



## The English Essay and Essayist (Classic Reprint) (Paperback)

By Hugh Walker

Forgotten Books, 2017. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book \*\*\*\*\* Print on Demand \*\*\*\*\*. Excerpt from The English Essay and Essayist What is an essay? Perhaps the notions most widely prevalent with regard to this question are, first, that an essay is a composition comparatively short, and second, that it is something incomplete and unsystematic. The latter, clearly, was Johnson's conception, and he was not only a great lexicographer, but himself a notable essayist. He defines an essay to be a loose sally of the mind, an irregular, indigested piece, not a regular and orderly performance. The Oxford English Dictionary combines the two conceptions. Its definition runs thus A composition of moderate length on any particular subject, or branch of a subject; originally implying want of finish, an irregular, indigested piece but now said of a composition more or less elaborate in style, though limited in range. Both definitions are somewhat vague, and Johnson's is essentially negative - a sure sign of difficulty. But vague as they are, these definitions are too narrow and precise to embrace all essays so-called. If we conceive the essay to be short and incomplete,...



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