has an exquisite style as well. From the artist’s point of view, therefore, we are justified in giving the higher place to Berkeley, but in doing this we must not deny the importance of Locke. If we compare him with some pseudo-philosopher, whose style is highly ornamental but whose thoughts are valueless, we see that Locke greatly prevails. Yet we need not pretend that he rises to an equal height with Berkeley, in whom the basis is no less solid, and where the superstructure of style adds an emotional and aesthetic importance to which Locke’s plain speech is a stranger. At the same time, an abstract style, such as that of Pascal, may often give extreme pleasure, in spite of its absence of ornament, by its precise and pure definition of ideas and by the just mental impression it supplies of its writer’s distinguished vivacity of mind. The abstract or concrete style, moreover, what Rossetti called “ fundamental brain-work,” must always have a leading place.

When full justice has been done to the necessity of thought as the basis of style, it remains true that what is visible, so to speak, to the naked eye, what can be analysed and described, is an artistic arrangement of words. Language is so used as to awaken impressions of touch, taste, odour and hearing, and these are roused in a way peculiar to the genius of the individual who brings them forth. The personal aspect of style is therefore indispensable, and is not to be ignored even by those who are most rigid in their objection to mere ornament. Ornament in itself is no more style than facts, as such, constitute thought. In an excellent style there is an effect upon our senses of the mental force of the man who employs it. We discover himself in what he writes, as it was excellently said of Châteaubriand that it was into his phrases that he put his heart; again, D’Alem­bert said of Fontenelle that he had the style of his thought, like all good authors. In the words of Schopenhauer, style is the physiognomy of the soul. All these attempts at epigrammatic definition tend to show the sense that language ought to be, and even unconsciously is, the mental picture of the man who writes.

To attain this, however, the writer must be sincere, original and highly trained. He must be highly trained, because, without the exercise of clearness of knowledge, precise experience and the habit of expression, he will not be able to produce his soul in language. It will, at best, be perceived as through a glass, darkly. Nor can anyone who desires to write consistently and well, afford to neglect the laborious discipline which excel­lence entails. He must not be satisfied with his first sprightly periods; he must polish them, and then polish them again. He must never rest until he has attained a consummate adaptation of his language to his subject, of his words to his emotion. This is the most difficult aim which the writer can put before him, and it is a light that flits ever onward as he approaches. Perfec­tion is impossible, and yet he must never desist from pursuing perfection. In this connexion the famous tirade of Tamburlaine in Marlowe’s tragedy cannot be meditated upon too carefully, for it contains the finest definition Which has been given in any language of style as the unapproachable fen-fire of the mind:— "If all the pens that poets ever held

Had fed the feeling of their master’s thoughts, And every sweetness that inspired their hearts, Their minds, and muses, on admirèd themes— If all the heavenly quintessence they ’still From their immortal flowers of poesy, Wherein, as in a mirror, we perceive The highest reaches of a human wit— If those had made one poem’s period, And all combined in beauty’s worthiness, Yet should there hover in our restless heads One thought, one grace, one wonder, at the least. Which into words no virtue can digest.”

Flaubert believed that every thought or grace or wonder had one word or phrase exactly adapted to express it, and could be “ digested ” by no other without loss of clearness and beauty. It was the passion of his life, and the despair of it, to search for this unique phrase in each individual case. Perhaps in this research after style he went too far, losing something of that simplicity and inevitability which is the charm of natural writing. It is boasted by the admirers of Flaubert that his style is an enamel, and those who say this perhaps forget that the beauty of an enamel resides wholly in its surface and not at all in the substance below it. This is the danger which lies in wait for those who consider too exquisitely the value and arrangement of their words. Their style becomes too glossy, too highly varnished, and attracts too much attention to itself. The greatest writing is that which in its magnificent spontaneity carries the reader with it in its flight; that which detains him to admire itself can never rise above the second place. Forgetfulness of self, absence of conceit and affectation, simplicity in the sense not of thinness or poorness but of genuineness—these are elements essential to the cultivation of a noble style. Here again, thought must be the basis, not vanity or the desire to astonish. We do not escape by our ingenuities from the firm principle of Horace, “ scribendi *recti sapere* est et principium et fons.”

In speaking of originality in style it must not be forgotten that memory exercises a strong and often an insidious effect upon writing. That which has been greatly admired will have a tendency to impregnate the mind, and its echo, or, what is worse, its cadence, will be unconsciously repeated. The *cliché* is the greatest danger which lies in wait for the vapid modern author, who is tempted to adopt, instead of the one fresh form which suits his special thought, a word or even a chain of words, which conventionally represents it. Thus “ the devouring element ” was once a striking variant for the short word “ fire,” and a dangerous hidden place was once well described as "a veritable death-trap,” but these have long been *clichés* which can only be used by writers who are insincere or languid. Worse than these are continuous phrases, and even sentences, such as are met with in the leaders of daily newspapers, which might be lifted bodily from their places and inserted elsewhere, so completely have they lost all vitality and reality.

With regard to the training which those who wish to write well should resign themselves to undergo, there is some difference of opinion, based upon difference of temperament. There are those who believe that the gift of style is inborn, and will reveal itself at the moment of mental maturity without any external help. There are others who hold that no amount of labour is excessive, if it be directed to a study and an emulation of what are called “ the best models.” No doubt these theories are both admissible. If a man is not bom to write well, no toil in the imitation of Addison or Ruskin will make his style a brilliant one; and a bom writer will express himself with exactitude and fire even though he be but an idle student of the classics. Yet, on the other hand, the very large number of persons who have a certain aptitude for writing, yet no strong native gift, w ill undoubtedly cure themselves of faults and achieve skill and smoothness by the study of those writers w ho have most kinship with themselves. To be of any service, however, it seems that those writers must have used the same language as their pupils. Of the imitation of the ancients much has been written, even to the extent of the publication of manuals. But wτhat is that imitation of the verse of Homer which leads to­day to Chapman and to-morrow to Pope? What the effect of the study of the prose of Theophrastus which results in the prose of Addison? The good poet or prose-man, however closely he studies an admirable foreign model, is really anxious to say something which has never before been said in his own language. the stimulus which he receives from any foreign predecessor must be in the direction of analogous or parallel effort, not in that of imitation.

The importance of words, indeed, is exemplified, if we regard it closely, in this very question, so constantly mooted, of the imitation of the ancients, by the loss of beauty fatally felt in a bad translation. The vocabulary of a great writer has been, as Pater says, "winnowed it is impossible to think of Sophocles or of Horace as using a word which is not the best possible for introduction at that particular point. But the translator has to interpret the ideas of these ancient writers into a vocabulary which is entirely different from theirs, and unless he has a genius of almost equal impeccability he will undo the winnowing work.