"The darkness of midnight will glitter with the blaze of your dwellings. You are a father: the blood of your sons shall fatten your corn-field You are a mother: the war-whoop shall *wake the sleep of the cradle.*"

The further horrors of Indian warfare are here veiled with equal judgment and elegance under a double figure.

189. **3. Personification** consists in representing inanimate objects and abstract notions as endowed with *life* and *intelligence.* It may exist in various degrees:

1st Degree.—When merely some *properties* or *qualities* of animals or persons are ascribed to inanimate objects or abstract notions; as:

"One faithful harp shall praise thee."—*Moore.*

"O the cold and cruel winter!"—*Longfellow.*

2d Degree.—When inanimate objects or abstract notions are represented as performing the *actions* of intelligent beings; as:

"Patriotism, which sinks self and scorns death, is a noble virtue."—*Headley.*

"Hope for a season bade the world farewell,
And Freedom shrieked as Kosciusko fell."—*Campbell.*

"*Lympha pudica Deum vidit et erubuit,*"

says Crashaw, describing the miracle by which our Blessed Saviour changed water into wine. Dryden thus translates the verse with exquisite taste:

"The modest water saw its God and blushed."

"Within their buds let roses sleep,
And virgin lilies on their stems."—*Shirley.*

"Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull, cold ear of Death?"

3d Degree.—When they are represented as *feeling* like men, or as *speaking* or *listening* to us; as:

"Within the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a king,
Keeps Death his court; and there the antic sits,
Scoffing his state, and grinning at his pomp."
—*Shakspeare.*

"Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe
That all was lost."—*Milton.*

"O gentle Sleep,
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frightened thee," etc.

"Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain," etc.
—*Goldsmith*

"O unexpected stroke! worse than death!
Must I thus leave thee, Paradise! thus leave
Thee, native soil," etc.—*Milton.*

190. **Source of the pleasure.**—Man naturally loves communion with his fellow-man; and when his passions are excited or his imagination is aroused, he is prone to invest objects around him with such qualities as raise them to a state of fellowship with himself.

191. **Hence it follows:** 1. That poetry, which is the language of the passions and of an excited imagination, is full of personifications. Prose admits the lower degrees of personification very readily in all literary productions, and it admits the highest degree when the heart is under the influence of lofty, violent, or tender emotions. 2. No objects should be personified in the highest degree that are not of sufficient dignity or importance to awaken such emotions. The last two lines of the following quotation evidently violate this rule:

"Dear fatal name! rest ever unrevealed,
Nor pass these lips in holy silence sealed.
Oh, write it not, *my hand!* His name appears
Already written—blot it out, *my tears!*"

192. When personification is founded upon resemblance, as it usually is, it is subject to the **rules** for metaphor, but not otherwise. For instance, in the words of Moore,

"One *faithful* Harp shall save thee,"

there is no resemblance; but the fidelity of the harper is attributed to the harp: it is a metonymy. So, too, in Milton's lines,

"Her *rash* hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she ate,"

the rashness of Eve is by metonymy transferred to her hand, which is thereby slightly personified, being made to show a property of a person. Thus personification is usually combined with some other figure, and is then subject to the rules for that figure.

193. This *union of two figures in one* must be distinguished from the **metalepsis** (μετάληψις, a partaking), which is a noble figure resulting from the meeting of two independent tropes upon one word, as in

"And desolation saddens all thy green."

'Green' here stands by metonymy for the *fields*—the *abstract for the concrete*—and the fields are *personified* by being put in connection with 'saddens.'

194. **Directions to discover the tropes and their species.**—Ask yourself:

1. What idea does the writer wish to convey?
2. Do the words literally express that idea? If they do there is no trope. If not,
3. What connection is there between what is literally expressed and what is really meant?

A trope founded on *resemblance* is called metaphor;
A trope founded on *resemblance prolonged*—allegory.
A trope founded on a *relation of whole and part*—synecdoche.

A trope founded on an *external relation*—metonymy.
A trope founded on *contrast*—irony.
A trope founded on *exaggeration*—hyperbole.
A trope founded on *diminution*—litotes.
A trope founded on *elevation to intelligence*—personification.
A trope founded on *combination of two tropes*—metalepsis.

An inconsistent or strained trope is a **catachresis** (κατάχρησις, misuse). A trope whose real meaning is not clear to an intelligent and attentive reader should be considered as faulty.

195. **Exercise.**—Point out the correct and the incorrect tropes which occur in the following selections:

"I appeal to History! Tell me, thou reverend chronicler of the grave, can all the illusion of ambition realized, can all the wealth of a universal commerce, can all the achievements of successful heroism or all the establishments of the world's wisdom, secure to empire the permanence of its possession?"—*Phillips.*

"How many centuries of national existence did Austria go through before this mighty change was effected! How many national sins did she expiate! What a spot of glory not merely in imperial but in human annals has she left!"—*Alison.*

"The accusing spirit that flew up to Heaven's chancery with the oath blushed as he gave it in; and the recording angel, as he wrote it down, dropped a tear upon the word and blotted it out for ever."—*Sterne.*

"Our knees shall kneel till to the ground they grow."—*Shakspeare.*

"Our web of life is a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues."—*Shakspeare.*

"Music that gentler on the spirit lies
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes."—*Tennyson.*

"But the tender shoot of other times has become a giant in the world's extended forest."—*Dickerson.*

"As War was driving his ebon car upon his remorseless mission."—*Id.*

"One drop of balm alone, one drop of heavenly, life-giving balm, mingles in this bitter cup of misery."—*Everett.*

"Our modern prayers have no wings: they creep with us on our own low sphere."—*Card. Wiseman.*

"Peace, the loathed manna, which hot brains despise."—*Dryden.*

"Forth from the curtain of clouds, from the tent of purple and scarlet,
Issued the Sun, the great high-priest, in his garments resplendent."—*Longfellow.*

"My slenderer and younger taper imbibed its borrowed light from the more matured and redundant fountain of yours."—*Curran.*

"Stalwart and stately in form was the man of seventy winters,
Hearty and hale was he, an oak that is covered with snowflakes."
—*Longfellow.*

"While the bell from its turret sprinkled with holy sounds the air."
—*Id.*

"When the breeze of joyful dawn blew free
In the silken sails of infancy."—*Tennyson.*

"On the ancient stock of Saxon independence the English engrafted the shoots of modern liberty; in its stead the French planted the unknown tree of equality. In the British Isles the plant has become deeply rooted, and expanded widely in its native air; time will show whether the French have not wasted their endeavors in training an exotic unsuited to the climate and unfruitful in the soil."—*Alison.*

"Lost! somewhere between sunrise and sunset, two golden hours, each set with sixty diamond minutes. No reward is offered, for they are lost for ever."

CHAPTER II.

FIGURES OF WORDS.

196. **Figures of Words, or Diction,** are ornaments of style consisting of unusual forms of expression, but without any departure from the literal meaning. As they regard the expression rather than the thought itself, they are the least noble among the figures. Still, that they are no inconsiderable source of strength and beauty will appear from the examples to be adduced.

197. **1. Repetition** repeats the same word:

"O Rome! Rome! thou hast been a tender nurse to me."

"In an ugly, dark room an old woman, ugly and dark too, sat listening to the wind and rain. . . . A heap of rags, a heap of bones, a wretched bed, . . . the black walls and blacker ceiling," etc.—*Dickens.*

"Strike—till the last armed foe expires;
Strike—for your altars and your fires;
Strike—for the green graves of your sires,
God, and your native land!"—*Halleck.*

"First in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen."—*Curtis.*

"Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I."—*Scott.*

198. **2. Polysyndeton** multiplies conjunctions for the purpose of making the sentence more impressive; while **Asyndeton** omits them all to denote greater rapidity:

"He woke to die 'midst flame and smoke,
And shout, and groan, and sabre-stroke."—*Halleck.*

Of the asyndeton we can give no more striking instance than the words in which Cæsar expressed the rapidity of his conquest: *Veni, vidi, vici*—"I came, I saw, I conquered."

199. **3. Antithesis** unites contrasted words or phrases in the same sentence:

"Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my hand and my heart to this vote."—*Webster.*

"Ring out the darkness from the land;
Ring in the Christ that is to be."—*Tennyson.*

"The God of hosts in slender Host doth dwell,
Yea, God and Man, with all to either due;
That God that rules the heavens and rifled hell,
That Man whose death did to us life renew."—*Southwell.*

200. **4. Accumulation** of synonyms dwells on one thought:

"You cannot tell me how, but that some unknown dread, some indescribable apprehension, some indefinable danger, affrighted you," etc.—*Clay.*

"He is no benefactor nor deserving of honor, whatever may be his worldly renown, whose life is passed in acts of force, who renounces the great law of Christian brotherhood, whose vocation is blood, who triumphs in battle over his fellow-man."—*Charles Sumner.*

201. **5. Gradation** or **Climax** makes the sentence rise step by step in strength or dignity:

"So the rule of right, which binds the single individual, binds two or three men when gathered together; binds conventions and congregations of men; binds villages, towns, and cities; binds states, nations, and empires, clasps the whole human family in its sevenfold embrace; nay, more,

'Beyond the flaming bounds of space and time,
The living throne, the sapphire blaze,'

it binds the Angels of heaven, the Seraphim full of love, the Cher[illegible]

bim full of knowledge; above all, it binds in self-imposed bonds a just and omnipotent God."—*Charles Sumner.*

202. **6. Correction** consists in retracting an assertion as soon as made, and substituting something more suitable, which is more emphasized by this artifice; as:

"He has sat quietly in his seat, without moving a finger or raising his voice. Without raising his voice, did I say? His voice was raised, not for us but for our assailants."—*Calhoun.*

CHAPTER III.

FIGURES OF THOUGHT.

203. **Figures of Thought** are ornaments of composition consisting in an unusual turn given to the thought for the purpose of imparting to it special strength or beauty. As the expression and the thought expressed are intimately connected, it is often hard to tell whether the peculiar happy turn which constitutes the figure should be attributed to the thought or to the expression, and therefore whether it is a figure of thought or a figure of words. But it matters little, as both classes of figures are to be directed by the same rule.

204. **Rule for figures of words and of thought.**—Look to the end or purpose for which they are used—namely, to add strength or beauty. If a figure does either or both, it is well used; if not, it is faulty. The figures have no charm in themselves, but only in their effects upon the reader or hearer. If this rule is carefully observed all wordiness and declamation will be avoided; for these are the only abuses to which these figures are liable.

205. **The chief figures of thought** are:

1. Preterition, when we pretend to omit an argument, thereby calling attention to it.

"I was going to awake your justice to this unhappy part of our fellow creatures by bringing before you some of the circumstances of this awful plague of hunger. Of all the calamities which beset and waylay the life of man, this comes the nearest to the heart, and is

that wherein the proudest of us all feels himself to be nothing more than he is—but I find myself unable to manage it with decorum. These details are so degrading to the sufferers and to the hearers, they are so humiliating to human nature itself, that I consider it more advisable to throw a pall over the hideous object and leave it to your general conceptions."—*E. Burke.*

206. **2. Reticence,** which purposely leaves a sentence unfinished; as:

"By these [mercenary armies] France and Spain, though blessed by nature with all that administers to the convenience of life, have been reduced to that contemptible state in which they now appear; and by these Britain—but if I was possessed of the gift of prophecy, I dare not, except by divine command, unfold the leaves on which the destiny of that once powerful kingdom is inscribed."—*John Hancock.*

207. **3. Concession,** which yields a point with a view to making a more telling point.

"Yes, I have ambition, but it is the ambition of being the humble instrument in the hands of Providence to reconcile a divided people," etc.—*Clay.*

"I agree with my honorable friends in thinking that we ought not to impose a government on France. I agree with them in deprecating the evil of war; but I deprecate still more the double evil of a peace without securities and a war without allies."—*Grattan.*

208. **4. Paradox,** which advances what is seemingly absurd to make the assertion more striking: as:

"Do not despond, Athenians, even though your situation is very bad. For what is worst in the past is best for the future," etc.—*Demosthenes.*

"The very excess of his [Burke's] tenderness made him cruel, and the vehemence of his detestation of injustice made him unjust."—*Shaw.*

209. **5. Self-questioning,** in which the orator puts a question and answers it himself; as:

"And what was it which gave to our Lafayette his spotless fame?

The love of liberty. What has consecrated his memory in the hearts of men? The love of liberty," etc.—*Everett.*

"What is it you can do? This is the question. I answer: Be true to your religion; be true to your fatherland; be true to your families and to yourselves; be true to the glorious republic that opened her arms to receive you and give you the rights of citizenship."—*Rev. T. Burke, O.P.*

210. **6. Suspense,** which keeps the mind in uncertainty awhile, thus arousing attention to what comes next.

"You will read, sir, that Cæsar triumphed four times: first for his victory over the Gauls, secondly over Egypt, thirdly over Pharnaces, lastly over Juba, the friend of Cato. His first, second, and third triumphs were, we are told, magnificent. Before him marched the princes. . . . His fourth triumph approaches, as magnificent as the former ones. It does not want its royal captive, its soldiers crowned with laurels, nor its multitude of spectators—but they send up no shout of exultation; they heave loud sighs; their cheeks are frequently wiped; their eyes are fixed upon one object that engrosses all their senses, their thoughts, their affections—it is the statue of Cato."—*Knowles.*

211. **7. Forestalling an objection;** as:

"But we are told the sanction of virtue is in the social laws of nations. They are sufficient to make man an honest, upright, moral being, such as your religion requires him to be. This objection is so directly at variance with common sense and daily experience that it scarcely deserves an answer."—*Rev. C. F. Smarius, S.J.*

212. **8. Vision** is a vivid description which presents a fact as passing before our eyes; as:

"But lo! the time is come; the awful words have been spoken; the mouth of unfailing Truth has declared his own body to be there. All are reverently and silently awaiting their turn to partake of the tremendous gift; the first have tasted it; Peter is burning and John is melting into tears. The life-giving portion is proffered to Judas, and he stretches to receive it. Oh! in pity let us hope that he understands not, notwithstanding the words just spoken, what it is! O Son of God! exclaim, if thou canst: Father, forgive, for he knows not what he doth."—*Cardinal Wiseman.*

213. **9. Mimesis** is the vivid description of a person's character; as:

"It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the Queen of France, the Dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely there never lighted on this orb, which she scarcely seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in, glittering like the morning star, full of life, splendor, and joy."—*E. Burke.*

214. **10. Apostrophe** addresses absent persons as if present, or personified objects as if listening; as:

"Hail, sacred tabernacles, where thou, O Lord, dost descend at the voice of a mortal! Hail, mysterious altar, where Faith comes to receive its immortal food!" etc.—*Archbishop P. J. Ryan.*

"Accept, O Prince! these 'ast efforts of a voice once familiar to your ears. With you all my funeral discourses are now to end. Instead of deploring the death of others, it shall be my study to learn from you how my own may be blessed," etc.—*Bossuet.*

215. **11. Comparison** or **Simile** illustrates the subject by comparing it with something else:

"Boundless as ocean is a mother's love."—*S. H. Messenger.*

"Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water the woodlands,
Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image of heaven."
—*Longfellow.*

"The diamond's sparkle and the ruby's tint are darksome compared to friendship's transcendent lustre. But the diamond can be imitated; so, too, alas! may friendship be assumed. As all precious gems are rare, so are friends. A true friend, like the ivy that clings to the walls of the old deserted castle, is ever by one's side to comfort us in sorrow and rejoice with us in prosperity."—*J. J. Hamlyn.*

216. **12.** A **Wish** or **Prayer** is often used as an elegant and powerful figure; as:

"Thus lived and thus died our sainted patriots! May their spirits still continue to hover over their countrymen, inspire all their councils, and guide them in the same virtuous and noble path! And may that God in whose hands are the issues of all things confirm and perpetuate to us the inestimable boon which through their

agency He has bestowed, and make our Columbia the bright exemplar for all the struggling sons of liberty around the globe!"—*Wirt.*

217. **13. Exclamation** and **Interrogation**, when they are used to adorn the style or move the heart; as:

"Has God rejected the beautiful in this temple of creation? . . . Who was the first painter that touched with his brush the flowers of the valley and tinged with deep azure the ocean? . . . Who was the first inspirer of music? Who was the first decorator that studded with gems the Milky Way, and spread his arch of splendor across the concave of this his temple?"—*Archbishop P. J. Ryan.*

218. **14. Allusions** hint at some fact sufficiently known, in illustration of the present subject. These, as well as **Maxims** and **Quotations**, are figures if they beautify the style; as:

"And why are these eternal gates thus lifted up? And why is this sublime spectacle revealed, if not that we may be induced to take the dove's wings and fly—fly from this earth, which the waters of bitterness and iniquity still cover, and bear the olive-branch of our reconciliation to this open ark, where alone our feet can rest?"—*Cardinal Wiseman.*

"Slowly as out of the heavens with apocalyptical splendors
Sank the city of God, in the vision of John the Apostle,
So with the cloudy walls of chrysolite, jasper, and sapphire
Sank the broad, red sun, and over its turrets uplifted
Glimmered the golden reed of the angel who measured the city."
—*Longfellow.*

219. **Exercise 1.** Collect elegant figures from the speeches of Webster, Calhoun, Clay, Burke, Pitt, Chatham, Cardinals Wiseman, Newman, Manning, Fathers Burke and Smarius; or from any selections in prose or verse—*e.g.*, from your reader or hand-book of elocution.

220 **Exercise 2.** Write an address, full of figures, to stir up indolent students or to enkindle in an audience feelings of patriotism, generosity in behalf of a disabled soldier, or any other noble sentiment.

BOOK III.

STYLE IN LITERARY COMPOSITION.

221. We have so far considered the chief elements of literary composition; we now proceed to combine these elements, and to study the more complex subject of *style*.

Style (from *stylus*, the ancient instrument for writing) is the manner in which a person expresses his thoughts and feelings by means of any of the fine arts. We speak of different styles in music, painting, architecture, etc. In literature style is the manner of expressing one's thoughts and feelings by means of language. A man's thoughts and feelings are not, in themselves, perceptible to other men. Style sets them forth in a sensible form; it gives them body and shape, beauty to please, and power to influence others. We study style with a view to increase this beauty and power in our compositions.

222. For this purpose we are to consider in so many chapters: 1. Beauty in itself; 2, Sublimity, Wit, and Humor, which are species of beauty; 3. Taste, which directs the use of these sources of pleasure; 4. Different species of style; 5. Improvement of style.

CHAPTER I.

BEAUTY.

223. **Beauty** is the power which objects have of pleasing the beholder: beautiful objects please by merely being considered; *quæ visa placent*, says St. Thomas.

Whence comes this power of an object to please? From the perfection or excellence of the object itself. Is, then, the beauty of an object the same as its excellence? It is that excellence inasmuch as it is perceived, and thus made capable of giving pleasure to the beholder; if hidden or obscured it could not please him. Beauty is "excellence perceived," or "striking excellence"—*splendor veri*, "the brightness of reality," as Plato puts it. Hence one point is evident, that nothing can be beautiful inasmuch as it is bad or imperfect: falsehood is not beautiful, sin is not beautiful, disorder is not beautiful.

224. How, then, can **works of fiction** please, since they are false? They do not please inasmuch as they are false, but inasmuch as they are true to nature and contain beautiful characters, beautiful scenery, a beautiful plot, beautiful language, etc. But may not a vicious character be beautiful? The description of it, done with skill and fidelity to nature, may be so, but not the character itself.

225. But does not **vice** please the vicious? The mere beholding of vice does not please the mind, but a vice may please by gratifying a passion of the heart; thus, doing wrong to another may please an angry man. But the beautiful pleases *by the mere fact that it is perceived.* Whatever gratifies one of the passions pleases, and may, therefore, be mistaken for true beauty; but it is false or only apparent beauty. True beauty pleases because its perfection is perceived and approved by the intellect.

226. We must here notice the difference between the beautiful and **the good**: A thing is good when its possession pleases; beautiful, when its very perception gives pleasure. Thus a ragged, soiled one-hundred-dollar note may please the possessor, but not the beholder.

From our definition of the beautiful so far explained another consequence follows—namely, that those things which are most perfect in themselves are also most beautiful to those who clearly perceive them. Thus inanimate things contain, as a class, the lowest degree of perfection and are least beautiful; vegetation rises higher, animals higher still; man surpasses all other material beings in excellence and in beauty, because he is intelligent; angels are higher still; God is **the highest possible beauty** to those blessed beings that behold Him as He is. If He does not always seem so to us, it is because we know Him so little, and also because we let our lower nature obscure the light of our intellect. When, in a better world, God will stand revealed to our sight as He is, our purified souls will see in Him absolute beauty, which will make us supremely happy; therefore that sight is called the **Beatific Vision.**

227. The fact that man is more perfect and beautiful than all lower beings is the reason why literature delights in **personification**—that is, in attributing to lower objects the actions and feelings of living and intelligent beings. Yet even **lower objects** have their beauty: that *color* is more beautiful which is better proportioned or adapted to our organ of sight; *straight lines* and *figures* are beautiful, as suggestive of usefulness; *curves* and *waving lines*, as combining regularity with variety; the waving line is called

the line of beauty, the *spiral* that of grace; *motion* is beautiful, as exhibiting variety and as being suggestive of life. This suggestiveness of higher beauty is founded on *associations of ideas*, and is often a source of great pleasure to the mind, even when things are beheld which are of a very inferior nature; thus the violet is suggestive of modesty, the lily of purity, etc.

228. It is certain that unity, variety, proportion, design, life, etc., are all sources of pleasure to the beholder. Some critics are of opinion that in all beauty there is **one underlying principle.** One class of writers maintain that this principle is the blending of *unity with variety*, others that the one principle is *order with due proportion*, or suitableness to the faculties of the beholder. It is not clear that all beauty can be traced to one such principle; but it is certain that *the very perfection of an object*, inasmuch as it is properly considered, whether in itself or in its associations, is the real source of the pleasure produced.

229. We shall next consider **artistic beauty.** The mere reproduction by human skill of some natural beauty is doubly pleasing: first, on account of the natural beauty reproduced, and, secondly, on account of the intellectual power displayed by men in its reproduction. Thus a painted bunch of grapes which almost deceives the eye is more admired than the bunch which nature produced. And though photography gives us a more perfect likeness than drawing can do, still the latter is more admired as being more the effect of human skill and intellect. But while all correct imitation is beautiful because skilful and intellectual, still mere imitation of nature is only the lowest beauty of art. Artistic skill of a higher kind aims at the expression of more than natural beauty—namely, *ideal beauty.*

230. Now, **ideal beauty** is that higher conception of

3560

beautiful things which the artist forms to himself by removing from them all such imperfections as would hinder the full appreciation of them, and by associating with them suggestions of greater perfection than the objects themselves contain.

231. The presentation of ideal beauty is the object of all higher art, of the **fine arts** as such. The ancients aimed at this when their painters and sculptors selected for their subjects the ideal forms of Apollo, Hercules, etc., idealizing human perfections to represent their gods and demigods. Thus, too, Homer is not satisfied with the presentation of human heroes as they really existed, but he portrayed them as the mind loves to contemplate them; and, rising even higher, he presents to us a panorama of superior ideal beings, exhibiting far more power of intellect and will than it is natural for man to possess. Thus he gives us his gods and goddesses, the most wonderful creations of the pagan mind. In fact, the tendency of all true art has ever been upward into the region of religious thought. Not until **Christianity** came to reveal to us a far higher perfection did art produce its noblest creations. The spirits, good and bad, described by Milton in his "Paradise Lost" are grander creations than Homer's; but especially the Saviour of the world, dying upon the cross or reclining upon the straw of the manger, and by His side the purest and fairest of mere created beings, the Blessed Virgin Mother, are subjects for the pencil and the pen which modern artists and poets have fully appreciated. Hence Christian art is far more elevated in its ideals than pagan art could possibly have been.

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3560

CHAPTER II.

SUBLIMITY, WIT, AND HUMOR.

232. **Sublimity, Wit,** and **Humor** give pleasure to the mind by the very fact that they are perceived. They come, therefore, under the definition of beauty, of which they are species. Still, sometimes the term beauty is taken in a narrower meaning, as distinguished from them by certain peculiarities of these three species. We shall next consider those peculiarities.

ARTICLE I. SUBLIMITY.

233. **Sublimity** is that species of the beautiful which imparts pleasure of a peculiarly elevated nature. As beauty is *striking perfection*, so sublimity is *striking greatness*, which is a special kind of perfection. It produces in the beholder a sort of internal elevation and expansion, raises the mind above its ordinary state, and fills it with a degree of astonishment which it cannot well express. The emotion is delightful but serious; when greatest it awes the mind.

The **sources of the sublime** are various—some physical, others moral.

234. **1.** The **physical** are chiefly:

(*a*) *Boundless views*, in the contemplation of which the mind is lost.

(*b*) The exhibition of *vast power* or strength, not accompanied by any apprehension of danger to ourselves.

The ocean combines to a remarkable extent these two sources of the sublime:

"Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean—roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore; upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown."
—*Byron.*

(*c*) *Unusual magnificence*, as in Byron's lines on St. Peter's at Rome:

"But lo! the dome—the vast and wondrous dome,
To which Diana's marvel was a cell—
Christ's mighty shrine above his martyrs' tomb!
I have beheld the Ephesian miracle—
Its columns strew the wilderness, and dwell
The hyena and the jackal in their shade;
I have beheld Sophia's bright roofs swell
Their glittering mass i' the sun, and have survey'd
Its sanctuary the while th' usurping Moslem pray'd;

"But thou, of temples old, or altars new,
Standest alone, with nothing like to thee:
Worthiest of God, the holy and the true,
Since Sion's desolation, when that He
Forsook his former city, what could be
Of earthly structures, in His honor piled,
Of a sublimer aspect? Majesty,
Power, Glory, Strength, and Beauty, all are aisled
In this eternal ark of worship undefiled."—*Id.*

(*d*) *Loud and deep sounds*, spreading far and wide, as that of the thunder.

(*e*) *Solemn and awful objects*, bordering on the terrible, and whatever makes us sensible of our littleness

compared to the grandeur around us, as solitude, deep silence, obscurity, mystery.

We have said that *order* is an element of beauty in its usual acceptation; but *disorder* is not unfavorable to the sublime—not disorder in itself, but in connection with grandeur, which it makes incomprehensible to the human mind. The same holds of obscurity, mysteriousness, etc.

235. **2. Moral sublimity** arises from the exhibition of such power of the mind and will as produces astonishment in the beholder. When two of the Horatii were slain, and their father heard that his third son had fled, he was indignant; and when asked what the youth should have done, "He should have died," he said. The history of the Christian martyrs is full of such examples; but grander than all is the scene on Calvary, when nature trembled at the crimes of men, and the Victim of all this wickedness, the Son of God Himself, opened His lips, not to complain, but to beg pardon for the perpetrators of the deicide: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

236. The **style** in which the sublime is to be expressed is either of the greatest simplicity or of the highest magnificence. We have seen specimens of magnificence in Byron; the style of Holy Writ, which contains the loftiest examples of the sublime, is usually of the simplest kind:

"In the beginning God created heaven and earth. And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the spirit of God moved over the waters. And God said: Be light made. And light was made."—*Gen.* i. 1–4.

"The sublime," says Lacordaire, "is elevation, profundity, and simplicity, blended in a single trait." (See Lacordaire's *Jesus Christ*, p. 29.)

237. **Other examples from Holy Writ:**

"In the horror of A VISION by night, when deep sleep is wont to hold men, fear seized upon me, and trembling, and all my bones were affrighted: and when a spirit passed before me, the hair of my flesh stood up. There stood one whose countenance I knew not, an image before my eyes, and I heard the voice as it were of a gentle wind: Shall man be justified in comparison of God, or shall a man be more pure than his maker? Behold, they that serve Him are not steadfast, and in His angels He found wickedness: how much more shall they that dwell in houses of clay, who have an earthly foundation, be consumed as with the moth?"—*Job* iv. 13–19.

"Wilt Thou give strength to THE HORSE or clothe his neck with neighing? Wilt Thou lift him up like the locusts . the glory of his nostrils is terror. He breaketh up the earth with his hoof, he pranceth boldly, he goeth forward to meet armed men. He despiseth fear, he turneth not his back to the sword. Above him shall the quiver rattle, the spear and shield shall glitter. Chafing and raging he swalloweth the ground: neither doth he make account when the noise of the trumpet soundeth. When he heareth the trumpet he saith: Ha, ha! he smelleth the battle afar off, the encouraging of the captains, and the shouting of the army."—*Job* xxxix. 19–25.

"GOD hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and weighed the heavens with His palm; He hath poised with three fingers the bulk of the earth, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance."—*Isaias* xl. 12.

The following **passages** are full of sublime thoughts and images: the fifteenth chapter of Exodus, which contains the Canticle of Moses, sung by the Jews after their miraculous crossing of the sea; Psalm ciii.; the forty-third chapter of Ecclesiasticus; the thirty-eighth of Job.

238. **Exercise.**—Point out the beautiful and the sublime images accumulated in the following poem, "The Fairest Fair":

"Mountains, that upwards to the clouds arise,
Odorous with thyme, whereon the wild bees linger
Jewelled with flowers of a thousand dyes—
Their petals tinted by no mortal finger;

How solemn in their gray-worn age they stand,
Hills piled on hills in silent majesty!
Lofty and strong, and beautiful, and grand:
All this and more is my Beloved to me.

"Come forth into the woods—in yonder valley,
Where rippling waters murmur through the glade;
There, 'neath the rustling boughs of some green alley,
We'll watch the golden light and quivering shade:
Or couched on mossy banks we'll lie and listen
To song-birds pouring forth their vernal glee.
Wave on, ye woods; ye fairy fountains glisten:
But more, far more, is my Beloved to me.

"Know ye the land where fragrant winds awaken
In spicy forests hidden from the eye;
Where richest perfumes from the boughs are shaken,
And flowers unnoticed bloom, and blush, and die?
Sweet is the eternal spring that there reposes
On wondrous isles that gem the sunny sea,
And sweet the gales that breathe o'er beds of roses:
But sweeter far is my Beloved to me.

"The roaring torrents from the ice-cliffs leaping—
I see them foaming down the mountain-side;
Through the green dells and valleys onward sweeping,
They fill the hollows with their mighty tide:
Their voice is as the voice of many waters;
Onward they rush, exulting to be free;
But ah! their thunder fails, their music falters:
Far more than this is my Beloved to me.

"A gentler sound wakes in the hush of even,
The whisper of a light and cooling breeze;
It stirs when twilight shades are in the heaven,
And bows the tufted foliage of the trees;
It fans my cheek; its music softly stealing
Speaks to my heart in loving mystery.
Ah! gentle breeze, full well thou art revealing
The joy that my Belovèd is to me.

"Night comes at last, in mystic shadows folding
The nodding forest and the verdant lawn,
Till the day breaks, and nature starts, beholding
The golden chariot of the coming dawn:
Then on each bough the feathered chanters, waking,
Pour forth their music over bush and tree.
Cease, cease your songs, ye birds; my heart-strings breaking
Lack words to say what JESUS is to me.

"Yea, all the fairest forms that Nature scatters,
And all melodious sounds that greet the ear;
The murmuring music of the running waters,
The golden harvest-fields that crown the year,
The crimson morn, the calm and dewy even,
The tranquil moonlight on the slumbering sea—
All are but shadows, forms of beauty given
To tell what my Belovèd is to me."

—*Augusta Theodosia Drane.*

ARTICLE II. WIT.

239. **Wit** causes pleasure by a peculiar quickness in perceiving, and felicity in expressing, such hidden relations of things as amuse the hearers. Take this example: "You must either be a knave or a fool," said two lawyers to an Irishman sitting between them. "No; I am between both," was the prompt reply. Here is a relation which would not have struck one person in a thousand. To be true wit, however, it is necessary that, as soon as the relation is pointed out, the hearers or readers understand it. Besides, the unexpected thought must come apparently unsought, else no peculiar quickness of conception is noticed. When a person evidently tries to be witty he disgusts instead of pleasing.

240. A **pun** is a witticism consisting in a play on words. Hancock, encouraging those who had signed the Declara-

tion of Independence to mutual fidelity, remarked: "We must all hang together." "Yes," said Franklin, "or we shall all hang separately." An occasional pun, when truly witty, undoubtedly gives pleasure. But an habitual punster, like every professed wit, is universally pronounced a bore. And with reason: first, such persons evidently try to be witty; secondly, they often fail; thirdly, they acquire a habit of trifling, and will often spoil a serious conversation for a wretched pun; fourthly, they are often sarcastic or otherwise offensive.

241. But wit, when united with common sense, kindness of heart, and beauty of thought, is, in its own place, not only an innocent charm of social intercourse, but also a **powerful weapon** in the arena of oratorical contests.

It appears to be a kind dispensation of Providence that the seasoning of wit and humor is often copiously granted to those whose homely fare stands most in need of such condiments to make life more supportable.

Article III. Humor.

242. **Humor** is not an elevated species of beauty, but it is more valuable than wit; it fills many a bright page, especially in English literature. One great **advantage** of humor is that it is always good-natured, and thus contributes directly to diffuse happiness all around. Lamb, Hood, Thackeray, and Dickens, in England; Irving, Lowell, Holmes, and Saxe, in the United States, have deserved much credit for their genial productions.

243. Humor is that species of beauty which delights by a good-natured exhibition of **incongruities**; it addresses itself to our perception of the ludicrous. Some persons appear to be almost destitute of this perception; others are overpowered by it beyond the bounds of reason. The

incongruity itself is not beautiful, but the good-natured exposition of it by the common sense of the humorist.

244. **Humor implies:**

1. In the object, *incongruity—i.e.*, want of proportion, as big words and bad grammar. A humorist has a peculiar talent for perceiving and expressing such ludicrous things.

2. In the effect, *surprise* at finding such incongruity where it was not expected: a thing is not ludicrous if it is just what could be expected.

3. In the humorist, strong common sense and *good nature—i.e.*, kindliness, even towards the persons ridiculed.

245. In order to be truly pleasing, humor requires strict regard to the laws of **decorum**: it must never attempt to ridicule the unfortunate, the truly great and wise, nor be employed on subjects held sacred by the hearers.

"It is a beautiful thing to observe the BOUNDARIES which nature has affixed to the ridiculous, and to notice how soon it is swallowed up by the more illustrious feelings of our minds. Where is the heart so hard that could bear to see the awkward resources and contrivances of the poor turned into ridicule? Who could laugh at the fractured, ruined body of a soldier? Who is so wicked as to amuse himself with the infirmities of extreme old age? or to find subject for humor in the weakness of a perishing, dissolving body? Who is there that does not feel himself disposed to overlook the little peculiarities of the truly great and wise, and to throw a veil over that ridicule which they have redeemed by the magnitude of their talents and the splendor of their virtues? Who ever thinks of turning into ridicule our great and ardent hopes of a world to come? Whenever the man of humor meddles with these things, he is astonished to find that in all the great feelings of their nature the mass of mankind always act and think aright, that they are ready enough to laugh, but that they are quite as ready to drive away with indignation and contempt the light fool who comes, with the feather of wit, to crumble the bulwarks of truth and to beat down the Temples of God!"—*Sydney Smith.*

246. The description of a **humorous character** supposes in its subject a blending of strikingly incongruous traits, as shrewdness with apparent simplicity in Sam Weller. Every act and word must accord with the character, and frequently remind us of its incongruous elements, as in Shakspeare's Falstaff.

CHAPTER III.

TASTE.

247. **Taste** is the power of perceiving and properly appreciating the beauties of nature and of art. Some call it the *Æsthetic faculty;* but it is no special faculty at all: it is an exercise of the intellect. As such it is common to all men, though in different degrees of perfection. This difference is due partly to variety of natural powers, and partly to difference of education and of early associations.

248. Good taste should be characterized by two qualities, **delicacy** and **correctness.** The former, when highly developed, enables it to distinguish the nicest shades and varieties of beauty, in the same manner as some persons have so delicate a palate as to distinguish readily the flavor of any viand. The latter quality—correctness—enables it to discern accurately what is true from what is false beauty.

249. Of the two characteristics, correctness ought to be chiefly taught, both because it is more capable of being developed and because the want of it is more offensive. If correctness be carefully taught by precepts and examples, delicacy will follow of itself. The direct object of rhetorical rules is to accustom the student to appreciate true and reject false beauty. The difference between these two is that **true beauty** pleases, not only at first sight, but also after the closest scrutiny, and receives the full approbation of man's highest faculty—the intellect; while **false beauty** cannot bear to be closely examined without displaying a

want of good sense, of naturalness, delicacy, appropriateness, etc.

250. **The precepts of rhetoric** are not arbitrary laws, but the conclusions which the greatest thinkers have drawn from a careful study of literature. Aristotle's mind, the keenest, perhaps, that ever existed, examined the productions of the greatest geniuses that had preceded him, and drew a clear line between true and false beauty. Cicero, Horace, Quintilian, and others continued his labors, and subsequent ages have accepted most of their decisions, because these were found to be conformable to human reason. Still later critics have added their share to this treasury of common sense.

251. **Human reason** itself is the judge of beauty. Now, in matters of taste human reason speaks through the great critics and rhetoricians who have been recognized for ages as the judges of literature. Their unanimous verdict is practically the utterance of mankind itself. This is the **standard of taste:** what it approves is true beauty, what it condemns is false beauty. From time to time some eccentric genius will appear to set at naught all the rules of rhetoricians, imagining that his conceited mind is the great luminary of the world. His brilliant imagination may attract to him a number of admiring followers. Carlyle, in England, was a man of this character, but his departures from the laws of taste were too glaring to mislead many. Other geniuses of less offensive eccentricities have done more real harm to good taste by blending minor faults with superior beauties. It is the part of criticism to point out in the works of even the greatest geniuses any admixture of false beauty. It blames many long speeches and other extravagances in Homer; a want of spirit in some passages of Virgil; excessive self-praise and labored periods in Cicero; a considerable amount of coarse language, wanton irregularities, ill-placed puns, etc., in Shakspeare. In fact, this last author, with all his uncommon beauties, is anything but a safe model on which to fashion the taste of young writers.

252. May there be, then, no **varieties in good taste?** There may be in different men a preference for different kinds of true beauty, and still all these may have good taste. One loves more what is bold or grand, another what is gentle and modest; one admires more the ideal, another the real; one loves sentiment and imagination, another sober sense. But if one person pronounces an object beautiful and another not beautiful, under the same circumstances, one or the other is clearly mistaken. In this sense it is not true that there is *no disputing about taste.* Varieties of taste are a kind dispensation of Providence that diversifies the aspect of human society as it diversifies the flowers of the field.

253. We add a few **general rules regarding taste** which apply to all kinds of composition.

Rule 1.—Let **good sense** pervade every literary production. This rule applies to poetry as well as to prose, to pleasantry as well as to philosophy and religion. But it is often **violated** by two kinds of writers: first, by those whose imagination and feelings are too lively to be controlled by their judgment, as are many orators, poets, and novelists; and, secondly, by some conceited philosophers and literati who put their individual views above the wisdom of all the world besides. Such are, for instance, the **Transcendentalists,** as they are called, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Matthew Arnold, and others, who extol culture and delicacy of taste above common sense.

254. Such, too, are the members of what is called "the **Satanic School.**" Southey, in the preface to his "Vision of Judgment," was the first to use this degrading appella-

tion. Of the writers who have been included under it, Byron, Shelley, Moore, Bulwer, Rousseau, Victor Hugo, Paul de Kock, and George Sand are the most prominent.

"Immoral writers," says Southey, "men of diseased hearts and depraved imaginations, who, forming a system of opinions to suit their own unhappy course of conduct, have rebelled against the holiest ordinances of human society, and, hating that revealed religion which, with all their efforts and bravadoes, they were unable entirely to disbelieve, labor to make others as miserable as themselves by infecting them with a moral virus that eats into the soul. The school which they have set up may properly be called the Satanic School; for though their productions breathe the spirit of Belial in their lascivious parts, and the spirit of Moloch in their loathsome images of atrocities and horrors, which they delight to represent, they are more especially characterized by a satanic spirit of pride and audacious impiety, which still betrays the wretched feeling of hopelessness wherewith it is allied."—*Southey.*

It is just to add that Moore and Bulwer in their later years wrote in a better spirit.

255. *Rule* 2.—Every composition should have **unity**—unity of subject, unity of plan, unity of general tone, etc. But how this rule applies to various works we shall examine in detail when we come to speak of each species of composition. We shall here confine ourselves to the rule as stated by Horace:

"*Denique sit quidvis simplex dumtaxat et unum.*"

"Then learn this wandering humor to control.
And keep one equal tenor through the whole."—*Francis.*

256. *Rule* 3.—Let perfect **appropriateness** characterize every part of your productions—the selection of your subject, your treatment of it, the thoughts, ornaments, expressions, etc., adapting every detail to the various circumstances of persons, times, places, etc., etc. There is a tendency in certain minds to ignore such proprieties. Some

preachers of great repute have gone so far as to introduce pantomime into the pulpit. Such an example, if not condemned by critics, would tend to debase the taste of the young. The New York *Sun* some time ago contained the following report:

"Pantomimic Efforts that made the Plymouth Congregation Laugh.—Mr. B—— preached last evening upon the difficulty of acquiring correct religious habits, and the comparative ease of maintaining them when once they have become second nature. 'Many look upon religion,' he said, 'as an insurance policy against final loss by fire.' He described that kind of religion so funnily that the congregation laughed outright. 'They go to church every Sunday,' he said, pulling his coat close around him, drawing his face down dolorously, and rolling up his eyes. 'The hymns are doled out to them, a good, sound, dry sermon is preached to them, and the most eloquent passage of all is their going out. They attend prayer-meetings, too—most dismal prayer-meetings!' Here his lower jaw dropped, more of the whites of his eyes showed, and his hands were clasped before him," etc.

CHAPTER IV.

VARIETIES OF STYLE.

257. **Literary style** is the manner in which a person expresses his thoughts and feelings by means of language. It is not a person's language merely. The expression of the thought and feelings is intimately connected with the conception of them. Hence style depends on our conceptions as well as on our language. In fact, a work may be translated from one language into another, and the chief peculiarities of its style remain the same.

ARTICLE I. SOURCES OF VARIETY IN STYLE.

258. To understand the **sources of variety in style,** consider the different ways in which the same thought or feeling may be conceived by the mind. Thus suppose I become convinced that the pleasures of this world cannot satisfy the human heart. I may reach this conviction intellectually, by considering that our hearts long for infinite and lasting happiness, and that this world is necessarily finite and of short duration. I may express this reasoning in abstract language, and my style will be **philosophical.**

259. But in conceiving and expressing the same conviction I may be powerfully assisted by my imagination, and I may thus describe the fleeting show of this world's delights under various images, in a **figurative** and **descriptive** style, as is done in the fifth chapter of the Book of Wisdom:

"All those things are passed away like a shadow, and like a post that runneth on,

"And as a ship that passeth through the waves; whereof when it is gone by, the trace cannot be found, nor the path of its keel in the waters:

"Or as when a bird flieth through the air, of the passage of which no mark can be found, but only the sound of the wings beating the light air, and parting it by the force of her flight; she moved her wings, and hath flown through, and there is no mark found afterwards of her way:

"Or as when an arrow is shot at a mark, the divided air presently cometh together again, so that the passage thereof is not known.

"So we also being born, forthwith ceased to be; and have been able to show no mark of virtue; but are consumed in our wickedness."

260. While this brief passage is descriptive, the whole fifth chapter develops the same thought in a **narrative** style, bordering on the **dramatic.** It will be readily perceived that the chapter needs only metre to give it the **poetic** style. Thus language and mode of thought combine to shape the style of any composition.

261. "Wolsey's Soliloquy" presents the same thought as the Book of Wisdom, and expresses it in poetic language:

"This is the state of man: to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope; to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honors thick upon him:
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost;
And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a-ripening, nips his root,
And then he falls, as I do. I have ventured,
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
This many summers in a sea of glory;
But far beyond my depth: my high-blown pride
At length broke under me, and now has left me,
Weary and old with service, to the mercy
Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.
Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye;
I feel my heart new-opened."—*Shakspeare.*

262. Horace deplores the shortness of earthly joys in the **lyric** style. See the fourteenth ode of his second book:

"Swift fly the rolling years, my friend!
Nor can your anxious prayers extend
The fleeting joys of youth;
The trembling hand, the wrinkled cheek,
Too plainly life's decay bespeak
With sad but silent truth.
. . . . . .
The purple vineyard's luscious stores,
Secured by trebly-bolted doors,
Excite in vain your care:
Soon shall the rich and sparkling hoard
Flow largely o'er the festive board
Of your unsparing heir."—*Ralph Bernal.*

263. When thoughts are fully developed, as in the fifth chapter of Wisdom, just quoted, we have the **diffuse** style; when briefly expressed, the **concise.** Each of these is beautiful in its proper place (see Nos. 71, 72).

If an author grasps his subject vigorously and expresses it forcibly, his style is said to be **nervous** and strong; this is always a desirable quality, while its opposite, **feebleness,** is always a defect.

The **vehement** style is characterized by a glowing ardor, pouring out strong feelings with the rapidity and fulness of a torrent, as in most speeches of Demosthenes; it adds strong feeling to strong thought.

264. A chief source of difference in style, among various persons who write on the same subjects, is the difference of their **characters.** A firm character will produce a manly style, a weak, vacillating character a confused style; a generous, open character is favorable to clearness, richness, beauty of expression, while narrow-minded and deceitful dispositions will give a very different coloring to the thought. Whatever improves a person's character improves his style. The social virtues are the sources of charming ornaments to all literature.

Article II. Ornament of Style.

265. One of the principal sources of variety in style consists in the **ornament** used to adorn the thought and the expression, in tropes, figures of thought, figures of diction, and harmonious constructions. In this respect Blair appropriately distinguishes five kinds of style, according to five degrees of ornament.

266. 1. The **dry style** rejects all ornament; it is proper in text-books on grammar, arithmetic, and any exact science, in legal documents, in business transactions, etc. The language of an educated man should always be correct and perspicuous, exhibiting great purity, propriety, and precision; but what is merely ornamental would, in the writings just mentioned, savor of affectation.

267. 2. The **plain style** uses ornament sparingly. Whatever subject admits of any play of the imagination or the emotions affords room for the ornaments of composition. All such productions are properly styled **literature,** and no others. Now, among these the plain style is appropriate to such as are either too exact to allow the imagination any great indulgence or too familiar or insignificant to justify much painstaking. Plain facts are best expressed in plain language, in proper words, with refined feeling, and with an occasional admixture of modest ornament. Dean Swift, even on important subjects, always wrote in the plain style, which best suited his earnest character. Clearness, strength, and a blunt honesty are his peculiar qualities.

268. 3. The **neat style** uses ornament more freely, but not copiously; and its ornament is ever modest, never strikingly brilliant or bold. It is a style equally capable of manly beauty and the most delicate refinement. To this

middle region belongs the bulk of good literature. Subjects of any elevation should be treated with neatness as a rule; plainness is an exception already explained; while the highest ornaments should be reserved for subjects and occasions of unusual dignity or excellence.

Washington Irving's prose works and Goldsmith's poems exhibit the perfection of the neat style.

269. 4. The **elegant style** possesses all the virtues of ornament without any of its defects. The noblest subjects, especially the loftiest portions of such subjects, call for the highest refinement and magnificence that human thought and human language can bestow. The solemn panegyrical oration, the highest efforts of eloquence at the bar, in the pulpit, and in the popular assembly; the most important events narrated in dignified histories, real or fictitious; the description of the grandest scenes in nature; the most pathetic emotions poured out in lyric verse—present proper occasions for elegance of style.

270. Most great historians, philosophers, orators, novelists, and essayists compose **habitually in the neat style,** being more taken up with the matter treated than with the beauty of the expression: such are Lingard, Blair, Pitt, Chatham, Calhoun, Dickens, Cooper; Archbishop Spalding, Cardinals Newman and Manning, Brownson, and such poets as Pope, Longfellow, and Scott, and many other writers of didactic and ballad poetry. All these, however, rise to the elegant style when the occasion requires. Others aim more habitually at elegant language, such as Prescott, Father Faber, Edmund Burke. Webster, Irving, Cardinal Wiseman, Lowell; and in poetry Shakspeare, Milton, Willis, Moore, Byron, Young, etc.

271. **Compare the following three descriptions** of morning, noticing how they rise in ornament above one another:

"See, the day begins to break
And the light shoots like a streak
Of subtile fire; the wind blows cold,
While the morning doth unfold;
Now the birds begin to rouse,
And the squirrel from the boughs
Leaps to get him nuts and fruit;
The early lark, that erst was mute,
Carols to the rising day
Many a note and many a lay."—*Fletcher.*

"Lo! here the gentle lark, weary of rest,
From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,
And wakes the morning, from whose silver breast
The sun ariseth in his majesty;
Who doth the world so gloriously behold,
The cedar-tops and hills seem burnish'd gold."
—*Shakspeare.*

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy."
—*Shakspeare.*

272. 5. The **florid style** is marked by an excess of ornament, so that the reader is distracted from the matter treated and forced to notice how the writer labors to adorn his composition. This excess is always objectionable, but especially in serious works. Still, it may be combined with considerable excellences, and thus leave the composition valuable, though not perfect. This is the case with Harvey's *Meditations among the Tombs* and Rev. Xavier McLeod's *Devotion to the Blessed Virgin in North America.* Both these works are well suited to develop a taste for ornament in prose composition.

CHAPTER V.

IMPROVEMENT OF STYLE.

ARTICLE I. PRACTICAL RULES FOR STYLE.

273. There are certain rules regarding style that should be observed by all writers on all subjects. The chief are these :

1. The **Rule of Clearness.**—Write so that no one can help seeing your exact meaning at the first glance. This is the most important rule of all. To write with clearness the great means is to have clear ideas yourself ; else how can you convey them to others? Study your subject diligently before you write.

274. 2. The **Rule of Strength.**—Make your thoughts impressive by presenting them strikingly, with proper ornaments and feelings. A languid, feeble style is worthless. Still, distinguish strength from vehemence, as explained above (No. 263).

275. 3. The **Rule of Simplicity.**—The word *simplicity* has many meanings : such as the absence of many parts, as in a simple story ; the absence of much ornament, as in the dry and the plain style ; the absence of refinement, as in the simple manners of rustics ; the absence of shrewdness or intelligence, as in the simplicity of the credulous. Our rule means, write with *naturalness*, so as to avoid all appearance of labor. Labor there must be in writing ; but the labor should not be noticed by the reader. **Virgil** and **Gibbon** labored at their productions with uncommon industry, striving to express every thought to the best advantage. Virgil's lines flow smoothly and as naturally as the warbling of a bird ; Gibbon's sentences are evidently labored, and often harsh and strained.

276. A simple style often appears so **artless** that a beginner imagines nothing is easier than to imitate it ; it is the perfection of art to reach all its purposes without making itself known. Such is the style in the *Sketch-Book* of Washington Irving, many essays of Addison, the novels of Conscience, Hawthorne's *Tanglewood Tales*, the *Stories for Children* of Canon Schmid, the fables of Æsop, of Phædrus, of La Fontaine, Rosa Mulholland's *Robinson Crusoe.* The ancients had more of this apparent artlessness than the moderns : Herodotus, Theocritus, Anacreon, Homer, Virgil, and Ovid abound in it. There is, however, in many recent writers, a return to the simplicity of classic taste.

277. When this simplicity assumes the character of child-like innocence it is called by the French term *naïveté*, of which Xenophon furnishes a pleasing example in his narrative of Cyrus' conversation at the court of Astyages.

278. A slight **appearance of carelessness** in the midst of refinement is not unpleasant in proper season, as in familiar letters ; it resembles the manners of a truly refined gentleman among his intimate friends. But young people cannot let themselves down to it with safety. An appearance of carelessness is admired in those only who have established a name for superiority of mind.

279. 4. The **Rule of Appropriateness** is the most difficult of all to observe, and is necessary on all occasions. It requires that we adapt our style to our subject, to our hearers or readers, to our own talent and our age, and to circumstances of place, time, etc. "He is truly eloquent," says Cicero, "who can express what is simple plainly, what is great nobly, and what is ordinary with decency and mo-

deration"—*Is est eloquens qui et humilia subtiliter, et magna graviter, et mediocria temperate potest dicere*" (*Or.*, 29). Dr. Johnson, though a writer of great eminence, could not adapt his style to his theme, and it was wittily said of him that if he made little fishes talk he would make them speak like whales. **Excess of ornament** is a violation of appropriateness. It is bad taste, in language as in dress, to be ever displaying fineries.

280. Still, this excess is more easily **excused in the young,** whose imaginations are more developed than their judgments. Cicero is not displeased with the youth whose compositions are rather flowery:

> "I wish to see exuberance in the youthful mind," he says; "for as it is easier to prune the superfluous branches of a vine than to add to its growth, so I like to see in the youth's production something to lop off" (*De Or.*, ii. 21).

Article II. Writing as a Means of Improvement.

281. **Writing** is the most important source of improvement in style and in all the other parts of literary composition. "The pen," says Cicero, "is the best and most efficient teacher of eloquence"—*Stylus optimus et præstantissimus dicendi effector ac magister.* Without practice no precepts are of any avail. For this reason we have so far proposed a variety of exercises, applying the several precepts in appropriate ways. Through the remainder of this work, however, fewer suggestions of this kind will be needed. The precepts themselves will directly suggest the exercises. All that the teacher need do is to select models for imitation, and themes or subjects for narrations, descriptions, etc., suited to the age and other circumstances of his pupils. But the exercises should by no means be neglected: in them lies the solid fruit of literary studies

282. For the writing of **original composition** these rules should be carefully observed by the pupil:

Rule 1.—He should **think over the whole matter** to be treated, and trace a plan of it in his mind or on paper before he writes the first line of the composition itself.

Rule 2.—He should **compose slowly,** doing the best he can in the first draught; he will thus improve far more than by putting down every word or idea that presents itself. As in penmanship, so in composition, by writing well we learn to write rapidly, but by writing rapidly we do not learn to write well.

Rule 3.—Still, when the **mind is warmed up** by the subject the writer may allow himself, to some extent, to be carried away by his ardor, provided he does not wander from his theme.

Rule 4.—After writing should come **correction**—a task often neglected because less interesting. But the mind of the master should rule here, not the whim of the scholar. The *limæ labor*—the careful finish—is the straight road to perfection in any art.

Rule 5.—When a composition is written for the eye of the public it should, if possible, be laid by for a while, and then carefully retouched. No one should ever **publish** what an honest and judicious friend condemns, no matter how perfect the composition appears to himself.

Article III. Reading as a Means of Improvement.

283. That **reading** is a copious source of improvement in composition is beyond dispute. Still, on this subject many vague and some erroneous notions are entertained. We shall enter into some details, suggested in part by President Porter's *Books and Reading.*

284. I. **As to the matter** or thought, reflect that when

you read you listen to a **real person,** speaking deliberately and for definite purposes, who undertakes to instruct or to please you. Therefore:

285. 1. **If you read for instruction,** begin by ascertaining whether the author is capable of imparting correct information. (*a*) Is he a *man of authority* on those matters? Or is he simply a fluent writer who can converse plausibly on any subject, though his knowledge of it may be very superficial? Such are many essayists. (*b*) Is he *a man of sound principles?* Can you abandon yourself with perfect confidence to his guidance? If you have reason to distrust him, see whether it would not be more expedient to look for information elsewhere, or at least whether there are not some points on which you ought to mistrust his insinuations.

286. *Remark* that **nearly every book instils certain principles** which may do the more evil as they are less suspected—*e.g.*, Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* instils unbelief, seeing in the exchange of a temporal for a spiritual supremacy nothing but decay: it is thus that a pagan would have written. Hume, in his *History of England*, fails to appreciate any virtuous intentions in the nobles and the people; sneering at all things, he chills enthusiasm for every public and private virtue. *Blackwood's Magazine*, a Tory organ, is devoted to strengthen the throne and the Church of England; while the *Westminster Review*, with an opposite aim, tends to undermine the foundations of both.

As the *Fabiola* of Cardinal Wiseman instils purity, generosity, piety, thus many novels instil licentiousness, scepticism, worldliness.

287. 2. **If you read for pleasure**, see (*a*) whether the **writer** is a **moral** and conscientious man. If he is, do not stop to quarrel with every expression to which an improper meaning might be attached. Like the bee, sip the honey and leave the poison for the spider. If he is not, ascertain first from others whether it is proper to read that work at all, or whether, at least, you are not to be on your guard against some particular danger. If such information cannot be had, see (*b*) whether the **pleasure** afforded is of a **healthy** kind, which not only cheers but also expands and elevates the mind, or at least produces a calm serenity.

288. **Southey's rule** may be of use:

> "Would you know whether the tendency of a book is good or evil, examine in what state of mind you lay it down. Has it induced you to suspect that that which you have been accustomed to think unlawful may, after all, be innocent, and that that may be harmless which you hitherto have been taught to think dangerous? Has it tended to make you dissatisfied and impatient under the control of others? and disposed you to relax in that self-government without which both the laws of God and man tell us there can be no virtue and consequently no happiness? Has it attempted to abate your reverence for what is great and good? . . . has it defiled the imagination with what is loathsome? Throw the book into the fire."

289. **II. As to the style:** 1. We improve more by reading **a few excellent writers** than by reading a multitude of indifferent ones.

2. Even in reading the best authors we learn more by reading **a few select passages** carefully and frequently than entire books cursorily—*non multa sed multum.*

3. There is an **abundance of good writings** of which the thoughts are proper, so that for style alone we need never read anything really dangerous.

4. The **best** should be read **from earliest childhood.**

5. **Faulty writers** do positive harm to the style of the young; now, many modern writers, highly admired by some, are full of faults.

6. Not mere reading, but a careful study by **analyzing,** is necessary for the acquisition of a good style.

7. Even in select models **distinguish the perfect** from the faulty; but be slow to condemn before understanding well.

290. **III. To read critically** is to judge for yourself of the real value of a book. This supposes the reader to be well versed in the matter treated, and to have read several other works on the same or on a similar subject, so as to be able to compare. Young people are rarely qualified to do so; it will be safer for them to seek information in particular cases from those of greater experience. Still, **some few hints** may be suggested:

1. See what the book professes to treat, what end to obtain. Is that end in itself desirable? Is it of present utility?

2. Can it be reasonably expected that the author, as far as he is known, is qualified to attain it?

3. Does he actually attain it?

4. Does he do so better than is done by any book yet published on that subject in the same language? else what is the use of a new book?

291. **IV. Read attentively.**—1. Do not, as a rule, read a book that cannot keep you awake and interested.

2. Read for a definite purpose—*e.g.*, to know such an author's views on such a question.

3. Know, however, that not every book requires the same closeness of attention.

4. Distracted reading does no good; pause when there occurs a thought worth entertaining.

5. In serious reading pause from time to time—*e.g.*, at a new chapter—to review in mind the matter read.

6. Some readings are so suggestive that but little should be read at a time; the more we reflect, the more we improve.

292. **V. What shall I read?** *Answer:* 1. **On what matter do you need most information** to do well what is expected of you? After settling this you may next inquire what book will best supply this particular want—*e.g.*, one engaged in studying the ancient languages will do well to read Ancient History, that he may understand the facts and circumstances to which classical literature constantly refers.

2. Generally **prefer what is of present use** to the information which may perhaps be useful some future day. Still, do not so confine yourself to your present narrow sphere as to neglect acquiring a certain amount of general information to fit you for a wider field of action in after-life.

3. **Do not read what you cannot at present understand,** and be honest enough to acknowledge your ignorance; but adapt your reading to your age and circumstances. Children should generally read narrations, descriptions, etc., in prose and verse, but these should always be such as inculcate sound principles; later on they will read essays, treatises, etc.

4. Generally **avoid wordy writers,** who say little in many words.

293. **VI. Poetry.**—1. As all will not enjoy the same authors and the same pieces, read only such as you can appreciate. You cannot readily enjoy poetry when you cannot **sympathize with the writer;** and as we should never sympathize with what is vicious, we must be most careful to select pure-minded authors.

2. The moral influence of a piece is good, no matter what the subject, if it **throws our affections aright** and leaves on the mind fit images and contemplations. Milton makes Satan odious, Byron and Goethe make the reader sympathize with the evil spirit against God.

BOOK IV.

VARIOUS SPECIES OF PROSE COMPOSITIONS.

CHAPTER I.

IMITATION.

294. The young are gifted with a remarkable power of **imitation**; it is the most important instinct which the all-wise Creator has provided for their early development, and it suggests the method to be followed by the educator. No kind of exercise is better adapted to their age than the imitation of whatever is excellent in thought and style. It must be noticed, however, that they can be made to imitate advantageously those literary beauties only which they can to some extent understand and appreciate. Hence some exercises in imitation are suitable to children, others to those whose judgment is more mature and whose education is more advanced.

295. The **importance** of imitation is even greater than that of precepts: precepts without models to imitate would not carry a learner far on the road to literary excellence; while many have become skilful writers without the guidance of precepts, by the sole means of imitation, supposing, of course, a fair amount of natural talent.

Longum iter per præcepta, says Seneca, *brevis et efficax per*

exempla—"The way that leads through precepts is long, that through examples is short and direct."

296. Still, **imitation is not all-sufficient,** for its productions are usually inferior to the originals, not having their naturalness and their power. Besides, what is most valuable in a writer, his genius, ease, tact, etc., cannot be imitated. Exercises of imitation may be almost infinitely varied, but all may be reduced to **two kinds.** We may imitate a model either by writing on the *same subject* or on *another subject.*

ARTICLE I. IMITATIONS ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

297. The ways in which learners may imitate a model by **writing on the same subject** are chiefly five:

I. They may read a composition, or hear it read, and then try to **reproduce the same thoughts** in their own words; and they may even attempt to improve on the original.

These models should be suited to the age, degree of progress, and other circumstances of the pupils; a judicious choice of the proper models must be made by the teacher. He will find a supply of such pieces in readers, selections for elocution, etc.

This exercise may be improved by dictating a brief **analysis** of the model, so that the pupil may develop it more regularly.

298. II. Pupils may write a **prose** composition, reproducing in their own style the thoughts contained in a piece of **poetry.** For instance, let them write a description of a happy village, or of the village inn, the village schoolmaster, etc., in imitation of Goldsmith's "Deserted Village." Or let them read the poem "Evangeline" of Longfellow, and then narrate the same story in prose.

299. III. They may **translate** a masterpiece of composi-

tion from an ancient or a modern language into their mother-tongue. Such exercises are of constant use in a classical course of education. They are highly recommended by Cicero (*De Or.*, i. 34) and by Quintilian (x. 5). Pliny points out the following **advantages of such translation:**

"It gives the learner propriety and beauty of expression, a copious supply of figures, facility in explaining every thought; and, by the power of imitation, it stimulates him to invent for himself beauties similar to those of his models. Shades of thought which a reader might not notice cannot escape the attention of the translator, and thus his understanding and his judgment are improved by constant practice."—*Letters*, vii. 9, § 2.

300. That these and other advantages may be secured, the translation must be carefully and **judiciously done**, so that the full and exact meaning of the original be expressed with great propriety in the vernacular. It is not at all necessary that there be a word in English to correspond to every word of the original, nor that the sentences in both be of the same length and construction. But two extremes must be avoided: on the one hand, we should not give a mere paraphrase instead of a translation, and, on the other, we should not follow the original so closely as to do violence to our own idiom.

301. **Two further directions** for translation may usefully be added:

1. The manner of translation should be **regulated by the object** to be attained: thus for a legal or theological document fidelity and closeness are more important than beauty of style; while the latter should receive more care in works of less exact thought which are translated for the general reader.

2. In works of literary merit the translation should **retain the characteristic beauties** of the original style; for instance, Cicero's fulness, fluency, and harmony; Demosthenes' closeness and energy; Livy's ease; Cæsar's exactness; Ovid's sweetness; Homer's rapidity and fire; Virgil's delicacy, etc. (See Newman's *Historical Sketches*, vol. ii., advertisement.)

302. IV. A fourth kind of imitation consists in a **double translation.** If the object is, for instance, to perfect one's self in Latin composition, a passage of Cicero or Livy may be translated into English; then, after some interval of time, it is to be translated back into Latin, and the result to be compared with the original. This exercise is well suited for self-improvement, especially with persons of more mature minds.

303. V. A very useful kind of imitation consists in first **analyzing** a model—for instance, an oration—and then **developing this analysis**, so as to produce a composition resembling the original. (See for the preparation of such analysis our *Art of Oratorical Composition*, b. iii. c. iv.)

Article II. Imitation on a Different Subject.

304. We may strive to reproduce the beauties of a model by applying them to a **different subject** in three principal ways, of which the first two are suited to younger persons, the third to more advanced students.

305. I. The first manner consists in taking the **elegant words and phrases**, constructions and figures of our model, and applying them, with some judicious changes, to a similar subject. Take as an example the following extract from a speech by Patrick Henry (March, 1775):

"They tell us, sir, that we are weak, unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week? or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction?

Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot? Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us."

In close imitation of this write a strong appeal to sinful men who put off their conversion:

"You may tell me that you are weak, unable at present to subdue your unruly passions. But when will you be stronger? Will it be the next week? or the next year? Will it be when these passions shall have grown still stronger by more protracted indulgence? when your wills shall have been further weakened by habitual excesses? Will you gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Will you acquire the means of effectual resistance to your depraved inclinations by lying supinely on your backs and hugging the delusive phantom of hope that you shall be able to shake off the yoke at some future day, when your passions shall have bound you hand and foot? No; you are not too weak now, if you make proper use of those means which a merciful God has placed at your disposal. Men so intelligent and noble in many other respects, men accustomed to make sacrifices for other purposes, which they fully appreciate, are capable of accomplishing any object to which they generously devote their attention. Besides, you are not to fight your battles alone. There is a good God who earnestly wishes every sinner to be converted, who speaks to your hearts this very day, and who is ready now to second your earnest efforts"; etc.

306. II. The second is a much **looser method of imitation**: it consists in reading carefully a story, a description, a letter, or any elegant passage of a good author, and then endeavoring to compose on a similar subject, profiting by any hint which the model may suggest with regard to style, or plan, or anything else that may improve the composition. This method of imitation is not subject to definite rules, but it relies on that instinctive power of imitation which is productive of the happiest results, provided the models be judiciously chosen; that is, provided they be excellent in themselves and well suited to the stage of the learner's progress. An **example** would be The Combat of Goliath and David written in imitation of The Combat of the Horatii and Curiatii, as related by Livy (ii. 10).

307. III. The **more advanced exercise** consists in first studying a model thoroughly, examining its excellences of various kinds—the beauty and appropriateness of the thoughts, the order in which they are developed, the harmony of the periods, the elegance and power of the figures, the closeness of the reasoning, the clearness of the arguments, the delicate politeness of the refutation, etc.—and then writing a similar composition on another theme which is capable of analogous treatment.

308. For instance, in imitation of the **first oration of Cicero against Catiline** a speech may be written denouncing some evil practices or some wicked men that are ruining the youth of the country, such as the reading of obscene literature or the wretches who spread it broadcast over the land. It is not necessary that the imitation follow the entire model step by step. Sometimes we may imitate the main division only and the general spirit of a model.

309. Thus we find, for instance, that Demosthenes, in his **Third Olynthiac** Oration, 1. Shows the necessity of seizing the proffered opportunity; 2. Explains how it is to be improved; 3. Enforces these measures by proving that success is certain, if that plan be adopted, and that action is imperative (*Art of Orat. Comp.*, p. 120). Now, on this plan an address to the members of a debating society may readily be composed: 1. Showing the necessity of profiting by

the opportunities for self-improvement which the society affords; 2. Explaining what must be done to derive fruit from the exercises; 3. Enforcing these suggestions by proving that the task is easy, but that earnest application is absolutely necessary to insure success.

The greatest writers of all ages have made use of such imitations while striving to improve on their models. Cicero imitated Plato in his dialogues; Virgil imitated Homer and Theocritus; Horace, Pindar; Pope imitates Virgil's Eclogues, etc.

Article III. Selection of Models.

310. Much depends on the **judicious choice of models** to be proposed for imitation. Even for the youngest children none but excellent examples should be selected, suited to their tender age, of course, but exquisite in their kind. In fact, perfection in the model is more necessary in proportion as the pupils' judgment is less developed; for such learners have no other guide than the instinct of imitation, and cannot discern what should be imitated in the model from what is unworthy of their imitation.

311. Besides, what is thus learned in early years can scarcely be unlearned later on. Very many children have their taste depraved for life by their first picture-books or sensational stories. Quintilian, in his excellent work on the *Education of an Orator*, insists earnestly on the necessity of putting nothing before children that they may not imitate to advantage. *Optima quidem et statim et semper*—"Choose the best models at once and ever after." He would have the very talk of the child's nurse to be grammatical:

"First of all, let the talk of the child's nurses not be ungrammatical. Chrysippus wished them, if possible, to be women of some knowledge; at any rate he would have the best chosen that circumstances may allow. To their morals, doubtless, attention is first to be paid; but let them also speak with propriety. It is they that the child will hear first; it is their words that he will try to imitate. We are naturally most tenacious of what we have imbibed in our infant years, as the flavor with which you scent new vessels remains in them; nor can the colors with which wool is stained be effaced hereafter. Those very habits which are of a more objectionable nature adhere with the greater tenacity; for good ones are easily changed for the worse, but when will you change bad ones into good? Do not, then, accustom the child, even when yet an infant, to phraseology which must be unlearned" (b. i. c. i. 4, 5).

312. Those writers, as a rule, are the **best models for imitation** who combine regularity of plan with ease and naturalness of development. Such are chiefly Cicero and Demosthenes, Livy and Herodotus, Cæsar and Xenophon, among the ancients; and among the moderns, Edmund Burke and Erskine, Pitt and Chatham, Webster and Calhoun, Clay and Everett; Lingard and Alison, Prescott and Irving; Addison and Walter Scott, Dickens and Cooper; Cardinals Wiseman, Manning, and Newman.

313. Some writers are useful models for the acquisition of **special excellences;** thus we may learn vigor and condensation of thought from Thucydides and Tacitus, vivid description from Sallust, a forcible and direct style from Macaulay, Brownson, and Father Burke. While perhaps no author is commendable in every respect, beginners especially should confine themselves to those who approach nearest to perfection; or, better still, such passages from any good author should be selected for them by a prudent teacher as are every way fit models for imitation.

314. **The teacher will, besides,** 1. Vary his selections to suit the capacities and circumstances of his pupils; 2

Point out in what the beauty of those pieces consists, and in what particular respects they are chiefly to be imitated; 3. Vary his selections so as to improve, now some, then other talents of his pupils. A learner trained on one model or to one kind of style only, would not bring all his powers into play; he would not acquire a well-developed mind nor all the beauty of language which is within his reach.

CHAPTER II.

LETTERS.

315. A **letter** is a written communication on any subject from one person to another. Letters deserve most careful study; for, 1. No species of composition is more generally used by all classes of persons. 2. A negligently written letter may entail very injurious consequences. 3. Many will judge of a person's character and attainments from his epistolary correspondence.

It makes a considerable difference in our style whether we write as officials or business men, or as individual members of society. We may, therefore, usefully distinguish letters into **two kinds**—*official* or *business* letters and *unofficial* letters. We class official and business letters together, because they are mainly subject to the same rules.

Article I. Official or Business Letters.

316. We call **official** or **business letters** all those written by a person in the capacity of an officer, a professional man, a merchant, or a tradesman. In all such correspondence the following are the leading rules:

Rule 1.—Be very **clear**, so that your exact meaning cannot fail to be understood at first sight. Read your letter over with close attention to see that all your thoughts are correctly, fully, and clearly expressed.

Rule 2.—Take care that the **handwriting** be legible, else you may get *boots* for *books*, *matches* for *hatchets* or *latches*, *two ponies* instead of 100 *pansies*.

Rule 3.—Be **brief** and to the point; business men have no time to waste.

Rule 4.—Confine yourself to **strict business.** If you wish to add matters of friendship, it is well to write them on a separate leaf, that the business portion may be separately filed.

Rule 5.—Write **grammatical and idiomatic** English, but without any attempt at figures—in the plain style.

Rule 6.—Observe the received **formalities,** which are now to be explained.

The **formalities of epistolary correspondence** are not uniform in all countries. The general tendency of Americans is towards simplicity in forms: they consult the convenience of all persons concerned, showing proper respect for every one, but using few idle compliments. We shall notice the points most generally agreed upon, without condemning such departures from these directions as are authorized by common sense and respectable practice.

317. Here is an **example** of official correspondence. It is taken from General Sherman's *Memoirs;* most of the letters in that work are on the same simple plan:

HEADQUARTERS ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES,
CITY POINT, VIRGINIA, December 26, 1864.

Major-General W. T. Sherman, Savannah, Georgia:

GENERAL: Your very interesting letter of the 22d inst., brought by Major Gray, of General Foster's staff, is just at hand. As the major starts back at once, I can do no more at present than simply acknowledge its receipt. The capture of Savannah, with all its immense stores, must tell upon the people of the South. All well here. Yours truly,

U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General.*

318. We call attention to some **special formalities in general use.**

1. Write on white paper with black ink, leaving a half-inch margin at the left side. Use letter or note size, but never tear nor cut off a part. Decided colors, odd patterns, gaudy pictures are in bad taste.

2. Leave at least one inch vacant on the top of the first page.

3. Put on the first line, and to the right, your own post-office **address;** and, either on the same line or on the next, the **date**—that is, the month, day, and year; also the hour, if necessary.

319. 4. On the next line, and beginning near the margin, put the **name, title,** and **address** of the person or firm you write to. This inside address, as it has been called, may occupy one or two, or even three, lines. It should be complete enough to distinguish the party addressed from all others (as the letter will be filed without the envelope); but it need not be so detailed as the outside address on the envelope.

It is more formal, when addressing dignitaries, to omit or abridge the directions at the head of the letter, and to write the whole address below the signature to the left.

320. Care should be taken to give every one his **proper title.** The following titles are in common use:

In writing to the Pope, "His Holiness, Leo XIII."

To a cardinal, "His Eminence."

To an archbishop, "The Most Rev. P. R. Kenrick (with or without D.D.)"

To a bishop, "The Rt. Rev. —— (D.D.)"

To a priest, "Rev. ——."

To the President and Vice-President of the United States, "The President," "The Vice-President."

To a governor or foreign minister, "His Excellency."

To members of Congress and other high officers of the State, to judges, aldermen, etc., "The Hon."

After the name of a lawyer or a justice of peace, "Esq." (nothing before it).

To a military officer, "General," "Colonel," "Captain," "Lieutenant."

To private persons, "Mr.," "Master" (for a young boy), "Messrs." or Misses (for a firm), "Mrs. John Brown" (for the wife of John Brown), "Mrs. Mary Brown" (for his widow), "Miss Brown" (for his eldest daughter), "Miss Julia Brown" (for a younger daughter), etc.

321. 5. Next comes the **salutation:**

"Holy Father" or "Your Holiness," "Your Grace," "Your Lordship," "Rev. Father," or "Your Reverence."

"Mr. President," "Mr. Vice-President."

"Your Excellency," "Your Honor."

"General," "Colonel," etc.

"Sir," "Gentlemen" or "Ladies," "Madam," "Miss."

The word "Dear" denotes acquaintance and respect, but not familiarity: the terms "Sir," "Madam," "Miss" look rather formal without "Dear." "My Dear" is considered by some as more familiar, by others as less so.

322. 6. Begin the first **paragraph** at the point where the salutation ends, or on the next line just below it. The other paragraphs will commence about half an inch from the margin.

323. 7. The letter should end with the **subscription,** which consists of two parts—viz., an expression of respect and the signature. The expression of respect often forms part of the last paragraph; at other times it stands separately, and then it usually begins about the middle of the line. The following forms are common in official correspondence:

"I am, with respect, your obedient servant"; "I have the honor to be your obedient servant"; "Very respectfully yours"; "Yours truly"; "Sincerely yours"; "Yours thankfully," etc.

324. 8. Make as few **folds** in the letter as possible. With a full-sized sheet turn the lower on the upper edge and make a fold in the middle; fold the double into three parts. See that the letter does not adhere to the inside of the envelope. The envelope should be suitable to the paper, and both should be of an approved pattern.

325. 9. **On the envelope** put the stamp near the right upper corner. About the middle of the envelope write the name and title of the party addressed; on the next line, a little more to the right, the number of the house and the name of the street (or, for small places, of the town and county); below, the name of the city; and, lastly, that of the State. Take great care that the directions be so explicit as to prevent all possibility of mistake.

10. In **answering** business letters (or any letters that require a direct answer) begin by mentioning the items to which you are replying; thus:

"Yours of the 25th inst. came to hand. You desire to know . . ."

"Your order for . . . is received."

"Your favor of the 30th ult. enclosing check for seventy-five dollars ($75) on Farmers' Bank, St. Louis, is received and credited to your account, in full payment for . . ."

326. 11. A **note** may be written in the third person throughout; *e.g.:*

"Mr. Jno. Green will call on Mr. W. Smith on next Thursday at three P.M."

This is often a convenient form for postal cards.

327. 12. When sending a **telegram** the great rule is to convey all the necessary information briefly and in such language as is most apt to be correctly transmitted. Proper names are often mistaken and punctuation marks utterly neglected in the transmission. The formalities of titles, etc., may be dispensed with in telegrams.

328. 13. When it is necessary to add an item after the letter is finished, we begin by making **P. S.** (postscript) near the margin below the last line of the letter, and then state briefly what we have to say; if there is no evident reason for our former omission, we premise a word of excuse.

329. **Exercise 1.**—Write a letter purporting to order from the publisher a dozen copies of this text-book, or of another book designated by the teacher; and submit the letter to him for criticism on all particulars.

330. **Exercise 2.**—Write a letter purporting to send payment for the books received.

331 **Exercise 3.**—Write in the name of the book-firm to acknowledge receipt of payment.

332. Examples:

A Note.

Mr. & Mrs. ———
request the pleasure of
.....Company
at dinner on Friday,
Jan. 19th, at 7½ o'clock.

A Card.

Mr. & Mrs. ———
At Home,
Wednesday, April the eleventh,
from four until six o'clock,
and from eight until eleven o'clock.
No. —— Second Avenue.

An informal, familiar Letter.

No. — H Street,
Washington.

Dear Julia,

Will you not come to dine with us to-morrow, Saturday, at 7 o'clock? We shall be so glad to see you. I hope that you have no other engagement.

Affectionately yours,
Agnes Smith.

Jan. 2d, Friday

An Envelope.

[*Stamp*]

Mrs. Lily Tulip,
Elm Grove Mansion,
Acacia,
Linwood Co.,
Florida.

ROSEBUD VILLAGE, Merrydale Co., Ind.,
April 1, 1886.

Mrs. Lily Tulip,
Acacia, Florida.

MY DEAR MOTHER:

I have just received your kind favor of the 25th ult. in which you inform me that you desire me to return as soon as convenient. Much as I enjoy the scenery here, and especially the affection of my excellent uncle and aunt, I shall be happy to comply with your wishes. You may look for me on next Saturday morning. I have so many good things to say to you, but the postboy is waiting for this letter. Do take good care of your health: here all are well and send love.

Your loving daughter,
FLORA.

Article II. Unofficial Letters.

333. **Unofficial letters** are such as are written by any person in his private capacity, as an individual member of society. They may be dictated by friendship, by charity or kindness, by politeness, by respect, by gratitude, by self-interest, or by any other reasonable motive.

There is one important **difference** between official and unofficial letters—namely, that the former exclude sentiment, and the latter admit it freely; the former proceed solely from the head, the latter often from the heart, though, of course, under the guidance of the head. Now, when the heart is interested the imagination is stirred, and literature, in the strict meaning of the word, is the result; then there is room for tropes and figures and other ornaments of style, and, in particular, for the display of the most delicate taste. Epistolary correspondence does not admit the bolder figures of oratory: any attempt at splendor is objectionable in letters. We must charm by gentler beauties, by appropriateness, by modest plays of the imagination, by genial warmth of sentiment.

334. The **style** of these letters should generally be:

(*a*) *Correct*, as is the language of educated men in conversation; still, somewhat more chastened—*i.e.*, free from all that is rather tolerated than approved. Apparent negligence may be sometimes agreeable; real negligence never.

(*b*) *Appropriate* to the subject, the persons, the occasion, etc.; on important matters grave, on common ones neat, elegant and playful on trifling ones, etc.

(*c*) *Concise*, pruning away long introductions, unnecessary developments, diffuse reasoning, especially to men of little leisure. Familiar letters may be more diffuse.

(*d*) *Modest*, avoiding long periods, bold figures, etc.

(*e*) *Graceful*, selecting neat constructions and all kinds of modest ornaments, such as obvious comparisons, natural metaphors, brief narrations and descriptions, pithy sayings, witty and humorous reflections, etc.

335. We shall treat with some detail of the principal species of such letters:

I. **Letters of friendship** are such as are dictated by mutual affection between relatives and friends. They should be natural, easy, frank, without the least affectation. "I wish you to open to me your soul, not your library," said Mme. de Sévigné, who wrote exquisitely herself. Such letters may treat of any subject of common interest to the parties concerned. Their language is that of the heart. Kindness, affection, charity, good-nature should dictate, prudence and common sense supervise them.

336. **Their charm will depend** chiefly on the intelligence and the amiable character of the writer. Whatever, therefore, will quicken or develop our intelligence, but especially whatever will improve our character, making us more sociable, unselfish, considerate, etc., will improve our familiar correspondence. Persons too dull to have any original thoughts, those incapable of warm feelings, pretentious persons who cannot write without affectation, vainglorious ones who can think of nothing but self, deceitful characters incapable of candor, are not likely to succeed in this species of composition. On the other hand, intelligent persons with warm-hearted, modest, and open characters are sure to succeed, provided they do not take a wrong view of their task. What is that task? It is to make others happy for time and eternity. See what your friend would like to hear; anticipate his queries; speak of yourself for the sake of your friend. Avoid overwrought sentimentality: it is distasteful, because unreal. Genuine goodness and gentle piety are attractive.

337. "A light, easy, playful **style** is most appropriate in

friendship" (*American Gentleman*). Still, the modest ornaments of style are here in place. Happy turns of expression, delicate allusions, innocent hints, ingenious fault-finding, pleasing anecdotes, and pen-pictures have a pleasant effect, but all must be natural. "If you run after wit," says Montesquieu, "you will catch folly." "Most persons write ill," says Chesterfield, "because they aim at writing better than they can, by which means they acquire a formal and unnatural style; whereas to write well you must write easily and naturally."

338. In **telling news** be not a gossip, do not make known the secrets of others; handle the names of others with respect, so that, if they should happen to see the letter (as they may sooner or later), they could not be offended with you; be charitable and prudent. Relate facts with order and clearness, in a pleasant style.

339. II. **Letters of Congratulation**—such as are written on occasion of the New Year, a birthday, a patronal feast, or when a friend has met with some uncommon good-fortune—should be dictated by genuine friendship and sincere esteem, and expressed modestly without any exaggerated praise. Never flatter—*i.e.*, never praise what you feel does not deserve it—but let your friend see that you love him and that you rejoice with him for his sake, not for the advantage his success may bring you.

340. In **New Year's letters**, etc., express gratitude for all that parents and others have done for you, sorrow for the grief you may have caused them, a promise of more thoughtful conduct in the future, with a hope that God will grant you time to fulfil your promise. Add good wishes, and a prayer for the blessings of Heaven on the new year. The writing should be most careful, to show respect and to prove you have profited by your opportunities to learn. In all such letters one good thought, one happy

hit, is more pleasing than four rambling pages: it is more creditable to the writer and more acceptable to the reader.

341. III. **Letters of Condolence.** These require great skill and care. Act like the humane surgeon who touches the wound gently, and only to heal it. If your correspondent knows the sad news already, sympathize sincerely with him: "What a loss sustained! what hopes disappointed!" Hit as it were accidentally on a motive of consolation drawn from reason, or, better, from religion, and develop it skilfully. If you are to announce the bad news yourself prepare the way slowly; suggest motives of resignation to God's will beforehand; state the news at last as delicately as you can. Express your grief again before you conclude.

342. **IV. Letters of Introduction or Recommendation** require special prudence. Think first whether it is proper to write such a letter at all for such a person.

> "Consider well for whom you pledge your name,
> Lest without guilt you bear another's shame."—*Horace.*

Avoid two dangers: do not offend the applicant for a recommendation; do not deceive your correspondent by exaggerated praise of the one recommended.

If the applicant is *worthy* state his merits, express reasonable confidence in him, ask your friend's interest in his behalf as a personal favor to yourself. If he is *unworthy* or doubtfully worthy, give him a letter which he will prefer not to present; for every such letter is an open letter, which the bearer is expected to read before delivering. It may be necessary to write by mail to the third party, informing him, before the letter is presented to him, of certain facts which could not be mentioned in the recommendation. Write on the envelope, below the address, towards the left: "To introduce Mr. ——."

343. V. **Letters of Petition** should be modest and every way moderate. Ingratiate yourself in a manly way; state your reasons briefly but forcibly; show your appreciation of the trouble your correspondent may be put to in consequence of the favor; promise gratitude.

In answering such letters favorably be brief and show your pleasure at rendering the little service asked. Say as little as possible of the trouble it costs, or of limitation or conditions. In refusing show how reluctantly you do so; give good reasons for it. Express your hope of finding, some other time, a better opportunity of showing your affection or esteem.

344. VI. **Letters of Thanks** should never be neglected when a favor has been received. Express your appreciation both of the favor and of the kindness with which it was bestowed. Hope for an opportunity, not of repaying the person, but of showing your gratitude.

345. We add some further directions for epistolary **correspondence in general:**

1. Give *advice* sparingly: do not volunteer it except for very special reasons; if asked give it cautiously, modestly, appearing to mistrust your views unless there is a principle at stake. If there is, state it modestly but firmly: in this, as in all things else, honesty is the best policy.

2. If you must *find fault*, do so reluctantly and as gently as circumstances will allow; but if it is your clear duty to do it at all, do it with manly firmness.

3. To *excuse* yourself rather exaggerate than hide your fault; express sorrow; then touch upon palliating circumstances, or explain how the mistake arose; promise care for the future.

346. **Eminent letter-writers** are few. Cicero's is the best collection: he corresponded in a charming style with the greatest men of his age on all manners of subjects;

but he wrote simply what the circumstances actually suggested, without any intention of publishing his letters.

Pliny's are highly, even excessively, polished.

Dean Swift's are unaffected, but they want discretion and betray many of his defects of character.

Pope's are entertaining, witty, and refined, but too evidently labored.

Chesterfield's are natural, but often indelicate, and in other ways wanting in a Christian spirit.

Lady Mary Montagu has much ease and vivacity, and a very agreeable epistolary style.

In French, Madame de Sévigné is considered a charming model of familiar correspondence; still, she is too talkative for English taste.

The letters of Eugénie de Guérin are among the most perfect models in this species of literature.

347. **Exercises.**—Write one letter of each species, the particular circumstances being suggested by your teacher.

CHAPTER III.

NARRATION.

348. **Narration** is defined a species of composition which relates the particulars of a real or fictitious event. In a wider meaning, narration is the statement of successive facts; it enters into histories, biographies, travels, novels, etc. We shall consider: 1. The *general rules* for all good narration; 2. The rules for *Simple Narration;* 3. Those for *Complex Narration;* 4. The *style* of narration.

Article I. Rules for Narration in General.

349. The first rule regards the **choice of a subject.**

Rule 1.—The writer should select a subject with which he is **sufficiently acquainted,** else he cannot expect to write a sensible composition.

350. *Rule* 2.—He should choose a subject **not too lofty** for his talents, nor too intricate for his ability to handle successfully.

These two rules apply to all compositions; but they are often violated in the choice of subjects for narration. The reason is that many of the most perfect specimens of narration, in ancient and modern writers, are of wars and battles, and other stirring subjects, which are too intricate and too little understood by the young to be good subjects for imitation. Such subjects accustom beginners to unreality and conceit, and do more harm than good.

351. *Rule* 3.—The subject should **suit the end** intended by the writer. If he desires to *please* let him choose facts

which are beautiful or interesting in themselves, or which may readily be beautified; if he aims at *moving* his readers he must select a story that speaks to their hearts; if he wishes to *instruct* he must relate an event that is itself instructive, or from which he can draw a useful lesson. If all these ends be intended together he should choose very carefully some matter which is suited for all these purposes.

352. If the subject deals with real facts the rule of **fidelity** to the truth is essential. It requires that not only the main facts shall be true as they are narrated, but also that all the striking and important details be faithfully stated as they are known to have happened. Little details which are only the filling-up of the picture may be supplied by the writer's knowledge of human nature. But care must be taken that the author does not give a false coloring to his picture by offering his own speculations as real facts. It would be a great fault to introduce any important but fictitious circumstance into the narrative of a real event.

353. *Rule* 4.—The rule of **probability** applies to both real and fictitious narratives. It requires that everything narrated must appear natural, plausible, or true to nature. To make a narration look probable or plausible the writer must show how far the effects mentioned proceeded from known causes, and how far they were merely accidental. He must exhibit the words and actions as in keeping with the characters of the persons, with the times, places, etc. He must do all this without appearing to reason much, simply by presenting the facts and circumstances in a natural manner.

354. *Rule* 5.—To make a narration truly artistic—*i.e.*, a beautiful piece of literary composition—the rule of **unity** is important. All the details of the narrative must be so selected and disposed as to appear parts of one whole story, so that all the attention of the reader is concen-

trated upon a single fact. When the story is brief and simple the rule of unity is easily observed; but not so when the details are many and the narrative is prolonged.

355. **The art of telling a good story well** lies chiefly in this process: that, after a proper introduction, you excite and partly satisfy the curiosity of the reader without hurrying the events too much, suspending the action occasionally without allowing it to languish. Such suspense often adds intense interest to the narrative, which must afterwards be brought to a natural and full close, satisfying all reasonable curiosity and expectation.

Article II. Simple Narration.

356. **A narrative is simple** if it is free from intricacy and multiplicity of details, and so brief that, when it has been read, the whole story is easily remembered—taken in, as it were, at one glance; else it is *complex*. Addison illustrates the truth, "The humble are exalted," by this simple story, "The Drop of Water":

"A drop of water fell out of a cloud into the sea, and, finding itself lost in such an immensity of fluid matter, broke out into the following reflection: 'Alas! what an insignificant creature am I in this prodigious ocean of waters; my existence is of no concern to the universe; I am reduced to a kind of nothing, and am less than the least of the works of God.' It so happened that an oyster, which lay in the neighborhood of this drop, chanced to gape and swallow it up in the midst of this its humble soliloquy. The drop lay a great while hardening in the shell, till by degrees it was ripened into a pearl, which, falling into the hands of a diver, after a long series of adventures, is at present that famous pearl which is fixed on the top of the Persian diadem."

357. Dodsley inculcates moderation in pleasure by the "Fable of the Two Bees":

"On a fine morning in May two bees set forward in quest of honey;

the one wise and temperate, the other careless and extravagant. They soon arrived at a garden enriched with aromatic herbs, the most fragrant and the most delicious fruits. They regaled themselves for a time on the various dainties that were spread before them; the one loading himself at intervals with provisions for the hive against the distant winter, the other revelling in sweets without regard to anything but his present gratification. At length they found a wide-mouthed vial, that hung beneath the bough of a peach-tree, filled with honey ready tempered and exposed to their taste in the most alluring manner. The thoughtless epicure, in spite of all his friend's remonstrances, plunged headlong into the vessel, resolving to indulge himself in all the pleasures of sensuality. The philosopher, on the other hand, sipped a little with caution; but, being suspicious of danger, flew off to fruits and flowers, where, by the moderation of his meals, he improved his relish for the true enjoyment of them. In the evening, however, he called upon his friend to inquire whether he would return to the hive; but he found him surfeited in sweets, which he was as unable to leave as to enjoy. Clogged in his wings, enfeebled in his feet, and his whole frame totally enervated, he was but just able to bid his friend adieu, and to lament with his latest breath that, though a taste of pleasure might quicken the relish of life, an unrestrained indulgence is inevitable destruction."

358. One of the most perfect models that can be proposed of a simple narration is from the masterly pen of Cicero, "Dionysius and Damocles":

"Dionysius, the tyrant of Sicily, showed how far he was from being happy, even whilst abounding in riches and all the pleasures which riches can procure. Damocles, one of his flatterers, was complimenting him one day upon his power, his treasures, and the magnificence of his royal state, and affirming that no monarch ever was greater or happier than he. 'Have you a mind, Damocles,' said the king, 'to taste this happiness, and know by experience what my enjoyments are, of which you entertain so high an appreciation?' Damocles gladly accepted the offer. Then the king ordered that a royal banquet should be prepared, and a gilded couch placed for him, covered with rich embroidery, and sideboards loaded with gold and silver plate of immense value. Pages of extraordinary beauty

were ordered to wait on him at table, and to obey his commands with the greatest readiness and the most profound submission. Neither ointments, chaplets of flowers, nor rich perfumes were wanting. The table was loaded with the most exquisite delicacies of every kind. Damocles fancied himself amongst the gods. In the midst of all his happiness he sees, let down from the roof, exactly over his head as he lay indulging himself in state, a glittering sword hung by a single hair. The sight of destruction, thus threatening him from on high, soon put a stop to his joy and revelling. The pomp of his attendants and the glitter of the carved plate gave him no longer any pleasure. He dreads to stretch forth his hand to the table. He throws off the chaplet of roses. He hastens to escape from his dangerous situation, and at last begs the king to restore him to his former humble condition, having no desire to enjoy any longer so dreadful a kind of happiness."

359. If we study this piece with care we shall **notice the following points** in particular: 1. There is a brief introduction to the story. 2. The facts are related in the natural order. 3. The quotation of the tyrant's words enlivens the narrative. 4. The description of the feast adds elegance. 5. Every detail either throws light upon the facts, or makes them more interesting or impressive. No item could be omitted without detracting from the happy effect of the whole. 6. We see the reason of everything that is said or done. All these are points worthy of imitation.

360. Care ought always to be taken to **select those circumstances** of an event which mark it strikingly. A few well-chosen details may convey a more vivid impression of a fact than a multitude of less telling incidents. Thus Walter Scott, in narrating the "Taking of Roxburgh Castle," selects only a few items; but they stamp the impression of the sudden surprise indelibly on the mind:

"You must know Roxburgh was then a very large castle situated near where two fine rivers, the Tweed and the Teviot, join each

other. Being within five or six miles of England, the English were extremely desirous of retaining it, and the Scots equally eager to obtain possession of it. I will tell you how it was taken.

"It was upon the night of what is called Shrovetide, a holiday which people paid great respect to and solemnized with much gayety and feasting. Most of the garrison of Roxburgh castle were drinking and carousing, but still they had set watches on the battlements of the castle, in case of any sudden attack; for as the Scots had succeeded in so many enterprises of the kind, and as Douglas was known to be in the neighborhood, they conceived themselves obliged to keep a very strict guard.

"An Englishwoman, the wife of one of the officers, was sitting on the battlements with her child in her arms, and looking out on the fields below. She saw some black objects, like a herd of cattle, straggling near the foot of the wall and approaching the ditch or moat of the castle. She pointed them out to the sentinel, and asked him what they were. 'Pooh, pooh!' said the soldier, 'it is Farmer Such-a-one's cattle' (naming a man whose farm lay near the castle). 'The good man is keeping a jolly Shrovetide, and has forgot to shut up his bullocks in their yard; but if the Douglas come across them before morning he is likely to rue his negligence.' Now, those creeping objects which they saw from the castle-wall were no real cattle, but Douglas himself and his soldiers, who had put black cloaks above their armor, and were creeping about on hands and feet, in order, without being observed, to get so near to the foot of the castle-wall as to be able to set ladders to it. The poor woman, who knew nothing of this, sat quietly on the wall, and began to sing to her child. You must know that the name of Douglas had become so terrible to the English that the women used to frighten their children with it, and say to them when they behaved ill that they 'would make the Black Douglas take them.' And the soldier's wife was singing to her child:

'Hush ye, hush ye, little pet ye;
Hush ye, hush ye, do not fret ye:
The Black Douglas shall not get ye.'

"'You are not so sure of that,' said a voice close beside her. She felt at the same time a heavy hand, with an iron glove, laid on her shoulder, and when she looked round she saw the very 'Black Douglas' she had been singing about standing close beside her, a

tall, swarthy, strong man. At the same time another Scotsman was seen ascending the walls, near to the sentinel. The soldier gave the alarm and rushed at the Scotsman, whose name was Simon Ledehouse, with his lance; but Simon parried the stroke, and, closing with the sentinel, struck him a deadly blow with his dagger. The rest of the Scots followed up to assist Douglas and Ledehouse, and the castle was taken. Many of the soldiers were put to death, but Douglas protected the woman and the child. I dare say she made no more song about the Black Douglas."

361. Washington Irving, in narrating the first landing of Columbus, was naturally led by the importance of the event to give a full and detailed account of what took place on that solemn occasion. But he has carefully avoided overloading his picture with useless circumstances; his narration is in exquisite taste. (See *Life of Columbus*, vol. i. b. iv. c. i.)

Article III. Complex Narration.

362. It is not easy to draw the line between simple and complex narration; nor does it matter much by what name we call a narrative, provided it be clear and interesting. But the reason we speak of **Complex Narrations** is, to show how certain difficulties are to be overcome which do not occur in the pieces so far explained. These **difficulties** are: (*a*) multiplicity of detail; (*b*) a want of obvious connection between various events; and (*c*) intricacy, when various series of facts run into one another.

363. These difficulties are to be overcome by the study of **order**—*i.e.*, a skilful disposition of the parts with a view to obtaining certain results; here the results aimed at are clearness and interest.

364. There are **various kinds of order.** 1. The most common is the **order of time,** called also the historical order. An example of this order is found in the history of Joseph and his brothers (Genesis xxxvii. to xlvi.). Another example is "The Sorrowful Night" (Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*, ii. p. 361). All that is necessary in the historical order is that the events unfold themselves naturally before the eyes of the reader, without confusion.

365. 2. The **order of importance** relates first the principal events, omitting such details as might cause confusion, and returning afterwards to supply them. This order is partly historical, and is often the clearest in relating complicated facts. It is used by Livy in his account of the passage of the Rhine by Hannibal. He narrates first how the soldiers effected the crossing of that rapid stream in the face of a numerous army of hostile Gauls, and then returns to relate other matters omitted in the first account (Livy, xxi. 26–29).

366. 3. The **distributive order** consists in relating separately two or more series of facts which happen about the same time in different places, and which conspire to produce one main result. Thus Livy, in narrating the battle of Cannæ, tells first what was done on one wing, then in the centre, and then on the other wing; thus enabling the reader to follow the account with ease and pleasure. He does not give us three separate narrations; but, by presenting both the armies together to our view before the battle, and as soon again as the rout of the Romans began, he exhibits all the events as the parts of one harmonious whole.

367. 4. The **romantic order** arranges events not so much with a view to clearness as to interest, beginning with a striking fact or scene which is not the first in the order of time, but which is suitable to arouse attention: the writer later on supplies such other facts as had first been omitted. This order is often pursued where the purpose is pleasure and the story is long. In the body of the narration in-

terest may similarly be promoted by delaying the explanation of some facts till a proper degree of suspense has been attained. But inversions are by no means necessary, and the most regular order is usually the most tasteful and pleasing. First-class writers create sufficient interest by the naturalness of their story, their felicity in the choice of items, and the propriety and elegance of their expressions; but inferior writers make constant use of tricks and artificial contrivances, as bad cooks do of strong condiments to atone for the absence of the genuine flavors which please a healthy taste.

368. **Classical taste** favors neatness and regularity, in arrangement as in everything else; but romantic taste loves wildness and striking peculiarities as productive of more excitement. This is at present the prevailing taste of the general reader, but by no means of our best writers nor of the refined portion of society. Goldsmith, Irving, Prescott, Lingard, Wiseman, Newman, and many others are classical in their taste and resemble Livy, Ovid, Virgil, Homer, Plato, Cicero, and Demosthenes. Whatever order is adopted, a long story should be divided into chapters, each of which should exhibit some particular group of facts, so that a brief heading may comprise the whole matter of that division.

369. To insure **unity in a complex narration** one fact must be made more prominent than all the rest, the centre of attention and interest, or the issue to which everything tends. For this purpose the narrator may give prominence to one leading character in whom the interest of the narrative is centred; such would be either Napoleon or Wellington in the battle of Waterloo. When the story is long or very intricate there may be secondary centres of interest, and distinct groups of events, provided the groups and the persons be themselves clustered around one

striking or commanding figure, and directed to one important result.

370. It is a useful exercise to **compare in detail two distinct accounts** of the same event as given by two different writers; for instance, the **defeat of Braddock,** in Bancroft's *History of the United States* (vol. iv., pp. 186–192, Ed. 1852), and in Irving's *Life of George Washington* (vol. i. pp. 173–182, Ed. 1860). It will be observed that Irving premises a clear description of the battle-ground, concentrates attention on one army, keeps Braddock and Washington ever in sight, making the general the central figure, which we can easily follow; while in Bancroft, who is less attentive to these points, there appears to be confusion. This will be seen more clearly if we read the latter account first; else, without noticing it, we are apt to allow the distinct views of Irving to guide us through the less distinct account of Bancroft. With Irving's clear narration of the battle we may compare the no less distinct description of the battle of Poictiers in Lingard's *History of England* (vol. ii. pp. 314 to 316, Ed. of 1840). Lingard appears to gain by the comparison. He concentrates attention more effectually upon the leading points. If we compare with his narrative the taking of Badajos as related by Alison (vol. iii. pp. 467–469, Ed. 1848), we shall notice that Alison describes very graphically, and distributes the events judiciously and most carefully. But he seems to overload his account with minor details, which make it difficult to follow.

371. This last remark is further illustrated by a comparison of Alison's narrative of the **Battle of Waterloo** (*History of Europe*, vol. iv. c. lxxvii. pp. 532–539, Ed. of 1848) with Abbott's in his life of Napoleon (Griswold's *Prose Writers of America*, pp. 609 to 612). Both are very able narrations of one of the most important events in the history of the world; and they are worthy specimens of

the style of both distinguished authors. The two passages should be carefully read, and compared together in detail. They offer some striking **points of difference:**

Abbott's sympathies are entirely with Napoleon, Alison's are decidedly with Wellington. Both make their favorite hero the centre of the action. Hence results at once a striking difference in the style. The dashing spirit of Napoleon and of his enthusiastic followers pervades the account of the former; the cool, calculating skill of the Iron Duke and of his unyielding legions characterizes the elaborate narration of the latter. Abbott writes as the biographer of one man in whom all interest is naturally centred; Alison, as the painstaking historian of modern Europe, strives to do justice to many individual heroes. Abbott writes for the general reader; Alison for the careful student of history and military tactics. Hence the former's account is more pleasing, more artistic; the latter's more useful and more scientific. As a specimen of literature Abbott's is singularly beautiful; the charge of the Imperial Guard in particular is sublime.

Article IV. Style of Narrations.

372. The **style** ought to be regulated by the end or purpose of the writer: 1. When *instruction* is aimed at clearness ought to be the chief quality. It should, however, be accompanied by neatness, and even elegance, as the occasion may require, and as the writer's talents can afford: no one should aim higher than he can reasonably expect to reach.

2. If emotion or *persuasion* is aimed at vividness is the chief quality, exhibiting, as if present to the view, whatever can move the heart.

3. If *pleasure* is the chief object the language ought to

be polished accordingly, not by loading it with gaudy ornaments, but by setting forth the subject with becoming dignity and elegance.

Familiar facts can be most gracefully related in what the ancients called the *stylus tenuis*—a style of simplicity and neatness combined, which is unpretending but may be very charming in its apparent artlessness.

> "*Ut sibi quivis*
> *Speret idem, sudet multum, frustraque laboret*
> *Ausus idem.*"—*Ars Poet.*, 240.
>
> "From well-known tales such fictions would I raise
> As all might hope to imitate with ease;
> Yet while they strive the same success to gain,
> Should find their labor and their hopes are vain."
> —*Francis.*

As a specimen of this style in narration we may refer to Irving's well-known story of Rip Van Winkle in his *Sketch-Book.*

373. Persons who have not acquired a cultivated style should aim at narrating briefly and clearly, in correct language, without attempting any great elegance of style.

374. Narration is said to be **graphic** when the various scenes are so painted that the imagination is arrested by them. This quality of style is obtained by mingling descriptions with the narrative. Long descriptions are rarely appropriate; but brief descriptions and characteristic epithets may occur at every step. Of this style of narration we find a beautiful example in the account of the Romans surrounded in the defile of Caudium (Livy, ix. 2–6).

375. The story should, as a rule, be **told feelingly;** that is, the writer should enter into the sentiments, the spirit of the narration: now exulting, now sympathizing, now indignant, now grateful, etc. The expression itself