

the Zolaesque type. In 1867 the British Government had the unclean pamphlets of the no-Popery impostor MURPHY publicly burned. Ten years later it prosecuted Mr. BRADLAUGH and Mrs. BESANT for having published works that it deemed dangerous to public morals. A public censor of plays was long an institution in Great Britain, as it is to this day in France. The British and other Governments treated ZOLA's translators and their publishers as common criminals. The United States Post Office refuses to carry or deliver literature that is in the least degree unsavory. A similar regulation is in force on the railways of New Zealand. And little more than twelve months ago a Dunedin bookseller was successfully prosecuted for having exposed for sale certain Australian newspapers which contained advertisements of a suggestive and dangerous nature. In one of its early issues of 1891 the *Caxton Review* said of China: 'The official gazette for the northern provinces of that country has quite recently published a decree ordering that any official who shall publish an immoral book shall be dismissed; private persons similarly guilty shall receive a hundred strokes of the rod and be sent into exile; and persons selling such books shall receive a similar number of strokes of the rod.' Even the heathen Chinese seems capable of giving a lesson in self-restraint and public decency to some Christians on the West Coast of New Zealand. We may add that a respectable Protestant firm in Dublin—Messrs. EASON, who own the bookstalls at the Irish railway stations—declined some years ago to sell so much as a copy of a particular issue of the *Review of Reviews* which contained an attack on Christian marriage. And in every well-regulated family parents are strict and careful censors of the reading matter of their growing boys and girls.

A Good Principle.

The world-old and world-wide censorship referred to above was often carried to ridiculous and tyrannous extremes. But the principle on which it was grounded is sound. It is a function of the State as well as of the Church to preserve public morals and to protect social order. CHESTERFIELD penned the art of 'uniting wickedness and the graces.' But he had a statesmanlike mind and recognised the fact that 'books are indeed our friends or foes. They do us either good or harm,' he adds; 'they improve or corrupt.' They exercise a marked influence on human conduct, not alone in the individual, but in the mass as well. The truth of this statement is sufficiently evidenced in the story of British and American pamphleteering—of Wood's halfpence, of the Gordon and Know-nothing riots, the anti-Slavery and Reform agitations, and the Oxford Movement. Books are set for the rise or fall of many. And in the multitude of them that issue from the press there is not merely the good, the indifferent, the merely harmless, and the rapid and frothy—mere whipped cream; but there are also the vicious and unclean that glorify illicit love, make light of the sanctity and unity of the marriage bond, and strike at the root of all morality. Such publications—couched, as they occasionally are, in elegant or captivating phrase—are a far greater menace to the morals of youth than the 'studiously indecent' dramas of BEAUMONT and FLETCHER, than the coarse writings of FIELDING and SMOLLET, than the lascivious pages of VOLTAIRE and d'ALEMBERT. Some, at least, of these held right views regarding the shady side of life. But now, more than ever, is the hand of the unclean and unbelieving devil heavy upon the lever that moves the press. And now, more than ever, is there pressing need of censorship and conscientious selection if we are to safeguard Christian faith and cleanness of heart among our youth.

Objectionable Publications.

But there is another class of publications that are distinctly inimical to the public welfare—to that peace and goodwill which constitute the best charm of social intercourse and the best mainstay of the State. We refer to those books, pamphlets, tracts, periodicals, etc., which brutally misrepresent a creed and its adherents, and which excite, or are calculated to excite, popular passion against them. In English-speaking countries Catholics are practically the only people against whom those dangerous and unchristian publications are directed. We have no objection to the presence of clean and cool-headed theological expository works in our public libraries. But we do hold that such works should be introduced, if at all, sparingly, and that the

public purse should not be made to serve the exclusive, or almost exclusive, propaganda of any one school of doctrinal belief. And we must ever strenuously object to public funds being used to spread the venom of publications of the following kinds: (1) the filthy and indecent lucubrations of blackguardly adventurers of the type of the SLATTERYS and of gaolbirds and convicts like RIORDAN and NOBBS; (2) vehement no-Popery invective by such hysterical writers as COLLETTE, LITLEDALE, HORTON, and the gross publications that circulate in the Orange lodges; and (3) the whole mass of brimstone-and-treacle no-Popery fiction, from the bigoted pages of KINGSLEY's *Westward Ho!* down through the thin flummery of anti-nun and anti-Jesuit romance that was treated with such withering sarcasm in Mr. BRITTEN's *Protestant Fiction*, and onward to the violent story-whoops of RIDER HAGGARD's and CROCKETT's later works and the hysterical stuff that MARIE CORELLI poured into her *Master Christian*, and the little minister JOSEPH HOCKING into the *Scarlet Woman* and the *Purple Robe*. The committees of our public libraries should be, as far of possible, men with a knowledge of books, a sound literary judgment, an eminent spirit of fairness, and a deep sense of the responsibilities of their position. In the interests of social harmony and public peace they should exclude from the shelves of our public libraries publications of the three classes referred to above, just as, in the interests of public morals, they should place a ban upon those productions of swinish French and British pornographers that are as whiffs from the fetid mouth of Tophet. So long as such institutions receive public moneys, Catholics are entitled to this on grounds of sheer public right. And this right is perpetual and inalienable, whether the number of Catholics on the register of this or that public library—or on all of them combined—be nought or one, nine or nine hundred and ninety-nine.

Notes.

The *Nineteenth Century* for January contains the following in the course of an article by a non-Catholic writer, Lady Ponsonby: 'The cult of the Virgin Mary in the Middle Ages did far more to raise the status of women than any other cause at work since the age of chivalry, and the efforts towards intellectual discipline in our day are futile in comparison.'

In the *Review of Reviews* Annual for the present year Mr. W. T. Stead, in reviewing the personalities who bore a conspicuous part in the departed century, makes the following references to the late Cardinal Newman: 'In the religious world,' he says, 'Cardinal Newman may be regarded as the Foremost Personality of the Century. . . . He exercised a rare personal influence even over those who differed from him profoundly. Whether at Oxford or in his Oratory at Birmingham, he was a spiritual influence that could be felt, not only by those who followed, but by those who opposed him. As a writer, as a thinker, and as a leader of men, his influence which was potent during his life, continues to survive after his death.'

When certain of the London dailies set forth in company to dish and carve the Duke of Norfolk for having dared to express a hope for the restoration of the temporal independence of the Holy See, one of them (the *Daily Chronicle*, to wit) declared that 'all the Catholic disabilities which existed at the beginning of the (nineteenth) century in Great Britain have been one by one abolished.' But this is precisely what has not happened to them. No Catholic, for instance, can be Lord Chancellor of England or Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, nor can a Catholic sovereign sit on the English throne. And to this hour the members of certain religious Orders are debarred from receiving bequests and from other rights and privileges of ordinary citizenship of the Empire. Recent legal decisions both in Ireland and in England prove, too, that this penal enactment is no dead letter.

A paragraph that appeared in a recent issue of the *N.Z. Times* reminds one of a story that is told of a Scottish regiment that was on parade. Struck by the splendid physique of one of the men, a high-placed officer asked him: 'Where are you from, my man?' From Tipp'rarry, sir,' was the unexpected reply. Well, a representative of the *N.Z. Times*, during the stay of the Imperial troops in Wellington, took the trouble to settle the 'where do you come from' question with respect to the individuals composing the late valeting regiments. He asserts that not one of the twenty-three Cameronians or Highland Light Infantry was a Scotchman.