

Hence, the first rule--nay, this in itself is almost sufficient for a good style--is this, _that the author should have something to say_. Ah! this implies a great deal. The neglect of this rule is a fundamental characteristic of the philosophical, and generally speaking of all the reflective authors in Germany, especially since the time of Fichte. It is obvious that all these writers wish _to appear_ to have something to say, while they have nothing to say. This mannerism was introduced by the pseudo-philosophers of the Universities and may be discerned everywhere, even among the first literary notabilities of the age. It is the mother of that forced and vague style which seems to have two, nay, many meanings, as well as of that prolix and ponderous style, _le stile empesé_ ; and of that no less useless bombastic style, and finally of that mode of concealing the most awful poverty of thought under a babble of inexhaustible chatter that resembles a clacking mill and is just as stupefying: one may read for hours together without getting hold of a single clearly defined and definite idea. The _Halleschen_, afterwards called the _Deutschen Jahrbücher_, furnishes almost throughout excellent examples of this style of writing. The Germans, by the way, from force of habit read page after page of all kinds of such verbiage without getting any definite idea of what the author really means: they think it all very proper and do not discover that he is writing merely for the sake of writing. On the other hand, a good author who is rich in ideas soon gains the reader's credit of having really and truly _something to say_ ; and this gives the intelligent reader patience to follow him attentively. An author of this kind will always express himself in the simplest and most direct manner, for the very reason that he really has

something to say; because he wishes to awaken in the reader the same idea he has in his own mind and no other. Accordingly he will be able to say with Boileau--