

THE Canadian Magazine.

Vol I.

Toronto, July.

No. 1.

ADDRESS ON LITERATURE.

BY THE EDITOR.

Much has been said and written respecting the false views of human life to be found in some works of fiction. We admit that such is the case, some novels throw a halo round even the most disreputable of their characters, and make consummate villains into romantic heroes. Writing of this description is in extensive demand among certain classes,—such as the sickly sentimental, the imperfectly educated and the vicious. Many journals pander to this sensational class by the publication of the most morbid literature. But because some professed artists produce daubs and caricatures, true art must not be condemned. It is quite as true in literary art as in any other, that the great masters copy direct from nature. We remember, some years ago, hearing a long diatribe by a public lecturer, on works of fiction, light and magazine literature, in which he professed to show the evil effects of such reading upon the mind, through creating a distaste for more solid and practical literature. All such reading as novels, he asserted, was mental poison, varied in its power according to the character of the production, but all of which tended to paralyze the thinking powers, because it required no exercise of the judgment. So powerfully convinced was the lecturer of the truth of his statements, that he experimented *in propria persona*, he was in private! a great reader of novels, and if all are poisonous, he sometimes selected such as contained strong doses of the paralyzing virus. Such is the inconsistency of fallen humanity! Our best novels copy direct from actual, daily life; and so far from exaggerating character and facts, we think the reverse will often hold good. If we call to mind the remarkable divorce cases which have been reported in European and American papers during the past twenty years, and the extraordinary revelations which have been elicited during the trials, we shall find facts stranger than fiction, in its ordinary acceptance, while some of the exceptional cases rival the wildest romance. If we turn to the records of crime arising from the love