

It is not openly immoral. It is, as a rule, artistically written, and loudly praised by the critics in sympathy with its principles. It is the novel of pessimism. Not only is it anti-Christian in its spirit, but it is anti-human. It represents men and women under the cold and barren influence of agnosticism or positivism—either system has the same ultimate result—with their theories filtered through their lives and moulding their opinions and characters. Within its pages you look in vain for a Providence, immortality, spiritual existence. Its summary of all life is a natural development of the physical man or woman, happy in the airy fancies youth weaves; then a crisis which precipitates all illusions; afterwards hardened feelings, bitterness of speech, and either railings at all life or the resignation of despair, recklessly, hopelessly submitting to the Must-be. You cannot detect its subtle influence till it has left the iron in your soul, and the sweet prayers of your childhood have grown insipid, and the rituals and ceremonies of the church have lost their attraction, and you no longer think of God and the future with the same concern. It is in steering clear of such novels that direction is especially necessary.

It is only within the present century that English-speaking Catholics have begun to build up a distinctively Catholic literature. During the eighteenth century our English and Irish missionaries found it difficult to live. The hardships and privations they endured were most exhausting. And yet their pens were not idle. Their people needed plain and solid instructions, and they met the want. They placed in their hands the Rheims Douay version of the Sacred Scriptures. Bishop Challoner wrote his "Catholic Christian Instructed"; Bishop Hay was led into the Church by the reading of an anonymous pamphlet, "Papists Represented and Misrepresented," and afterwards put out those beautiful works of doctrine, "The Pious Christian," "The Devout Christian," "The Sincere Christian"; Bishop Hornhold explained the Commandments and Sacraments; Dr. Husenboth wrote on the Creed; Bishop Milner wrote his admirable "End of Controversy"; Alban Butler left us that great monument of erudition and repository of learning, his "Lives of the Saints." Bishop Walmesley was a man of vast scientific attainments, and was one of the mathematicians employed to regulate the calendar preparatory to the adoption of the New Style in 1752. This was the nature of the work done by our clergy in the eighteenth century. It was not brilliant, but it was solid, useful, and necessary work. These men did not cultivate style. They were obliged to study abroad, and after spending years on the Continent, they returned to England with foreign accents ringing in their ears and foreign idioms slipping into their writings.

English classical literature, since the days of Spencer and Shakespeare, has been Protestant. The authors who have helped to build up our language; the authors from whom we cull those expressions that have become part and parcel of our daily thinking; the authors to whose pages we refer for the allusions in which the writings of the day abound are, with a few exceptions, in spirit and tone Protestant. And yet it is a surprise and a happiness to know that outside the domain of history, which has been shamefully perverted by the Burnets, the Robertsons, the Gibbons, the Humes, the Macaulays, and the Froudes, a Catholic can take home to himself a goodly portion of this literature without having his Catholic instincts wounded or his moral sense blunted. I have strayed into many fields of literature, and culled flowers in many languages, and I can bear witness that whilst there are certain works in other languages which I appreciate more highly than works of the same grade in our own tongue, still, taking the literature of various countries as a whole, there is none of less objectionable character and of more elevating tone than is English literature, in its grand roll of authors from Widsith, the old English gleeman of the third century, down to the present laureate. But for this boon we are not to thank the Protestantism of England. It is rather due to the fact that the roots of Catholic literature struck deep in Catholic soil, and the conservative character of the English people kept up the Catholic spirit and Catholic traditions long after the very name of Catholic had become offensive. That Catholic spirit still lingers in the cloistered aisles and corridors of Oxford. It hovers over the vacant tomb of Edward

the Confessor within the hallowed walls of Westminster Abbey. It speaks in dome and pillared town throughout the land, "of which every arch has its scroll teaching Catholic wisdom, and every window presents some canonized saint." It breatheth through the Catholic prayers still preserved in the "Book of Common Prayer." It has become transfused into some of the noblest passages in "Paradise Lost"; the Arminism and Protestantism are Milton's own; but his noble lines clothe many a sentiment of tenderness and sublimity culled from the pages of Caedmon, St. Avitus, the Catholic mediæval miracle plays, and the Catholic drama, "Lucifer," of Vondel, the greatest Catholic and national poet of Holland. It lurks in the "Pilgrims Progress," as much of it as John Bunyan chose to spell out of the prose translation of the original "Pilgrim's Progress, *Le Pèlerinage de l'Homme* of the Cistercian monk, Guillaume de Deguileville." It is our Catholic heritage of thought and sentiment that has inspired the sublimest passages in our Wordsworths and Tennysons, our Longfellow and Lowells. And whatever Shakespeare may have been in practice, the whole spirit of his immortal plays is Catholic. Even Carlyle regards him as the flowering of mediæval Catholicism. "Indeed," says Digby, "a book might be composed on the latent Catholicism of many natives of this country, where everything solid and valuable is, after all, either a remnant or a revival of Catholic thinking or institution."

All honour, then, to those who at many and great sacrifices, and actuated by the pure love of God and their religion, have sought to wrest back for us a portion of our Catholic heritage in English literature. Do you ever bring home to you what these sacrifices may be? Take the conscientious Catholic publisher. He would rather see his house burned down than knowingly print a single sentence contrary to the teachings of the church. He invests time, energy, and capital in the printing and selling of Catholic books. How is his work appreciated? How is it patronised? Take the editors of our ablest Catholic periodicals. Are they properly remunerated? The managers of our ablest Catholic periodicals will tell you that their journals—whether weekly or monthly—have not, with few anomalous exceptions, circulation sufficient to provide competently for the editors. Take our Catholic authors. Do those of them writing exclusively Catholic literature fare any better? Cardinal Manning recently remarked that when he was a Protestant he wrote books and made money by them, but since he became a Catholic his books brought him little or nothing. Have we not actually known, within the last decade, one of the most scholarly Catholic writers in London to die in want? For such was the fate of S. Hubert Burke, whose portraits of the men and women of the Reformation in England are so clear and truthful and the best refutation extant of the romances of Froude. Let us say it aloud: Catholics do not patronize and encourage Catholic books and the Catholic press as they might.

There are names connected with Catholic literature in America that we all should ever hold in honour and benediction. Such is the name of Orestes A. Brownson. Do we realize all the greatness covered by that name? America has produced no more powerful intellect than Brownson's. There was no problem, social, political, religious, or philosophical, that he did not grapple with and find an answer for. After trying creed after creed to find out the hollowness of each, the aspirations of his strong and generous nature and the invincible logic of his acute intellect led him into the church in the strength and maturity of his manhood. Forthwith he consecrated his pen to the vindication of that church and the defence of her doctrines against all comers. Mediæval knight never bore lance with greater singleness of purpose, or with more bravery and determination, in the cause of his lady love than did Brownson wield his pen on behalf of the church. To his dying breath he was faithful to his vow. He viewed, he taught others to view, the doctrines of the church from an elevated plane, from which they were taken in as a whole and all their grandeur and beauty revealed to advantage. Men might differ with him in politics, his political opinions were odious to the great bulk of his readers, men might differ with him in criticism—his literary canons were frequently narrow and inadequate, men might