

The English idea is to narrow, or, as we may say, degrade the human character into a mere aggregate of vices and virtues, and the English novelist must conform to the prevailing standard. His heroes must be prodigies of valor, his heroines perfections of virtue, and the villains in the plot have the one quality of vice. In other words, one quality represents the whole character; the part is taken as the whole. In this respect the novels of Dickens and Thackeray are like all English novels.

Thackeray, however, has one peculiarity. He is eminently a satirist. Satire is the characteristic most natural to English writings. A man of reflection is impelled to it by the false character of the institutions surrounding him. Thackeray was a man of deep reflection, and therefore eminently fitted for the writing of satire. His reflections were of the gloomiest kind, and it is the gloom that makes his satire so depressing in its effects. A man of high moral principles and a lover of all that is honest and pure, he was fully alive to the follies and vices of men, and keenly observant of the wrongs and oppressions around him. His fault is that he is so lost in the contemplation of vice that he leaves out of sight the good that is in us. Those who admire him most admit that he paints the world blacker than it is. Through all his novels, even those of his characters who are not actually vicious have their faults and weaknesses more prominent than their admirable qualities. In some respects this fault-finding tendency is of value. For example, his satires of snobs. The snob is a character peculiar to England, a natural outgrowth of English institutions. Thackeray had a peculiar detestation of snobs and of everything snobbish. In the "Book of Snobs" he touches upon every type known in society and shows up their follies with stinging sarcasm. In all his writings Thackeray is the sternest of moralists. From his novels we might glean whole sermons on morality. We may read between the lines complete lessons on love, on vanity, on hypocrisy, on all the virtues and all the vices. To every odious character is attached an obvious moral. This didactic style, long-continued, becomes tedious. We do not like to have moral conclusions thrust upon us, but prefer sometimes to draw inferences for ourselves.

The marked contrast between the writings of Thackeray and Dickens is the natural result of their different natures. Thackeray is preeminently an assailant of vice; he picks out flaws and faults in human character and shows us the evil of wrong doing. Whatever may have been his character as a man, as a writer he was the Prince of Cynics.

Dickens has nothing of the cynical in his nature. He was a lover of mankind, delighting in finding good in every man, no matter how humble he might be. This principle is evident in all his novels. His heroes are people to admire. The difference may be best noted by taking a character from each author, as Pendennis and Nickleby. Pendennis is rash, vain and foolish. He meets trouble through his own fault, and when he is successful we are inclined to think his success due to the force of circumstances rather than to his own wise exertions. His first love is an actress, a dull, stupid woman older than himself. When obliged to give her up he thinks his heart is almost broken. However, he recovers and is soon lost in admiration of another. Each time his love is entirely without reason and therefore not genuine.

Nicholas, on the other hand, is a man of resolution. He overcomes obstacles readily and shapes his career with a firm hand. His first and only love is a noble girl who would win the admiration of any man. We despise Pendennis because he is weak; we admire Nicholas because he is strong.

The great power of Dickens is his imagination. An idea

takes complete possession of him; all else is for the moment forgotten. He presents a picture in an infinite variety of forms, gives minutest details with such vividness and distinctness that the reader must see it just as the author has it in his mind. Moreover, a great subject is not required to arouse his imagination. Critics find fault with him because he gives too much attention to common things, exalting trivialities, but the very criticism shows his worth. He seeks for beauty everywhere. All beauty about us tends to the refinement of our moral natures. But if we do not notice beauty, the effect is lacking. And there are degrees in beauty as in other things. We cannot always be roused by grand subjects and soul-inspiring themes. Human nature cannot long endure a heavy strain. Dickens takes the trivial things, the common affairs which make up the sum of our lives, and shows us beauties in them which but for him might have remained unnoticed.

Thackeray has none of the impulsiveness of Dickens. He keeps his subject always under control, never allowing himself to be mastered by it. His judgments are reached only after due deliberation and reflection. His sweeping condemnations are not the result of excitement or prejudice. We feel that his intense hatred of wrong justified it. In all his writings the ruling sentiment is hatred—hatred of evil, to be sure, but hatred none the less. The ruling principle of Dickens' writings is love—love of all things good, pure and beautiful. The difference in the effect produced is just the difference between love and hate. Love expands our sensibilities; hate cramps them. Hate warps and dwarfs the soul; love enlarges and develops.

Taine sums up the teachings and general principles of Dickens' novels as follows: "Be good and love; be virtuous and you will be happy. Honor virtue wherever found. Genuine joy is found only in the emotions of the heart. Sensibility is the whole man."

BASE BALL IN HADES.

The following little article is clipped from one of our exchanges, and is meant specially for the benefit of the Classics, though of course those of the other students who have brains enough to appreciate it are welcome to laugh at it if they so choose.

As the rivalry was intense, the kicking over the choice of an umpire was proportionately huge; but Socrates was finally chosen. He took his position and the game began. The two nines were as follows:

GREEKS.		ROMANS.
Cleon	catcher	Brutus.
Cimon	pitcher	Caesar.
Plato	1st	Virgil.
Aristophanes	2d	Lucretius
Alcibiades	3d	Cicero.
Aristotle	short	Horace.
Euripides	right	Juvenal.
Æschylus	left	Livy.
Sophocles	center	Tacitus.

The Romans were at bat. Virgil and Livy were called out on strikes, but Lucretius smashed the round atom on the nose for a base hit. On the first ball pitched he stole second in safety, but to the amazement of all was declared "out" by Socrates on the ethical ground that stealing was contrary to every principle derived from a contemplation of the idea of Virtue. In less time than it takes to tell it, Socrates was "fired," and Catiline was substituted. He remarked that a good philosopher might be a d— poor umpire, and the game proceeded.