

repetition of the saying of Erasmus, *qualis homo, talis oratio*; as is the man, so is his speech. As we form our impressions of men, not so much from what they actually say, as from their way of saying it—their looks, manner, tones of voice, and other peculiarities—so we catch glimpses of an author between the lines, and detect his idiosyncrasies even when he tries hardest to hide them. The latent disposition of the man peeps through his words, in spite of himself, and vulgarity, malignity, and littleness of soul, however carefully cloaked, are betrayed by the very phrases and images of their opposites. Marivaux declares that style has a sex; but we may go farther, and say that literature has its comparative anatomy, and a page or a paragraph will enable a skilful hand to construct the skeleton. "Every sentence of the great writer," says Alexander Smith, "is an autograph. If Milton had endorsed a bill with half-a-dozen blank verse lines; it would be as good as his name, and would be accepted as good evidence in court." How plainly do we see in the swallowlike gyrations of Montaigne's style the very veins, muscles and tendons of his moral anatomy! How glaringly he betrays his self-complacency by the very air and tone of his self-humiliations! Again: how visibly do the despotic will, the imperial positiveness and the oriental imagination of Napoleon stamp themselves on his style—in that hurried, abrupt rhythm, under which, as Sainte-Beuve says, we feel palpitating the genius of action and the demon of battles! What perfect simplicity characterizes the writings, as it does the actions of Julius Cæsar! His art is unconscious, as the highest art always is, and his style has been well compared by Cicero to an undraped human figure, perfect in all its lines as nature made it.

How grave, courtly, and high-mannered, how politic and guarded, like

himself, are the utterances of Bacon! What serenity of temper is expressed in "the sleepy smile that lies so benignly on the sweet and serious diction of Izaak Walton!" What haughtiness and savage impatience of contradiction,—what egotism and contempt of conventional opinions,—are stamped on the plain, blunt and often coarse periods of Swift; and, on the other hand, what an urbanity reveals itself in the almost perfect manner, so easy and high-bred—courteous, not courtier-like, as Bulwer says—of the gentle Addison! It has been happily said that there is no gall in his ink, and, if it kills, it is after the manner of those perfumed poisons which are less grateful then deadly: Again, what fierceness breathes in the short, daggerlike sentences of Junius; and how, on the contrary, the shyness of Lamb's nature—his love of quip, and whimsey, and old black-letter authors—peeps out in his style, with its antique words, and quaint convolutions, and doublings back on itself! Dean Swift would have torn to pieces a lamb like a wolf; but the loving "Elia" would have tried to coax a wolf into a lamb. How quickly "South is discovered by the lash of a sentence, and Andrews by the mechanism of his exposition!" Did any mirror, even of French plate glass, ever reflect any man's outer configuration more vividly and distinctly than the strange inner nature of Sir Thomas Browne is mirrored in his periods? What a revelation we have of his inmost self—what a picture of his wit, imagination, portentous memory, insatiable curiosity, "humorous sadness," pedantry, and love of crotchets and hobbies, even "a whole stable-full"—in the quaint analogies, the grotesque fancies, the airy paradoxes, the fine and dainty fretwork, the subtle and stately music, the amazing Latinisms, and the riotous paradoxes and eloquent epigrams of the old knight's style! Again, how