

While the historian tells the story of the life of a people—or of a single period in that life—the biographer treats of a single individual. If, therefore, the necessary allowance is made for the changes of treatment which naturally arise out of this difference of subject, we may say that the same qualities are required in biography as in history; except, perhaps, that a note of personal sympathy is tolerated or even welcomed in the biographer which would be out of place in the historian.

The *Essay* is distinguished by the brevity of its external form, and by the presence of the element of reflection. It treats a subject from a single point of view, and permits the personal characteristics of the writer to assume a greater prominence than is permitted in the regular and complete treatment of the same subject in a treatise or book. It stands to the treatise in the relation of a sketch to a finished painting, and it has the same kind of merit as a sketch from nature. Just as the sketch is a record of direct and immediate impressions received by the mind of the painter from the study of natural objects made on the spot, so the essay should contain impressions received by the mind of the writer when it has been brought fresh to the consideration of any body of facts. And since the process of selection is employed with more than usual freedom in such writing, the essay is the most artistic of all forms of non-creative literature.

Classical and Romantic.—In the composition of all these works of literature, both creative and non-creative, we can trace the effect of one or other of two opposite tendencies. Of these the first is the tendency to follow the models presented by the works of the masters in each branch, and the second is the conscious desire to break away from these models in one or more particulars with the object of getting nearer to the reality of contemporary life. The danger of the classical method,—as the first is styled—is that of losing vitality by an adherence to those forms and methods of the past which are unsuited for the conditions—mental and social—of the present; the danger of the second, the