

lacking, then one's style, however good viewed simply as style, will be ineffective—as ineffective as would be St. Paul's or Notre Dame Cathedrals, if, whilst retaining their present splendid form and proportions, one could imagine them built of fragile, unplanned boards, instead of the solid, massive materials they contain.

Having thus indicated some things which must be pre-supposed in every one who would attain a good style in literature, the way is now open for a discussion of Literary Style itself, and to this we proceed.

What then are the principles that underlie this art, what the elements that go to constitute it? The following characteristics have often been laid down as *criteria* of all true art, viz.: Truth, Strength, and Beauty—and they will answer very well for the purposes of this essay. A good literary style, then, will be one that is *true*, *strong*, and *beautiful*. These will require to be looked at successively.

WHAT IS A "TRUE" STYLE IN LITERATURE?

Perhaps it may best be defined by the almost synonymous term, "natural," and the contrasted terms, "affected" and "imitative." That style is true which is natural, and an affected or imitative style is untrue. It must not be imagined, however, that by natural, as applied to style, is meant something which every person possesses, and which he is able spontaneously and without effort to call into exercise. On the contrary there is no commoner fault in style than unnaturalness, and it requires a long process of observation, instruction and study to bring men back to nature, so far have they departed from it. But, to be more specific, in saying that a style is natural it is meant—

1. That it truly represents the person using it. That, as an outward manifestation, it expresses correctly his inward impressions. In a word, that it is *his* style, having the distinctive stamp of his individuality upon it. It requires no argument to show that the man who gives as truth what he himself does not believe, or only partially believes to be such, or who professes to feel what he does not really experience, will be very artificial and unnatural in his style. Nor is it any more difficult to see that the man who tries to express his own feelings in the language, voice or gestures of another will be quite as untrue. A man here must be himself or