

rate analysis of these books would be a valuable index to what it much concerns us to know, whether *Thomas A. Kempis* is still the book most read next to the Bible. How many of Shakspeare, and how many of Tupper go the hundred; whether the *Pilgrims' Progress* is bought chiefly as a child's book, and whether Keble's "Christian Year" sells as well or better than *Don Juan*? "The demand for novels" says my informant, "is not nearly so great as it was," and this he traces to the growing preference for newspapers and periodicals, containing serial stories and romances in chapters. On the general subject of reading fictitious works, I hold by a middle opinion. I hold that a bad novel is a bad thing, and a good one a good thing. That we have many bad novels, ushered from the press every day is a lamentable fact; books just as vile and flagitious in spirit as any of Mrs. Behns abominations of a former century. The very facility with which these books are got together by their authors, might itself be taken as evidence of their worthlessness, for what mortal genius ever threw off works of thought or of art worthy of the name with such steam-engine rapidity? It is true Lopez de Vega could compose a comedy at a sitting, and Lafontaine, after writing 150 sentimental stories, was obliged to restrain himself to two days' writing in the week, otherwise he would have drowned out his publisher. But you know what has been said of "easy writing" generally. For my own part, though no enemy to a good novel, I feel that I would fail of my duty if I did not raise a warning voice against the promiscuous and exclusive reading of sensational and sensual books, many of them written by women, who are the disgrace of their sex, and read with avidity by those who want only the opportunity equally to disgrace it. We must battle bad books with good books. As our young people in this material age will hunger and thirst for romantic relations, there is no better corrective for an excess of imaginative reading than the actual lives and books of travel of such men as Hodson, Burton, Speke, Kane, Du Chailla, Huc, and Livingstone. These books lead us through strange scenes, among strange people, are full of genuine romance, proving the aphorism, "truth is stranger—stranger than fiction." But these are books which enlarge our sympathies, and do not pervert them; which excite our curiosity, and satisfy it, but not at the expense of morals; which give certainty and population to the geographical and historical dreams of our youthful days; which build up the gaps and spaces in our knowledge with new truths, certain to harmonize speedily with all old truth,—instead of filling our memories with vain, or perplexing, or atrocious images, as the common run of novelists are every day doing. Then, there is always as a corrective to diseased imaginations the Book of books itself—the Bible. I do not speak of its perusal as a religious duty incumbent on all Christians; it is not my place to

inculcate religious duties; but I speak of it here as a family book mainly; and I say that it is well for our new Dominion that within the reach of every one, who has learned to read, lies this one book, the rarest and most unequalled as to matter, the cheapest of books as to cost, the most readable as to arrangement. If we wish our younger generation to catch the inspiration of the highest eloquence, where else will they find it? If we wish to teach them lessons of patriotism, can we show it to them under nobler forms than in the maiden deliverer who smote the tyrant in the valley of Bethulia? or in the grief of Esdras as he poured the foreign king his wine at Susa? or in the sadness beyond the solace of song, which bowed down the exiles by the waters of Babylon? Every species of composition, and the highest kind in each species, is found in these wondrous two Testaments. We have the epic of Job; the idyl of Ruth; the elegies of Jeremiah; the didactics of Solomon; the sacred song of David; the sermons of the greater and lesser Prophets; the legislation of Moses; the parables of the Gospel; the travels of St. Paul; the first chapters of the history of the Church. Not only as the spiritual corrective of all vicious reading, but as the highest of histories, the truest of philosophies, and the most eloquent utterance of human organs, the Bible should be read for the young and by the young, at all convenient seasons.

As to other correctives, I do not advocate a domestic spy system on our young people; but if one knew that a young friend or relative was acquiring a diseased appetite for opium-eating, would we not interfere in some way? And this danger to the mind is not less poisonous than that other drug to the body. "The woman that hesitates," says the proverb, "is lost;" as truly might it be said, "the woman who lides her book is lost." And in this respect, though Society allows a looser latitude to men, it is doubtful if Reason does; it is very doubtful that any mind, male or female, ever wholly recovers from the influence on character, of even one bad book, fascinatingly written.

Mention must be made, Gentlemen, of those institutions of learning and those learned professional classes which ought, and doubtless do, leaven the whole lump of our material progress. We have already twelve Universities in the Dominion—perhaps more than enough, though dispersed at such long distances; from Windsor and Fredericton to Cobourg and Toronto. The charters of these institutions, up to the close of the last decade, were Royal charters, granted directly by the Crown with the concurrence, of course, of the Colonial authorities for the time being. In the order of time they range thus: King's College, Windsor, Nova Scotia, 1802; McGill College, Montreal, chartered in 1821, actually commenced only in 1829; King's College, Fredericton, 1823; Laval, 1852; Lennoxville, 1853; St. Mary's, Montreal, 1859; Queen's College, Kingston, 1841; Vic-