

peculiar temperament, the qualities of his head and heart. This statement may seem, to a certain extent, to be a truism, but we must remember that Goldsmith drew largely upon his stores of personal experience, and consequently that he has infused much of himself in his work. We can discern much of his natural kindliness of manner, sly humor and delicate pathos, in the *Vicar* himself. Part, also, of its charm is due to his inimitable style, pellucid, fresh, sparkling, carefully adapted to the thought to be expressed, and heightened in many passages by poetic touches. Goethe has spoken gratefully of the pleasure afforded him by the *Vicar of Wakefield*, and declared it to be one of the best novels ever written, and ever regarded it as a real picture of English life.

Goldsmith enjoyed a high reputation as an historian in his own day—a reputation due to his polished and graceful style, rather than to any of the other qualities we attribute to the historian. He was not sufficiently industrious to enter upon that laborious research to which an historian must resort in order to verify his facts, and of what is denominated the philosophy of history, Goldsmith knew little, and for which he very probably cared less. His historical works are short sketches, mere abridgments of the currently received literature of the day on the subject, and from the charm of their style and their conciseness, they have been used as text-books until very recently. He has written the histories of *Greece*, *Rome* and *England*. Johnson's opinion of his *History of Rome* is interesting: "Goldsmith's abridgment is better than that of Lucius Florus or Eutropius, and I will venture to say, that if you compare him with Vertot in the same place of the Roman History, you will find that he excels Vertot. Sir, he has the art of compiling and of saying everything he has to say in a pleasing manner."

Goldsmith was a master in the art of condensation—in the knack of selecting everything most important to retain. His great defect was, that he knew nothing accurately, and his credulity made it an easy matter to impose on him. He was nearly hoaxed into giving, in his *History of Greece*, an account of a battle between Alexander, the Great, and Montezuma. In his *History of England* he states that Naseby is in Yorkshire! Perhaps his most extraordinary performance is his *History of Animated Nature*. On hearing of this projected history, Dr. Johnson remarked: "If he can tell a horse from a cow, that is the extent of his knowledge of Zoology." Yet the Doctor, though he thus notices Goldsmith's extraordinary ignorance of facts, was of the opinion that the *History of Animated Nature* would be "as entertaining as a Persian tale." And entertaining the *History* turned out to be, with its stories of gigantic Patagonians, nightingales that remember and repeat long conversations, and monkeys that preach sermons. We learn also, that the "insidious tiger" is a denizen of Canadian backwoods.

As a poet, Goldsmith must be regarded as having attained a very high position. His poems are *The Traveller* or *Prospect of Society*, *The Deserted Village*, *The Hermit* and *Retaliation*, with a few minor pieces. Macaulay has remarked that Goldsmith's works are defective in design, but happy in their execution, with the exception of *The Traveller*, where the plan surpasses the execution, felicitous though that be. We have an allusion in *The Traveller* to one of his pet theories, viz: that the accumulation of wealth is inimical to a country's real welfare, a theory which he makes the text of his *Deserted Village*. Hales remarks, "In accordance with the dubious theory of his age, he attempted what was called didactic poetry. Both *The Traveller* and the *Deserted Village*