

man's life should be to leave the world a little better from his having lived. How shall this desired end be gained? It seems to me by the development of the individual, by allowing all his powers to expand, unchecked by the customs and superstitions that ages of darkness have woven into society. Wonderfully diverse will be the characters thus produced; but they will correspond to the law Amos has so finely expressed, when he says: "Diversity is the law of life, absolute equality that of stagnation and death" '80.

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### THACKERY AND DICKENS.

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**P**ROSE fiction was one of the latest classes of literature to be cultivated. Bacon's and More's works, written in Latin, were philosophical romances; but prose descriptions of character and incidents were first presented to the world by Sterne, Defoe, and others. The two great branches of this department are the romance and the novel. The former treats of incidents and character in an unnatural manner, being greatly a work of imagination, while the latter is supposed to give every thing in a natural and probable way.

Jeffrey, in his criticism of novels, seemed to feel it necessary to make excuses for noticing any thing so unimportant as a novel. We are not surprised at this, when we consider the fact that in the early part of their existence, novels were rated very low. Even after the "Vicar of Wakefield" and the works of Richardson and Fielding were given to the world, they did not rise in the estimation of the people; for, certainly, a greater amount of trash never disgraced any country than was found in England at their time. After Scott's works were published, this prejudice gradually subsided.

The English novelists have had few rivals and no superiors. Of this class two of the most noted are Thackery and Dickens. Very different in individual

character and also in their styles of writing, but each wielding a powerful influence. Such works can do a great amount of good by calling the attention to certain evils of society. To be sure a moral essay might do so more briefly, but many who will pass the essay by will read the novel.

All things seem to have combined to make these two men different. Thackery, reared in wealth and with every advantage; Dickens, compelled to struggle with poverty all through his childhood; one surrounded by pleasant home influences, the other having a home where harmony was unknown; Thackery kind, but severely just, and Dickens sympathetic and quick to defend the oppressed.

The father of Charles Dickens intended him for the law; but the boy showed such a decided aversion to this that he was finally permitted to turn his attention to literary work. He began his career as a contributor to a daily paper. In this appeared "Sketches by Boz" followed by "Picwick Papers," which was Dickens' first decided success.

Thackery, on the other hand, had every advantage from the first. After careful training, he was sent to Cambridge; but the death of his father soon after, left him a large fortune and perfect freedom; so he left school at once. His great desire was to become an artist, and he therefore spent several years in travel and in the study of art. When compelled, by the loss of his fortune, to give this up, he possessed stores of just such knowledge as is valuable in literary work. Another advantage he had over most other authors was that he could illustrate his own writings.

These two men travel on very different roads to arrive at the same place. Their ideas seem entirely different on many points, but it is evident that both have kindly feelings towards humanity and a true desire to promote its welfare.

It is not of the great wrongs of mankind that they treat, but of the lesser evils of society. Thackery is one of the