

and immorality in conversation, manners and life. Consequently the writings of Addison must not be criticized too severely.

Addison was the chief founder of English essay-writing, and through him our language has been raised almost to a level with the French in elegance and precision.

His style is peculiar. "It is familiar, but not coarse; elegant but not ostentatious." We find humor pervading all his writings; and among his collection of Latin verses we find several exhibiting curious symptoms of his characteristic humor. One of the prevailing characteristics of his writing is irony; in other words an inimitable air of gravity which sets before the reader some absurdity as if it were consistent with nature and reason. His "Dialogues on Medals" exhibit much liveliness of style and gay humor. Another characteristic feature in his style is the richness and delicacy of his fancy. He aims to make philosophy popular, and to use language familiar to the people. A careful reader will often detect mistakes in his composition, such as frequent and faulty uses of the conjunction, 'as'; substituting wrongly one word or phrase for another; vulgarisms, &c. These, however, are but specks in the midst of his familiar style, which is mainly distinguished by a wonderful clearness of expression, a beautiful propriety in the choice of words, and such a balance in the distribution of them as leaves the ear with a sense of satisfaction.

It is impossible in a short treatise such as this to do justice to the other writers, many of whom deserve almost as much honor and praise as those mentioned. Thus among the contemporaries of Addison may be mentioned such illustrious personages as Burke, Johnson and Dryden. Thackeray was a great novelist and contemporary of George Eliot; Carlyle was a great contemporary of Ruskin and Goldwin Smith. And so we have a great many more, each of whom has added a part and exerted an influence in building up a literature renowned throughout the world in the fields of prose writings.

JAS. F. FERGUSON.

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On one of the examination papers the word discuss was written dis—. No doubt it was considered that the remainder of the word would be supplied.