utilitarian value. When we consider that Germany alone prints 15,000 books a year; that one library only—the National at Paris—contains 150,000 acres of printed paper; that in one ramified science, *e.g.* chemistry, the student needs fourteen years barely to overtake knowledge as it now stands,—while, nevertheless, the two lobes of the human brain are not a whit larger to-day than in the days of Adam; that, even after deducting all the old books which the process of "natural selection" and the "survival of the fittest" has spared us from reading, the remnant even of literary and other masterpieces, which cannot be stormed by the most valiant reader, but must be acquired by slow "sap," is simply appalling; and, finally, that even the labour-saving machinery of periodical literature, which was to give us condensations and essences in place of the bulky originals, is already overwhelming us with an inundation of its own,—it is easy to see that the *manner* in which a writer communicates his ideas is hardly less important than the ideas themselves.

But what, it may be asked, do we mean by style? We shall not attempt any technical definition, but simply say that by it we understand, first of all, such a choice and arrangement of words as shall convey the author's meaning most clearly and exactly, in the logical order of the ideas; secondly, such a balance of clause and structural grace of sentence as shall satisfy the sense of beauty; and, lastly, such a propriety, economy, and elegance of expression, as shall combine business-like brevity with artistic beauty. All these qualities will be found united in style of the highest order; and therefore style has been well defined as an artistic expedient to make reading easy, and to perpetuate the life of written thought.

Style, in this sense, is, and ever has been, the most vital element of literary immortality. If we look at the brief list of books which, among the millions that have sunk into oblivion, have kept afloat on the stream of time, we shall find that they have owed their buoyancy to this quality. More than any other, it is a writer's own property; and no one, not even time itself, can rob him of it, or even diminish its value. Facts may be forgotten, learning may grow commonplace, startling truths dwindle into mere truisms; but a grand or beautiful style can never lose its freshness or its charm. It is the felicity and idiomatic *naïveté* of his diction that has raised the little fishing-book of Walton, the linen-draper, to the dignity of a classic, and a similar charm keeps the writings of Addison as green as in the days of Queen Anne. Even works of transcendent intellectual merit may fail of high success through lack of this property, while works of second and even third-rate value—works which swarm with pernicious errors, with false statements and bad logic—may obtain a passport to futurity through the witchery of style. The crystal clearness and matchless grace of Paley's periods, which were the envy of Coleridge, continue to attract readers, in spite of his antiquated science and dangerous philosophy; and a similar remark may be made of Bolingbroke. The racy, sinewy, idiomatic style of Cobbett, the greatest master of Saxon-English in this century, compels attention to the arch-radical to-day as it compelled attention years ago. Men are captivated by his style, who are shocked alike by his opinions and his egotism, and offended by the profusion of italics which, like ugly finger-posts, disfigure his page, and emphasize till emphasis loses its power. For the pomp and splendour of his style, "glowing with oriental colour, and rapid as a charge of Arab horse," even more than for his colossal erudition, is Gibbon admired; it is