

## RADIO, SCREEN, AND PRESS

F. P. Aylward, '44

In the midst of a horrible war, people are coming forth with many ideas as to how we can get behind the war effort; some are going so far as to talk of reconstruction after the war and to plan along those lines. We are told that we are fighting for Christianity, for freedom; I agree. But common sense, as well as teachers of Christian doctrine, tells us that a return to God is of paramount importance in the winning of the war and in post-war reconstruction. This movement must begin in the people themselves, but they should at least have the help of the Government and those in high authority.

Different commodities are being rationed; we are constantly being asked not to hoard; and, during the first part of the New Year, an effort was made by some well-meaning people to have the Government prohibit the sale of liquor for the duration; but how many have given any thought to the greatest evil of our day, the immorality of radio, screen, and press?

This subject is seldom mentioned except occasionally from our pulpits. The everyday man does not seem interested. We admit that the world has become corrupted; we talk of the bad state of affairs among our enemies; we say that we are fighting a war to keep our country free from all this; but what are we doing about the enemy within? What is the reason that no action is being taken? Are we afraid of being called old-fashioned? If all this obscenity which is being thrown at today is modern and necessary, then we are truly lost. Why talk of the immorality of other nations when we can find it at home? We are seeing the mote in our neighbour's eye but not the beam in our own.

Let us consider first the radio programs. Think of the evil caused by the "soap-stories" to which our radio system devotes the whole of each afternoon, and by programs in which shameless love problems are discussed. These are only two examples; many more could be cited. Why are our young people so anxious to get away to larger cities? Because, attracted by the free and glamorous life which they hear of every day over the air, they become discontented at home. Peaceful homes become disrupted



because minds are turned from clear thinking by listening to this trash and filth.

We of the Island province are more fortunate in regard to screen. Our censors take every precaution to see that objectionable pictures are prohibited, but it is not so in the larger provinces where producers do not have to cater to a strict board of censors. With practically all our young men in uniform, so many of our young girls in strange cities filling positions left vacant by men in arms, and all working harder than ever before, it is not surprising to see the youth of our country seeking diversion at the theatres. Why, then, can we not have something elevating to offer them rather than immodest pictures produced by those whose only desire is to make money at the expense of others?

Enough about radio and screen; we all know what they have to offer. Let us turn now to obscene literature, the most deadly of the three, most deadly because it is displayed in nearly every news-stand and book store in our country to be read by everybody, young and old. Magazines given to nothing except publishing filthy pictures and jokes, weekly papers with their stories justifying such evils as divorce, books giving to the youth advice which should be given only by their parents or spiritual directors, all these we see on sale, and it has even come to such a point that some of our universities, sinking to the lower level, have begun to publish smutty jokes in their magazines and weekly papers. For the last there are no excuses. They are the so-called cultured; they are the ones to whom we shall look for leadership in the troubled times ahead. We wonder what sort of leaders they will be.

I have painted, somewhat imperfectly, perhaps, a picture of the existing evils. We all know that they exist, but it is sometimes well to be reminded. The next question before us is, what can we do to better the situation? The Canadian Federation of Catholic College-Students, co-operating with the Church, is making some efforts along this line, but its scope is limited. There is a real need to create an interest among people with influence, to bring the matter into public view. It is with this idea in mind that this article has been written.

What can be done? At the 1941 conference of the C. F. C. C.-S., held at St. Dunstan's, the subject of obscene literature was discussed. A delegate from Mount St.



Vincent's read a paper in which were contained the following suggestions for action on the part of the students, "protest to the dealers who sell such matter, refuse to deal with them; lodge complaints with the firms who advertise in such magazines; appeal to the postal authorities who should be interested in public welfare, and try to have the mailing of them stopped; approach the heads of universities and college to solicit their aid." These are only a few suggestions given to students, but I feel that they should be passed along and used by men and women who are members of clubs and societies. Similar action could be taken in regard to radio and screen. Influential men and women could do much along these lines, and, as an added suggestion, why not, as some of our neighbours to the south would say, write your Congressman. Get the Government interested.

The whole question boils down to this; there is a definite and urgent need for action. How can we give our best to the war effort when we have an enemy within our camp? How can we hope to conquer and reform our enemies when we ourselves are slowly but surely becoming corrupt? "Physician, heal thyself."



Freedom has a thousand charms to show,  
That slaves howe'er contented never know.

—*Cowper*

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Who does the best his circumstances allow  
Does well, acts nobly.

—*Young*

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There is nothing so kindly as kindness  
And nothing so noble as truth.

—*Alice Cary.*