

INTRODUCTION.

SOME admirers of solid reading say, with regretful sighs, and doleful faces, that the day of stable, instructing literature is superseded by that of trashy novels, romances, etc., tending to corrupt the mind and principles. Formerly, the tables of even the fashionable were strown with volumes designed not only to amuse, but to elevate, edify, and contribute to the truly intellectual enjoyment of their readers instead of those fostering vitiated tastes and sullyng youthful minds, with which they insist our shelves are now cumbered. They mourn over the degeneracy in this of our otherwise "age of improvement," and not rightly judging the true cause, almost wish, from the evils which have arisen from this, that the noble art of printing had remained undiscovered.

But, dear friends, do not shake your head in such grave disapproval of the above apparently ironical paragraph. In part, I do agree with you. There does seem to have been a sad falling off from the pure healthful taste of former days, when a volume of true poetry, or a treatise on a sensible subject could be read with real zest and enjoyment. It is too true, that many works are now forced upon us detailing scenes too highly wrought, exciting and dissipating to the mind, and presenting pictures tending to nourish a depraved moral hunger. In their places we should have productions divested of frivolous imaginings, wild speculations, and false sentimentalism; and I can not believe that our tastes are so vitiated that such we could not appreciate and duly value. There are real scenes of sorrow and pleasure even in this