

**CHARACTERISTICS OF  
LITERATURE: ILLUSTRATED  
BY THE GENIUS OF  
DISTINGUISHED MEN**

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Characteristics of Literature: Illustrated by the Genius of Distinguished Men by Henry T. Tuckerman

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**HENRY T. TUCKERMAN**

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Genius of Distinguished Men.

BY

HENRY T. TUCKERMAN.

AUTHOR OF "THE ITALIAN SKETCH-BOOK," "ISABEL, OR A PILGRIMAGE THROUGH SICILY,"  
"THOUGHTS ON THE POETS," "ARTIST-LIFE," ETC.



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## Preface.

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THE favorable reception of two previous attempts at a series of analytical portraits—one devoted to celebrated poets, and the other to some of our native painters—has induced the publication of this volume. Its design is to indicate the chief phases of the literary character. The subjects have been selected from their adaptation to this general plan, and with the hope that, at a time when the influence of Continental writers is so prevalent, a few illustrative criticisms drawn from the rich field of English literature, may prove acceptable.

NEW YORK, May 1849.





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## The Philosopher.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

THERE is something winsome as well as venerable in the character of the true philosopher. He, as well as the poet, derives his charter from nature. The term, in its best acceptation, not merely designates the adherents of a school of wisdom whether Stoical, Platonic, or Epicurean, but the man of liberal and inquiring mind, who habitually reasons upon facts, and to whom the pursuit of truth is an instinct, and its appreciation a keen delight. Next to the great bards, this race of men engage the affections; after the poetic, this phase of humanity is most noble. Approaches to the character are to be found in all good diarists and self-biographers—for such writings are but collections of personal incidents and thoughts more or less rich in philosophy. Montaigne is the prince of this species, and old Burton a fine example; but autobiographies, ingenuously composed, furnish the same kind of aliment, and betoken a like idiosyncrasy. Thus Rousseau, Goldoni, Alfieri, Cellini, and Boswell, have contributed invaluable materials towards the science of life, by disclosing, with honesty and