

## DANGEROUS LITERATURE.

There are crying evils in this country no doubt—many of them; but the reformers who point some of them out seem to confine their attention to those only which have no immediate effect on the everyday life of the people. There is one, however, which we can point out, and which demands immediate attention. This is the flood of actually and openly vicious literature which deluges some of the railroad trains. It is safe enough to send a young girl on a long journey so far as her environment is concerned. She will not be molested in any way, even if she be without a chaperone; she is safer in our country than in any other country in the world; she is as secure as the Irish maiden in Moore's famous melody. But, nevertheless, she cannot avoid an insult which in France or England she would be free from. The most shameless books are thrust into her hands by the agents of the news companies that monopolize the business of distributing literature on the trains. During the past summer the pest of evil literature was rampant. Old French novels, whose immorality was their only claim to recognition by the English-speaking world, were circulated openly on the cars.

The worst novels of Zola and his *confreres* were thrust on the attention of the boy on his way to school. "Marion Lescant" was paraded everywhere as a pleasant book for youth. And, although "Marion Lescant" was written by an abbe, its author was one of those abbés who assumed that title in order to enjoy the incomes of church property—who were made possible by Gallican Caesarism. In France such books are put out of the sight of young girls. Prohibition in France means prohibition of bad books for the young. In our country we allow young people all the mental poison they can buy. For some reason or other the railroad stands and some book stores were never so overloaded with vile books as they were during the summer of 1890. The parody written by some clever paragrapher came near the truth—

"Where are you going, my pretty maid?"  
 "I'm going to the book store, sir," she said.  
 "May I go with you, my pretty maid?"  
 "If you're not too modest, sir," she said.

The truth is, that only the worst French novels are translated for the American market. The present writer knows of a publishing firm, happily now no more, that found the works of Paul de Kock entirely too moral and consequently employed a man "to fix them for the American taste!"

The flashing dramatic poster must go; why not the evil book? Burton's "Arabian Nights," which is suppressed publicly and carefully locked up in great libraries, would be harmless compared with the novels that are sold without remonstrance or protest to the young on some of the railroad trains.

And yet we Catholics who value purity above all virtues, calmly see this horrible blight increasing without a word of public protest. If mothers knew what some of their daughters read, they would bow their heads in shame and feel that the worst of cankers had entered their homes.

"Ouida" and "George Sand" are virtue itself compared to the new school of authors. The first are divided from the last by the line that divides chastity from bestiality. This is plain talk. If it shocks mothers and teachers and men of public influence into recognising the evils of this frightful disease, we shall not regret. To mention the names of the vilest of these novels would be to advertise them; and yet, if we thought it necessary, we should do it. The most unspeakably vile book in the French language—a book which lost its author a seat in the French Academy—is sold everywhere openly. The French—"the immoral French"—guard their youth from it; the "moral American" calmly sees his daughter buy it in a car and asks no questions! "I should as soon think of letting my daughter enter a smallpox ward," the Count de Keratry is said to have remarked, when he was here, "as to permit her to read such a book."

But we are progressive. We teach everybody to read, which is right; and we protect nobody against the evils of reading, which is wrong. Let us begin the reform by exercising a censorship in our homes.—*M. F. Ryan.*

## ARCHBISHOP RYAN ON "OUR CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION."

MOST REV. ARCHBISHOP RYAN of Philadelphia delivered a lecture on "Our Christian Civilization and How to Perpetuate It" last Sunday evening, Jan. 11, in the Metropolitan Opera House, New York.

The object was to establish a fund for the benefit of St. Benedict's Home for Destitute Coloured Children. Many prominent citizens were present. Archbishop Corrigan and many priests from all parts of the city and vicinity occupied seats upon the stage. Archbishop Corrigan introduced Archbishop Ryan. He spoke for two hours and was frequently applauded. He said in part:—

Most Rev. Archbishop, Reverend Fathers of the Clergy, and Ladies and Gentlemen:—I am very grateful for these kind words of introduction, and only fear that the lecturer may not prove worthy of them and of the cause in favour of which I appear here to-night. This cause should enlist our sincerest sympathy, for two reasons. The first is that we owe a natural debt to the coloured race on account of slavery, which we can now pay only to its present representatives, and, secondly, because, as the protection from vice is much better and easier than its reformation, there can be no charity greater than the care of poor exposed orphans.

The brave young priest who, in the face of great difficulties, undertook this work of providing a home for coloured orphans deserves the encouragement of all citizens, irrespective of their religious, political, or national distinctions. He has had to beg for food for these poor children, and, what was more trying to him, has had to refuse, for lack of room, some two hundred applicants for his charity. He is already \$49,000 in debt, and has commenced to build an asylum for 200 children which will cost \$40,000 more without any prospect of assistance from the City or State. This may seem imprudent, but it is not. St. Vincent de Paul, the great modern apostle of charity, laid down and acted upon the true principle that whatever is necessary is possible. This supposes, of course, that we do our part to aid such good works. The building of the asylum already commenced will have to be stopped unless the necessary assistance shall be rendered.

Your presence in such numbers here to-night is evidence that you will not permit the failure of an admirable project. The subject I have chosen for this lecture, which I trust you will not think inappropriate to the occasion, is, as announced, "Our Christian Civilization and How to Perpetuate it."

To some persons it may appear unnecessary to speak of perpetuating Christian civilization as it is in no danger of being lost. Of course it cannot be entirely lost to the world, because it is inseparably connected with Christianity itself, which is imperishable, but it may be lost to individuals, and even to nations, as it has been to many Oriental peoples. It is all important we should secure its preservation in this glorious young Republic. Now, Christian civilization was formed by three factors, first, the personal character of the founder of Christianity impressing itself on its followers; second, certain great doctrines which He taught, which give motives for the ethics of Christianity, and third, by a living, powerful organization which has been established to preserve His personality.

The Archbishop then dwelt with much feeling upon the position of the Christian church, and the influence its civilization has had for the betterment of the position of children and women. Continuing he said:—"It was a common practice in the early ages for parents to expose their children to death. The yellow Tiber, as it swept by the marble palaces, by the temples and luxurious baths of ancient Rome, bore away the bodies of innocent holy childhood! Such, ladies and gentlemen, was the state of the world when a voice was heard from obscure Palestine. It was but the feeble cry of a child, but it was to reverberate in thunder tones through the universe, and to awaken and purify the echoes of the seven-hilled city. It was the cry of infancy from the stable of Bethlehem. It was the deep, solemn protest of the child-God against the barbarism of infanticide. It was the proclamation of the young King that infancy should be revered, that Divinity itself had descended from on high and appeared