

the former. That is ever striking out new and the most exquisite modes of thought to which Milton and Shakspeare have nothing similar. Tennyson distils a subtler element than any of the writers of the Commonwealth or the times of the Charleses. Christopher North could almost be paralleled with Jeremy Taylor. Carlyle is almost as wise as Bacon. Have we not had as good metaphysicians as Locke? Have we not some theologians that are not unworthy to stand side by side with the Puritans—the Hookers, the Jewells, the Reynoldses of other times? And with respect to the alleged injury of magazine or review writing, or newspaper articles—the splendid essays of the *Times*, for example, or the *Pall Mall Gazette* or the *Saturday Review*—it is as idle to complain of these and of their influence, as it would be to complain of the shower or the dews of evening, because they are not the ocean, or the river that first derives its volume thence, and then returns it with what it has gathered from the Empires through which it has flowed. “Books are the ships of time”; but are there to be no lighters? Are there to be no pleasure craft? Are there to be no coasters, to convey from shore to shore the treasures of lands disunited by the broad seas? All honour then to Defoe, and Sir Richard Steele, and Addison, and others their coadjutors, who broke down literature for the million, and let it fall in fertilising showers, or diffused it in refreshing rills among the masses of England. All honour to the magazines and reviews—the Monthlies and the Quarterlies—to the daily and weekly press—which are doing the same office for the masses now. What do we not owe to the *Tattlers* and *Spectators* and *Guardians* of the Augustan age of our Literature? To them we can trace the *Ramblers* and *Idlers* and *Mirrors* and *Loungers* of more recent times. The essays and the pleasing fictions of Johnson and Mackenzie and Goldsmith—“*Rasselas*,” the immortal “*Vicar of Wakefield*,” the “*Man of Feeling*,” “*La Roche*,” “*Julia de Roubigne*,” or the story of “*Anningait and Ajut*.” To them we owe the writings of Vicesimus Knox, of Bowdler, of Kirke White, the exquisite essays of Elia, the pleasing productions of Leigh Hunt, the fine compositions of Emerson, the sketches of Washington Irving, and the style of Dickens and of Thackeray. The *Pickwick Club* is directly modelled upon that of the *Spectator*, though it has an originality all its own, a freshness that is not interfered with by the earlier idea or invention.

But we must try to form some estimate of the literary merits of Steele and Addison, and the general influence which their writings have exerted upon subsequent times.

