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## Original Poetry.

### "ONLY."

- Only a memory of the dead,  
Dearer than all that is left beside;  
Only the fast low words we said  
Standing alone by the evening tide.
- Only the grasp of an honest hand,  
Only the tear in an honest eye,  
Only a lingering on the strand,  
Only the half-choked word "Good-bye."
- Only the fading gleam of day  
Kissing the pebbles along the beach;  
Only the waters growing grey  
Under the fir-grove's silent reach.
- Only a touch of the sea-ward breeze  
Waking the waters to smile once more;  
Only a pointing to untried seas  
Of a prow that is turned to a distant shore.
- Only a sudden stroke of death  
Washing a brave young form away;  
Only a soul at the parting breath,  
Winging aloft to the hills of day.
- Only a thrill on the trembling wires  
Telling the tale to my home apart;  
Only a quenching of the fires  
In the wave-washed ceasar of my heart.
- Only another daisied mound,  
Quiet and lone, on the church yard hill,  
Only a presence that breathes around  
When I visit the spot in the twilight still.
- Only a tombstone, chaste and white,  
Only a name on a marble scroll,  
Only a loneliness at night  
Stealing o'er my saddened soul.
- Only a voice that haunts me still,  
In memory's hour, the dusk of day,  
Only a whisper o'er the hill,  
That reaches into the western grey.

## NOVEL READING.

(Concluded.)

ALTHOUGH a refined Society now enforces public decency, although vice does not now revel in the public gaze, although the lowest and most disgusting passions of depraved nature must crouch and teed behind the scenes, or feel legal vengeance; the blackest and foulest features of the days of a sottish Charles still exist.

Tear off the gaudy covering behind which they lurk and you will see sensuality as coarse, as unbridled and unblushing; political and social putrefaction, as horrible; excess, as frightful and ruinous, as blasted the time of Juvenal. Never has there been a lack of base spirits who gain a rich but damning harvest, by pandering to the lowest instincts of fallen nature. From such come in terrible and startling abundance, the polluted and polluting stories that disgrace the columns of numberless papers and magazines. This froth of filthy imaginations contains the spawn of every species of crime. Like serpents hidden among flowers, poisonous thoughts lurk between gilt edge and morocco binding. They charm only to sting. Their smile is more dangerous than the fan of a Vampire's wing. To every intelligent mind comes the pertinent question: what shall I read? Within reach are a thousand volumes. We would say: grasp real knowledge. Shun the worthless fictions that are floated up from the dark hazy regions of corrupt souls. "Make your selection with a view to invigorating reading, and reflection. Grapple with the products of the best thinkers and standard authors, instead of idly feeding upon the flimsy utterances, and dallying with the empty dreams of diseased imaginations." Intellectual strength cannot be grafted from sickly sentimentalities or high-seasoned mental garbage. Dime Novels are the jagged rock on which many a promising life has been irretrievably shattered. The fictitious tale of blood has often aroused youthful passion, and pushed adventurous feet down the awful steeps of crime. In this paper we deal not with fiction whose moral tone is questionable, or whose literary merit is of a low order, but with writings that injure mainly by their unreality as respects men and things.

A distorted vision is a curse. It wrenches things out of their true place, and heaps them up in bewildering confusion. It often disjoins and unhinges the delicate framework of a noble character, robs it of beauty and reduces it to a shapeless, hopeless mass. On the contrary it often creates a false loveliness that reminds one of flowers strowed on the bosom of corruption. It drives all sym-

metry out of life and turns it into a huge disproportioned picture, making objects increase in size directly as the distance, bringing foreground and background into monstrous proximity, and violating every law of perspective.

Early associations and training in numberless instances injure the mental and moral vision, and waywardness and degeneracy are commonly the frightful results. The circumstances surrounding a youthful life have much to do with giving shape to the eye through which the soul shall afterward look out on men and things. Short and crooked sight has ruined many a man. Under its dangerous witchery thousands have stumbled over imaginary difficulties, and have crawled with dubious steps over a path smooth as a floor. Others, to whose diseased gaze swamp, thornbrake, and open woods looked about the same, have gone crashing on till a stout barrier hurled them to the ground, or the foul sluggish waters of some unseen pool closed over their mouth.

We unhesitatingly affirm that the unreality stamped upon the characters and general features of the vast majority of Novels tends to distort views of life, and of its grand, vital, significant relations, and tremendous responsibilities, and so inflicts a positive and irreparable injury upon the mind. No intelligent being is free from the potent far reaching sway of thought. The books we read modify our decisions and mould our opinions. Unconsciously, it may be, but none the less certainly, we are sucked into the whirling vortex of their domineering influence. A hand, without arm or body, writing upon the wall, startled by its strangeness the debauched Belshazzar; but here is a more profound mystery, a book without aid of hand written upon the indestructible walls of memory; and every thought that traverses that chamber traces out the curious writing and in the act receives an indelible impress. We live the books we read, especially those we like. In our boyish days, Dick Turpin, Sixteen-string Jack, and Claude Duval, made us long for a black charger, and a keen blade, that we might rival their daring exploits, and with a wooden sword as substitute, and without any