

RULES FOR WRITING ESSAYS.

(From the "Glasgow Young Men's Journal," for August, 1833.)

I. Endeavour, by reading and reflection, to obtain clear and distinct ideas of the subject on which you intend to write, *and do not put pen to paper*, until you know *precisely* the object you have in view in writing your essay.

II. This having been done, let all your observations, either directly or indirectly, tend to establish this object, and thus, throughout your pieces, unity, that grand desideratum in every species of composition, will be maintained.

III. Your next business is to divide your subject into heads. An Essay may be variously divided, according to the nature of the subject; sometimes few, sometimes many divisions are to be employed. The following, however will be found practicable in the generality of cases:—

1. DEFINITION.—In this define your subject; if the word admits of several meanings, state the sense in which you adopt it. A clear definition may prevent much discussion.

2. CAUSE OR ORIGIN.—Under this head, you may trace out the origin or commencement of that which forms the subject of your essay, which will, of course, lead you to a sketch of

3. THE ANCIENT STATE,—Wherein the early history must be treated of, that is to say, if the subject of your essay (such, for instance, as music,) has existed in an ancient state. Should your subject, however, be such a one as printing, or any other art unknown to the ancients, you cannot, of course, give an account of its ancient history,