

*FICTION AND ITS PROPER PLACE.*

From time immemorial, fiction has held an important and necessary place in literature. Important, by reason of its amount and its influence; necessary, because man must draw largely on his imagination to find the material for his literary productions.

There seems to be a prevalent opinion that there is a broad distinction between real and fictitious writings. This is not true. The former are based upon known facts; the latter upon known principles; yet principles sustain a vital relation to facts. A novelist meets with a few incidents of everyday life that suggest to him the groundwork of a story. His knowledge, however, of the manner in which these are interwoven is quite likely to be far from precise. Hence, if he confine himself to the facts, it will be almost impossible to construct the novel. He can only supply the lack by drawing upon his imagination for the details.

If this be done as they may fairly be presumed to have happened, the novel may be made the vehicle of a good deal of varied and useful information. It will be presented, also, in a very popular and attractive manner.

If the novel be true to life, the vividness of its portraiture causes us almost to lose sight of its unreality. We gain from it an insight into the thoughts of men that is rarely so well presented in what we call real literature.

The latter is often misleading. History is full of disputed points; abstract treatises abound in wrong premises and incorrect conclusions. And again, the opponents of fiction seem to forget that writers in other departments of literature freely employ invented illustrations. Fiction, whether in this form or as a novel, is indispensable, and opposition to it on general grounds, of little avail.

Though fiction in itself is indispensable, it yet has its proper limits. Among large

numbers of people, it has fallen into disrepute. This, we think, is not so much owing to the idea that unreal literature is necessarily injurious, as because a large amount of it steps outside the bounds of truth, and deals chiefly in the marvelous and absurd. In this case, it is mere fabrication and deserving of all the censure which it receives.

True fiction does not necessarily have an injurious influence on its readers. Because crowds of sensational writers stand ready to flood the newsmarket with their flimsy stories, these need not pass into general circulation. In fiction, as in other departments of literature, we should not throw away the good because the bad is mingled with it, but discriminate between the two. Novel reading may be carried to an extreme, yet it is not the best plan to read nothing else than what is called "solid reading." Information is thus lost which is scarcely obtainable in any other way.

CAIUS.

*LIMITATIONS TO SUFFRAGE.*

It is not my intention to go through the whole rigmarole about women's suffrage, but simply to show what I consider to be the inevitable in the matter and then to see what universal suffrage should be. Is it at all likely that the time will come when women will be allowed equal rights with men? This, I think, can hardly be denied by any intelligent person, but how soon or for what reason it will be granted, I am unable to say. It may be that the women will persuade the men to give it them. And if true women unite in persuading the men they will succeed, but never, while they curse and browbeat the men as some of the female advocates of suffrage do. It may be that the men will voluntarily give it them without any restrictions or it may be allowed, as Wendell Phillips advocates, simply for an experiment. However they may get it, I believe that when once it is within their grasp, they