

but never reaches the mind so as to leave an *impression* there. It is like the passing breeze of summer, which fans our cheek and is gone leaving us neither wiser or better.

The grand design of language is to convey our ideas clearly to the minds of others. And his is an exalted mission, who makes language the willing and ready instrument for the advancement of truth. It matters not to him how profound his thoughts are; they will take shape in clear and forcible expressions. While he, who cannot give the ideas for which his words should stand, evidently has no clear idea in his mind. When words conceal instead of reveal truth, they are not appropriated to their legitimate use. Locke says in this connection, "When words conceal, they conceal nothing but the ignorance of the writer." And Locke has expressed, in these words, the opinion of the majority of right-thinking men. Thoughts and not words prove the worth of an author.

One of the most censurable faults, of which a writer can be accused, is obscurity. The obscurity, which reigns supreme among many metaphysical writers, is mainly due to the indistinctness of their own conceptions. At best they see the object in a confused light and of course cannot exhibit it in a clear one to others. Instead of removing the mists and haze which overhang the atmosphere of their conceptions they only render it still more hazy by the frequent use of mystical terms and phrases.

On the other hand one of the most commendable merits which any one is capable of possessing, is conciseness of expression with fulness of thought. A word should never be introduced into a sentence unless it conveys some new idea. Otherwise it only weakens the sentence while it shows a careless mode of thinking. Many authors have fallen into this habit while attempting to produce wire-drawn refinings in thought.

Thus far our remarks, concerning men and their writings, have been very general. Let us now apply our test to a few individual cases.

Homer was so remarkable for simplicity of expression that to this day many writings are designated as being of "Homeric simplicity." Chaucer's style was very simple. Shakespeare was unique in this respect. Sir Thomas Moore, Pope, Dryden, Hume, Gray, Goldsmith, Cowper, Burns and a host of others all take rank on the side of simplicity. Others, equally eminent in their respective spheres, give us valid testimony on this question. Locke in the passage already quoted, shows most decidedly his position. Coleridge, one of the most meditative thinkers of his day, says, in his later years, "It is wonderful to myself to think how infinitely more profound my views now are and yet how much *clearer* they are withal." Emerson also says, "In general it is a proof of high culture to say the greatest matters in the