

laying waste in those ingenuous, unguarded souls, should they happen to drink in the poison distilled from a corrupt pen.

Not to mention the violent and sudden revulsions from good or evil, as the case may be, produced by reading, in the mind or heart, there is that slow, continuous, progressive action, scarcely noticeable, working a change in the soul, just as food works a change in our bodies. The venturesome reader of questionable literature is yet to be found who has not been influenced, and more than he would wish to acknowledge, by the constant perusal of such books.

Has he still the same lively horror of evil, the same keen sense of duty as formerly when he spurned weak evasions? Have doubts never crossed his mind, nor temptations ever got the better of his heart? Is he not too often willing to affect that broad-mindedness — in a reprehensible sense — which, when it cannot endorse everything read as precisely good or true, has no longer the courage to resent what is vile or to contradict what is erroneous, but would allege any number of excuses in palliation of falsehood?

The danger is all the greater nowadays as it is rare to find persons, even well-to-do in the world, who possess that solid instruction which would render them proof against the false principles and equally unreliable opinions set forth in the pages of our modern books, papers and reviews. The very infatuation with which they are sought after is sufficient proof of a deplorable ignorance, or at least of indifferent mental culture in the public which allows itself to be captivated by such triflings. The greater part, if not all the prejudice existing among a certain class may be traced to the same source. Then again, crimes against morality, scandals in high-life, the nudities of the stage, the carnal *fantasies* of the studio, all are seized upon with avidity and laid before the public, because being *sensational* they readily command a market. And to render the lesson in evil still more telling, the profusion of illustrations executed with a skill deserving