

If the poet and the philosopher reflected upon a truth so great, and yet so obvious, would not much that has been written have been blotted out? I know of no living man who bears upon him so great, so fearful a responsibility, as that man upon whom God has bestowed those transcendent talents which have enabled him to lead the tastes, enlighten the intellects, and form the morals of a great empire. How easy would it be to name those who might be fairly comprehended under this designation, and whose works have exerted a deleterious influence upon millions of men.

If I have spoken of the responsibility of the writer, let me say something of the responsibility of the reader. It will be very obvious, from what I have already said, what I deem good and profitable reading; and I would now venture to warn the young, in particular, not to indulge in what is called light reading. It is very useless, and often very pernicious. Some works, of course, are worse than others—some, indeed, most poisonous, most pernicious. Every wise parent will prohibit such works, and every wise youth will avoid them. The restoration of Charles the second brought with it a flood of writers noted for their abominable immorality, and the novelists of the earlier part of last century were as vile as could well be. The Poets of the Augustan age of Queen Anne gradually took the place of those I have alluded to, while the Novelists of last century have fallen into merited contempt and oblivion.

I shall close this subject by an extract from an anonymous work I lately met with, but which I have good reason to believe was written by a mechanic :—

“ The invention of the art of Printing was in itself a memorable event, and gave an impulse to the progress of society which will be transmitted to the remotest ages. It has been an instrument of incalculable benefit to man. To it we owe the infinite multiplication of copies of the Word of God, of works of science, and of sacred and elegant literature. To it