

The Strange Woman
Henry Ward Beecher

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All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

SURELY one cannot declare the whole counsel of God, and leave out a subject which is interwoven with almost every chapter of the Bible. So inveterate is the prejudice against introducing into the pulpit the subject of Licentiousness, that Ministers of the Gospel, knowing the vice to be singularly dangerous and frequent, have yet by silence almost complete, or broken only by circuitous allusions, manifested their submission to the popular taste.* That Vice upon which it has pleased God to be more explicit and full than upon any other; against which he uttered his voice upon Sinai, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*; upon which the lawgiver, Moses, legislated with boldness; which Judges condemned; upon which the venerable Prophets spake oft and again; against which Christ with singular directness and plainness uttered the purity of religion; and upon which He inspired Paul to discourse to the Corinthians, and to almost every primitive church; this subject, upon which the Bible does not so much speak, as thunder — not by a single bolt, but peal after peal — we are solemnly warned not to introduce into the pulpit!

I am entirely aware of the delicacy of introducing this subject into the pulpit.

* The liberality with which this Lecture was condemned before I had written it, and the prompt criticisms afterwards, of those who did not hear it, have induced me to print it almost unaltered. Otherwise I should have changed many portions of it from forms of expression peculiar to the pulpit into those better suited to a book.

One difficulty arises from the sensitiveness of unaffected purity. A mind, retaining all the dew and freshness of innocence, shrinks from the very *idea* of impurity, as if it were sin to have thought or heard of it, —as if even the shadow of the evil would leave some soil upon the unsullied whiteness of the virgin-mind. Shall we be angry with this? or shall we rudely rebuke so amiable a feeling, because it regrets a necessary duty? God forbid! If there be, in the world, one whose generous faults should be rebuked only by the tenderness of a reproving smile, it is the mistake of inexperienced purity. We would as soon pelt an angel, bewildered among men and half smothered with earth's noxious vapors, for his trembling apprehensions. To any such, who have half wished that I might not speak, I say :—Nor would I, did I not know that purity will suffer more by the silence of shame, than by the honest voice of truth.

Another difficulty springs from the nature of the English language, which has hardly been framed in a school where it may wind and fit itself to all the phases of impurity. But were I speaking French—the dialect of refined sensualism and of licentious literature; the language of a land where taste and learning and art wait upon the altars of impurity—then I might copiously speak of this evil, nor use one plain word. But I thank God, the honest English tongue which I have learned, has never been so bred to this vile subservience of evil. We have plain words enough to say plain things, but the dignity and manliness of our language has never grown supple to twine around brilliant dissipation. It has too many plain words, vulgar words, vile words; but it has few mirror-words, which cast a sidelong image of an idea; it has few words which wear a meaning smile, a courtesan-glance significant of something unexpressed. When public vice necessitates public reprehension, it is, for these reasons, difficult to redeem plainness from vulgarity. We must speak plainly and properly; or else speak by *innuendo*—which is the devil's language.

Another difficulty lies in the confused echoes which vile men create in every

community, when the pulpit disturbs them. Do I not know the arts of cunning men? Did not Demetrius, the Silversmith (worthy to have lived in our day!) become most wonderfully pious, and run all over the city to rouse up the dormant zeal of Diana's worshippers, and gather a mob, to whom he preached *that Diana must be cared for*; when, to his fellow-craftsmen, he told the truth: OUR CRAFT IS IN DANGER! Men will not quietly be exposed. They foresee the rising of a virtuously retributive public sentiment, as the mariner sees the cloud of the storm rolling up the heavens! They strive to forestall and resist it. How loudly will a liquor-fiend protest against temperance lectures sinful enough for redeeming victims from his paw! How sensitive some men to a church bell! they are high priests of revivals at a horse-race, a theatre, or a liquor-supper; but a religious revival pains their sober minds. Even thus, the town will be made vocal with outcries against sermons on licentiousness. Who cries out? —the sober? —the immaculate? —the devout? It is the voice of the son of midnight; it is the shriek of the STRANGE WOMAN'S victim! and their sensitiveness is not of purity, but of fear! Men protest against the indecency of the pulpit, because the pulpit makes them feel their own indecency; they would drive us from the investigation of vice, that they may keep the field open for their own occupancy. I expect such men's reproaches. I know the reasons of them. I am not to be turned by them, not one hair's breadth, if they rise to double their present volume, until I have hunted home the wolf to his lair, and ripped off his brindled hide in his very den!

Another difficulty exists, in the criminal fastidiousness of the community upon this subject. This is the counterfeit of delicacy. It resembles it less than paste-jewels do the pure pearl. Where delicacy, the atmosphere of a pure heart, is lost, or never was had, a substitute is sought; and is found in forms of delicacy, not in its *feelings*. It is a delicacy of exterior, of etiquette, of show, of rules; not of *thought*, not of pure *imagination*, not of the crystal-current of the *heart*! Criminal fastidiousness is the Pharisee's sepulchre; clean, white, beautiful

without, full of dead men's bones within! — the Pharisee's platter, the Pharisee's cup—it is the very Pharisee himself; and like him of old, lays on burdens grievous to be borne.

Delicacy is a spring which God has sunken in the rock, which the winter never freezes, the summer never heats; which sends its quiet waters with music down the flowery hill-side, and which is pure and transparent, because it has at the bottom no sediment. I would that every one of us had this well of life, gushing from our hearts—an everlasting and full stream!

False modesty always judges by the outside; it cares *how* you speak, more than *what*. That which would outrage in plain words, may be implied furtively, in the sallies of wit or fancy, and be admissible. Every day I see this giggling modesty, which blushes at *language* more than at its *meaning*; which smiles upon base things, if they will appear in the *garb* of virtue! That disease of mind to which I have frequently alluded in these lectures, which leads it to clothe vice beautifully and *then* admit it, has had a fatal effect also upon Literature; giving currency to filth, by coining it in the mint of beauty. It is under the influence of this disease of taste and heart, that we hear expressed such strange judgments upon English authors. Those who speak plainly what they mean, when they speak at all, are called rude and vulgar; while those upon whose exquisite sentences the dew of indelicacy rests like so many brilliant pearls of the morning upon flowers, are called our moral authors!

The most dangerous writers in the English language are those whose artful insinuations and mischievous polish reflect upon the mind the image of impurity, without presenting the impurity itself. A plain vulgarity in a writer is its own antidote. It is like a foe who attacks us openly, and gives us opportunity of defence. But impurity, secreted under beauty, is like a treacherous friend who strolls with us in a garden of sweets, and destroys us by the odor of poisonous flowers proffered to our senses. Let the reprehensible grossness of Chaucer be compared with the perfumed, elaborate brilliancy of Moore's license. I would not willingly answer at the bar of God for the writings of either; but of the two, I would

rather bear the sin of Chaucer's plain-spoken words, which never suggest more than they say, than the sin of Moore's language, over which plays a witching hue and shade of licentiousness. I would rather put the downright, and often abominable vulgarity of Swift into my child's hand, than the scoundrel-indirections of Sterne. They are both impure writers; but not equally harmful. The one says what he means; the other means what he dare not say. Swift is, in this respect, Belial in his own form; Sterne is Satan in the form of an *angel of light*: and many will receive the temptation of the Angel, who would scorn the proffer of the Demon. What an incredible state of morals, in the English church, that permitted two of her eminent clergy to be the most licentious writers of the age, and as impure as almost any of the English literature! Even our most classic authors have chosen to elaborate, with exquisite art, scenes which cannot but have more effect upon the passions than upon the taste. Embosomed in the midst of Thomson's glowing Seasons, one finds descriptions unsurpassed by -any part of Don Juan; and as much more dangerous than it is, as a courtesan, countenanced by virtuous society, is more dangerous than when among her own associates. Indeed, an author who surprises you with refined indelicacies in moral and reputable writings, is worse than one, who, without disguise, and on purpose, serves up a whole banquet of indelicacies. Many will admit poison-morsels well sugared, who would revolt from an infernal feast of impurity. There is little danger that *robbers* will tempt the honest young to robbery. Some one first tempts him to falsehood; next, to petty dishonesties ; next, to pilfering ; then, to thieving; and now, only, will the robber influence him, when others have handed him down to his region of crime. Those authors who soften evil, and show deformity with tints of beauty; who arm their general purity with the occasional sting of impurity; —these are they who take the feet out of the straight path—the guiltiest path of seduction. He who feeds an inflamed appetite with food spiced to fire is less guilty than he who hid in the mind the leaven which wrought this appetite. The polished seducer is certainly

more dancreros than the vulgar debauchee— both in life and in literature.

In this contrast are to be placed Shakespeare and Bulwer: Shakespeare is sometimes gross, but not often covertly impure. Bulwer is sily impure, but not often gross. I am speaking, however, only of Shakespeare's Plays, and not of his youthful fugitive pieces; which, I am afraid, cannot have part in this exception. He began wrong, but grew better. At first, he wrote by the taste of his age; but when a man, he wrote to his own taste: and though lie is not without sin, yet, compared with his contemporaries, he is not more illustrious for his genius than for his purity. Reprehension, to be effective, should be just. No man is prepared to excuse properly the occasional blemishes of this wonderful writer, who has not been shocked at the immeasurable licentiousness of the Dramatists of his cycle. One play of Ford, one act, one conversation, has more abominations than the whole world of Shakespeare. Let those women, who ignorantly sneer at Shakespeare, remember that they are indebted to him for the noblest conceptions of woman's character in our literature — the more praiseworthy, because he found no models in current authors. The occasional touches of truth and womanly delicacy in the early Dramatists are no compensation for the wholesale coarseness and vulgarity of their female characters. In Shakespeare, woman appears in her true form — pure, disinterested, ardent, devoted; capable of the noblest feelings and of the highest deeds. The *language* of many of Shakespeare's women would be shocking in our day; but so would be the domestic manners of that age. The same actions may in one age be a sign of corruption, and be perfectly innocent in another. No one is shocked that in a pioneer-cabin, one room serves for a parlor, a kitchen, and a bed-room, for the whole family, and for promiscuous guests. Should fastidiousness revolt at this, as vulgar, — the vulgarity must be accredited to the fastidiousness, and not to the custom. Yet, it would be inexcusable in a refined metropolis, and everywhere the moment it ceases to be necessary. But nothing in these remarks must apologize for language or deed, which indicates an impure heart. No age,

no custom, may plead extenuation for essential lust; and no sound mind can refrain from commendation of the master-dramatist of the world, when he learns that in writing for a most licentious age, he rose above it so far as to become something like a model to it of a more virtuous way. Shakespeare left the dramatical literature immeasurably purer than it came to him.

Bulwer has made the English novel-literature more vile than he found it. The one was a reformer, the other an implacable corrupter. We respect and admire the one, (while we mark his faults,) because he withstood his age; and we despise with utter loathing the other, whose specific gravity of wickedness sunk him below the level of his own age. With a moderate caution, Shakespeare may be safely put into the hands of the young. I regard the admission of Bulwer as a crime against the first principles of virtue.

In all the cases which I have considered, you will remark a greater indulgence to that impurity which breaks out on the surface, than to that which lurks in the blood and destroys the constitution. It is the curse of our literature that it is traversed by so many rills of impurity. It is a vast champaign, waving with unexampled luxuriance of flower, and vine, and fruit; but the poisonous flower everywhere mingles with the pure; and the deadly cluster lays its cheek on the wholesome grape; nay, in the same cluster grow both the harmless and the hurtful berry; so that the hand can hardly be stretched out to gather flower or fruit without coming back poisoned. It is both a shame and an amazing wonder, that the literature of a Christian nation should reek with a filth which Pagan antiquity could scarcely endure; that the Ministers of Christ should have left floating in the pool of offensive writings, much that would have brought blood to the cheek of a Roman priest, and have shamed an actor of the school of Aristophanes. Literature is, in turn, both the cause and effect of the spirit of the age. Its effect upon this age has been to create a lively relish for exquisitely artful licentiousness, and disgust only for

vulgarity. A witty, brilliant, suggestive indecency is tolerated for the sake of its genius. An age which translates and floods the community with French novels (inspired by Venus and Bacchus,) which reprints in popular forms, Byron, and Bulwer, and Moore, and Fielding, proposes to revise Shakespeare and expurgate the Bible!! Men who, at home, allow Don Juan to be within reach of every reader, will not allow a Minister of the gospel to expose the evil of such a literature! To read authors whose lines drop with the very gall of death; to vault in elegant dress as near the edge of indecency as is possible without treading over; to express the utmost possible impurity so dexterously, that not a vulgar word is used, but rosy, glowing, suggestive language— this, with many, is refinement. But to expose the prevalent vice; to meet its glittering literature with the plain and manly language of truth; to say nothing except what one desires to say plainly this, it seems, is vulgarity!

One of the first steps in any reformation must be, not alone nor first the correction of the grossness, but of the elegancies of impurity. Could our literature, and men's conversation, be put under such authority that neither should express, by insinuation, what dared not be said openly, in a little time, men would not dare to say at all what it would be indecent to speak plainly. If there be here any disciples of Bulwer ready to disport in the very ocean of license, if its waters only seem translucent; who can read and relish all that fires the heart, and are only then distressed and shocked when a serious man raises the rod to correct and repress the evil; if there be here any who can drain his goblet of mingled wine, and only shudder at crystal-water; any who can see this modern prophet of villany strike the rock of corruption, to water his motley herd of revellers, but hate him who out of the Rock of Truth should bid gush the healthful stream; —I beseech them to bow their heads in this Christian assembly, and weep their tears of regret in secret places, until the evening service be done, and Bulwer can staunch their tears, and comfort again their wounded hearts.

Whenever an injunction is laid upon plain and undeniable scripture-truth, and I am

forbidden, upon pain of your displeasure, to preach it; then, I should not so much regard my personal feelings, as the affront which you put upon my master; and in my inmost soul I shall resent that affront. There is no esteem, there is no love, like that which is founded in the sanctity of religion. Between many of you and me, that sanctity exists. I stood by your side when you awoke in the dark valley of conviction, and owned yourselves lost. I have led you by the hand out of the darkness; by your side I have prayed, and my tears have mingled with yours. I have bathed you in the crystal-waters of a holy baptism ; and when you sang the song of the ransomed captive, it filled my heart with a joy as great as that which uttered it. Love, beginning in such scenes, and drawn from so sacred a fountain, is not commercial, not fluctuating. Amid severe toils and not a few anxieties, it is the crown of rejoicing to a Pastor. What have we in this world but you? To be your servant in the gospel, we renounce all those paths by which other men seek preferment. Silver and gold is not in our houses, and our names are not heard where fame proclaims others. Rest we are forbidden until death; and girded with the whole armor, our lives are spent in the dust and smoke of continued battle. But even such love will not tolerate bondage. We can be servants to love, but never slaves to caprice; still less can we heed the mandates of iniquity!

The proverbs of Solomon are designed to furnish us a series of maxims for every relation of life. There will naturally be the most said where there is the most needed. If the frequency of warning against any sin measures the liability of man to that sin, then none is worse than Impurity. In many separate passages is the solemn warning against the STRANGE WOMAN given with a force which must terrify all but the innocent or incorrigible; and with a delicacy which all will feel but those whose modesty is the fluttering

of an impure imagination. I shall take such parts of all these passages as will make out a connected narrative.

When wisdom entereth into thy heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee... to deliver thee from the strange woman, which flattereth with her tongue; her lips drop as a honey-comb, her mouth is smoother than oil. She sitteth at the door of her house on a seat in the high places of the city, to call to passengers who go right on their ways: "Who-so is simple let him turn in hither." To him that wanteth understanding, she saith, "Stolen waters are sweet and bread eaten in secret is pleasant;" but he knoweth not that the dead are there. Lust not after her beauty, neither let her take thee with her eyelids. She forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life, her ways are movable, that thou canst not know them. Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house, for her house inclineth unto death. She has cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chamber of death; none that go unto her, return again; neither take they hold of the paths of life. Let not thy heart decline to her ways, lest thou mourn at last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, and say: "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof. I was in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly."

I. Can language be found which can draw a corrupt beauty so vividly as this; *Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.* Look out upon that fallen creature whose gay sally through the street calls out the significant laugh of bad men, the pity of good men, and the horror of the pure. Was not her cradle as pure as ever a loved infant pressed? Love soothed its cries. Sisters watched its peaceful sleep, and a mother

pressed it fondly to her bosom! Had you afterwards, when spring-flowers covered the earth, and every gale was odor, and every sound was music, seen her, fairer than the lily or the violet, searching them, would you not have said, “Sooner shall the rose grow poisonous than she; both may wither, but neither corrupt.” And how often, at evening, did she clasp her tiny hands in prayer? How often did she put the wonder-raising questions to her mother, of God, and heaven, and the dead— as if she had seen heavenly things in a vision! As young womanhood advanced, and these foreshadowed graces ripened to the bud and burst into bloom, health glowed in her cheek, love looked from her eye, and purity was an atmosphere around her. *Alas! she forsook the guide of her youth.* Faint thoughts of evil, like a far-off cloud which the sunset gilds, came first; nor does the rosy sunset blush deeper along the heaven, than her cheek, at the first thought of evil. Now, ah ! mother, and thou guiding elder sister, could you have seen the lurking spirit embosomed in that cloud, a holy prayer might have broken the spell, a tear have washed its stain! *Alas! they saw it not; she spoke it not; she was forsaking the guide of her youth.* She thinketh no more of heaven. She breatheth no more prayers. She hath no more penitential tears to shed; until, after a long life, she drops the bitter tear upon the cheek of despair,— then her only suitor. Thou hast forsaken the covenant of thy God. Go down! fall never to rise! Hell opens to be thy home!

Oh Prince of torment! if thou hast transforming power, give some relief to this once innocent child, whom another has corrupted! Let thy deepest damnation seize him who brought her hither! let his coronation be upon the very mount of torment! and the rain of fiery hail be his salutation! He shall be crowned with thorns poisoned and anguish-bearing ; and every woe beat upon him, and every wave of hell roll over the first risings of baffled hope. Thy guilty thoughts, and guilty deeds, shall flit after thee with bows which never break, and quivers forever emptying but never exhausted! If Satan hath one dart more poisoned than another; if God hath one bolt more transfixing and blasting than another; if there be one

hideous spirit more unrelenting than others; they shall be thine, most execrable wretch! who led her to *forsake the guide of her youth, and to abandon the covenant of her God.*

II. The next injunction of God to the young is upon the ensnaring danger of Beauty. *Desire not her beauty in thy heart, neither let her take thee with her eyelids.* God did not make so much of nature with exquisite beauty, or put within us a taste for it, without object. He meant that it should delight us. He made every flower to charm us. He never made a color, nor graceful flying bird, nor silvery insect, without meaning to please our taste. When He clothes a man or woman with beauty. He confers a favor, did we know how to receive it. Beauty, *with* amiable dispositions and ripe intelligence, is more to any woman than a queen's crown. The peasant's daughter, the rustic belle, if they have woman's sound discretion, may be rightfully prouder than kings' daughters; for *God* adorns those who are both good and beautiful; man can only conceal the want of beauty, by blazing jewels.

As moths and tiny insects flutter around the bright blaze which was kindled for no harm, so the foolish young, fall down burned and destroyed by the blaze of beauty. As the flame which burns to destroy the insect, is consuming itself and soon sinks into the socket, so beauty, too often, draws on itself that ruin which it inflicts upon others.

If God hath given thee beauty, tremble; for it is as gold in thy house— thieves and robbers will prowl around and seek to possess it. If God hath put beauty before thine eyes, remember how many strong men have been cast down wounded by it. Art thou stronger than David? Art thou stronger than mighty patriarchs?— than kings and princes, who, by its fascinations, have lost peace and purity, and honor, and riches, and armies, and even kingdoms? Let other men's destruction be thy wisdom; for it is hard to reap prudence upon the field of experience.

III. In the minute description of this dangerous creature, mark next how seriously we are cautioned other WILES.

Her wiles of dress. Coverings of tapestry and the fine linen of Egypt are hers; the perfumes of myrrh and aloes and cinnamon. Silks and ribbons, laces and rings, gold and equipage; ah! how mean a price for dam nation. The wretch who would be hung simply for the sake of riding to the gallows on a golden chariot, clothed in king's raiment— what a fool were he ! Yet how many consent to enter the chariot of Death,— drawn by the fiery steeds of lust which fiercely fly, and stop not for food or breath till they have accomplished their fatal journey— if they may spread their seat with flowery silks, or flaunt their forms with glowing apparel and precious jewels!

Her wiles of speech. Beasts may not speak; this honor Is too high for them. To God's imaged son this prerogative belongs, to utter thought and feeling in articulate sounds. We may breathe our thoughts to a thousand ears, and infect a multitude with the best portions of our soul. How, then, has this soul's breath, this echo of our thoughts, this only image of our feeling's, been perverted, that from the lips of sin it hath more persuasion, than from the lips of wisdom! What horrid wizard hath put the world under a spell and charm, that words from the lips of a STRANGE WOMAN shall ring upon the ear like tones of music; while words from the divine lips of religion fall upon the startled ear like the funeral tones of the burial-bell! Philosophy seems crabbed; sin, fair. Purity sounds morose and cross; but from the lips of the harlot, words drop as honey, and flow smoother than oil; her speech is fair, her laugh is merry as music. The eternal glory of purity has no lustre, but the deep damnation of lust is made as bright as the gate of heaven!

Her wiles of LOVE. Love is the mind's light and heat; it is that tenuous air in which all the other faculties exist, as we exist in the atmosphere. A mind of the greatest stature without love, is like the huge pyramid of Egypt — chill and cheerless in all its dark halls and passages. A mind with love, is as a king's palace lighted for a royal festival.

Shame! that the sweetest of all the mind's attributes should be suborned to sin! that this daughter of God should become a Ganymede to arrogant lusts!—the cupbearer to tyrants!— yet so it is. Devil-tempter! Will thy poison never cease?— shall beauty be poisoned?— shall language; be charmed?— shall *love* be made to defile like pitch, and burn as the living- coals? Her tongue is like a bended bow, which sends the silvery shaft of flattering words. Her eyes shall cheat thee, her dress shall beguile thee, her beauty is a trap, her sighs are baits, her words are lures, her love is poisonous, her flattery is the spider's web spread for thee. Oh! trust not thy heart nor ear with Delilah! The locks of the mightiest Samson are soon shorn off, if he, will but lay his slumbering head upon her lap. He who could slay heaps upon heaps of Philistines, and bear upon his huge shoulders the ponderous iron-gate, and pull down the vast temple, was yet too weak to contend with one wicked artful woman! Trust the sea with thy tiny boat, trust the fickle wind, trust the changing skies of April, trust the miser's generosity, the tyrant's mercy; but ah! simple man, trust not thyself near the *artful* woman, armed in her beauty, her cunning raiment, her dimpled smiles, her sighs of sorrow, her look of love, her voice of flattery;— for if thou hadst the strength of ten Ulysses, un-less God help thee, Calypso shall make thee fast, and hold thee in her island!

Next beware the wile of her *reasonings*. *To him that wanteth understanding she saith, stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. I came forth to meet thee, and I have found thee.*

What says she in the credulous ear of inexperience? Why, she tells him that sin is safe; she swears to him that sin is pure; she protests to him that sin is innocent. Out of history

she will entice him, and say: Who hath ever refused my meat-offerings and drink-offerings? What king have I not sought? What conqueror have I not conquered? Philosophers have not, in all their wisdom, learned to hate me. I have been, the guest of the world's greatest men. The Egyptian priest, the Athenian sage, the Roman censor, the rude Gaul, have all worshipped in my temple. Art thou afraid of to tread where Plato trod, and the pious Socrates? Art thou wiser than all that ever lived?

Nay, she readeth the Bible to him; she goeth back along the line of history, and readeth of Abraham, and of his glorious compeers; she skippeth past Joseph with averted looks, and readeth of David and of Solomon; and whatever chapter tells how good men stumbled, there she has turned down a leaf, and will persuade thee, with honeyed speech, that the best deeds of good men were their sins, and that thou shouldst only imitate them in their stumbling and falls!

Or, if the Bible will not cheat thee, how will she plead thine own nature; how will she whisper, *God hath made thee so*. How, like her father, will she lure thee to pluck the apple, saying, *Thou shalt not surely die*. And she will hiss at virtuous men, and spit on modest women, and shake her serpent tongue at any purity which shall keep thee from her ways. Oh! then, listen to what God says: *With much fair speech she causeth him to yield; with the flattery of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her as an ox goeth to slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, till a dart strike through his liver,— as a bird hasteth to a snare and knoweth not that it is for his life.*

I will point only to another wile. When inexperience has been beguiled by tier infernal machinations, how, like a flock of startled birds, will spring up late regrets, and shame, and fear; and worst of all, how will conscience ply her scorpion-whip and lash thee. uttering with stern visage, “thou art dishonored, thou art a wretch, thou art lost!” When the soul is full of such outcry, memory cannot sleep; she wakes, and while conscience still plies

the scourge, will bring back to thy thoughts, youthful purity, home, a mother's face, a sister's love, a father's counsel. Perhaps it is out of the high heaven that thy mother looks down to see thy baseness. Oh! if she has a mother's heart, nay, but she cannot weep for thee there!

These wholesome pains, not to be felt if there were not yet health in the mind, would save the victim, could they have time to work. But how often have I seen the spider watch, from his dark round hole, the struggling fly, until he began to break his web; and then dart out to cast his long lithe arms about him, and fasten new cords stronger than ever. So, God saith, the strange woman shall secure her ensnared victims, if they struggle: *Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life, her ways are movable that thou canst not know them.*

She is afraid to see thee soberly thinking of leaving her, and entering the path of life; therefore her ways are movable. She multiplies devices, she studies a thousand new wiles, she has some sweet word for every sense- obsequience for thy pride, praise for thy vanity, generosity for thy selfishness, religion for thy conscience, racy quips for thy wearisomeness, spicy scandal for thy curiosity. She is never still, nor the same; but evolving as many shapes as the cloud and as many colors as dress the wide prairie.

IV. Having disclosed her wiles, let me show you what God says of the chances of escape to those who once follow her: *None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.* The strength of this language was not meant absolutely to exclude hope from those who, having wasted their substance in riotous living, would yet return; but to warn the unfallen, into what an almost hopeless gulf they plunge, if they venture. Some may escape— as here and there a mangled sailor crawls out of the water upon the beach,— the only one or two of the whole crew ; the rest are gurgling in the wave with impotent struggles, or already sunk to the bottom. There are many evils which hold their victims by the force of habit; there are others which fasten them by breaking their return to society. Many a

person never reforms, because reform would bring no relief. There are oilier evils which hold men to them, because they are like the beginning of a fire; they tend to burn with fiercer and wider flames, until all fuel is consumed, and go out only when there is nothing to burn. Of this last kind is the sin of licentiousness: and when the conflagration once breaks out, experience has shown, what the Bible long ago declared, that the chances of reformation are few indeed. The certainty of continuance is so great, that the chances of escape are dropped from the calculation; and it is said roundly, NONE THAT GO UNTO HER RETURN AGAIN.

V. We are repeatedly warned against the strange woman's HOUSE.

There is no vice like licentiousness, to delude with the most fascinating proffers of delight, and fulfil the promise with the most loathsome experience. All vices at the beginning are silver-tongued, but none so impassioned as this. All vices in the end cheat their dupes, but none with such overwhelming disaster as licentiousness. I shall describe by an allegory, its specious seductions, its plausible promises, its apparent innocence, its delusive safety, its deceptive joys,— their change, their sting, their flight, their misery, and the victim's ruin.

HER HOUSE has been cunningly planned by an EVIL ARCHITECT to attract and please the attention. It stands in a vast garden full of enchanting objects. It shines in glowing colors, and seems full of peace and full of pleasure. All the signs are of unbounded enjoyment— safe, if not innocent. Though every beam is rotten, and the house is the house of death, and in it are all the vicissitudes of infernal misery; yet to the young it appears a palace of delight. They will not believe that death can lurk behind so brilliant a fabric. Those who are within, look out and pine to return; and those who are without, look in and pine to enter. Such is the mastery of deluding sin. That part of the garden which borders on the highway of innocence is carefully planted. There is not a poison-weed, nor thorn, nor thistle there. Ten thousand flowers bloom, and waft a thousand odors. A victim cautiously inspects it; but it has been too carefully patterned upon innocency to be easily detected. This outer garden is innocent;-

innocence is the lure to wile you from the path into her grounds;— innocence is the bait of that trap by which she has secured all her victims. At the gate stands a comely porter, saying blandly: *Whoso is simple let him turn in hither.* Will the youth enter? Will he seek her house? To himself he says, “I will enter only to see the garden,— its fruits, its flowers, its birds, its arbors, its warbling fountains!” He is resolved in virtue. He seeks wisdom, not pleasure!— Dupe! you are deceived already; and this is your first lesson of wisdom. He passes, and the porter leers behind him! He is within an Enchanter's garden! Can he not now return, if he wishes?— he will not wish to return, until it is too late. He ranges the outer garden near to the highway, thinking as he walks: “How foolishly have I been alarmed at pious lies about this beautiful place! I heard it was Hell: I find it is Paradise!”

Emboldened by the innocency of his first steps, he explores the garden further from the road. The flowers grow richer; their odors exhilarate; the very fruit breathes perfume like flowers; and birds seem intoxicated with delight among the fragrant shrubs and loaded trees. Soft and silvery music steals along the air. “Are angels singing?— Oh! fool that I was, to fear this place; it is all the heaven I need! Ridiculous priest, to tell me that death was here, where all is beauty, fragrance, and melody! Surely, death never lurked in so gorgeous apparel as this! Death is grim, and hideous!” He has come near to the strange woman's HOUSE. If it was beautiful from afar, it is celestial now; for his eyes are bewitched with magic. When our passions enchant us, how beautiful is the way to death! In every window are sights of pleasure; from every opening, issue sounds of joy—the lute, the harp, bounding feet, and echoing laughter. Nymphs have descried this Pilgrim of temptation;— they smile and beckon. Where are his resolutions now? This is the virtuous youth who came to *observe!* He has already seen too much! but he will see more; he will taste, feel, regret, weep, wail, die! The most beautiful nymph that eye ever rested on, approaches with decent guise and modest gestures, to give him hospitable welcome. For a moment he recalls his home, his mother, his

sister-circle; but they seem far-away, dim, powerless! Into his ear the beautiful herald pours the sweetest sounds of love: “You are welcome here, and worthy! You have early wisdom, to break the bounds of superstition, and to seek these grounds where summer never ceases, and sorrow never comes! Hail! and welcome to the House of pleasure!” There seemed to be a response to these words; the house, the trees, and the very air, seemed to echo, “Hail! and welcome!” In the stillness which followed, had the victim been less intoxicated, he might have heard a clear and solemn voice which seemed to fall straight down from heaven : COME NOT NIGH THE DOOR OF HER HOUSE. HER HOUSE IS THE WAY TO HELL, GOING DOWN TO THE CHAMBERS OF DEATH!

It is too late! He has gone in,— who shall never return. *He goeth after her straightway as an ox goeth to the slaughter; or as a fool to the correction of the stocks... and knoweth not that it is for his life.*

Enter with me, in imagination, the strange woman's HOUSE— where, God grant you may never enter in any other way. There are five wards— Pleasure, Satiety, Discovery, Disease, and Death.

Ward of Pleasure.— The eye is dazzled with the magnificence of its apparel,— elastic velvet, glossy silks, burnished satin, crimson drapery, plushy carpets. Exquisite pictures glow upon the walls, carved marble adorns every niche. The inmates are deceived by these lying shows; they dance, they sing; with beaming eyes they utter softest strains of flattery and graceful compliment. They partake the amorous wine, and the repast which loads the table. They eat, they drink, they are blithe and merry. Surely, they should be; for after this brief hour, they shall never know purity nor joy again! For this moment's revelry, they are selling heaven! The strange woman walks among her guests in all her charms; fans the flame of joy, scatters grateful odors, and urges on the fatal revelry, As her poisoned wine is quaffed, and the gay creatures begin to reel, the torches wane and cast but a twilight. One by

one, the guests grow somnolent; and, at length, they all repose. Their cup is exhausted, their pleasure is forever over, life has exhaled to an essence, and that is consumed! While they sleep, servitors, practised to the work, remove them all to another Ward.

Ward of Satiety.— Here reigns a bewildering twilight through which can hardly be discerned the wearied inmates, yet sluggish upon their couches. Overflushed with dance, sated with wine and fruit, a fitful drowsiness vexes them. They wake, to crave; they taste, to loathe; they sleep, to dream ; they wake again from unquiet visions. They long for the sharp taste of pleasure, so grateful yesterday. Again they sink, repining to sleep; by starts, they rouse at an ominous dream; by starts, they hear strange cries! The fruit burns and torments; the wine shoots sharp pains through their pulse. Strange wonder fills them. They remember the recent joy, as a reveller in the morning thinks of his midnight-madness. The glowing garden and the banquet now seem all stripped and gloomy. They meditate return; pensively they long for their native spot! At sleepless moments, mighty resolutions form,— substantial as a dream. Memory grows dark. Hope will not shine. The past is not pleasant; the present is wearisome; and the future gloomy.

The Ward of Discovery.— In the third ward no deception remains. The floors are bare; the naked walls drip filth; the air is poisonous with sickly fumes, and echoes with mirth concealing hideous misery. None supposes that he has been happy. The past seems like the dream of the miser, who gathers gold spilled like rain upon the road, and wakes, clutching his bed, and crying “where is it?” On your right hand, as you enter, close by the door, is a group of fierce felons in deep drink with drugged liquor. With red and swollen faces, or white and thin; or scarred with ghastly corruption; with scowling brows, baleful eyes, bloated lips and demoniac grins;— in person all uncleanly, in morals all debauched, in peace, bankrupt— the desperate wretches wrangle one with the other, swearing bitter oaths, and heaping reproaches each upon each! Around the room you see miserable creatures unappareled, or dressed in

rags, sobbing and moaning. That one who gazes out at the window, calling for her mother and weeping, was right tenderly and purely bred. She has been baptized twice,—once to God, and once to the Devil. She sought this place in the very vestments of God's house. “Call not on thy mother! she is a saint in Heaven, and cannot hear thee!” Yet, all night long she dreams of home, and childhood, and wakes to sigh and weep; and between her sobs, she cries “mother! mother!”

Yonder is a youth, once a servant at God's altar. His hair hangs tangled and torn; his eyes are bloodshot; his face is livid; his fist is clenched. All the day, he, wanders up and down, cursing sometimes himself, and sometimes the wretch that brought him hither; and when he sleeps, he dreams of Hell; and then he wakes to feel all he dreamed. This is the Ward of reality. All know why the first rooms looked so gay—they were enchanted! It was enchanted wine they drank; and enchanted fruit they ate: now they know the pain of fatal food in every limb!

Ward of Disease.— Ye that look wistfully at the pleasant front of this terrific house, come with me now, and look long into the terror of this Ward; for here are the seeds of sin in their full harvest form! We are in a lazar-room; its air oppresses every sense; its sights confound our thoughts; its sounds pierce our ear; its stench repels us; it is full of diseases. Here a shuddering wretch is clawing at his breast, to tear away that worm which gnaws to his heart. By him is another, whose limbs are dropping from his ghastly trunk. Next, swelters another in reeking filth; his eyes, rolling in bony sockets, every breath a pang, and every pang a groan. But yonder, on a pile of rags, lies one whose yells of frantic agony appall every ear. Clutching his rags with spasmodic grasp, his swollen tongue lolling from a blackened mouth, his bloodshot eyes glaring and rolling, he shrieks oaths; now blaspheming God, and now imploring him. He hoots and shouts, and shakes his grisly head from side to side, cursing or praying; now calling death, and then, as if driving away fiends, yelling, avaunt!

avaunt!

Another has been ridden by pain, until he can no longer shriek; but lies foaming and grinding his teeth, and clenches his bony hands, until the nails pierce the palm— though there is no blood there to issue out— trembling all the time with the shudders and chills of utter agony. The happiest wretch in all this Ward, is an Idiot;— dropsical, distorted, and moping; all day he wags his head, and chatters, and laughs, and bites his nails; then he will sit for hours motionless, with open jaw and glassy eye fixed on vacancy. In tin's Ward are huddled all the diseases of PLEASURE. This is the torture-room of the strange woman's House, and it excels the Inquisition. The wheel, the rack; the bed of knives, the roasting fire, the brazen room slowly heated, the slivers driven under the nails, the hot pincers,— what are these to the agonies of the last days of licentious vice? Hundreds of rotting wretches would change their couch of torment in the strange woman's House, for the gloomiest terror of the Inquisition, and profit by the change. *Nature* herself becomes the tormentor. Nature, long trespassed on and abused, at length casts down the wretch; searches every vein, makes a road of every nerve for the scorching feet of pain to travel on, pulls at every muscle, breaks in the breast, builds fires in the brain, eats out the skin, and casts living coals of torment on the heart. What are hot pincers to the envenomed claws of *disease*? What is it to be put into a pit of snakes and slimy toads, and feel their cold coil or piercing fang, to the creeping of a whole body of vipers?— where every nerve is a viper, and every vein a viper, and every muscle a serpent; and the whole body, in all its parts, coils and twists upon itself in unimaginable anguish? I tell you, there is no Inquisition so bad as that which the Doctor looks upon! Young man! I can show you in this Ward worse pangs than ever a savage produced at the stake!— than ever a tyrant wrung out by engines of torment!— than ever an inquisitor devised! Every year, in every town, die wretches scalded and scorched with agony. Were the sum of all the pain that comes with the last stages of vice collected, it would rend the very heavens with its

outcry; would shake the earth; would even blanch the cheek of Infatuation! Ye that are listening in the garden of this strange woman, among her cheating flowers; ye that are dancing in her halls in the first Ward, come hither; look upon her fourth War— its vomited blood, its sores and fiery blotches, its prurient sweat, its dissolving ichor, and rotten bones! Stop, young man! You turn your head from this ghastly room; and yet, stop!— and stop soon, or thou shalt lie here! mark the solemn signals of thy passage! Thou hast had already enough of warnings in thy cheek, in thy bosom, in thy pangs of premonition! But ah! every one of you who are dancing with the covered paces of death, in the strange woman's first hall, let me break your spell; for now I shall open the doors of the last Ward. Look!— Listen!— Witness your own end, unless you take quickly a warning!

Ward of Death.— No longer does the incarnate wretch pretend to conceal her cruelty. She thrusts-aye! as if they were dirt— she shovels out the wretches. Some fall headlong through the rotten floor,— a long fall to a fiery bottom. The floor trembles to deep thunders which roll below. Here and there, jets of flame spout up, and give a lurid light to the murky hall. Some would fain escape; and flying across the treacherous floor, which man never safely passed, they go, through pitfalls and treacherous traps, with hideous outcries and astounding yells, to perdition! Fiends laugh! The infernal laugh, the cry of agony, the thunder of damnation, shake the very roof and echo from wall to wall. Oh ! that the young might see the end of vice before they see the beginning! I know that you shrink from this picture; but your safety requires that you should look long into the Ward of Death, that fear may supply strength to your virtue. See the blood oozing from the wall, the fiery hands which pluck the wretches down, the light of hell gleaming through, and hear its roar as of a distant ocean chafed with storms. Will you sprinkle the wall with your blood?— will you feed those flames with your flesh? will you add your voice to those thundering wails?— will you go down a prey through the fiery floor of the chamber of death? Believe then the word of God: *Her*

house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death,... avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away!

I have described the strange woman's House in strong language, and it needed it. If your taste shrinks from the description, so does mine. Hell, and all the ways of hell, when we pierce the cheating disguises and see the truth, are terrible and trying to behold; and if men would not walk there, neither would we pursue their steps, to sound the alarm, and gather back whom we can.

Allow me to close by directing your attention to a few points of especial danger.

I. I solemnly warn you against indulging a *morbid imagination*. In that busy and mischievous faculty begins the evil. Were it not for his airy imaginations, man might stand his own master— not overmatched by the worst part of himself. But ah! these summer-reveries, these venturesome dreams, these fairy castles, builded for no good purposes,— they are haunted by impure spirits, who will fascinate, bewitch, and corrupt you. *Blessed are the pure in heart*. Blessed art thou, most favored of God, whose THOUGHTS *are chastened*; whose imagination will not breathe or fly in tainted air; and whose path hath been measured by the golden reed of Purity.

May I not paint PURITY, as a saintly virgin, in spotless white, walking with open face, in an air so clear that no vapor can stain it?

“Upon her lightning-brow love proudly sitting,
Flames out in power, shines out in majesty.”

Her steps are a queen's steps; God is her father, and thou her brother, if thou wilt make her thine! Let thy heart be her dwelling; wear upon thy hand her ring, and on thy breast her talisman.

II. Next to evil imaginations, I warn the young of evil companions. Decaying fruit corrupts the neighboring fruit. You cannot make your head a metropolis of base stories, the ear and tongue a highway of immodest words, and yet be pure. Another, as well as yourself, may throw a spark on the magazine of your passions-beware how your companions do it! No man is your friend who will corrupt you. An impure man is every good man's enemy-your deadly foe ; and all the worse, if he hide his poisoned dagger under the cloak of good fellowship. Therefore, select your associates, assort them, winnow them, keep the grain, and let the wind sweep away the chaff.

III. But I warn you, with yet more solemn emphasis, against EVIL BOOKS and EVIL PICTURES. There is in every town an undercurrent which glides beneath our feet unsuspected by the pure; out of which, notwithstanding, our sons scoop many a goblet. Books are hidden in trunks, concealed in dark holes; pictures are stored in sly portfolios, or trafficked from hand to hand; and the handiwork of depraved art is seen in other forms which ought to make a harlot blush.

I should think a man would loathe himself, and wake up from owning such things as from a horrible nightmare. Those who circulate them are incendiaries of morality; those who make them, equal the worst public criminals. A pure heart would shrink from these abominable things as from death. France, where religion long ago went out smothered in licentiousness, flooded the world with a species of literature redolent of depravity. Upon the plea of exhibiting nature and man, novels are now scooped out of the very lava of corrupt passions. They are true to nature, but to nature as it exists in knaves and courtesans. Under a plea of humanity, we have shown up to us, troops of harlots, to prove that they are not so bad as purists think; gangs of desperadoes, to show that there is nothing in crime inconsistent with the noblest feelings. We have in French and English novels of the infernal school, humane murderers, lascivious saints, holy infidels, honest robbers. These artists never seem

lost, except when straining after a conception of religion. Their devotion is such as might be expected from thieves, in the purlieu of thrice-deformed vice. Exhausted libertines are our professors of morality. They scrape the very sediment and muck of society to mould their creatures; and their volumes are monster-galleries, in which the inhabitants of old Sodom would have felt at home as connoisseurs and critics. Over loathsome women, and unutterably vile men, huddled together in motley groups, and over all their monstrous deeds, their lies, their plots, their crimes, their dreadful pleasures, their glorying conversation, is thrown the checkered light of a hot imagination, until they glow with an infernal lustre. Novels of the French school, and of English imitators, are the common-sewers of society, into which drain the concentrated filth of the worst passions, of the worst creatures, of the worst cities. Such novels come to us impudently pretending to be reformers of morals and liberalizers of religion; they propose to instruct our laws, and teach a discreet humanity to justice! The Ten Plagues have visited our literature; water is turned to blood; frogs and lice creep and hop over our most familiar things,— the couch, the cradle, and the bread-trough; locusts, murrain, and fire, are smiting every green thing. I am ashamed and outraged when I think that wretches could be found to open these foreign seals, and let out their plagues upon us— that any Satanic Pilgrim should voyage to France to dip from the dead sea of her abomination, a baptism for our sons. It were a mercy to this, to import serpents from Africa and pour them out on our prairies; lions from Asia, and free them in our forests; lizards and scorpions and black tarantulas, from the Indies, and put them in our gardens. Men could slay these, but those offspring-reptiles of the French mind, who can kill these? You might as well draw sword on a plague, or charge a malaria with the bayonet. This black-lettered literature circulates in this town, floats in our stores, nestles in the shops, is fingered and read nightly, and hatches in the young mind broods of salacious thoughts. While the parent strives to infuse Christian purity into his child's heart, he is anticipated by most accursed messengers of

evil ; and the heart hisses already like a nest of young and nimble vipers.

IV. Once more, let me persuade you that no examples in high places, can justify imitation in low places. Your purity is too precious to be bartered, because an official knave tempts by his example. I would that every eminent place of state were a sphere of light, from which should be flung down on your path a cheering glow to guide you on to virtue. But if these wandering stars, reserved I do believe for final blackness of darkness, wheel their malign spheres in the orbits of corruption,— go not after them. God is greater than wicked great men; heaven is higher than the highest places of nations; and if God and heaven are not brighter to your eyes than great men in high places, then you must take part in their doom, when, ere long, God shall dash them to pieces!

V. Let me beseech you, lastly, to guard your heart-purity. Never lose it; if it be gone, you have lost from the casket the most precious gift of God. The first purity of imagination, of thought, and of feeling, it soiled, can be cleansed by no fuller's soap; if lost, cannot be found, though sought carefully with tears. If a harp be broken, art may repair it; if a light be quenched, the flame may enkindle it; but if a flower be crushed, what art can repair it?— if an odor be wafted away, who can collect or bring it back? The heart of youth is a wide prairie. Over it hang the clouds of heaven to water it, the sun throws its broad sheets of light upon it, to wake its life; out of its bosom spring, the long season through, flowers of a hundred names and hues, twining together their lovely forms, wafting to each other a grateful odor, and nodding each to each in the summer-breeze. Oh! such would man be, did he hold that purity of heart which God gave him! But you have a DEPRAVED HEART. It is a vast continent; on it are mountain-ranges of powers, and dark deep streams, and pools, and morasses. If once the full and terrible clouds of temptation do settle thick and fixedly upon you, and begin to cast down their dreadful stores, may God save whom man can never! Then the heart shall feel tides and streams of irresistible power, mocking its control, and hurrying

fiercely down from steep to steep, with growing desolation. Your only resource is to avoid the uprising of your giant-passions.

We are drawing near to a festival day,* by the usages of ages, consecrated to celebrate the birth of Christ. At his advent, God hung out a prophet-star in the heaven; guided by it, the wise men journeyed from the east and worshipped at his feet. Oh! let the star of Purity hang out to thine eye, brighter than the orient orb to the Magi; let it lead thee, not to the Babe, but to His feet who now stands in Heaven, a Prince and Saviour! If thou hast sinned, one look, one touch, shall cleanse thee whilst thou art worshipping, and thou shalt rise up healed.

NOTE.— The exceptions taken to the current reformation-novels of Godwin, Bulwer, Dickens, (perhaps,) Eugene Sue, and a host of others, require a word of explanation, 1. We do not object to any reasonable effort at reformation, moral, social, civil, or economical—much is needed. So far, the design of this school of romancers is praiseworthy. 2. But we doubt the propriety of employing fictions as an instrument; especially fictions wrought to produce a stage-effect, a violent thrill, rather than a conviction. These works affect the *feelings* more than the *opinions*. 3. Nine-tenths of novel readers are the young, the unreflecting, or those whose hearts have been macadamized by the incessant tramping of ten times ten thousand heroes and heroines, marching across their feelings. Efforts at reformation should be directed to other readers than these. 4. But the worst is yet to be told. Under the pretence of social reformations, the most flagitious vices are inculcated. There can be no doubt of it. An analysis of the best characters would give pride, lawlessness, passion, revenge, lusts, hypocrisies; in short, a catalogue of vices. Eugene Sue seeks to raise the *operatives*, to show the ruinous partiality of law, the hideous evils of prisons, &c., &c. The

design appears well. What part of this design are the constant and deliberate *lies* of Rodolphe, the hero? This wandering prince coolly justifies himself in putting out a man's eyes, because the law would slay him if delivered up!— provides means for decoying convicts from prison!— sets on foot atrocious deceptions, to crush deceptions. This is the best character in the far-famed Mysteries of Paris. Unquestionably the purest woman is Goualeuse, redeemed from prostitution! Madame Lucenay lives in unblushing adultery with Saint Remy, who proves to be a forger ! We are edified by a scene of noble indignation and virtue, in which this woman, who has violated the most sacred instincts, and all the sanctities of the family, teaches Remy his degradation for violating civil laws! Admirable reform! An unblushing adulteress preaches so well to her paramour forger! The diabolical voluptuousness of Cecily— the assignations of the *pure* Madame D'Harville— the astonishing reformations produced in a single hour, in which harlots turn vestals, murderers philanthropists, poachers and marauders more honest than honest men— these are but specimens of the instruments by which this new and popular reform is changing our morals, and Christianizing us! What then shall be said of the works of George Sand, Masson, Dumas, M. de Balsac and others like them, by whose side Eugene Sue is an angel of purity ? A bookseller in a large city on the Ohio river, on being asked, of what work he sold the most, replied— “*of Paul de Kock!*” — the literary prince of nastiness.

* This Lecture was delivered upon Christmas eve