

capacity of the mind we might designate further, as a certain susceptibility by which it tends to reject from the numerous presentations of sensuous images, all those which have not a close relation to the primal thought. The principles which govern the action of this mental process are called the "Laws of suggestibility." One thought arising in consciousness, if attention be directed to it, tends to suggest another, which has some relation to the first, either in likeness or contrast; and so the operation goes on until we have the unity of a complete mental experience. Thus we see that the mind in a normal condition, seeks as the outcome of its own constitution, the direct, the related, the logical, the complete. All minds have not this susceptibility to the same degree. Lack of information, instability of will power, intermittent attention; these turn the current of reason from its proper channel and lead men into confusion. All men however, though they may not have the power to develop abstruse problems, have, as a general thing, the power to comprehend logical demonstrations when formulated by others. Here then in this universal and exalted attribute of mind which is the glory of the human intellect, we see the necessity, when appealing to men, of observing those rules which govern the order of thought.

And is not this necessity born out by experience? By what manner of writing have men been most influenced? By the brilliant display of detached, though it may be beautiful fancies, or by the concise and orderly arrangement of facts? Assuredly by the latter; for while our imaginations may be pleased with the former, our wills are aroused by the latter; while we are soothed by the one, we are stimulated by the other. So it is throughout the whole realm of literature, and if the student would examine the effect produced on himself by the study of the great authors, he would find that the degree or value of the effect, corresponds with the degree of conciseness and logical order exhibited by the writer. This is an illustration in literature, of that general law which is true both in the mental and material world, "*that convergence gives power, and divergence creates weakness.*" An argument, in order to convince, must proceed from a well defined premise, through regular and legal stages, under the guidance of a critical judgment, until we are swept into the assurance of irresistible conviction. In such an argument the lines of thought converge; one fact supports another, while all the facts point to a certain conclusion. Here the mind is satisfied because the laws of thought are not violated.

In philosophical works, essays and treatises, this logical form is quite apparent. What student of Plato has not felt the keenness of his reasoning as with a deep insight into the nature of things, he sees in the longings and yearnings of a disappointed race, an index to immortal life? What was Plato's

power? Behold the answer of the convinced Roman, "It must be so, Plato, thou reasonest ill."

Study Socrates and Aristotle, men whose great minds, exalted with a lofty hope, sought to reduce the chaos of life to sequence and order. And in their efforts to do this they exerted an influence which affects the intellectual products of this proud age. Here I think you will be convinced that the success of these men lay in their strict adherence to method. They sacrificed beauty of language to simplicity and directness, but in the end secured all three. Many fail at this point, and thinking to astonish the world, they embellish their writings with the adornments of language, and in order to make room for striking metaphors and gaudy similes, the current of thought is interfered with, becomes separate, divergent and broken, till at last it is dissipated altogether, in the vanity of high sounding words. Such writings may be called graceful, but it would be poor satisfaction to a thinking man to be complimented on his graceful style, when to secure it he must be classed among those of whom it is said, "their reasons are as two grains of wheat, hid in two bushels of chaff, you shall seek all day ere you find them; and, when you have them they are not worth the search."

Again, although the logical method is more manifest in philosophical works of value, yet other departments of literature are not exempt from its claims. No historical, biographical, poetical, theological or other work ever yet achieved a name, which neglected order, arrangement, plan or unity. Even in poetry where one would expect to find the greatest laxity in this regard, a cursory study of the best poets reveals the fact that a purpose, a plan, underlies every outburst of lofty inspiration, and dignifies, what otherwise would be deemed unaccountable vagaries of a heated imagination.

Milton's "Paradise Lost" is a notable example of a well executed purpose, which was clearly conceived in the mind of the author. Shakespeare's plays abound in decisive, clear cut reasoning. For example read the speeches of Hamlet and Macbeth. And if poetry, that licensed goddess of expression, rebukes disunity of thought and lack of design, how careful should be the aspirant to prose honors.

It is an excellent thing for a young man just entering college, who is full of hopeful ambition, to consider this, that *thought* rules the world, not *words*. Hence he should be careful, when he takes his pen, to pass by the temptation to indulge his flights of fancy and be content with the presentation of, it may be homely, but convincing truths. If he follows this rule he will be a power among his fellows, when his classmate who adopted the meteoric style has long been forgotten. In the pursuance of method in writing, the beginner meets many difficulties.

In the first place his previous training, or lack of training, has resulted in certain habits of inattention,