

# PREFACE

## BY WAY OF CRITICISM

THESE studies are collected from the monthly press. One appeared in the *New Quarterly*, one in *Macmillan's*, and the rest in the *Cornhill Magazine*. To the *Cornhill* I owe a double debt of thanks; first, that I was received there in the very best society, and under the eye of the very best of editors; and second, that the proprietors have allowed me to republish so considerable an amount of copy.

These nine worthies have been brought together from many different ages and countries. Not the most erudite of men could be perfectly prepared to deal with so many and such various sides of human life and manners. To pass a true judgment upon Knox and Burns implies a grasp upon the very deepest strain of thought in Scotland,—a country far more essentially different from England than many parts of America; for, in a sense, the first of these men re-created Scotland, and the second is its most essentially national production. To treat fitly of Hugo and Villon would involve yet wider knowledge, not only of a country foreign to the author by race, history, and religion, but of the growth and liberties of art. Of the two Americans, Whitman and Thoreau, each is the type of something not so much realised as widely sought after among the late generations of their countrymen; and to see them clearly in a nice relation to the society that brought them forth,