

We should seek for the faults in the style of another author's works, so that we may avoid committing the same in our own.

In order to get a provisional estimate of the value of an author's productions it is not exactly necessary to know the matter on which he has thought or what it is he has thought about it,--this would compel one to read the whole of his works,--but it will be sufficient to know _how_ he has thought. His _style_ is an exact expression of _how_ he has thought, of the essential state and general _quality_ of his thoughts. It shows the _formal_ nature--which must always remain the same--of all the thoughts of a man, whatever the subject on which he has thought or what it is he has said about it. It is the dough out of which all his ideas are kneaded, however various they may be. When Eulenspiegel was asked by a man how long he would have to walk before reaching the next place, and gave the apparently absurd answer _Walk_, his intention was to judge from the man's walking how far he would go in a given time. And so it is when I have read a few pages of an author, I know about how far he can help me.