

IMMORAL LITERATURE.

ON the first day's sitting of the present session of the French Legislature, one of the queries put to the Minister of Public Works was in regard to the exclusion of Zola's novels, and those of other French authors, from sale at railway news-stands, on the ground that they were immoral. In the debate it came out that these books were not sold at any railway station in France. The Minister held that the owner of the franchise could exclude any books he pleased, as he bought and paid for the right to sell.

Zola's books are not allowed to be sold anywhere in England, and the publishers were imprisoned for printing immoral literature. In the United States we are much more indifferent or careless. Not only are the books of Zola and other forbidden authors sold freely at all our news-stands, but they are carried in the mails at one cent a pound, while Bibles, school books, scientific, historical, and miscellaneous books, bound and unbound, cost in the mails eight cents a pound. In his last annual report the Postmaster-General officially stated that "a million dollars in postal revenue were lost each year by reason of this favor to certain publishers" of fiction, trash, blood curdling tales, and French impurities.

Ten million pounds are carried annually in the mails from New York alone, and probably half as much more from other cities. The proportion of really helpful books so carried is not over one in a hundred. One of the serious impediments to "one cent letter postage" is the existence of this and other evils that should be promptly removed. Every one putting a two-cent stamp on a letter is helping to pay the postage of this mass of corrupt, hurtful books that are now flooding the country.

The Postmaster-General has called attention to it very strongly in his annual report. He has personally appeared before the Post-Office Committee to urge the stoppage of the evil, and has prepared an official document fully setting forth its injustice. He has done all he can do, and it now rests with the good people of the country to say whether this abominable evil shall go on or be stopped. One publishing firm with three millions capital, and a hundred or more smaller houses, it is affirmed, are doing all they can to prevent action. They are heard in the committees of Congress, and their agents are in the lobbies to see that nothing is done; and while people quietly submit nothing will be done.

Bills to remedy the evil are before the Senate and House Post-Office Committee, but the people show so little interest in the matter that they quietly rest there. If anything is done at this session of Congress it must be done immediately. Wake up! we say.

If one thousand people were each to write a letter to a Senator or Member of Congress calling attention to this matter it would be stopped. Will they do it?