

tains; bleak, solitary, desolate, but girdled with grim sky-piercing cliffs, overshadowed with storms, and illuminated only by the red glare of the lightning." How vividly by a few suggestive words he brings Johnson before us—not the Johnson of Macaulay, the squalid, unkempt giant in dirty linen, with straining eye-balls, greedily devouring his victuals—not the husk or *larvæ* of the literary leviathan, the poor scrofula-scarred body without the soul, but Johnson "with his great greedy heart and unspeakable chaos of thoughts; stalking mournful on this earth, eagerly devouring what spiritual thing he could come at"—in short, the grand old moral hero as he *is*, in the very centre and core of his being! A kind of grim Cyclopean humour gives additional pungency to Carlyle's style, which—"if it is a Joseph's coat of many colours, is dyed red with the blood of passionate conviction." Cherishing, and even parading, an utter contempt for literary art, he sacrifices truth itself to be artistical, and is, in fact, with many glaring faults, one of the greatest literary artists of the time.

Why, to take an opposite illustration, has John Neal, in spite of his acknowledged genius, been so speedily forgotten by the public whose eye he once so dazzled?—why, but because, holding the absurd theory that a man should write as he talks, and despising the niceties of skill, he bestows no artistic finish on his literary gems, but, like the gorgeous East,

"showers from his lap
Barbaric pearls and gold."

with all their incrustations "thick upon them?" With less prodigality of thought and more patience in execution, he might have won a broad and enduring fame; but, as it is, he is known to but few, and by them viewed as a meteor in the literary firmament, rather than as a fixed star or luminous

planet. Washington Irving has probably less genius than Neal; but by his artistic skill he would make more of a Scotch pebble than Neal of the crown jewel of the Emperor of all the Russias.

That we have not exaggerated the value of style—that it is, in truth, an alchemy which can transmute the basest metal into gold—will appear still more clearly if we compare the literatures of different nations. That there are national as well as individual styles, with contrasts equally salient or glaring, is known to every scholar. Metaphors and similes are racy of the soil in which they grow, as you taste, it is said, the lava in the vines on the slopes of *Ætna*. As *thinkers*, the Germans have to-day no equals on the globe. In their systems of philosophy the speculative intellect of our race—its power of long, concatenated, exhaustive thinking—seems to have reached its culmination. Never content with a surface examination of any subject, they dig down to the "hard pan," the eternal granite which underlies all the other strata of truth. As compilers of dictionaries, as accumulators of facts, as producers of thought in the ore, their book-makers have no peers. The German language, too, must be admitted to be one of the most powerful instruments of thought and feeling to which human wit has given birth. But all these advantages are, to a great extent, neutralized by the frightful heaviness and incredible clumsiness of the German literary style. Whether as a providential protection of other nations against the foggy metaphysics and subtle scepticism of that country, or because to have given it a genius for artistic composition as well as thought, would have been an invidious partiality, it is plain that, in the distribution of good things, the advantages of form were not granted to the Teutons. In Bacon's phrase, they are "the Her-