

public men to at last destroy a creditable record, it is doubtful if his name would best promote a more national feeling between the North and the South.

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THE STRUGGLES OF THE AMERICAN NOVELIST.

THE struggles of the American novelist, for existence, for popularity, and artistic attainment combined, render humiliating aspect to a sympathetic eye. Not for the lack of ambition, nor the want of suitable material does he languish in mid-ocean. But baffling the waves of a national tendency, he is forever tossed by contending billows.

Humanity, restless with activity, has ever striven to display its greatest powers. Civilization, though at intervals has been irregular, in its development, has, nevertheless, been progressive. If it has been retarded, it has burst forth in redoubled fury. At one time, it has exulted in philosophical development, again, in artistic culture. But yesterday a classical literature gleamed and sparkled throughout Europe. To-day, the inventive genius of its authors has assumed the mechanic's garb. The laboratory has become the modern library, the foundery, the haunts of the imagination. Already are we groping in the labyrinths of a scientific age. The imaginative element of England and America has glided into an inquiry after the mysteries of nature. Elegance of diction and dignity of romance find expression in the mechanism of machinery and the elements of inductive science. Fascinated by research, we find little time to muse upon fictitious probabilities. Reality we seek. To the golden end of utility we aspire.

Upon the present turmoil of commercial activity the American novelist, surrounded and enraptured by the relics of classic excellence, looks with troubled gaze. With lofty ambition to improve

upon the style of his predecessors, he marshals to his command superior graces of character, and perfected symmetry of design. But ere his pen records a single thought, one glance at public taste, predicts the fate of his most sanguine hopes and discloses the degenerated condition of his ideal art. Instead of the cultivated society that nourished a Scott and a Dickens, he finds to his regret, only an unpolished mind, bent upon the development of the factory and the mill. To such an one wholly destitute of appreciation for artistic beauty, the only attraction of the novel exists in the sensation of adventure and novelty of plot. Eliminate from its pages the melodramatic and the sprightly, and you have made it a drug upon the market. Insert into it the aesthetic taste of the classic writer and you have immortalized it, by attaching an everlasting curse for its stupidity. Deprive it of its humor and garrulity and it receives a vindictive reception. But clothe the most repulsive dogma in its brilliant attire and it evades detection, fascinates the undisciplined mind, and sways the destiny of civil society.

Impelled by scientific development, we have drifted far from the moorings of a literary criterion. Submerged in an atmosphere of mechanical genius the hum of machinery and the mutterings of social rivalry, furnish our sweetest music. The periodical teeming with sensational comments, enlists public applause. But fiction shaded with philosophy, or cast in a classic mould, engenders a lingering disgust.

The American novelist, then, finds in his public, a literary taste so contaminated as to set at defiance his worthier incentives. Unwilling to proffer his noblest conception to the provincial herd, to be trampled in the mire by unprincipled critics, he calmly resigns his favored project to a selfish enjoyment. Characterizing as he does, the peculiarities of human nature, he the more easily becomes a slave to her magic devices. Eager for wealth and intoxicated with a