

sequence. It is a curious but acknowledged fact, that each new resultant of determined investigation opens up, in one way or another, fresh avenues of thought, and points to vast and fertile regions never yet explored by man. The gifted Jewish preacher of ancient days exclaimed with a sigh of bitterness, "There is no new thing under the sun." Three thousand years of inquiry and experience have passed away, and the boundaries of novelty have not yet been reached. The kingdom of knowledge is ever widening, and its power, aided by civilization and research, is extending to territories hitherto unknown. The misty veil lifts as the world rolls on, disclosing illimitable ranges of thought. Such results refer themselves primarily to the principle already enunciated, and carry out the beneficent design of the Creator in placing so powerful an element in the mental constitution of mankind. The non-existence of inventive genius since the early years of history, would long ago have plunged humanity in a woful condition of despair. The wail of the preacher would have been echoed with stronger emphasis, and deeper feeling by each succeeding generation, till it became a deep—resounding, earth—surrounding funeral dirge.

That novelty is an essential factor in all branches of Literature, will be readily granted. Its effects therein cannot be so easily seen. One of the most palpable and apparent is its tendency to promote variety. The mind after a time wearies of the beaten track, and though this may be the safer and more solid, it is pleasant to wander off into the bye-paths and investigate the recent and the novel. Such a departure should be guided by reason rather than prompted by curiosity. Men are apt to forget that novelty does not signify excellence, and that productions because new are not necessarily standard.

Novelty also tends to introduce new departments of study. This is involved in the very word itself. Here the principle of originality endures its strongest test, and proportionate to the possession thereof by the author, will be the success of his work. This factor tends naturally and primarily toward innovation, so that the writer whose thoughts are characterized by freshness and originality, will seldom fail to command attention, even though his style and force of expression be inferior. Sincerely we respect the man whose genius has revealed a branch of study hitherto unknown. In these days we do not meet

such men, but they have been and future time may produce others yet greater.

A third effect of this element in Literature is the awakened interest in established lines of thought. Here its power is most widely exercised, since each several department of investigation has been adorned and freshened by its presence, and growing years seem never to exhaust its progress or vitality. So potent and universal is this fact that authors seek often curious and uncommon titles for their works, in order by this means to ensure attention. In many instances however, the title is the only novel feature in the production. A few years ago, Dickens graphically delineated the condition of the lower orders of society in London. The racy and original manner in which this was done naturally awakened interest, and a three-fold object was gained. The public were enlightened, the fame of the author was established, and the poor received a more extensive, a more heartfelt and a more tangible sympathy. Never before had the subject been presented in so pleasing yet straight-forward a manner. In this case neither the material nor the style of writing were entirely new, but the novelty of the combination was effective.

The fore-going illustration leads naturally to the consideration of *novel writing*, as generally understood. The novel, in this regard, is of essentially recent growth. Modern usage has restricted the term almost entirely to the realm of fiction, which seems unwarrantable. The undoubted influence for good exerted by this style of writing cannot be gainsaid, but at present there is a marked tendency towards superficiality and sensationalism. The appeal is made far more strongly to the emotions than to the intellect, so that the former are unduly excited, while the latter becomes weakened through inaction. Here the fundamental principle, implied in the very name, is in great degree eradicated.

Through the whole extent of Literature a lack of novelty is perceptible. The acknowledged rulers therein are at all points open to the charge of plagiarism. Of this fault past as well as present time furnishes examples. Virgil's *Aeneid* shows many faithful reflections from the *Iliad* of Homer. Chaucer, Pope, Swift were also masters of imitation, but so changed is the language, so altered the style, so elevated the thought, that we perceive only the hand of the most recent painter and ascribe to him acknowledged genius all the praise.