

THE CHARACTER OF OLIVER TWIST.

THAT the most amiable qualities of mind and heart are not inconsistent with lowliness of birth, poverty or misfortune, is a fact of every day experience. And yet there are many who still persist in trampling on the "thick-crowding poor"; who pass their less fortunate neighbours in the street with a look of cold scorn; who, if ever they happen to come in contact with a person on whose name there is a stain, throw up their hands in holy horror, thus aggravating the ignominy of one who is probably deserving of their sympathy. If such a course of action were always prompted by pride, it would at least be readily understood; but very often this is not the case. Not infrequently this deplorable lack of christian charity is evinced by men who are known among their friends and associates as far removed from anything like the least semblance of vanity. They act on principle: on that absurd principle — like all popular fallacies, wide-spread and fashionable — that all who do not move in, or above, his particular social circle are unworthy of the notice of a polished gentleman; they have been trained up in that exclusive, aristocratic school, which, with characteristic shortsightedness, condemns indiscriminately all those who go to make up that miscellaneous class to which we apply the generic term "poor," and hence they invariably treat all paupers alike, without ever stopping to consider the peculiar circumstances of the unfortunates who come to their notice. It is not a matter of rare occurrence to see the rich man refuse to the applicant for charity the crumbs that fall from his table; and this too, not from any motive of niggardliness or avarice, but solely for the reason that he thinks every poor man is a tramp, or worse. This mistaken notion of those unhappy mortals who form the lowest class in society is all too common and the sooner it is fully exploded the better. Because perchance a fellow-creature contending against "the thousand nameless ills that one incessant struggle render life," has fallen into poverty and become the victim of want and neglect; because a person happens to be born in poor circumstances,—or even in disgrace—is not an infallible proof that he is destitute of all the