

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

VOL. XV.—MARCH, 1888.—No. 3.

## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—HARMFUL BOOKS.

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READERS of *The Forum* have undoubtedly been interested in a well conducted series of papers on the suggestive topic, "Books That Have Helped Me." As the caption indicates, the papers have been mainly personal in character, their respective authors aiming to show the varied forms of benefit that they have received in their perusal and study of books. An equally interesting series of articles might be written on the correlative topic, Books That Have Harmed Me. *A priori*, when we speak of books, we speak of good and helpful books, of those to which ex-President Porter refers in his treatise on "Books and Reading," or to those so ably discussed by Prof. Phelps in his "Men and Books."

There are, however, books and there are books, and though, as Mr. Howells tells us, "more good books are read now than ever before," still, the proportion in favor of the bad is greater than ever. Of all forms of evil current, none is more harmful than such a literature, now made so cheap as to be within the reach of the day laborer and even of the idler, and furnishing to thousands of the people the only staple of education. No page will ever record the sad experience of the multitudes of our race who have been injured or ruined by these pernicious volumes, and who, with the bad book in head and heart, have been proof against every moral appeal. It will be our purpose in this paper to call attention to certain generic classes of books that are harmful in character and tendency. As we write, our eye will be specially fixed upon the educated youth of the land, while we intimate to them, as best we may, what not to read.

#### UNWHOLESOME BOOKS.

These belong to the category of the positively immoral, as opposed to that literature which is wholesome and ethically pure. They con-