

and they have and enjoy them to the utmost.

I wonder do we ever consider how fortunate we are in living now and not in an age when books were unknown. What a friend a book can be, only the book-lover knows. Those who are not fond of reading do not know how much they miss.

A person who is homesick and alone, far from home and kindred, if he is fond of reading can lose himself in a book, and live for a time in the characters of his book; and there are books to suit the tastes of all. The physician, botanist, naturalist, agriculturist, scientist, phrenologist, sociologist, theologian, astronomer, etc., all find that some gifted person has left the humble creation of his brains to be handed down to posterity.

Those who like a good wholesome love story have not far to look in any modern library.

The invalid in his arm chair, or still more helpless on a bed of pain, can sometimes forget his pain for a time, and travel in imagination with some explorer to the heart of Central Africa, or to China, Japan, to Egypt or Rome, and view their ancient glories. Happy should the author feel who can beguile the weary hours of suffering thus.

Even for the wee mites there are wonderful picture books, and as the mind matures, the beautiful Bible stories, fairy stories, stories of birds, beasts and flowers, and for the older ones again there is no lack of good wholesome and instructive books.

It is marvellous the influence of books on one's character. Who has not felt the uplifting influence of some good biography, felt the need to restrain some unworthy desire, to try to cultivate more fortitude of character, more patience, more self-sacrifice, after reading one of these. When one is tired and despondent, how soothing is the influence of the right sort of book.

How often has a person almost given up in despair, when he has heard or read of someone in a similar position, who has struggled on through adversity and eventually attained his goal; and it has given him renewed courage and stimulated him to fresh achievements and attainments. What an intense power and scope the author has to ex-hale his influence for good or evil: Wherever men go, there can go the children of his brain. He can reach

the people and the hearts of the people that no others can reach and influence them as no others can influence.

If only all authors could comprehend this, as many do, and realise that this marvellous power is not really their own, to be used only for their own selfish ends, but only lent to them by God for the furtherance of His own kingdom, then perhaps we would not come across so much trashy and immoral literature.

We pick up books to-day by the score that can do no good to anyone, but can and do work untold harm to some. Some will argue that in this advanced age we must take a wider outlook on life. That is quite so, and if there is a good moral in a book, even although it be rather plainly spoken, I have no doubt it attains its end.

A few years ago there was a great controversy about a book of Hall Caine, called "The Woman Thou Gavest Me." I heard many people say it should never have been written, and that it was most immoral. Certainly it was not a book that should be read by those who had not reached years of discretion, but I am convinced that it was a book written with a great purpose, and that purpose was to show the folly and sin of forced and loveless marriages.

Some time ago I read another book, written I am sorry to say, by a New Zealand woman. It was cleverly written, the language was good, and the story would have been beautiful if it had not been spoiled, for every self-respecting man and woman, by its utter immorality, and I think it would take a supernaturally clever person to find any purpose in that book, except to pander to the taste of a class that is no acquisition to the world at large.

It is the children and the youth of the nations that are going to be sullied by these sort of books. When the mind is fully developed it can as a general rule withstand these influences, but to the undeveloped mind and character an immoral book emanates just the same influence as an immoral companion. When you realise that that influence does not remain with one person, but is passed on and on by him, until it goes down the countless ages it is appalling.

The only thing we can do is to encourage the young people to read books of a high moral tone, advise them to choose authors we know are sound, and never let them read books we know

nothing about until we have scanned them. When their tastes are cultivated for good literature they are safe, but let them get a taste for sensational trash, and they will vote good pure books "tame."

I could go on and on, but there is a refrain ringing in my brain "Boil down," and after all, what can I do but appeal to some influential persons to set revolving the wheels within wheels that will stop the import and sale of immoral books.

A. CULLEN.

News of the Unions.

PLEASE NOTE!

1. Every Union should report.
2. Reports must be short.
3. Must be in by 8th of month.
4. Don't report what you are going to do.
5. Don't send newspaper reports of your meetings.

OXFORD.

Dec. 12. Annual meeting. Fair attendance. Expressions of sympathy with Mrs G. Rossiter. A short service of thanksgiving for Spiritual Healing Mission, and for help received by one member. "No More War" resolution endorsed. Balance-sheet read and adopted. Reports from various departments showed fifty financial members, the increase largely due to Miss Earnshaw; one honorary member. Sixty-three names on Cradle Roll, and fifty-eight "White Ribbon" subscribers. Votes of thanks passed to Auditor (Mr L. Watson), outgoing officers, and the newspapers. Mrs Ryde occupied the chair during election of officers, which resulted as follows:—Pres., Mrs G. Ryde, Cooper's Creek; Sec., Mrs C. W. Tritt, Oxford; Treas., Miss Caverhill; Vice-Pres., Mrs D. Hawke; Evangelistic Committee, Mesdames Robertson and Morris and Miss Gainsford; "White Ribbon" Supt., Mrs D. Hawke; Cradle Roll, Mesdames Roi and Comyns; Notable Days, Mrs Cooper; Flower Mission, Mrs Jamieson; Home Meetings, Mrs T. Gainsford.

WAIPUKURAU.

Nov. 12. Special prayer meeting. Numbers were small, but all were greatly blessed. Unanimously decided Peace Day to be on day nearest Armistice Day.

Dec. 4. Annual meeting. Good attendance. Various accounts were passed for payment. Election of officers: Pres., Mrs Gore; Sec., Mrs Reid;