

because he does not do so. "A wise author," he says, "never allows his reader's mind to be at large, but casts about from the very first how to secure it all for himself. He takes you (seemingly) into his confidence, perhaps pretends to consult you as to the best route, but at all events points out to you the road lying far ahead, which you are to travel in his company. The reader's mind interested from the beginning, and desirous of ascertaining whether the author keeps his word and adheres to his plan, feels a glow of healthy exercise and pays a real though unconscious attention. But Emerson makes no terms with his readers — he gives neither thread nor clue, and thus robs them of one of the keenest pleasures of reading—the living beforehand with your author and going shares with him in his own thoughts."

Of the chief characteristics of Birrell's work, we have already mentioned a few, his clear vision, his generosity and fairness, his fondness for presenting the author's personal character and attitude of mind, his sympathy, and his broad-minded culture, begotten of wide reading. But perhaps the two most marked characteristics are his humour and his strong moral sense.

This humour, of a satirical yet withal a very good-natured sort, is a leaven which permeates the whole of his work, making it always bright and interesting. It is a saving grace which keeps him from extremes and helps him *always* to see men, women, books and things in proper perspective.

He is never afraid to give it rein, for he believes that "literature exists to please—to lighten the burden of men's lives, to make them for a short while forget their sorrows, their sins, their silenced hearts, their disappointed hopes and their grim futures."

There is, however, beneath this humour a seriousness of purpose which is never lost sight of. He can and does speak gravely, when he likes, with a quiet, healthful common sense which makes the reader respect his opinions.

Without intentionally setting out to spread the gospel of "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control," he makes it perfectly clear what qualities, both in a man and in a book, he