

the beauties and wonders of nature, as well as to those who are the slaves of appetite and passion, the novel and the romance have ever possessed irresistible attractions. And since these three classes form, to a greater or less extent, the principal part of society, this is the literature that is most widely and abundantly diffused. And while the demand has created a supply, so, according to a principle of political economy, a surplus supply has increased the demand. The pen and the press have been prolific beyond all precedent; and the quality of the article has varied according to the demands of fashion. At one time the gross and disgusting descriptions of Fielding and Smollet met the popular taste. Anon, what Hannah More calls the "non-morality" of the Great Unknown, was in excellent *gout*. And since that prolific fountain has been dried up, others, who, alas for the cause of virtue and religion are too well known, have not failed to disgorge tales of all sorts, suited to every variety of appetite, from the most delicate and refined to the most gross and grovelling. For, like the frogs of Egypt, these productions have not been confined to the *boudoirs* of the literati, nor to the centre tables and withdrawing rooms of wealth and fashion, but have found their way to the kneading troughs of the kitchen; coming there, it may be, in one of those enormous products of the modern press that might be mistaken for a winding sheet, and which, I fear, has proved the winding sheet of many a noble intellect.

I am aware that not a few authors, disgusted with these perversions of fictitious literature, have made many praiseworthy efforts to turn its current into the channels of virtue and religion. Nor have they failed to obtain many interested readers. But I fear that in most cases it is the well-arranged story, and not its moral, which has awakened interest;—