

its weakness into the light. To cancel every sentence and every member of a sentence that does not add something valuable to what was said before, and to cancel every word in the sentences left that does not make that value more clear, is a pruning that lets the light of truth into the tree of knowledge and gives vitality to the fruit.

To raise thought to its highest power, the formula of words must be reduced to its lowest terms. This more than any other intellectual characteristic is the secret of the masterful power of Shakespeare, and Bacon's essays, and the English Bible.

There is no class of compositions in all the arts of letters which stands in sorer need of this principle than judges' opinions and lawyers' briefs. A large part of legal writing appears to be done as a means of thinking through the fog out into the clear. The easy facility of expression which shorthand and the typewriter give us, and the habit of estimating expression by a commercial value of so much a folio, are responsible for much of that growing uncertainty of legal minds about the law, which is called "uncertainty of the law." It is really uncertainty of the lawyer.

Voluminousness is the mother of indecision.—*University Law Review, New York.*

THE SCOTCH OATH IN THE COURTS OF LAW.

In view of the practice of some of the judges, says the *London Law Journal*, the following letter of Mr. Francis A. Stringer, which appeared some time since in the *Times*, is worthy of reproduction :

Under the above heading you were good enough to publish a letter from me on March 17, 1893, calling attention to the statutory right of every person sworn for any purpose to swear in Scotch form without the use of any book. On May 31, 1893, a circular was issued by the Home Office giving the form of Scotch oath to be administered under section 5 of the Oaths Act, 1888. Prior to March, 1893, there had been considerable friction in the various Courts of the country in consequence of resistance being offered to the claims of medical men to be sworn without 'kissing the Book,' in accordance with their undoubted right under the section named. This resistance was offered by officials of the Courts who were ignorant of the then somewhat new provision,