

press ideas which have become everyday ideas to him by the length of time they have been in his mind." What is the secret of Spurgeon's power? Is it not that he uses the plain, nervous, sinewy Saxon; the vocabulary, not of books, but of the fireside and the market-place—not of the university, but of the universe? "The devil," he once said, "does not care for your dialectics and eclectic homiletics, or German objectives and subjectives; but pelt him with Anglo-Saxon in the name of God, and he will shift his quarters." In France the least lettered people make use of the same words as the greatest writers. Malherbe said, that he took his words from the porters of the grain market. Stendhal had such a horror of emphasis that, before setting himself to write, he read a page of the civil code. One of the chief faults of Gladstone, as a writer, is a kind of "dim magnificence" of style; he has a vast command of language which is grave and majestic, but of vague and uncertain meaning.

But what is meant by simplicity of style? Does it exclude beauty or tasteful ornamentation? Is the best style a colourless medium, which, like good glass, only lets the thought be distinctly seen; or may it, like a painted window which tinges the light with a hundred hues, afford a pleasure apart from the ideas it conveys? "He was so well dressed," said a person to Beau Brummell, "that everybody turned to look at him." "Then," said Brummell, "he was not well dressed." So of the garb of thought, it is said by some persons that it is most perfect when it attracts no attention to itself, and we see only the ideas which it habitates. What is the distinctive excellence of Scott? Is it not that we rise from his works with a most vivid idea of what is related, and yet are unable to quote a single phrase in the entire narration? Well-

dressed men and women are not those whose minds are absorbed in the art of dressing, but those who give simply the general impression that they are well-dressed, and nothing more. We do not look to tailors, milliners and mantua-makers for the best models of costume. That this is true of a large class of writings—those which simply convey information, or seek to explain rather than to suggest or symbolize truth, and depict it in attractive forms—all persons will admit; but that it is true of other kinds of composition—those which are generic to poetry, and address themselves to the imagination, and through the imagination to the reason—we are far from believing. There are many literary compositions which, if summoned to give an account of themselves, to explain their *raison d'être* upon any utilitarian principles, would be sorely puzzled. It is something above all practical use, like the song of the lark, the colours of the rainbow, the butterfly's painted wing, or the burning breast of the robin. Of all such writings style is the very essence. Scientific books may do without this charm, but these must please or go to the trunk-maker's. In a dwelling-house or a shop we are content with plain geometrical lines and rectangular proportions. But, to use the illustration of another, when the painter puts on his canvas an old legendary castle—some illustration of a scene which heroes have trodden or poets have sung—we not only pardon, but expect a different treatment. Then we are delighted if the moss and the ivy creep up the sides of the time-stained structure—if the thunder-cloud rests upon the ruined battlements, and the moonlight streams through the clefts of the crumbling walls, and we catch sight of smooth lawns and nooks of bright garden, and the gleam of a distant river, down which the eye loses itself in the woods. We cannot agree, therefore, with those who make