

Truth that is naked is the most beautiful, and the simpler its expression the deeper is the impression it makes; this is partly because it gets unobstructed hold of the hearer's mind without his being distracted by secondary thoughts, and partly because he feels that here he is not being corrupted or deceived by the arts of rhetoric, but that the whole effect is got from the thing itself. For instance, what declamation on the emptiness of human existence could be more impressive than Job's: *_Homo, natus de muliere, brevi vivit tempore, repletus multis miseriis, qui, tanquam flos, egreditur et conteritur, et fugit velut umbra_*. It is for this very reason that the naïve poetry of Goethe is so incomparably greater than the rhetorical of Schiller. This is also why many folk-songs have so great an effect upon us. An author should guard against using all unnecessary rhetorical adornment, all useless amplification, and in general, just as in architecture he should guard against an excess of decoration, all superfluity of expression--in other words, he must aim at *_chastity_* of style. Everything that is redundant has a harmful effect. The law of simplicity and naïveté applies to all fine art, for it is compatible with what is most sublime.