

a weapon whenever we are imprudent enough to store our memory with a multitude of evil and dangerous reminiscences.

Though it may be very mortifying to our pride to acknowledge it, we take, for the most part, our ideas from the books we read. Our pet authors, with whom we while away such pleasant and, perchance, such dangerous hours, traffic freely with our sentiments; some they stifle, others they foster. They recast our way of thinking for weal or for woe, and at those very periods when genuine literature is discredited, we are helplessly transformed into whatever it may please the writers, our masters, to preordain.

Unwholesome reading exposes us to the peril of losing our faith, our innocence, our peace of mind and eternity itself, by making us squander the precious time God has given us wherein to earn endless happiness. How many readers, were they forced to be candid, would confess, in looking back over the years gone by, that they find the enduring impression of some indifferently written book, long since forgotten by the public, to which however they can ascribe a certain leaning of the heart, a certain bent of the mind, certain pleasures of the soul, and perhaps even certain events in their lives. One may attribute to its reading a more dreamy or more active imagination, another, a more ardent or a more unimpassioned sensibility, and a third, a more pronounced abhorrence of vice, while some unfortunate may acknowledge that by its perusal he awakened passions insatiable in their longings.

One can scarcely realize how easily awakened and how lasting impressions are in those fallow and virginal natures of childhood. A child may, even till it reaches the years of manhood, be swayed by some affecting word, some touching simile, some favourite air which erstwhile moved it to indignation or tears. Now, should the first book to fall into its hands voice only truthful thoughts and virtuous sentiments, what a precious and fruitful harvest would be sown for all time to come. But on the contrary, what a blighting, what a