IMMORAL LITERATURE.

A people's standard of intelligence and morality is invariably regulated by their standard of literature. If of a low, trifling, immoral type, such will be the character of the people among whom it circulates. All history, experience, and observation demonstrates this fact. It is to be found in the rise and fall of men and parties, nations and dynasties. Deprive a people of their literature and they degenerate into barbarism. Limit them to immoral literature, and debauchery and crime are sure to overtake them sooner or later.

It costs no more to feed people on sound philosophy, draped in proper language, than it does to surfeit them with cheap romance adorned in rags and polluted in filth. But another objector replies that the public taste requires such literature, and the papers would not sell without it. If this be true, it simply proves that the public taste is perverted and public reform is seriously demanded. The pernicious influence of this standard of literature may not be so readily detected in the adult population as among the youth. In the one case character is formed and habits are fixed, while in the other character is in process of formation, and habits may be changed or improved. If the family table or library is loaded with indecent literature and sensational trash, the youth of the country are not to be blamed if they grow up to be desperadoes and land in the penitentiary or on the gallows. Censure belongs not to the wrong-doers, but to the parents or guardians who placed such temptations in their way. There is a prevailing tendency to ignore the wholesome restraints which characterized the culture of children at an early period in our history, and the increase of crime in our land is largely attributable to this neglect in the education of children. No feature of domestic discipline should be more scrupulously guarded than that which limits the selection of family literature to such papers and books as produce a sound, healthy, moral social and political influence on the youth.

– *Selected*.

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