

presses was throwing off sheets of various works, and the greater number were occupied with the printing of a large illustrated Bible, and Morse's Geography for the use of schools. In 1845, the Harpers sold two millions of volumes, some of them, it is true, being only styled numbers, but these often contain a reprint of an entire English novel, originally published in two or three volumes, at the cost of a guinea and a half, the same being sold here for one or two shillings. Several of Bulwer's tales are among these, 40,000 copies of his "Last of the Barons" having just issued from this house. It may, indeed, be strictly said of English writers in general, that they are better known in America than in Europe.

Of the best English works of fiction, published at thirty-one shillings in England, and for about sixpence here, it is estimated that about ten times as many copies are sold in the United States as in Great Britain; nor need we wonder at this, when we consider that day laborers in an American village often purchase a novel by Scott, Bulwer, or Dickens, or a popular history, such as Alison's Europe (published at thirteen pounds in England and sixteen shillings in America), and read it at spare moments, while persons in a much higher station in England are debarred from a similar intellectual treat by considerations of economy.

It might have been apprehended that, where a daily newspaper can be bought for a halfpenny, and a novel for sixpence, the public mind would be so taken up with politics and light reading, that no time would be left for the study of history, divinity, and the graver periodical literature. But, on the contrary, experience has proved that, when the habit and facility of reading has been acquired by the perusal even of trashy writings, there is a steady increase in the number of those who enter on deeper subjects. I was glad to hear that, in proportion as the reading public augments annually, the quality of the books read is decidedly improving. About four years ago, 40,000 copies were printed of the ordinary common-place novels published in England, of which sort they now only sell about 8000.

It might also have been feared that the cheapness of foreign works unprotected by copyright, would have made it impossible