

refined taste, many persons love to adorn their libraries with works of acknowledged merit in this department, and affect to admire their contents, when, in fact, the volumes have scarcely been opened.

Whence this want of poetic taste? Unquestionably it is, in a great measure, inherent in the nature of the inhabitants of America. The first settlers of this Continent consisted chiefly of those who were driven from the Old World by poverty. Once here, their minds were necessarily devoted to the attainment of physical comforts, to the all but total exclusion of intellectual refinements. This inclination has descended to the present generation. At least, the improvement of his pecuniary position, is, ostensibly, or professedly, *the* great object in life of almost every man on this Continent. The pursuit of the "almighty dollar" is the grand pursuit; and the public institutions both of the United States and of British America, tend to foster this state of things. We cannot expect the great body of such a people to be *very* keenly alive to the sensations of poetic feeling; much less can we expect their heart strings to vibrate very readily beneath the touch of the Old World's poet.

Again, the local and historical associations which tend so much to the growth of the poetic temperament, are, in a great measure, wanting in America. Every American who has travelled in Europe, must have observed the effects of these in the comparatively large development of that temperament, among nearly every class of European Society. Indeed, *romantic* is the word we hear most frequently used by such travellers, and one which is frequently misapplied to that refinement of sensibility, that ennobling of impulse, that etherealization of thought, which may be appropriately styled the *poetry of feeling*, as it is that only which can create, and which only can appreciate the poetry in language. As an instance of the existence and effect of such associations, take the case of an inhabitant of Great Britain. From the nursery to the tomb, he breathes in an atmosphere of soul-stirring associations. At every step he treads upon classic ground. There is something which tends to lofty aspirations, to deep and grand emotions, even in the fact of his being a native of, and of his drawing his sustenance from the soil of, that country "whose flag has braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze." But, commencing with his infancy and the nursery tale of the "Babes in the Wood," he is familiarised with the soul-stirring and soul-purifying influences of those traditions which throw a poetic halo around his country—traditions which are ever fresh in his memory, from his being, through life, familiar with their localities and with the traces they have left upon the face of society. Every hill and valley, and stream has its volume of poetic legendary lore; every grove, its fairy fictions; every hamlet, its poetic tales of real life fraught with thrilling interest. Within the horizon of his daily ken, there are probably the picturesque and crumbling ruins of a castle tenanted of old