

The work of a true novel is to present life to us as it is, to delineate character truly, and to depict customs and manners as it finds them. In this it has a vast advantage over History, though perhaps not so much as was claimed by Fielding, who said "History has nothing but facts, the novel has everything but facts." Its great advantage is that it sees all the inner workings of life, knows all the causes of effects, and stands within the sanctum sanctorum of man's soul. The novel is the confidential letter that comes to us of the voyage on the ocean of years; history is the log-book that chronicles each day's events, the storms and calms, and all the data of the voyage.

The aim of the novel is to please and delight the mind in the contemplation of life in all its varied phases, and its aim is the most easily accomplished since it has for its sphere the whole of the world and of human life, while its universal character makes it the literature of all. Since its chief aim is to please, a novelist who makes all his work subservient to some moral or didactic end, fails to reach perfection in his art. Though you may cite a Dickens to the contrary yet we have only one Dickens as we have only one Shakespeare. So many authors, as Hawthorne most happily expresses it, relentlessly impale their stories with a moral, as by sticking a pin through a butterfly, thus at once depriving it of life, and causing it to stiffen in an ungainly and unnatural attitude.

The first novel was founded upon the passion of love, and its influence seems to have been for all time. Yet one must protest against the orthodox novel that persists in reducing man's whole life to the limits of an exciting courtship. No one, especially a woman, will deny to the novel this great and important feature, yet we argue, that since Eros does not entirely and absolutely rule man's life, he should not be represented as so doing. It is when Vesta presides over his destiny that he approaches the truest end of his

being, and reaches the most complete development; so we find the novel has attained the highest perfection among a truly domestic people. Yet books are written to express man's vast range of experience and subtleties of thought; they have stolen the copyright of the true novel and we have metaphysical, political, and religious novels perpetrated upon us with personifications of truths and passions usurping the place of real characters with human hearts and feelings.

Madame De Staël says, "Without a little conventional rouge no human complexion can stand the stage lights of fiction," and an author who fails to idealize his characters is false to the first principles of his art, yet an unrestrained passion for the ideal often produces a morbid sentimentality and draws the writer and reader from the common interests and pursuits of life.

The many worthless novels that flood this age testify to the common belief that to write a novel is but pastime for a summer afternoon. As Fielding says, they think the only requisites are a pen, paper and the manual power of using them. But to write a good novel requires the most varied qualifications and the rarest talents. One must have wide sympathies with humanity, a deep and intrinsic knowledge of the human heart with great keenness of observation, to be able to penetrate into the mysteries of life and the soul. The true novelist must have a power of mind that is capable of penetrating into all the essential differences of things. He must possess great imagination and creative power, while, with all these qualities, learning must step in and show him how best to use them.

Since imagination is the master faculty of the novelist there must be a complete surrendering of the mind and will to all its impulses; but in all its creation he must never depart so far from the range of probability that his character will be removed from the pale of human interest and sympathy.