

while of those previously described writers it may be said, in the words of the same poet, *„et qui parlant beaucoup ne disent jamais rien“*. It is also a characteristic of such writers to avoid, if it is possible, expressing themselves *„definitely“*, so that they may be always able in case of need to get out of a difficulty; this is why they always choose the more *„abstract“* expressions: while people of intellect choose the more *„concrete“*; because the latter bring the matter closer to view, which is the source of all evidence. This preference for abstract expressions may be confirmed by numerous examples: a specially ridiculous example is the following. Throughout German literature of the last ten years we find "to condition" almost everywhere used in place of "to cause" or "to effect." Since it is more abstract and indefinite it says less than it implies, and consequently leaves a little back door open to please those whose secret consciousness of their own incapacity inspires them with a continual fear of all *„definite“* expressions. While with other people it is merely the effect of that national tendency to immediately imitate everything that is stupid in literature and wicked in life; this is shown in either case by the quick way in which it spreads. The Englishman depends on his own judgment both in what he writes and what he does, but this applies less to the German than to any other nation. In consequence of the state of things referred to, the words "to cause" and "to effect" have almost entirely disappeared from the literature of the last ten years, and people everywhere talk of "to condition." The fact is worth mentioning because it is characteristically ridiculous. Everyday authors are only half conscious when they write, a fact which accounts for their want of intellect and

the tediousness of their writings; they do not really themselves understand the meaning of their own words, because they take ready-made words and learn them. Hence they combine whole phrases more than words--_phrases banales_. This accounts for that obviously characteristic want of clearly defined thought; in fact, they lack the die that stamps their thoughts, they have no clear thought of their own; in place of it we find an indefinite, obscure interweaving of words, current phrases, worn-out terms of speech, and fashionable expressions. The result is that their foggy kind of writing is like print that has been done with old type. On the other hand, intelligent people _really_ speak to us in their writings, and this is why they are able to both move and entertain us. It is only intelligent writers who place individual words together with a full consciousness of their use and select them with deliberation. Hence their style of writing bears the same relation to that of those authors described above, as a picture that is really painted does to one that has been executed with stencil. In the first instance every word, just as every stroke of the brush, has some special significance, while in the other everything is done mechanically. The same distinction may be observed in music. For it is the omnipresence of intellect that always and everywhere characterises the works of the genius; and analogous to this is Lichtenberg's observation, namely, that Garrick's soul was omnipresent in all the muscles of his body. With regard to the tediousness of the writings referred to above, it is to be observed in general that there are two kinds of tediousness--an objective and a subjective. The _objective_ form of tediousness springs from the deficiency of which we have been

speaking--that is to say, where the author has no perfectly clear thought or knowledge to communicate. For if a writer possesses any clear thought or knowledge it will be his aim to communicate it, and he will work with this end in view; consequently the ideas he furnishes are everywhere clearly defined, so that he is neither diffuse, unmeaning, nor confused, and consequently not tedious. Even if his fundamental idea is wrong, yet in such a case it will be clearly thought out and well pondered; in other words, it is at least formally correct, and the writing is always of some value. While, for the same reason, a work that is objectively _tedious_ is at all times without value. Again, _subjective_ tediousness is merely relative: this is because the reader is not interested in the subject of the work, and that what he takes an interest in is of a very limited nature. The most excellent work may therefore be tedious subjectively to this or that person, just as, _vice versa?_, the worst work may be subjectively diverting to this or that person: because he is interested in either the subject or the writer of the book.