

sweep of his tremendous genius. I have said these things not to discourage you, but to give you a due sense of the greatness of the task before you. Hence a very plain and practical rule for the conduct of such a society as this: Let every member work as hard in the study of the subject proposed as if the whole responsibility rested with him alone. There is no lazy man's path to knowledge. You will profit just so far, and no farther, as you put forth effort yourself. Little or nothing will be gained by coming to hear papers read by somebody else; you must do your own work. And this brings me to the last point I wish to touch upon. Even after you have gone through all the labour I have roughly indicated, the pangs of original composition have to be faced, if you really wish to rescue from the "void and formless infinite," and give palpable shape to the suggestions that may have come to you. What then is the best way of expressing ideas, granting one to have ideas to express?

No precise rules that are of much use can be laid down. The general principle is: Put your thoughts into the simplest possible form that is consistent with their full and precise expression. Never set down anything because it *sounds* well; always be sure that what you say *means* something.

In spite of Rochefoucauld, the object of language is not to conceal thought, or the absence of thought, but to express it. But there are many modes of expression. The style of a man, when it is the natural clothing of his ideas, fits him as closely as his skin. Thought and its expression correspond like soul and body. Thus the style of Macaulay, who looks at things from the outside, is formal and mechanical. Macaulay is the spokesman of Philistine respectability. Progress means for him an accumulation of spinning jennies, electrical machines, cheap commodities. Now

all these things are important and matter for rejoicing; but one cannot help protesting that the life is more than meat and the body than raiment. Observe, too, that just as Macaulay regarded the history of England as a conflict of Whig and Tory for supremacy, so he looked upon the progress of religious truth as a question of the predominance of one form of ecclesiastical organization over another. The idea that truth is something deeper than any of its outward embodiments never so much as dawns on his consciousness. As his thought, so his style: it has the merit of superficial clearness; but in its measured cadences and continual antitheses, one seems to hear the unvarying, monotonous beat of a pendulum; of the intricate harmony of the highest prose it exhibits not a trace. Now see how differently Ruskin speaks of the progress of Venice. The point of view is completely changed; not the outward and actual, but the inner and spiritual, is of interest to the author; the life of a man is determined by what he is in himself. Religion is not a thing of external organization, but a thing of experience, working from the centre outward, and giving character to the every day walk and conversation. Also, the writer is an inquirer into moral causes; he will ask why it is that the national, like the individual, life of Venice was not quickened and informed by the spirit of religion. And lastly, he has a didactic purpose in view; he is a preacher of righteousness, and he will try to apply the lessons learned from the failure of Venice in awakening the slumbering conscience of his own England. The style of a man of this type is naturally weighty and impressive, but also as naturally it is full of the various and subtle music of persuasive speech. Turn to another writer. "That living flood, pouring through these streets, of all qualities and ages, knowest thou