

veins, was as soft and cool as white velvet; but under its touch the strong man shrank and shivered, as the Baron of Smaylhome's false wife may have, when the dead adulterer's grasp scorched her to the bone. After that, he stood still in his place, as if under some mesmeric spell; never turning his head nor diverting his eyes from their fixed gaze, though surely they realized no one object, far or near. He did not hear the half of the broken syllables that followed that first word which told him all. For Ida would not leave her self-abasement incomplete."

Now all this is undoubtedly very clever in its way. There is a certain fascination given to the scene, an evil glamor cast around its recklessness and indelicacy. Even the author's apology—for he offers that sort of apology which aggravates tenfold the original offence, from its transparent insincerity—and the author's depreciation of criticism in the future, on the plea that he is incapable of doing the very thing of which he makes his readers guilty; to wit, the lingering over "any ensample, real or imaginary, of woman's degradation or dishonor"—are feints, more or less skillful, to carry off the air of reality which clings about the scene. To a certain extent, our sympathies are enlisted for the moment with the pain and passion of the woman. It is impossible to look upon the depths of such a nature, so stirred up, without unutterable pity.

Yet nothing can well be imagined more repulsive or disgusting than the whole conception of this scene. It is simply painful to contemplate calmly its utter disregard of all modesty, and reticence, and self-respect; its barefaced profligacy of passion; its utter shamelessness

of abandonment to the impulse of the moment.

So utterly vile and shameless are these books and so destructive to all sense of decency, that habitual reading produces a moral leprosy, which rots all self respect and so completely ruins all power of discernment that in a short time, modesty, maidenly bashfulness and spirituality are dead forever more.

The culmination however of satanic ingenuity is reached when we come to the atheistic or infidel novel.

The writers of these books are men and women, so vile, so utterly corrupt, and so callous to Christian feeling, that one would think the devil himself spat them out from his boiling and ulcerating lungs. The tendency of the erotic novelist is to destroy all morality, but the atheist writer is content only when he has destroyed faith in God and in the hereafter. The style of the infidel novel is a fascination. The arguments are so ingeniously and plausibly put, the infidel characters morally so heroic and admirable, the men so grandly proportioned and the women so fascinating and attractive, that the young reader is sympathetic before he reaches the second chapter. The Christian characters who take part in the drama are pious fools who mistake emotion for devotion, and are completely under the control of some cunning priest, whose manners are vulgar and whose conversation is spiritual mush. But let us rest here for the present, for a review of the infidel novel would lead us beyond the limits of a magazine article.

God protect our young men and women from the contamination of these books, a contamination so dangerous and infectious that the "end thereof is death."