

INDECENT LITERATURE

IS THE CURSE OF THE AGE.

Novel Reading a Dangerous Amusement for Boys and Girls.

The intellectual poison distilled by the sensational press and drunk in so eagerly by the youth in this country threatens the very life of the Republic. Indecent literature is the curse of the age. The literature of the Church, men who have searched the inmost recesses of the human heart and sounded the depths of the mysteries of the soul, have remarked that the strongest virtue not unfrequently falls beneath the poison of bad books.

The readers of indecent literature are made familiar with vice under its most seductive forms. Murder, suicide and adultery are the leading events in the lives of the heroes and heroines of the story paper, while the Christian truths of revelation are mocked at or misrepresented. Many an outcast from society, many a Magdalen without Magdalen's repentance, many a swindler, many a murderer, can trace their fall to the evil influences of bad books. The ancient serpent is as cunning to-day as when he tempted Eve in the garden, and he makes a good use of the press to instill moral poison into the minds of the young. There is scarcely any subject on which the devil's pen has not written. In former times theology and history were the favorite themes of SATANIC INSPIRATION.

but in our days "the evil one" makes a special study of science and fiction. While anti-Catholic bigots distort the Scriptures to their own destruction, misrepresent the teachings of the Church and falsify the records of the past, thousands of presses are printing indecent and filthy tales and novels, and, in the name of science, reviving the materialistic doctrines of paganism. Novel reading is at best a dangerous amusement for boys and girls. They get false ideas of the world and wrong notions of duty. There are, of course, standard novels which are written in a moral and beautiful style; but it is a question whether the reading of them does more good or harm. We speak of the works of Scott, Dickens, Thackeray or writers of that class, but of those vile productions of depravity which come from the prompting of Satan. It is a pity that the law against indecent publications includes only those of the utterly undistinguished filth class. There are others, although not illustrated with disgusting pictures, that are but little less destructive to the morals of the young. The reading matter in many of the weekly story papers appeals forcibly to the lowest passions of human nature, and is more dangerous in one view, as it makes its approaches under the guise of moral sentiment. These publications are particularly dangerous to young boys and girls. The trashy nonsense is devoured by thousands of the young of both sexes, and creates an unhealthy yearning for the false hero and a dislike for their condition in life.

FOOLISH SENTIMENT, combined with discontent, invariably produces an unhealthy state of the mind which reveals itself in all the hideousness of sin. Such reading familiarizes the patrons of the story paper with the details of viciousness, and their better nature is overshadowed by the fictitious existences depicted, while moral strength to resist temptation is slowly but surely weakened. There is no doubt that many a weak-minded girl can trace the beginning of her downfall back to the insidious lessons of that class of literature.

In the scientific world hell seems to have a literature of its own. So-called science has taken the place of revelation with Protestant parsons of the McQueary type, or the scientists intimate that looking through nature they have failed, as utterly as did Lucretius nineteen centuries ago, to find Nature's God. Herbert Spencer is the champion of the theory of Evolution or Development, and pronounces with a philosophic air of authority, Him, whom Pope had apostrophized as—

Father of all in every age, In every clime adored, By Saint, by Savage, and by Sage, Jehovah, Jove, or Lord.

"the Unknowable." The vagaries of philosophical day dreamers and speculators which Spencer, Tyndall, Huxley, Darwin and Draper have reviewed and systematized are mixed up with the plots of some novels in a manner worthy of the fiend who guided the hands of those who held the pens that wrote them. Catholic parents should carefully exclude from their homes all publications that might sully the purity of their children's minds, or shake their faith in the Church of God or its teachings.—New York Democrat.

Who said Hood's Sarsaparilla? Thousands of people, who know it to be the best blood purifier and tonic medicine.

How to Give up Bad Habits.

Understand the reason, and all the reasons why the habit is injurious. Study the subject until there is no lingering doubt in your mind. Avoid the places, the persons, and the thoughts that lead to the temptation. Frequent the places, associate with the persons, indulge the thoughts that lead away from temptation. Keep busy; idleness is the strength of bad habits. Do not give up the struggle when you have broken your resolution once, twice, or a thousand times. That only shows how much need there is for you to strive. When you have broken your resolution, just think the matter over, and endeavor to understand why it was you failed, so that you may be on your guard against a recurrence of the same circumstances. Do not think it an easy thing that you have undertaken. It is folly to expect to break off a habit in a day which may have been gathering strength in you for years.

The Dominicans. The General of the Dominican, Pere Larroca, is at death's door. It is said

that he cannot live very long. His death will be a considerable loss to the Order. He has proved himself a clever and energetic administrator. By birth a Basque-Spaniard, he was obliged to leave his country after the first civil war of Navarre. He was named cure in one of the French Basque parishes, but returned to his Order very shortly, and, after a brilliant career, was named its General. We say he was energetic; energy is required to govern the Dominican Order where so much liberty is allotted to such strict discipline. The celebrated order is a veritable model of a republic, where all, from the highest to the most humble, are chosen by election. Pere Larroca was a believer in severity. It is sufficient to recall the well known incident about Pere Dion, who, for preaching certain sermons not quite approved of, was exiled from Paris to Corsica, and condemned to a long silence.

THE STAGE IRISHMAN.

[BY JOHN C. FLEMING.]

It may be safely concluded that the beasts in New York's Central Park will not from this out be given Irish names. Donahoe's Magazine has put a stop to the disgrace, and now the Gotham papers and the Central Park officials are furnishing all sorts of explanations and excuses. According to the New York Sun and the New York Herald, "Miss Murphy" arrived fully christened, while a wise park employee says many of the animals bear such names as Tip, Tim, Tom and Fan. This may be so; if it is so, it is eminent right and proper; but we have not heard that any of them were named Strauss, or Cohen, or Pulitzer, while they have undoubtedly been named O'Toole, O'Brien, McSinty, Crowley and Murphy. The letter of Dr. William O'Meara, sent to Mayor Grant complaining of the abuse, was at first treated in a humorous spirit by the press. One newspaper implied that the writer was a crank to notice such a thing; but when it was found he belonged to the gallant Sixty-ninth Regiment, and fought in the war; that he was once a deputy coroner, and apart from that, he is a gentleman of social and professional standing, they treated his protest with respect. Hence we shall hear no more of Miss Murphy.

And now that one abuse has been corrected through your columns, shall we not hope a few others of a kindred nature may share the same fate? There is the stage Irishman, for instance, who should also go. The stage Irishman likes "swate" punch, and falls "ashlape," and cries out "Howly Biddy," whereas the real Irishman never does so. Shakespeare says the stage should hold the mirror up to nature; but this is certainly not done in New York, or in any other American city for that matter. The Irishman of the stage never mispronounces the word sweet, or any other word in which the double e appears. He pronounces neat as if it were written "nate," it is true, and so with other words containing such diphthongs; but that is because they were so pronounced in England a hundred years ago, when the Irishman was, unfortunately, obliged to use a foreign tongue. He spoke the new language correctly, but being conservative, he has, if uneducated, retained the old vowel sounds. This stage travesty is the more to be regretted as Irish-American actors and Irish-American audiences who patronize them are the principal offenders. W. J. Scanlan made a professional tour of Ireland last year, but learned nothing; for though, through the length and breadth of the Green Isle he never heard such a word used, when he came back he caused the stage Irishman to fall "ashlape" as soundly as ever. Playwrights take pains to write Scotch and English provincial dialects correctly, and actors to learn and pronounce them correctly; but it appears anything is good enough for the Irish, and consequently, we did see men from Germany who cannot speak good English sit down and write humorous stories for the magazines and newspapers in the Irish vernacular—heaven save the mark! Everything in that line goes, for the Irish have grown either very good-natured or very apathetic. The publication in all America that, above others, offends in this respect, is Puck, and yet one may see it lying on the table of hundreds of Irish-American liquor-dealers in New York city. It is Puck that out-punches Punch in its hideous caricatures of Irish men and women, and makes them talk like savages just learning English. It is really shameful, but I repeat, "What are we going to do about it?"

It does no harm to call attention to these things, and it may do good.

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Self-Denial.

Few things can so speedily ruin an individual or corrupt a nation as an unrestrained self-indulgence. When pleasure or ease comes to be the supreme motive, decay begins. This must ever be the case with imperfect and improvable beings. They cannot for ever sail with fair winds on placid seas; they must display energy, effort, striving, and occasionally make sacrifice. They must at times give up something to gain something better; they must lay down what is of less value before they can take up what is of more value. Would a man have sound health? He must sacrifice to a certain extent his desire of indulgence, or his craving for gain or fame. Would he attain excellence in his work? He must resign a life of easy leisure. Would he be virtuous? He must resist temptation. Would he live for others? He must leave off living only for himself.

In life, whether we know it or not, we are always traveling to a sorrow. At the next turn of the road stands an unforeseen death of some one we love, or the breaking up of a circle in which it seems as if our very existence were bound up; or some disgrace which we never reckoned on.

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Drunkenness in Olden Times. CANADA TO THE FRONT.

The offence of drunkenness was a source of perplexity among the ancients, who tried every possible way of dealing with it. If none succeeded, probably it was because they did not begin early enough, by intercepting some of the ways and means by which the insidious vice is incited and propagated. Severe treatment was often tried to little effect. The Locrians, under Zaleucus, made it a capital offence to drink wine if it was not mixed with water; even an invalid was not exempt from punishment unless by order of a physician. Pistaeus, of Mytilene, made a law that he, who, when drunk, committed an offence should suffer double the punishment which he would do when sober; and Plato, Aristotle, and Plutarch applauded this as the height of wisdom. The Roman censors could expel a Senator for being drunk, and take away his horse. Mahomet ordered drunkards to be bastinadoed with eighty blows. Other nations thought of limiting the quantity to be drunk at one time or at one sitting. The Egyptians put some limit, though what is not stated. The Spartans also had some limit. The Arabians fixed the quantity at twelve glasses a man, but the size of the glasses was unfortunately not clearly defined by the historians. The Anglo-Saxons went no further than to order silver nails to be fixed on the side of drinking cups, so that each might know the proper measure; and it is said that this was done by King Edgar, after noticing the drunken habits of the Danes. Lycurgus, of Thrace, went to the root of the matter by ordering the vines to be cut down; and his conduct was imitated in 704 by Terbulus of Bulgaria. The Sueti prohibited wine to be imported; and the Spartans tried to turn the vice into contempt by systematically making their children how foolish and contemptible men looked in that state.

Drunkenness was deemed much more vicious in some classes of persons than in others. The ancient Indians held it lawful to kill a king when he was drunk. The Athenians made it a capital offence for a magistrate to be drunk; and Charlemagne imitated this by a law that judges on the bench and pleaders should do their business fasting. The Carthaginians prohibited magistrates, governors, soldiers, and servants, from any drinking. The Scots in the second century made it a capital offence for magistrates to be drunk, and Constantine II of Scotland, in 861, extended a like punishment to young people.

Again, some laws have absolutely prohibited wine from being drunk by women; the Massilians so decreed. The Romans did the same, and extended the prohibition to young men under 30 or 45. And the wife's relations could scourge the wife for offending, and the husband himself might scourge her to death.

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OUR Prize Competition.

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The proprietors of THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE have pleasure in announcing that it is their intention, with the object of interesting the younger members of the Catholic community in literature, to offer for open competition a number of valuable prizes to the pupils of the Catholic schools of the Dominion. This competition will be open to pupils of schools of the Dominion, other than those in Universities and finishing schools. The prizes will be given for the best original story on some subject relating to the religious, domestic or general history of Canada, early settlements, pioneer efforts, mission work, etc. As far as practicable competitors must confine themselves to incidents connected with their own locality, but this is not absolutely compulsory. Competitors need not confine themselves to the literal truth, but they may indulge in some romantic embellishment of their stories so long as they are based upon local, general or historical fact.

Each MS. must be enclosed in a blank sheet of paper of the same size as that on which the story is written, half foolscap size; endorsed with the title of the story; that of the writer; his or her school; county or city; teacher's name and address, and an endorsement by the teacher certifying that the story is in the handwriting of the pupil. Manuscripts must only be written on one side of the paper. All Stories for competition must be mailed not later than May 1st, 1891, after which the competition closes. The Stories will be submitted to competent judges, who will award the prizes. The names of these judges will be announced later on.

Rules for Competitors:

Blank forms for Intending Competitors, and all other information regarding our Prize Competition, can be had by applying the at Office, 761 Craig Street.

THE PRIZES.

- The Prizes will be divided as follows: 1. City of Montreal 2. Dominion Prize. 3. Provincial Prize. 4. County Prize. 5. School Prize.

MONTREAL CITY PRIZE. The first prize will be given for the best story selected from those sent in from the schools in the city.

DOMINION PRIZE. The second for the best story selected from those sent from the various counties in each province.

PROVINCIAL PRIZE. The third for the best story sent from the provinces generally.

COUNTY PRIZE. The fourth for the best story from any of the schools generally.

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EXTRA PRIZES. A special extra series of prizes will be given for the best story in the same grade written by children under twelve years of age, to be duly certified by their teacher. There will consist of a series of valuable books. [Subscribers will be good enough to note further announcements in our columns on this subject.]