

fact, though it is coloured by emotion. Poetry, on the other hand, is differentiated from these in that the production of emotion is here the main end, in subordination to which the facts themselves are chosen and moulded. As by its form then, so by its aim, poetry is the highest species of literature. For the highest manifestations of human nature, love, reverence, joy, and so on, are emotional. Emotion raises morality to religion. Nay more, the work of Christianity itself was to introduce the reign of emotion, to substitute for the tribunal of a fixed eternal code the arbitrament of an inner and ever progressive state.

Emotion is the main element of poetry, but emotion cannot exist by itself; it is merely the form in which something is grasped by the mind. The material with which, in the case of poetry, emotion co-exists, is truth. That the substance of poetry is truth, may seem a bold assertion: it is certainly not in accord with the prevalent conceptions as to works of the imagination. We often hear it said that history should be read in preference to novels; because history is true, and novels are not true. The advice, no doubt, is often good; but the reason alleged is a bad one. That a large part of existing fiction is false, is undoubted; yet, take all the history written in English, and all the fiction, I venture to assert that the sum-total of truth contained in the latter is much greater than in the former. The greatest English novelist of the last century calls his works histories, and in the introductions which he prefixed to the divisions of one of them, humourously vindicates its claims to truth in comparison with works usually so denominated