

Mid-Victorian Memories

opinion : but all were at least eminent enough to make memorable a certain Mid-Victorian decade wherein were conspicuously represented all the great names. The new novels of 1851-60 included "Esmond" and "The Newcomes": "Evelyn D'Audley" and "House" and "A Tale of Two Cities": "The Mill on the Floss": "The Ordeal of Richard Feverish": "The Warden" and "Barchester Towers": "My Novel" and "What will he do with it": "Villette" and "The Professor": "Hypatia": "The Woman in White." A few more years would have brought in Mrs. Oliphant, and Bulwer-Lytton's "Lorna Doone."

I began these recollections by maintaining that it should be everybody's duty to contribute his personal impressions to the atmospheric record of his time, regardless of their importance, though they were great or none. It is, after all, of the ordinary lives of the ordinary folk that the characteristic atmosphere of any period is composed: the lives of great men tell us but little of their times. The theoretical duty has, on the whole, proved a practical pleasure so far as memory can ever prove a pleasure in a parti-coloured world. And my concluding remarks in favour of the importance of a certain literary decade warrants me