

assist the student in forming a right conception of the characteristic excellencies of a good style. "The diction of Gibbon, Bacon and Junius, strongly resembles that of Johnson and their style is sometimes designated as "the Johnsonian." It is terse and powerful, free from unnecessary ornament and deficient in natural grace and seldom fails to remind the student of the sternness of the ancient Greeks and Romans.

Addison owes his shining renown to his exquisite art and native sweetness. He never fails to deliver himself with vivacity, purity, clearness and precision. His thoughts flow gracefully from an ever living fountain, and every good word he utters goes straight to the heart. Highly classical in manner and matter, and "without a tincture of pedantry, he expresses many of his brightest thoughts in homely phrase" and is therefore often looked upon as familiar when in reality he is only cunningly simple, or dexterously polished. Of Addison may it be truly said that—"He had the art to hide art." We know of no other writer whose productions we could recommend to the student with such confidence, nor are there any works probably from a perusal of which the embryo author would derive such material benefit. Addison's style is always simple, always graceful, always elegant. It would seem as if he drew his inspiration from nature rather than from art, so dexterously, skilfully and naturally does he use his pen.

Macaulay also, "had the art to conceal art" but in a less degree than Addison. His periods, like those of Hume, are always delightfully even, but seldom full and affluent. Notwithstanding the skill and power with which he wielded his pen a certain monotonous cadence is clearly perceptible in all his works. His sentences are certainly neat; his diction elegant, and pure as a crystal spring; his sequences are musical, and logically arranged; but with all his great gifts he is defective in manner and deficient in vivacity, force and fire. However, these defects are only apparent when we compare his writings with the productions of Goldsmith, Addison and other great masters of a preceding age. Macaulay is always,

pleasing but seldom gay, never dull but seldom animated, forever cheerful but never very mirthful or boisterous, always humorous but never witty. His language is always chaste and accurate whilst his style is as genial and almost as simple as that of Defoe.

Should our "modern popular" authors "devote more of their days and nights to the study of Addison," Macaulay and other worthies afore mentioned, our modern literature would not be so dry, bare, cheerless, bombastic and repulsive. It would afford more instruction to the public (if less sensation) and more enduring fame, (if less dollars and dimes) to the literary caterers. We can never become skilful writers unless we, "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest" the productions of the great exemplars.

We may resume the consideration and discussion of this subject at some future time when we shall review the writings of our recent and "ancient" English Authors. But in the meantime we would advise our young readers to avail themselves of every opportunity of improving themselves in the first and most important of gentlemanly accomplishments—the art of writing their native language with elegance, purity and propriety. Let them study the characteristic excellencies of the foregoing or other classical English Authors; and (always remembering that practise alone makes perfect,) let them write something every day. In these daily exercises let them imitate (and if possible rival) the natural beauties of their great models. Whoever adopts this plan will soon possess "the pen of a ready writer."

(For the Canadian Literary Journal.)

## IDYLS OF THE DOMINION.

BY ALEXANDER M'LACHLAN.

NO. II.

SPARKING.

Give me the night when the moon shines bright,  
And the stars come forth to meet her,  
When the very snow is all aglow,  
And the dismal swamp looks sweeter,  
When the cows are fed, old folks in bed,