

it serves the useful purpose of making the discourse more effective. Then there are other elements of discourse besides the sentence and the word, as, for instance, the paragraph, still larger divisions of the text, and figures of speech. There are also qualities, as well as elements, of discourse which can be made a subject of scientific inquiry and discovery on the comparative method.

The way in which the principles of rhetoric have been mastered in the past has been to learn them by rote from treatises on the subject; the proper method is to reach them by induction based on a comparison of the styles of writers of English prose. In no other way can the student arrive at a conception of what is meant by the philosophy of style, and the wider the basis of the induction and the more thorough the investigation, the more correct and more useful will his conception be. General principles discovered in this way by the student for himself will be of unspeakable use to him in constructing his own discourses; general principles learned by rote from text books will be of no use except to serve as a means of securing academic standing. It is sometimes objected that the critical study of English prose has a tendency to make the student a mere imitator, but this tendency can be reduced to a minimum by selecting a variety of styles for analysis. It is as impossible for a student to model his style on the styles of half a dozen great prose writers, as it is for that curious modern invention, the composite photograph, to be a portrait of each of the persons who sat in succession in order to produce the negative.

The scientific study of prose style has a special interest for those who intend to be preachers. Many pulpit performances, faultless in grammatical structure, models of good taste in the selection of words, are hopelessly marred by rhetorical defects. Nor is this to be wondered at; for while there is in our systems of English training some pretence of teaching grammar and philology, there is hardly even a pretence of teaching rhetoric as a science. Much may be done in the way of judicious criticism of the student's own compositions to inculcate general principles of a rhetorical as well as a grammatical and philological kind, but his rhetorical education is not more than well begun if he is not required to make an independent effort to master the artistic