

not—but he takes care to let you see that he does so write, while Defoe when he imports into a story what seems like didacticism, imports it apparently in order to give a kind of symbolic suggestion to the incident, as I have previously said in a study I once made of Borrow's *Wild Wales*. The perfect artistic method lies no doubt between Dickens on the one hand and Defoe on the other. The true artist is not he who paints exactly what he sees, nor he whose sentimental, humorous, aesthetic, or ethical purpose is obtrusively apparent; but he who, while really fashioning his characters out of broad general elements,—from universal types of humanity,—at the same time deceives us into mistaking these characters for real biographies—deceives us by appearing (from his mastery over the 'properties' of the fictionist) to be drawing from particulars—from peculiar individual traits—instead of from generalities,—and by not obtruding, except at rare intervals, sentimental, humorous, aesthetic, or ethical remarks, and then only for artistic ends.

Of course Defoe's cumulative method does not belong to the highest range of art. It is only in the parsimonious selection of physiognomic details that the power of the poetic artist is seen.

### III

#### DEFOE AND BALZAC

The foregoing observations make it almost necessary to say a word or two about Balzac in his relation to Defoe. It is the fashion to give the name of realist to both these writers. The truth is, however, that Defoe is as unlike Balzac as he is unlike Dickens. No doubt they are to be compared with each other in their command over the machinery of the realist—that commonplace illusion the quest of which destroyed the dramatic art of the Greeks as it has since destroyed the dramatic art upon which Shakespeare was nourished. But this absolute com-