

(though of course 'romanced' a little), is himself and 'the other fellow', and also, as it were, human criticism of both. At times we have a tolerably unsophisticated account of his actions, or it may be even his thoughts; at another his thoughts and actions as they present themselves, or might present themselves, to another mind: and yet at other times a reasoned view of them, as it were that of an impartial historian. The mixed form of narrative and monodrama lends itself to this as nothing else could: and so does the author's well-known, much-discussed, and sometimes heartily abused habit of *parabasis* or soliloquy to the audience. Of this nothing has yet been directly said, and anything that is said would have to be repeated as to every novel: so that we may as well keep it for the last or a late example, *The Virginians* or *Philip*. But its efficacy in this peculiar kind of double or treble handling is almost indisputable, even by those who may dispute its legitimacy as a constantly applied method.

One result, however, it has, as regards the hero-spokesman, which is curious. I believe thoroughly in Henry Esmond—he is to me one of the most real of illustrious Henrys as well of Thackeray's characters—but his reality is of a rather different kind from that of most of his fellows. It is somewhat more abstract, more typical, more generalized than the reality of English heroes usually is. He is not in the least shadowy or allegoric: but still he is somehow 'Esmondity' as well as Esmond—the melancholy rather than a melancholy, clear-sighted, aloof-minded man. His heart and his head act to each other as their governing powers, passion and humour, have been sketched as acting above. He is a man never likely to be very successful, famous, or fortunate in the world; not what is generally called a happy man; yet enjoying constant glows and glimmers of a cloudy happiness which he would hardly exchange for any other light. The late Professor Masson—himself no posture-monger or man of megrims, but one of genial