reveals; similarly, by analogy, in other arts, a mode or method of working characterized by distinctive features. The word (which is different from that used in architecture, see above) is derived from the instrument *stilus* (wrongly spelled *stylus),* of metal, wood or ivory, by means of which, in classic times, letters and words were imprinted upon waxen tablets. By the transition of thought known as metonymy the word has been transferred from the object which makes the impression to the sentences which are impressed by it, and a mechanical observa­tion has become an intellectual conception. To " turn the stylus ” was to correct what had been written by the sharp end of the tool, by a judicious application of the blunt end, and this responds to that discipline and self-criticism upon which literary excellence depends. The energy of a deliberate writer would make a firm and full impression when he wielded the stylus. A scribe of rapid and fugitive habit would press more irregularly and produce a less consistent text. The varieties of writing induced by these differences of temperament would reveal the nature of the writer, yet they would be attributed, and with justice, to the implement which immediately produced them. Thus it would be natural for any one who examined several tablets of wax to say, “ The writers of these inscrip­tions are revealed by their stylus ”; in other words, the style or impression of the implement is the medium by which the temperament is transferred to the written speech.

If we follow this analogy, the famous phrase of Buffon becomes at once not merely intelligible but luminous—“ le style est l'homme même.” This axiom is constantly misquoted (“le style c’est l’homme ”), and not infrequently miscomprehended. It is usual to interpret it as meaning that the style of a writer is that writer’s self, that it reveals the essence of his individuality. That is true, and the statement of it is useful. But it is probably not the meaning, or at least not the original meaning, that Buffon had in mind. It should be recollected that Buffon was a zoolo­gist, and that the phrase occurs in the course of his great *Natural History.* He was considering man in the abstract, and differ­entiating him from other genera of the animal kingdom. Hence, no doubt, he remarked that “ style was man himself,” not as every reviewer repeats the sentence to-day, “ the man.” He meant that style, in the variety and elaboration of it, distinguished the language of man *(Homo sapiens)* from the monotonous roar of the lion or the limited gamut of the bird. Buffon was engaged with biological, not with aesthetic ideas.

Nevertheless, the usual interpretation given to the phrase “ le style est l'homme même ” may be accepted as true and valuable. According to an Arab legend King Solomon inquired of a djinn, “ What is language? ” and received the answer, "a wind that passes.” "But bow,” continued the wisest of men, “ can it be held?” “ By one art only,” replied the djinn, “ by the art of writing.” It may be well to follow a little closely the processes of this art of writing. A human being in the artless condition, in whom, that is to say, the conception of personal expression has not been formed, uses written language to state primitive and general matters of fact. He writes, “ The sea is rough to-day; the wind is cold.” In these statements there is some observation, but as yet no personal note. We read them without being able to form the very smallest conjecture as to the character or condition of the writer. From these bald and plain words we may rise in degree until we reach Victor Hugo’s celebrated parallel of the ocean with the genius of Shakespeare, where every phrase is singular and elaborate, and every element of expression redolent of Victor Hugo, but of no other person who ever lived. Another example, in its own way still more striking, is found in comparison of the famous paragraph which occurs in the *Cyrus-Garden* (1658) of Sir Thomas Browne. A primitive person would say, “But it is time to go to bed this statement is drawn out by Browne into the wonderful page beginning, “ But the quincunx of Heaven runs low,” and collects around it as it proceeds on its voluptuous course the five ports of knowledge, cables of cobwebs, the bed of Cleopatra, the ghost of a rose, the huntsmen of Persia, and a dozen other examples of prolific and ornamented style. In its final form it is so fully characteristic of its author that it may be justly said that the passage *is* Browne himself.

It follows from what has just been said that style appeals exclusively to those who read with attention and for the pleasure of reading. It is not even perceived by those who read primarily for information, and these form the great majority of readers. Even these have a glimmering impression that we must not live by bread alone; that the human heart, with its imagination, its curiosity and sensitiveness, cannot be satisfied by bald state­ments of fact delivered on the printed page as messages are shouted along the telephone. This instinct it is which renders the untaught liable to fall into those errors of false style to which we shall presently call attention. In the untrained there yet exists a craving for beauty, and the misfortune is that this craving is too easily met by gaudy rhetoric and vain repetitions. The effect on the nature of a human being which is produced by reading or listening to a book, or a passage from a book, which that being greatly admires, is often so violent as to resemble a physical shock to the nerves. It causes a spasm of emotion, which is betrayed by tears or laughter or a heightened pulse. This effect could not be produced by a statement of the fact conveyed in language, but is the result of the manner in which that fact is presented. In other words, it is the style which appeals so vividly to the physical and moral system of the reader —not the fact, but the ornament of the fact. That this emotion may be, and often is, caused by bad style, by the mere tinsel of rhetoric and jangle of alliteration, is not to the point The important matter is that it is caused by style, whether good or bad. Those juvenile ardours and audacities of expression which so often amuse the wise man and exasperate the pedant are but the effects of style acting on a fervid and unripe imagination. The deep delight with which a grown man of experience reads Milton or Dante is but the same phenomenon produced in different conditions.

It is, however, desirable at the outset of an inquiry into the elements of style to insist on the dangers of a heresy which found audacious expression towards the close of the 19th century, namely, that style is superior to thought and independent of it. Against this may be set at once another of the splendid apo­thegms of Buffon, “ Les idées seules forment le fond du style.” Before there can be style, therefore, there must be thought, clearness of knowledge, precise experience, sanity of reasoning power. It is difficult to allow that there can be style where there is no thought, the beauty even of some poems, the sequence of words in which is intentionally devoid of meaning, being preserved by the characteristics of the metre, the rhymes, the assonances, all which are, in their degree, intellectual in character. A confusion between form and matter has often confused this branch of our theme. Even Flaubert, than whom no man ever gave closer attention to the question of style, seems to dislocate them. For him the *form* was the work itself: “As in living creatures, the blood, nourishing the body, determines its very contour and external aspect, just so, to his mind, the *matter,*the basis, is a work of art, imposed, necessarily, the unique, the just expression, the measure, the rhythm, the *form* in all its characteristics.” This ingenious definition seems to strain language beyond its natural limits. If the adventures of an ordinary young man in Paris be the *matter* of *L'Éducation senti­mentale* it is not easy to admit that they “ imposed, necessarily,” such a “ unique ” treatment of them as Flaubert so superlatively gave. They might have been recounted with feebler rhythm by an inferior novelist, with bad rhythm by a bad novelist and with no rhythm at all by a police-news reporter. What makes that book a masterpiece is not the basis of adventure, but the superstructure of expression. The expression, however, could not have been built up on no basis at all, and would have fallen short of Flaubert’s aim if it had risen on an inadequate basis. The perfect union is that between adequate matter and an adequate form. We will borrow from the history of English literature an example which may serve to illuminate this point. Locke has no appreciable style; he has only thoughts. Berkeley has thoughts which are as valuable as those of Locke, and he