

could be nothing more than a negative sort of rectitude. But perhaps Mr. Allen does not believe in the temptations of people who are morally sound. He may share the false impression which prevails among tolerably well-enlightened people, that it is only those who fall into actual sin, who know the real nature of temptation, as if, forsooth, ninety-nine had not struggled unweariedly and undauntedly, where one has sinned; as if ninety-nine had not leaned over the very precipice of voluntary and deliberate guilt, and yet saved themselves, where one has fallen! Yes, there are souls untainted by the breath of sin who daily climb the steep heights of the new Gethsemane weighed down with the dreadful possibilities of uncommitted crimes with which we all are more or less laden—of whose sorrows and sufferings the world shall never hear! There are silent warfares nightly waged in the darkness and solitude of cloistered cells, and worldly chambers, the clashing of whose deadly instruments has never fallen upon mortal ear. There are faithful men, and women too, hourly crossing the darksome, troubled waters of that bitter Brook of Cedron, following that other Sufferer who calls them from afar, who weep, and sweat, and strike their breasts, heaving with tumultuous passion, of whose agony the worldling and the libertine, who rub shoulders with them in life's daily pursuits, know nothing whatever. One of these Mr. Allen might have singled out, with profit to himself and to his readers. The cryptic workings of a soul in which nature and grace are struggling for ascendancy, are at all times a sadly captivating spectacle for the majority of men and women. But Mr. Allen had his own reasons for making another choice; he wished to air his morbid distrust of the ascetic life and expose what he considers

is its seamy side. He also wished to bring out the celibate state in an unfavorable contrast with that which offers every freedom and not a few licences to the animal nature of man. This, however, he did not accomplish, and the wealth of fleshly sentiment and philosophy which he put into *The White Cowl* went, practically, for nothing at all. The integrity of the monastic life is too well fortified by the testimony of ages and of nations to suffer from a weak attack such as Mr. Allen has made upon it.

If a lapse from virtue on the part of a man or woman who is consecrated by solemn, although voluntary vows, to the service of God and his fellow-creatures, offer an unprecedented plot to the writer of sensational stories, it must be because such an event is exceedingly rare, an explanation which we all most happily endorse. But the honor of an order or a community can scarcely be said to be impeached because a sin-marked moral weakling, who has been fathered by its members, shakes off not alone the bondage of his voluntary vows, but the mildly decent restraints of the common moral law. Mr. Allen is not the first story-teller who has tried in vain to dress up crime attractively. Our age is vitiated enough, God knows, but its moral sense is not so blunted, yet, that every pusillanimous attack on what is left of virtue in the world should pass unnoticed into the market. When Mr. Allen writes another love-story of this nature let him be careful to choose a *White Cowl* that does not "worms unfold," and a hero, who, if he must sin, shall do so because accidental transgressions are peculiar to human nature the world over, and not because he has been driven by the tyranny of vicious pre-natal influences to rebel against the law of God and man.

ROMA.

