

a libertine. He lived for his own gratification. It monopolised all his thoughts, and directed all his actions. He belonged to the school of Voltaire, and recognised no feeling of the heart as pure, no tie of duty or affection as sacred. No consideration of suffering, of heart-rending grief, on the part of his victim, were sufficient to intimidate his purpose, or check his career of infamy. Schooled in hypocrisy, dissimulation was his business, and he regarded the whole world as the sphere of his operations—the whole human family as legitimate subjects for his villainous depravity.

That such characters, so base, so despicable, so lost to all feelings of true honour, can force their way into respectable society, and poison the minds of the unsullied and virtuous, may well be a matter of astonishment to those acquainted with the desperate artfulness of human hearts. But these monsters appear not in their true character: they assume the garb and deportment of gentlemen, of philosophers, of men of education and refinement; and by their accomplishments, the suavity of their manners, their sprightliness of conversation, bewilder before they poison, and fascinate before they destroy.

If there be, in the long catalogue of guile, one character more hatefully despicable than another, it is the libertine. Time corrects the tongue of slander, and the generosity of friends make atonement for the depredations of the midnight robber. Sufferings and calamities may be assuaged or mitigated by the sympathies of kindred hearts, and the tear of affection is sufficient to wash out the remembrance of many of the sorrows to which flesh is heir. But for the venom of the libertine there is no remedy, of its fatal consequences there is no mitigation. His victims, blasted in reputation, are forever excluded from the pale of virtuous society. No sacrifice can atone for their degradation, for the unrelenting and inexorable finger of scorn obstructs their progress at every step. The visitation of death, appalling as is his approach to the unprepared, were a mercy, compared with the extent and permanency of this evil.

Duval's insidious arts were not unobserved by his intended victim. She noticed the gradual developement of his pernicious principles, and shrunk with horror from their contaminating influence. She did not hesitate to communicate her observations to her husband; but he, blinded by prejudice in favour of his friend, laughed at her scruples. Without a word of caution, therefore, his intercourse was continued, and such was the weight of his ascendant power, such the perfection of his deep laid scheme, and such his facility in glossing over what he called unpardonable, but which, in reality, were grossly licentious, indiscretions of language and conduct, that even the lady herself was induced in time to believe that she had treated him unjustly. The gradual progress of licentiousness is almost imperceptible, and, before she was aware of her error, she had drunk freely of the intoxicating draught, and had well nigh become a convert to Duval's system of philosophy. Few who approach this fearful precipice are able to retrace their steps. The senses are bewildered, reason loses its sway, and a whirlwind of maddening emotions takes possession of the heart, and hurries the infatuated victim to irretrievable death. Before her suspicions were awakened, the purity of her family circle was destroyed. Duval enrolled on his list of conquests a new name—  
THE WIFE OF HIS BOSOM FRIEND!

An immediate divorce was the consequence. The misguided woman, who but late had been the ornament of society and the pride of her family, was cast out upon the world, unprotected, and without the smallest resource. The heart of the husband was broken by the calamity which rendered this step necessary, and he retired, with his children, to the obscurity of humble life.

[We shall give the remainder in our next.]

The connexion of religious duties with moral is so very close, that, as the religion of those is always false who think meanly of virtue, so the virtue of those is never uniform, if at all true, who think meanly of religion.