12th, a similar display of fragrant dishonesty appeared, in which a great liberty was taken with this paper. A Graduate of a certain College charges us with having described the students and graduates of that College as "unorthodox." The writer grows pathetic, indignant, hortatory, rebukatory, (we have to coin a word to suit the occasion). He challenges us in six solemnly formal paragraphs to do this, that and the other wonderful things, literary trapeze tricks in fact, which his excited fancy invents as supposititious tortures for our poor selves. While this writer was figuratively, dancing a war dance in full party paint and orthodox feathers, on the College Campus, challenging us to mortal combat, with elaborate whoops and yells of defiance, we in great peace sat wondering whether that would be the style of sermon the performer would preach when in Orders? We asked whether his discourses would be as baseless in fact, as windy in exposition, and as belligerent in tone as his letters? We calmly thought over all our editorial sins, and can declare that we never once styled the students and graduates of that College "unorthodox." Such letters then we pronounce worse than "unorthodox," they are highly wicked, as they are based upon and promulgate falsehoods out of an evil disposition.

Regard also a number of letters on Church

History recently published. Every reading man knows that there has been as great an advance in historical culture in the last thirty years as in any science—there has been a revolution. Yet men wearing literary degrees go on mumbling fusty theories, repeating old wives' tales about the Church and the Reformation, in utter ignorance of, or contempt for the recent vast strides made in historical research! Such letters are immoral. They are the productions of men who have been so false to themselves, their position, and opportunities as to have kept away from sources of enlightenment. This raises a serious question. Is it just that any man shall continue to receive the homage and honour which a high scholastic degree brings, whose mind has made no progress since that degree was won? When we see, as we have in these Church history letters in the *Mail*, several persons wearing literary honors, who quote as authorities authors like Macaulay, who for many years past has been classed as a romance writer, and whose letters show that they are utterly unconscious of the marvelous advances made in historical study of recent years, we decidedly believe that degrees should either be confirmed or cancelled after a term of years. Look also at those wonderful letters on ancient wines written by writers who only know their mother tongue, and know that most imperfectly. These men are like a child's rubber ball, which if squeezed ever so flat, fills up again with wind as soon as the pressure is off! Cannot honest persons see that to write a letter implying special knowledge of modern science or of ancient writings, which the writer does not really possess, is flagrantly immoral?

When a letter is sent to the press conveying a charge against any person or institution, quotations with references should appear substantiating the indictment, or references in detail, showing where such evidence can be found.

In accusing a newspaper that paper ought to be the first to hear the charge. It is a mean and somewhat tricky policy to write a letter in a public journal slandering another journal, the editor of which cannot reply in the Court wherein he is arranged. But in all cases the accused should be informed of the evidence relied upon as the excuse for the charge made; how else can he prepare a reply or defence?

But when, as is the case of the graduate who assailed us, the accusation is spun like a spider's web, out of his interior economy, there is nothing left for us to do in reply, but politely request that in future the laws of common morality be applied for the control of our accuser's rampant imagination. "His distempered cause within the belt of rule," will be all the healthier and stronger.

ROME RULE AND HOME RULE.

AFTER long-delayed expectation the Pope has spoken. *Roma locuta est; causa finita est.* Rome has condemned the Plan of Campaign and the pastime of boycotting. No longer will it be permissible for a Roman

Catholic Leaguer to decide for himself how much—or, rather, how little—rent he chooses to pay, and if the accursed landlord will not accept that little to let him whistle for the rest. No longer may he, without incurring spiritual censure, decline to have any dealings with those whom the League has proscribed. This bare statement of the facts of the case needs to be amplified to become more nearly accurate. The Pope has, so far as we can learn from a comparison of the messages sent by the various correspondents at Rome to the daily papers they represent, given his approval to the decision submitted to him. He has not, so far, promulgated it. It would seem that Mgr. Persico, the Papal Envoy, on his return to Rome submitted certain grave reports to the Pope. Leo XIII. thereupon summoned a meeting of the Holy Office, and submitted to it a case of conscience. We may, in passing, note with a touch of cynicism that the organs of the Tory party speak of this body as the Holy Office, and do not call it by its more familiar name, the Inquisition. But then it would never do for Orange Protestants to be encouraged in their opinions by, or to be found fighting on the same side with, the Inquisition. This, in popular Protestant literature, is always associated with noisome dungeons and thumb-screws and fearful instruments of torture, which exist for the exclusive benefit of Protestant heretics. To tell an Orangeman that he was being upheld by the Inquisition would give him a fit on the spot. It is found in practice that the rose when called by any other name does not smell as sweet, and that an ugly creature when dignified with a high-sounding title becomes positively beautiful in some people's eyes. We return, therefore, to the Inquisition, and, taking good care to call it the Holy Office, we find that the Pope has submitted to it the following case of conscience:—Is it permissible in the disputes between landowners and tenants in Ireland to use the means known as the Plan of Campaign and Boycotting? We are not told whether the Pope took any part in the deliberations at which this case of conscience was discussed. But the result is that the Cardinals have decided that the Plan of Campaign and Boycotting are sinful, and they add that no confessor ought to absolve members of the League which avowedly employs such methods of resistance. This decision is eminently satisfactory, apart from the results which are likely to follow from it. The Catholic Church cannot dally with infringements of charity and justice. Cardinal Monaco in sending the circular to the Roman Catholic Bishops in Ireland says that a rent agreed upon by mutual consent cannot, without violation of a contract, be diminished at the mere will of the tenant, especially when there are tribunals appointed for settling such controversies and reducing unjust rents within the bounds of equity. Neither can it be considered permissible that rents be extorted from tenants and deposited in the hands of unknown persons to the detriment of the landowners. Finally, Cardinal Monaco says, it is contrary to justice and charity to persecute by a social interdict

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