

BOOKS AND THINGS.

Dean Swift, in giving some advice to a young poet, remarked that "people generally treat authors like they do lobsters: they take out the savory part near the tail, and lay the rest back in the dish." Swift hardly ever said a word but what went straight to the intended place. In this sentence he has made the whole matter plain, he has made a complete confession in open court. In all literature we will scarcely find a better rule of rhetoric than the one pointed out.—We treat books and especially essays like lobsters. How our gluttonous appetite often wishes that we had a thousand lobster tails already cut off and nicely heaped up that we might gorge without going to the trouble of handling or even eating a thousand lobsters. Or we would rather wish that lobsters were all tail so that we could gormandize indiscriminately.

But how we would curse the knave flunkey who would give us a lobster with the tail cut off. Think of a man eating down bones and shells, saying nothing of the disagreeable effect in the palate.

But in this latter day of cause and effect we are not inclined to adopt any statement without sufficient reason. And now, Mr. Swift, why so rash in your advice? You either believe that all readers are gluttons, or that all compositions are real lobsters with really soft palatable tails. Not so. Men are not mental gluttons—would to heaven they were, for we would then have at least a full age instead of one that is always complaining of sickness at the stomach.—The trouble is, men, in this country at least, are unaccustomed to real lobsters, and when one is pointed out, they are already disgusted with the smell and cannot think of tasting it. Our sense of smell thus becomes wonderfully cultivated. Mrs. L. R. S&c., a nervous old lady, says she can smell them clear across the street and in going to church, invariably goes clear around the square to avoid passing a one-horse restaurant. "It is passing

strange." "Shame on the age and its principles." Think of a strong bodied church member running away from a lobster! Stand your ground, sister. Bring to bear your infinite faith, maybe he will stop.

"So we will take ham and eggs, if you please, in these spring days of Evolution. We need something strong to brace us against the warm days coming in summer time." This is the voice of the many. And how they then take down the salt bacon and ham and mackerel and codfish and dried beans, that in little barrels and boxes and bags have been handed down to his posterity by the three-fold generous father Locke, while they might, just as well as not, be dissolving a sweet lobster tail beneath their anxious molars.

But the Dean is wrong, in the second place, when he supposes all productions to be like lobsters. If he could have lived in a later day, he would, most likely, have had a different opinion. For, if his statement be always true, we must pity the lobsters, for, how many must be without any tails at all! How can we answer people for not liking lobsters, when, generally, they have no soft palatable part near the tail. We sit down to our "literary feast" and we will take the tails already cut off, if you please.

But here comes a fellow thrusting beneath our nose an animal, which, he says, is of the genus *Astacus*. He declares it is a genuine lobster. "See his head," he says. "Look at his tentacula." We reply that we would rather see his latter appendage. We look but make no discovery. We then rail upon all cursed deceptions, swear that we will never again take any thing but round steak. But another loon comes. He affirms that his article is genuine. Points to the tail. We observe, while he pours in upon our soul a few lines of poetry well chosen from "Mother Goose." We are convinced, most thoroughly convinced, finish our repast, and leave. "But, before we go," say we, "we will embrace the present favorable