

We would all be perfect in our attributes if we could ! Who would write vapid, savourless pages, if it were in his power to set them aglow with rare erudition, and dazzling conceptions of ethical and other abstract subjects ? If I had been born a Dickens, *lector benevole*, I would have willingly, eagerly, proudly, favoured you with a " Tale of Two Cities " or a " David Copperfield ; " of that you may be morally certain, however, it is no mock self-disparagement (!) that moves me to humbly acknowledge (!) my inferiority to this immortal mind. I have availed myself of the only alternative left, when I recognized the impossibility of rivalling this protagonist among the *dramatis personæ* of the great Drama of English Fiction, and have done something of which he speaks very tenderly and delicately somewhere in his prolific writings, one's " best. " He says, " one man's best is as good as another man's, " not in its results, (I know by experience), but in the abstract relationship which exists between the nature of the two efforts, and I am grateful to him for having thus provided against the possible discouragement of " small authorship. "

In the subjoining pages, I offer to the world, a pretenseless record of the impressions, opinions, and convictions which have been, I may say, thrust upon me by a contact, which is yet necessarily limited, with the phases of every-day life.

That some of these reflections and conclusions should not meet with universal sympathy or approval, is not at all to be wondered at, when we consider how much more different, than alike, are any two human lives and lots. I do not ask my readers to subscribe to those tenets and opinions which may seem unreal and exaggerated to them, because of their different experience ; I can only justify them in myself, by declaring them to be the outgrowth of