

the ideal of a perfect man, which might be supposed possible to a tiger.

The women who surround these men are thoroughly sympathetic. They are all charming, graceful, accomplished and fascinating, but without even a perception of any higher motive than the sensual gratification of the present. With them love is an amusement or a passion. In the one case, the result of mere silliness; in the other, the outcome of deliberate wickedness—in both having its issues in the same result—the humiliation and degradation of all in womanhood that is pure and lovable and noble. And the interest of the tale in which these men and women are concerned, usually consists—to speak plainly—in the probabilities of the commission of sin.

In one way, indeed, the contemplation of these characters will do but little harm, except to the very youthful and the weak-minded. No sensible girl, who has seen anything of society, would feel much excited at the contemplation of "An Emotional Actor." She would know very well that such a man is, after all, simply a selfish and accomplished ruffian, with a certain superficial polish on him, which would very soon be rubbed off by the wear and tear of matrimonial life. She would also be aware that such a husband would to a certainty be cross, bearish, and immoderately jealous; that the "big drinks" would be by no means conducive to domestic felicity; that his nose would soon grow red, and his hand shaky; and that, in all probability, his wife would have the delectable office of nursing him through a series of attacks of delirium tremens. Also, it might occur to her that the "evil light," which is always coming into his eyes at

every imaginable provocation, although very romantic to think about, may be a decidedly unpleasant adjunct to the inevitable "desagremens" of married life.

The danger lies in the skill and power with which reckless passion, and the utter absence of self-restraint are depicted as the very characteristics of real and earnest love. The juggling process by which this foul delusion is produced, is that most dangerous of all things, a devilish mockery of truth. It grasps the noblest elements of love, devotion, abnegation of self and utter confidence, and images them as they might be in their wildest excess, if unbalanced and ungoverned by any higher principles, and represents them doing their natural work when ministering to evil, as truly as when efficient of the noblest good. Or rather, it makes a counterfeit of these things; it takes self-will, and sensuality, and lawlessness and lust—and calls them by noble, even by holy names, and fashions them into an image, and crowns them with a lurid light, in mockery of true glory; and with mighty blare of trumpeting, bids those who are willing to be deceived, to fall down and worship them. Many a young girl, who in her heart would be very much afraid of such men as C. Stuart Taylor—Taylor the hero—would be irresistibly fascinated by the seeming nobleness of giving up all, even modesty, even self-respect, even shame, in the devotion of a passionate love.

We will take one example of this school, not as the worst, but as the very best we know. "Her only Love" is written with very great ability. There is a freshness and an intensity, and a graphic vividness about many of the scenes, which are not surpassed, even if