

if the examinee acts upon the advice of counsel, it is well that the Judge should appreciate the value of that advice. It is perhaps not altogether unreasonable to hope that the examiner no less than the examinee might profit by the advice contained in this admirable little volume which, once more, we recommend to the attention of all whom it may concern.

ESSAYS AND ESSAY-WRITING.

The Essay, properly so-called, made its first appearance in England in 1597 with the publication of the tiny volume containing ten discourses by Lord Bacon. Bacon found his model in his French contemporary Montaigne and the word Essay or Assay is itself of French origin. The essay of a subject literally means its 'weighing' or 'trial'; it is an earliest endeavour on the writer's part to get at the truth of a subject. The word was used in its original sense by both Montaigne and Bacon, but it has undergone considerable modification in its meaning since then. The well-merited popularity of Bacon's Essays soon raised up a host of imitators and a considerable part of English literature now consists of this kind of composition. As some of the most famous Essay-writers since Bacon's time, we might mention Browne, Cowley, Temple, Dryden, Addison, Johnson, Hume, Lamb, De Quincey, Carlyle, Macaulay, Helps, M. Arnold and Hutton. Perhaps the most profitable way of understanding the nature and development of the English Essay would be to make a special study of three typical Essayists in three successive centuries.

Bacon.—His Essays are eminently practical and may serve as a guide-book to princes and people alike. They are of all his works, the most popular and afford the surest keynote to his character. They are not mere random jottings of his personal experience. The same spirit of analysis and

acute observation that runs through his other works pervades the Essays. For their pointed brevity of style, their fidelity to the fact and their concentrated wisdom, these few pieces of Bacon's writings still remain unsurpassed in English literature.

Addison. In Addison and Steele we notice another phase of the Essay. The Tatler, the Spectator and the Guardian were started in 1709, 1711 and 1713 respectively and the best contributions to them were from the pen of Addison. The amiable Mr. Spectator was the recognized moral censor of the times and the secret of his univalled success and popularity lay in his rare power of correcting without giving offence. He was seldom formally didactic and this is why the fashionable and the comparatively illiterate ladies of Anne's time sipped their tea with a copy of the Spectator in one hand. Addison was a perfect master of the art of amusing and it is in these Essays that we detect the germ of the English Novel. The characters of Sir Roger de Coverley, Will Honeycomb and Sir Andrew Freeport are as interesting and real as those drawn by Goldsmith and Thackeray. Some of the more fastidious critics have detected a 'note of provinciality' in his writings; but that was rather a fault of the public for whom he wrote. It would be no good preaching transcendentalism to those whose skull was too thick for philosophy. But though "provincial" by his matter, the style of Addison remains a model for all ages. It is hard to find such a rare combination of practical good sense and genial humour, logical precision and arrangement of thought, purity of ideas and simplicity of language. 'Even the cynical Dr. Johnson would recommend the incessant study of Addison's volumes to every one desirous of attaining a familiar and elegant English style.'

Macaulay.—Of all the Essayists of the nineteenth century, Lord Macaulay is perhaps the most popular. Like Byron

“he rose one morning and found himself famous” on the publication of his well-known Essay on Milton in 1825. With all his faults, Macaulay had an admirable grasp of facts and a wonderful memory and he brought to bear the finest fruits of his scholarship upon his writings. He gave the widest range to the Essay which in his hands, though mainly critical, was no less literary, historical and philosophical. Without being a novelist he is more interesting than a novelist. His versatility and command of facts surprise and amuse us. For his strength and vigour of style he has hardly an equal in English literature. He takes the reader into his confidence and fascinates him in every possible way. His style is simple and idiomatic and his sentences naturally follow one another. But he is sometimes too gorgeous and rhetorical and spoils the beauty of a whole paragraph by the use of too many antitheses and epigrams.

The qualities necessary in a literary Essay. The Essay is the elaboration in writing of a single thought that has struck the writer and set him thinking. It should, therefore, be a picture of the writer's own mind and not a mere reproduction of the thoughts of others, however excellent, on that subject. He need not laboriously work out all the different aspects of the subject and the Essay should be suggestive rather than argumentative. The virtue of originality is never out of date, for a thought can be original though it has been uttered a hundred times. But the writer should never try to be original at the cost of common sense and consistency of ideas. The Essay should also be an index of the writer's scholarship and range of study. It is an unfailing test of his habitual intellectual diet and his power of assimilation. It is also a measure of his power of expression, for the best thought will fail to have its desired effect unless couched in a simple and agreeable style.

How to begin an Essay? That is the initial difficulty

that puzzles the beginner. Begin, if you like, after the manner of Macaulay, with a short and amusing story. Do not thrust the subject unceremoniously upon the reader, but introduce it somewhat indirectly. You cannot, however, be too careful in the use of this device, as it is almost the monopoly of the Novelist and the Dramatist. It would perhaps be better to begin after Addison, that is, by approaching the subject-matter from a somewhat higher platform. Possess your soul in quiet, take a bird's eye view of the whole subject from a solitary intellectual prominence and make it a necessary connecting-link between two sets of ideas. Here lies the real difficulty in Essay-writing. The writer should be at once above and below the subject-matter he deals with and it is then and then only that he will do proper justice to it. He should have a vivid picture of the subject before his mind's eye before he proceeds to write.

Dangers to be avoided in Essay-writing.—Do not begin in a business fashion or, as it is too often done, with a precise definition of the subject of the Essay. Do not write at random; but clearly analyse the subject in your mind before you begin to write. Do not go too much into details. Avoid lengthy or inaccurate quotation as well as foreign expressions and idioms. Keep ambiguity and affectation at arm's length. The simplest style is always the best.

S. K. G.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

ENOCH ARDEN.

A hundred years ago :—The nine opening lines describe the locality of the poem ; this line states the date of the story. The little fishing village and its quiet folks do not belong to the nineteenth century with its gigantic commercial and manufacturing activities, with its looms and mills worked