

mas. This he clearly proved by his short but illustrious rule.

While Cortez was at the head of the subdued Mexicans, all went well. The natives were satisfied, internal progress was rapid and in fact all the arts of peace were carefully cultivated. Not a revolt was heard of among the conquered tribes and he was regarded by all as a benign ruler.

How different was the scene presented as soon as his narrow minded countrymen were placed in authority. Revolts sprung up on every hand. All sorts of lawlessness were practised upon the simple natives by the debased Spaniards and instead of the prosperity and order which existed when Cortez was ruler, Mexico has been sinking, from that day to this, deeper and deeper into the mire of anarchy and confusion.

Before passing a too hasty and severe condemnation upon the lives of men who lived in an age less civilized than ours, let us ask ourselves this question—how will future generations look upon many of our acts? I think that much which we consider just and humane will be regarded as acts of barbarism.

Then in speaking and writing of men of former ages, while showing forth their careers, let us place alongside of their bad deeds, their good ones and alongside of the good the bad and draw our inferences and conclusions by regarding the degree of civilization in which they lived.

We would have no one think that we defend many of the acts of Cortez. He was a human being and therefore subject to mistakes and gross errors.

An unprincipled adventurer he would be *now*, but *then* he was not so regarded.

Cortez in truth was in advance of his countrymen or in other words ahead of the time in which he lived.

DEFENSOR.

LITERARY CRITICISM.

The criticism that is sometimes placed upon American literature, is indeed amusing.

That criticism is necessary for designating an inferior class of books and periodicals is self-evident. But that criticism has been the chief agent in opposing the formation of a standard in American literature is equally true. Could criticism end in preserving a pure class of literature, then its brilliant results would remain untarnished. But criticism knows no end. There is a class of people that are called critics. They do not stop with a just criticism upon second or third class writings but pull down the master-pieces of eminent authors, and in glowing terms depict the gross mistakes of those whose reputation and perfection the critic might envy.

Critics, then, may be divided into two classes. The criticisms of one class result in the benefit of literature: the criticisms of the other in its degradation and ruin.

The first class is gifted with a free use of their judgment. They rise above the sphere of prejudice and jealousy. They criticise an article upon its real merits. If the article is worthy of attention, it receives its due attention; if inferior, it receives its due censure. It is this class that has established the standard of English and French literature. But in America this class is small. It is over-powered by the second class, and the standard of our prose and poetry is made to suit the critic.

The critics of the second class are numerous, and their criticisms are cheap. They not only criticise harshly an inferior type of literature, but sometimes ridicule the best that falls into their grasp. The inferior and superior are alike to them. They are not satisfied with anything. They are jealous over the success of others. They seem to smile upon the care-worn authors about to be crushed under the weight of their malicious criticism. It is