

Erostratus.

Although Conciseness and a hold on the reader, which are required in detective stories, are no less required in all forms of literature. Nothing is gained by wearying the reader. Edgar Wallace is more interesting than Walter Scott, but Edgar Wallace is not more interesting than Shakespeare. There is an Edgar Wallace in Shakespeare.

The stress and pressure of modern conditions may have many disagreeable aspects, but it has had ~~one~~ a very favourable one - the need for conciseness and for deliberate interestingness in a literary work. It was one of Poe's critical triumphs that he foresaw the necessity of the shorter poems. This was one of his visions of the future, as the detective story was one of his anticipations of it.

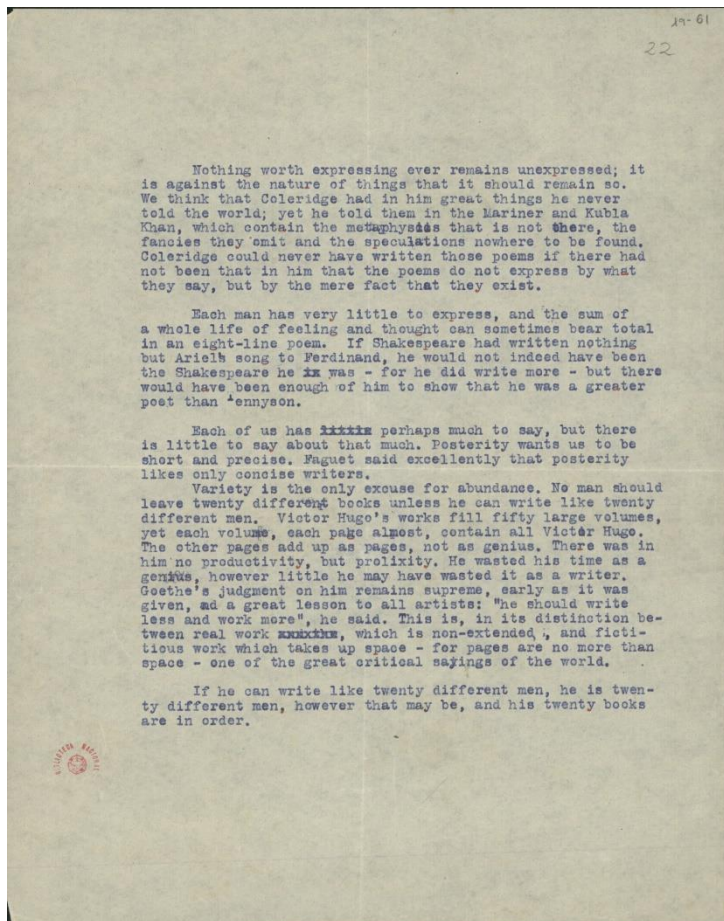
We need not exclude the epic poem, but we can reduce it to five books - the size of a drama, which should be the limit of literary bulk, that interest may be thorough and maintained.

No greatness of everything in verse can triumph over the twenty-four books of the "Iliad" or carry Virgil into the middle of Olympus.

Compare the luminous beauty of Tennyson's original and short "Morte d'Arthur" with the ~~dullness of~~ dull good-writing of his later and very long "Idylls of the King".

The constancy of scattered beauty cannot wipe out the unbecomingness of its being scattered over too long a stretch of verse.

The epic poem was really the old correspondence to the human need for the novel. The novel having come, we can sink the epic in the poem. Matthew Arnold's "Sohrab and Rustum".



Nothing worth expressing ever remains unexpressed; it is against the nature of things that it should remain so. We think that Coleridge had in him great things he never told the world; yet he told them in the Mariner and Kubla Khan, which contain the metaphysics that is not there, the fancies they omit and the speculations nowhere to be found. Coleridge could never have written those poems if there had not been that in him that the poems do not express by what they say, but by the mere fact that they exist.

Each man has very little to express, and the sum of a whole life of feeling and thought can sometimes bear total in an eight-line poem. If Shakespeare had written nothing but Ariel's song to Ferdinand, he would not indeed have been the Shakespeare he ~~is~~ was - for he did write more - but there would have been enough of him to show that he was a greater poet than Tennyson.

Each of us has ~~little~~ perhaps much to say, but there is little to say about that much. Posterity wants us to be short and precise. Faguet said excellently that posterity likes only concise writers.

Variety is the only excuse for abundance. No man should leave twenty different books unless he can write like twenty different men. Victor Hugo's works fill fifty large volumes, yet each volume, each page almost, contain all Victor Hugo. The other pages add up as pages, not as genius. There was in him no productivity, but prolixity. He wasted his time as a genius, however little he may have wasted it as a writer. Goethe's judgement on him remains supreme, early as it was given, and a great lesson to all artists: "he should write less and work more", he said. This is, in its distinction between real work ~~and the~~, which is non-extended, and fictitious work which takes up space - for pages are no more than space - one of the great critical sayings of the world.

If he can write like twenty different men, he is twenty different men, however that may be, and his twenty books are in order.

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## DIREITOS ASSOCIADOS

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