

upon human and divine things. But there is a joy which as far transcends this as intellectual activity transcends passivity; it is the ecstasy of creation—the joy of wreaking one's thought upon expression—of giving utterance to the sentiment that has long haunted the brain, and which cries passionately for utterance. How dull and death-like is the life of the book-worm—of the mind which has always absorbed knowledge, and never given it out! Who can wonder that so many cultivated men suffer from mental atrophy, ennui, and melancholy—become shy, suspicious, morbidly self-reflecting and self-conscious—when year after year they hoard information with miserly greed, and never vitalize it by imparting it to others? How many studious and thoughtful men, like the poet Gray, are tormented with an overnice fastidiousness, which “freezes the genial current of the soul,” and extinguishes all the healthy and buoyant activity of the intellect, making their lives as sluggish as “the dull weed that rots by Lethe's wharf,” because they repress the natural instinct of creation, instead of giving to the world (pardon the phrase) their “level best” of expression! The mother of Goethe tells us that her son, whenever he had a grief, made a poem on it, and so got rid of it. How many persons who are dying of “the secret wounds which bleed beneath their cloaks” would find relief in giving voice to their pains in song! How many who make life a selfish paradise would experience a purer happiness if by apt tale, or play, or poem, they would communicate the joys of their deliciously overburdened souls to the souls of others!

The popular writer holds the same relation to the public which the merchant holds to the consumer. He is the mediator between the speculative thinker and the uncultured man. He is the middle man, who stands be-

tween the schools and the marketplace, bringing the lettered and the unlettered together, and interpreting the one to the other. It is his function to work up the raw material, the rough ore of thought, into attractive forms, and by so doing to indoctrinate and impress the great mass of humanity. He thus contributes to that collision of mind with mind, that agitation and comparison of thought, which is the very life and soul of literature and history. To accomplish this mission, he must be a master of language—acquainted with the infinite beauty and the deepest, subtlest meanings of words; skilled in their finest sympathies; and able, not only to arrange them in logical and lucid forms, but to extract from them their utmost meaning, suggestiveness, and force. A man who has something to say, though he says it ill, may be read once. If he is read again, it will be due to some felicity of execution. No one re-reads a book unless drawn to it and lured on by the style, which magnetizes and entrances the reader like a siren, compelling him to go on from the beginning to the end. To be master of such a style—vigorous, luminous, flexible, graceful and musical—which responds to every mood of the writer as the strings or keys of the musical instrument respond to the touch of the master's fingers—to have a prompt command of those subtle, penetrative words which touch the very quick of truth, as well as of those winged words and necromantic terms, freighted with suggestion and association, which are like pictures to the eye, and strains of music to the ear—to be able to pour into language “such a charm, sweetness so penetrating, energy so puissant,” that men will be compelled to listen, and listening to yield their wills—this is to hold a wand more powerful than magician ever waved, a sceptre more potent than king ever wielded. Style, thus