

One special object of training, therefore, is to guard against vices of unnaturalness, springing out of imitation.

The necessity for writers being trained will further appear from the fact that *language*, which is the instrument whereby thought and feeling are expressed, or conveyed out of one mind into another, is composed of words whose meaning is arbitrary, and which are put together in an arbitrary manner.

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Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi."

The meaning of words and the right method of combining those words can be gathered only from observing a multitude of instances in which they are employed by good writers, or proximately by studying dictionaries and grammars and treatises on Synonymes in which this work is attempted to be done for us.

Evidently, then, none but a master can, in any language, choose absolutely the best word and set it in its right place, (and this is what constitutes a good style,) or correct the error of another in these respects.

Beneath these arbitrary uses of words there lie certain great principles and analogies belonging to each particular language, constituting, as it were, its idiomatic individuality. Underneath these, again, there lie principles of universal application, principles which are involved in the very laws of thought, and the organic structure of the human mind itself, and so prevail in every tongue.

It is by developing these principles according to the immutable laws of beauty, order, strength and truth that languages are to be cultivated, and style is to be brought to perfection.

It is in order to guard against breaches of good usage, and to educate the writer to an appreciation of these internal harmonies and analogies, so that he may clearly, vividly and truthfully set forth his thought in words of unfading propriety and beauty, that a living master is to be desired.

Style is one's manner of showing his thought.

But since the written language is a revelation, likewise, of the inward processes of the mind, it betrays the mental gait and shows the manner in which the mind travels from point to point; while it reflects, moreover, its passions and tastes, whether good or evil. And it is evident that the style will greatly depend upon the structure of the mind, the moulding of its intellectual habits and the regulation of its feelings. No one has a perfect mind. No one has all his faculties completely developed—no one has all his passions under perfect command. He that would be truly a teacher, an educator, or bringer out of all that is best in men, must