

But this class of authors is like certain workers in metal, who try a hundred different compositions to take the place of gold, which is the only metal that can never have a substitute. On the contrary, there is nothing an author should guard against more than the apparent endeavour to show more intellect than he has; because this rouses the suspicion in the reader that he has very little, since a man always affects something, be its nature what it may, that he does not really possess. And this is why it is praise to an author to call him naïve, for it signifies that he may show himself as he is. In general, naïveté attracts, while anything that is unnatural everywhere repels. We also find that every true thinker endeavours to express his thoughts as purely, clearly, definitely, and concisely as ever possible. This is why simplicity has always been looked upon as a token, not only of truth, but also of genius. Style receives its beauty from the thought expressed, while with those writers who only pretend to think it is their thoughts that are said to be fine because of their style. Style is merely the silhouette of thought; and to write in a vague or bad style means a stupid or confused mind.