

The element of tragedy in a well written novel, though objected to by simpering maidens who declare that they will never forgive the author for ending the story so badly, has long been recognized as a most important factor; for that element which so predominates in all lives cannot be ignored by those who profess to be the true painters of life.

In the novel, woman has always occupied the seat of honor and authors have exerted themselves to the utmost to interpret her character, and the purest type and the highest ideals of womanhood have had their birth in the brain of the novelist. Woman's attempt to analyze the character of her sex has hardly been so successful as that of man's, perhaps, from the great difficulty of obeying the command "know thyself."

The novelist must be so entirely lost in his work and forgetful of self, that, if he expects his readers to laugh or weep, he must laugh and weep before them, and we find Richardson weeping over his "Pamela" as DeStael and Macauley did after him. Scott in his excitement over his characters would show the greatest emotion and feeling, pacing the room with his face showing the utmost intensity of feeling.

We would uphold the novel from the many thrusts against it by a paraphrase of the well-known apology for Beauty,—if books were made for reading, then a novel is its own excuse for being.

It is owing to the many spurious articles together with the strong prejudice against the novel that it has suffered such injustice from so many. Our libraries are filled with works of science, history, of poetry and art, poorly written biographies, and, according to custom, we add in an undertone, a few choice novels.

I disclaim against this injustice to these universal histories of the soul and life, and while history and science may perform their part, still, as Emerson says, the human heart is of much more concern to us than the poring into microscopes;

and is larger than can be measured by the pompous figures of an astronomer. What, then, can be higher or nobler than the study and interpretation of this great human heart as it throbs and beats in the life of man; but there are those who, as Whipple says, consider him a greater personage who repeats some axiom in physics, or wraps up a plain fact in a metaphysical shroud, than one who thrills the heart or warms the soul with a prose epic.

E. P.

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### PAROLLES AND BOBADIL.

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**T**HE study of character ought to be one of the most important things, that engage our attention. The power to read character aright gives us the key to all of the actions of our fellow men.

This is more and more recognized as we move along the path of improvement.

This, it would seem, is proved by the numerous works in our day, teaching, or pretending to teach us how to read character aright. Among all teachers and painters of character, Shakspeare and Jonson rise superior. By them motive is presented, as though the soul were reflected from a clear, smooth mirror. The stamp of men, as presented to us by Shakspeare's Parolles and Jonson's Bobadil, is seen and known by all, is met in all the daily walks of life.

There is no trait of character, perhaps, that we so much despise, as sneaking, yet constantly boasting and egotistical cowardice. In these two men, we have just such a character, painted with all the masterly skill of Shakspeare, or the bold firmness of Jonson. To understand these two fine conceptions of one phase of human life, we must take one, and to it compare the other. In Bobadil we have precisely, what his big sounding oaths, "By the foot of Pharoah," or "As I am a soldier," would lead us to expect.

His pretensions to a soldier's skill, and frequent reference to his own deeds of