

ment more strong and manly in expression, our wit divested of obscurity or scurrility, but we are the same in tastes and passions as they. The germ or pith of what has been handed down to us as the really estimable in the literature of the past, has the same charms for us that it had for them, proving incontrovertibly the truth that true genius has no age or locality for its own, but sparkled as radiantly when time and creation wore their infant robes, as now when the world has grown older and wiser, when the very elements minister to the use of mankind, when highways are mapped out on the ocean, and the stars of the firmament classified and called by familiar names.

The inhabitants of the present day have unquestionably imbibed the spirit that animated the eighteenth century with regard to the prevalent tone of literature. We allude to the pathetic humorous style which pervaded the writings of the literati at that time, as witnessed in the works of Fielding, Smollet, Richardson, Sterne, Swift, and a number of others, whose names are familiar to the student of English literature. This taste has been revived by the popular authors of our own time, as exemplified in the works of Dickens, Hood, Thackeray, Jerrold, and a host of lesser lights, whose productions overstock the market, and give their admirers full opportunity to satiate their appetites for the ridiculous and absurd. This spirit not only tinctures the vast majority of books that are written, but it also guides the pencil—and caricature is even as abundant and popular as written jests. A *Punch* and a *Diogenes* can boast among their contributors some of the brightest minds of the nineteenth century, and who shall say what good has resulted from the weapons which these publications have used against the crimes and follies of mankind. Laughter loving, and jesting periodicals, though these but profess to be, there is a deeper meaning beneath their sallies which strikes home to the root of evil and artifice, not only laying bare the motives of those in high places but effectually eradicating the vices they ridicule, for there are few that can withstand that potent power. Where sin and folly thrive abundantly in the face of right and example and conscience, they shrink back abashed before the arrows of ridicule. Pun and jest and epigram, have greater force even with the evil disposed, than the soundest argument, and when these are heightened by the illustrative caricature, official burdens sit heavily on the men who have made it the business of a life time to secure them. But while ridicule has its uses, like all other good gifts it is subject to its abuses; and the same taste which publicly manifests its predilections by encouraging publications whose pages are devoted to the exposure of the weak points of mankind, will carry itself into private, and transform the social circle into a quick-witted company, ever on the alert to point an arrow or ward off a home thrust, thereby producing unpleasant feelings and destroying the charm of friendly intercourse. Who does not watch with regret the growth of this spirit, developing itself in the youth of the present day. Is there a young man