

## PART IV.

### STYLE AND PUBLICATION.

#### i. *Features of Greek Literature favorable to the Development of a Theory of Style.*

79. "Such being the state of preparation, what was the result?" These words concluded our last essay. There had been two **manifestations** or **bright** epiphanies of the Grecian intellect, revelations in two separate forms: the first having gathered about Pericles in the year 444 B.C., the second about Alexander the Great in 333 B.C.; the first being a pure literature of creative power, the second in a great measure of reflective power; the first fitted to call out the differences of style, the second to observe, classify, and discuss them. Under these circumstances of favourable preparation, what had been the result? Where style exists in strong colouring as a practice or art, we reasonably expect that style should soon follow as a theory, as a science explaining that art, tracing its varieties, and teaching its rules. To use ancient distinctions, where the "*rhetorica utens*" has been cultivated with eminent success (as in early Greece it had) it is but natural to expect many consequent attempts at a "*rhetorica docens*." And especially it is natural to do so in a case where the theorizing intellect had been powerfully awakened. What, therefore, we ask again, had been in fact the result?

80. We must acknowledge that it had fallen far below the reasonable standard of our expectations. Greece, it is

true, produced a long series of works on rhetoric, many of which, though not easily met with,<sup>1</sup> survive to this day; and one which stands first in order of time, viz. the great work of Aristotle, is of such distinguished merit that some eminent moderns have not scrupled to rank it as the very foremost legacy in point of psychological knowledge which Pagan Literature has bequeathed to us. Without entering upon so large a comparison as that, we readily admit the commanding talent which this work displays. But it is under an equivocal use of the word "rhetoric" that the *Rhetoric* of Aristotle could ever have been classed with books treating of style. There is in fact a complex distinction to which the word Rhetoric is liable. 1st, it means the *rhetorica utens*, as when we praise the rhetoric of Seneca or Sir Thomas Browne, not meaning anything which they taught, but something which they practised, — not a doctrine which they delivered, but a machinery of composition which they employed. 2dly, it means the *rhetorica docens*, as when we praise the Rhetoric of Aristotle or Hermogenes, writers far enough from being rhetorical by their own style of writing, but writers who professedly taught others to be rhetorical. 3dly, the *rhetorica utens*

<sup>1</sup> "Not easily met with":—From Germany we have seen reprints of some eight or nine; but once only, so far as our bibliography extends, were the whole body published collectively. This was at the Aldine press in Venice more than three centuries ago. Such an interval, and so solitary a publication, sufficiently explain the non-familiarity of modern scholars with this section of Greek Literature. — DE Q.

For critical accounts of these early treatises the following works may be consulted: L. Spengel, 'Studium der Rhetorik bei den Alten,' 'Artium Scriptores,' and the article 'Definition und Eintheilung der Rhetorik bei den Alten' in *Rheinisches Museum* XVIII. 481-526; R. Volkmann, 'Die Rhetorik der Griechen and Römer,' and 'Hermagoras oder Elemente der Rhetorik'; E. Egger, 'Histoire de la Critique chez les Grecs'; A.-Ed. Chaignet, 'La Rhétorique et son histoire'; E. M. Cope, 'Introd. to Aristotle's Rhetoric,' p. 1-4, 27-36; E. Gros, 'Étude sur la Rhétorique chez les Grecs'; Chas. Benoit, 'Essai historique sur les premiers manuels d'invention oratoire jusqu'à Aristote.'

itself is subdivided into two meanings, so wide apart that they have very little bearing on each other: one being applied to the art of persuasion, the dexterous use of plausible topics for recommending any opinion whatever to the favour of an audience (this is the Grecian sense universally); the other being applied to the art of composition, the art of treating any subject ornamentally, gracefully, affectingly. There is another use of the word rhetoric distinct from all these, and hitherto, we believe, not consciously noticed; of which at some other time.<sup>1</sup>

81. Now, this last subdivision of the word rhetoric, viz. "Rhetoric considered as a practising art, *rhetorica utens*," — which is the sense exclusively indicated by our modern use of the term,—is not at all concerned in the Rhetoric of Aristotle. It is rhetoric as a mode of moral suasion, as a technical system for obtaining a readiness in giving to the false a colouring of plausibility, to the doubtful a colouring of probability, or in giving to the true, when it happens to be obscure, the benefit of a convincing exposition,—this it is which Aristotle undertakes to teach, and not at all the art of ornamental composition.<sup>2</sup> In fact, it is the whole body of public *extempore* speakers whom he addresses, not the body of deliberate writers in any section whatever. And, therefore, whilst conceding readily all the honour which is claimed for that great man's Rhetoric, by this one distinction as to what it was that he meant by Rhetoric, we evade at once all necessity for modifying our general proposition,—viz. that style in our modern sense, as a theory of composition, as an art of constructing sentences and weav-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the essay on 'Rhetoric,' §§ 1-3 and 11.

<sup>2</sup> "Strict justice indeed, if applicable to Rhetoric, would confine itself to seeking such a delivery as would cause neither pain nor pleasure" (Rhetoric, III. 1). Aristotle holds that some slight attention to style is desirable because manner of presentation affects lucidity of statement, but thinks the point is of no great consequence, and calls attention to the fact that in the teaching of geometry it is altogether disregarded.

ing them into coherent wholes, was not effectually cultivated amongst the Greeks. It was not so well understood, nor so distinctly contemplated in the light of a separate accomplishment, as afterwards among the Romans. And we repeat that this result from circumstances *prima facie* so favourable to the very opposite result is highly remarkable. It is so remarkable that we shall beg permission to linger a little upon those features in the Greek Literature which most of all might seem to have warranted our expecting from Greece the very consummation of this delicate art. For these same features, which would separately have justified that expectation, may happen, when taken in combination with others, to account for its disappointment.

82. There is, then, amongst the earliest phenomena of the Greek Literature, and during its very inaugural period, one which of itself and singly furnishes a presumption for expecting an exquisite investigation of style. It lies in the fact that two out of the three great tragic poets carried his own characteristic quality of style to a morbid excess,—to such an excess as should force itself, and in fact *did* force itself, into popular notice. Had these poets all alike exhibited that sustained and equable tenor of tragic style which we find in Sophocles, it is not probable that the vulgar attention would have been fixed by its character. Where a standard of splendour is much raised, provided all parts are simultaneously raised on the same uniform scale, we know by repeated experience in many modes of display, whether in dress, in architecture, in the embellishment of rooms, &c., that this raising of the standard is not perceived with much vivacity, and that the feelings of the spectator are soon reconciled to alterations that are harmonized. It is always by some want of uniformity, some defect in following out the scale, that we become roused to conscious observation of the difference between this and our former standards. We exaggerate these differences in such a case

as much as we undervalue them in a case where all is symmetrical. We might expect, therefore, beforehand, that the opposite characteristics as to style of Æschylus and Euripides would force themselves upon the notice of the Athenian populace; and, in fact, we learn from the Greek scholiasts on these poets that this effect did really follow. These scholiasts, indeed, belong to a later age. But we know by traditions which they have preserved, and we know from Aristotle himself,<sup>1</sup> the immediate successor of the great tragic poets (indirectly we know also from the stormy ridicule of Aristophanes,<sup>2</sup> who may be viewed as contemporary with those poets), that Æschylus was notorious to a proverb amongst the very mob for the stateliness, pomp, and towering character of his diction, whilst Euripides was equally notorious not merely for a diction in a lower key, more household, more natural, less elaborate, but also for cultivating such a diction by study and deliberate preference. Having such great models of contrasting style to begin with, having the attention converged upon these differences by the furious merriment of Aristophanes, less than a Grecian wit would have felt a challenge in all this to the investigation of style, as a great organ of difference between man and man, between poet and poet.

83. But there was a more enduring reason in the circumstances of Greece for entitling us to expect from her the perfect theory of style. It lay in those accidents of time and place which obliged Greece to spin most of her specula-

<sup>1</sup> See the Rhetoric, Bk. III., chap. 2, where Aristotle says that Euripides was the first to make a practice of choosing words from the language of common life. Cf. with this passage, however, the following from the 'Poetics,' xxi. 7: "Æschylus and Euripides wrote the same line, which by Euripides' changing but one word, and using a strange term instead of an ordinary and usual one, appears beautiful instead of poor."

<sup>2</sup> In 'The Frogs.' See Egger's interesting chapter, 'De l'influence exercée par la satire comique sur les poètes qu'elle attaquait' ('Hist. de la Crit,' p. 82).

tions, like a spider, out of her own bowels. Now, for such a kind of literature style is, generally speaking, paramount; for a literature less self-evolved style is more liable to neglect. Modern nations have laboured under the very opposite disadvantage. The excess of external materials has sometimes oppressed their creative power, and sometimes their meditative power. The exuberance of *objective* knowledge — that knowledge which carries the mind to materials existing *out* of itself, such as natural philosophy, chemistry, physiology, astronomy, geology, where the mind of the student goes for little and the external object for much — has had the effect of weaning men from subjective speculation, where the mind is all in all and the alien object next to nothing, and in that degree has weaned them from the culture of style. Now, on the other hand, if you suppose a man in the situation of Baron Trenck at Spandau, or Spinoza in the situation of Robinson Crusoe at Juan Fernandez, or a contemplative monk of the thirteenth century in his cell, you will perceive that—unless he were a poor feeble-minded creature like Cowper's Bastille prisoner, thrown by utter want of energy upon counting the very nails of his dungeon in all permutations and combinations—rather than quit the external world, he must in his own defence, were it only as a relief from gnawing thoughts, cultivate some *subjective* science; that is, some branch of knowledge which, drawing everything from the mind itself, is independent of external resources. Such a science is found in the relations of man to God,—that is in theology; in the determinations of space,—that is in geometry; in the relations of existence or being universally to the human mind,—otherwise called metaphysics or ontology; in the relations of the mind to itself,—otherwise called logic. Hence it was that the scholastic philosophy evolved itself, like a vast spider's loom, between the years 1100 and 1400. Men shut up in solitude, with the education oftentimes of

scholars, with a life of leisure, but with hardly any books, and no means of observation, were absolutely forced, if they would avoid lunacy from energies unoccupied with any object, to create an object out of those very energies: they were driven by mere pressure of solitude, and sometimes of eternal silence, into raising vast aerial Jacob's ladders of vapory metaphysics, just as endless as those meteorologic phenomena which technically bear that name, just as sublime and aspiring in their tendency upwards, and sometimes (but not always) just as unsubstantial. In this present world of the practical and the ponderable, we so little understand or value such abstractions, though once our British schoolmen took the lead in these subtleties, that we confound their very natures and names. Most people with us mean by metaphysics what is properly called psychology. Now, these two are so far from being the same thing that the former could be pursued (and, to say the truth, was, in fact, under Aristotle created) by the monk in his unfurnished cell, where nothing ever entered but moonbeams. Whereas psychology is but in part a subjective science; in some proportion it is also *objective*, depending on multiplied experience, or on multiplied records of experience. Psychology, therefore, *could* not have been cultivated extensively by the schoolmen, and in fact would not have been cultivated at all but for the precedent of Aristotle. He, who laid the foundation of their metaphysics, which have nothing to do with man, had also written a work on man, — viz. on the human soul, — besides other smaller works on particular psychological phenomena (such as dreaming). Hence, through mere imitation, arose the short sketches of psychology amongst the schoolmen. Else *their* vocation lay to metaphysics, as a science which can dance upon moonbeams; and that vocation arose entirely out of their circumstances, — solitude, scholarship, and no books. Total extinction there was for them of all objective materials, and therefore, as a

consequence inevitable, reliance on the solitary energies of their own minds. Like Christabel's chamber lamp, and the angels from which it was suspended, all was the invention of the unprompted artist,—

“All made out of the carver's brain.”

Models he had none before him, for printed books were yet sleeping in futurity, and the gates of a grand asceticism were closed upon the world of life. We moderns, indeed, fancy that the necessities of the Romish Church — the mere instincts of self-protection in Popery — were what offered the bounty on this air-woven philosophy; and partly that is true; but it is most certain that all the bounties in this world would have failed to operate effectually, had they not met with those circumstances in the silent life of monasteries which favored the growth of such a self-spun metaphysical divinity. Monastic life predisposed the restlessness of human intellect to move in that direction. It was one of the few directions compatible with solitude and penury of books. It was the only one that opened an avenue at once to novelty and to freedom of thought. Now, then, precisely what the monastic life of the schoolmen was in relation to Philosophy, the Greece of Pericles had been in relation to Literature. What circumstances, what training, or predisposing influences existed for the monk in his cell, the same (or such as were tantamount) existed for the Grecian wit in the atmosphere of Athens. Three great agencies were at work, and unconsciously moulding the efforts of the earliest schoolmen about the opening of the Crusades, and of the latest some time after their close; — three analogous agencies, the same in virtue, though varied in circumstances, gave impulse and guidance to the men of Greece, from Pericles, at the opening of Greek literature, to Alexander of Macedon, who witnessed its second harvest. And these agencies were: — 1st, Leisure in excess,

with a teeming intellect; the burden, under a new-born excitement, of having nothing to do. 2*d*, Scarcity, without an absolute famine, of books; enough to awake the dormant cravings, but not enough to gratify them without personal participation in the labours of intellectual creation. 3*d*, A revolutionary restlessness, produced by the recent establishment of a new and growing public interest.

84. The two first of these agencies for stimulating intellects already roused by agitating changes are sufficiently obvious; though few perhaps are aware to what extent idleness prevailed in Pagan Greece, and even in Rome, under the system of household slavery, and under the bigoted contempt of commerce. But, waiving that point, and for the moment waiving also the degree of scarcity which affected books at the era of Pericles, we must say one word as to the two great analogous public interests which had formed themselves separately, and with a sense of revolutionary power, for the Greeks on the one hand, and for the Schoolmen on the other. As respected the Grecians, and especially the Athenians, this excitement lay in the sentiment of nationality which had been first powerfully organised by the Persian War. Previously to that war the sentiment no doubt smouldered obscurely; but the oriental invasion it was which kindled it into a torrent of flame. And it is interesting to remark that the very same cause which fused and combined these scattered tribes into the unity of Hellas, viz. their common interest in making head against an awful invader, was also the cause which most of all separated them into local parties by individual rivalry and by characteristic services. The arrogant Spartan, mad with a French-like self-glorification, boasted for ever of his little Thermopylæ. Ten years earlier the far sublimer display of Athenian Marathon, to say nothing of after-services at Salamis or elsewhere, had placed Attica at the summit of the Greek family. No matter whether selfish jealousy

would allow that pre-eminence to be recognised; doubtless it was felt. With this civic pre-eminence arose concurrently for Athens the development of an intellectual pre-eminence. On this we need say nothing. But even here, although the pre-eminence was too dazzling to have been at any time overlooked, yet, with some injustice in every age to Athens, her light has been recognised, but not what gave it value, — the contrasting darkness of all around her. This did not escape Paterculus,<sup>1</sup> whose understanding is always vigilant. “We talk,” says he, “of *Grecian* eloquence or *Grecian* poetry, when we should say *Attic*; for who has ever heard of Theban orators, of Lacedæmonian artists, or Corinthian poets?”<sup>2</sup> Æschylus, the first great author of Athens (for Herodotus was not Athenian), personally fought in the Persian War. Consequently the two modes of glory for Athens were almost of simultaneous emergence. And what we are now wishing to insist on is that precisely by and through this great unifying event, viz. the double inroad of Asia militant upon Greece, Greece first became generally and reciprocally known to Greece herself; that Greece was then first arranged and *cast*, as it were dramatically, according to her capacities, services, duties; that a general consciousness was then diffused of the prevailing relations in which each political family stood to the rest;

<sup>1</sup> Why should it escape him, when Cicero had made the same remark years before? The passage will be found in the ‘*Brutus*,’ chap. xiii. : “Hoc autem studium non erat commune Græciæ, sed proprium Athenarum. Quis enim aut Argivum oratorem, aut Corinthium, aut Thebanum scit fuisse temporibus illis?”

<sup>2</sup> People will here remind us that Aristotle was half a foreigner, being born at Stagira in Macedon. Ay, but amongst Athenian emigrants, and of an Athenian father! His mother, we think, was Thracian. The crossing of races almost uniformly terminates in producing splendour, at any rate energy, of intellect. If the roll of great men, or at least of energetic men, in Christendom were carefully examined, it would astonish us to observe how many have been the children of mixed marriages, — *i.e.* of alliances between two bloods as to nation, although the races might originally have been the same. — DE Q.

and that in the leading states every intellectual citizen drew a most agitating excitement from the particular character of glory which had settled upon his own tribe, and the particular station which had devolved upon it amongst the champions of civilisation.

85. That was the *positive* force acting upon Athens. Now, reverting to the monkish schoolmen, in order to complete the parallel, what was the corresponding force acting upon *them*? Leisure and want of books were accidents common to both parties,—to the scholastic age and to the age of Pericles. These were the *negative* forces, concurring with others to sustain a movement once begun, but incapable of giving the original impulse. What was the active, the *affirmative*, force which effected for the scholastic monks that unity and sense of common purposes which had been effected for the Greeks by the sudden development of a Grecian interest opposed to a Persian,—of a civilised interest, under sudden peril, opposed to the barbarism of the universal planet? What was there, for the race of monkish schoolmen labouring through three centuries, in the nature of a known palpable interest, which could balance so grand a principle of union and of effort as this acknowledged guardianship of civilisation had suddenly unfolded, like a banner, for the Greeks during the infancy of Pericles?<sup>1</sup> What *could* there be of corresponding grandeur?

86. Beforehand, this should have seemed impossible: but, in reality, a far grander mode of interest had arisen for the schoolmen: grander, because more indefinite; more indefinite, because spiritual. It was this:—The Western or Latin Church had slowly developed her earthly power. As an edifice of civil greatness throughout the western

<sup>1</sup> It is well to give unity to our grandest remembrances by connecting them, as many as can be, with the same centre. Pericles died in the year 429 before Christ. Supposing his age to be fifty-six, he would then be born about 485 B.C.,—that is, five years after the first Persian invasion under Darius, five years before the second under Xerxes.—DE Q.

world, she stood erect and towering. In the eleventh century, beyond all others, she had settled her deep foundations. The work thus far was complete; but blank civil power, though indispensable, was the feeblest of her arms, and, taken separately, was too frail to last, besides that it was liable to revolutions. The authority by which chiefly she ruled, had ruled, and hoped to rule, was spiritual; and, with the growing institutions of the age, embodying so much of future resistance, it was essential that this spiritual influence should be founded on a subtle philosophy, difficult to learn, difficult to refute; as also that many dogmas already established, such as tradition by way of prop to infallibility, should receive a far ampler development. The Latin Church, we must remember, was not yet that Church of Papal Rome, in the maturity of its doctrines and its pretensions, which it afterwards became. And, when we consider how vast a benefactress this Church had been to early Christendom when moulding and settling her foundations, as also in what light she must have appeared to her own pious children in centuries where as yet only the first local breezes of opposition had begun to whisper amongst the Albigenses, &c., we are bound in all candour to see that a sublimer interest could not have existed for any series of philosophers than the profound persuasion that by marrying metaphysics to divinity, two sciences even separately so grand, and by the pursuit of labyrinthine truth, they were building up an edifice reaching to the heavens,—the great spiritual fortress of the Catholic Church.

ii. *Influence of Subjective Pursuits upon the Culture of Style.*

87. Here let us retrace the course of our speculations, lest the reader should suppose us to be wandering.

88. First, for the sake of illustrating more vividly the influences which acted on the Greece of Pericles, we bring

forward another case analogously circumstanced, as moulded by the same causes:—1. The same condition of intellect under revolutionary excitement; 2. The same penury of books; 3. The same chilling gloom from the absence of female charities,—the consequent reaction of that oppressive *ennui* which Helvetius fancied, amongst all human agencies, to be the most potent stimulant for the intellect; 4. The same (though far different) enthusiasm and elevation of thought from disinterested participation in forwarding a great movement of the age: for the one side involving the glory of their own brilliant country and concurrent with civilisation; for the other, co-extensive with all spiritual truth and all spiritual power.

89. Next, we remark that men living permanently under such influences must, of mere necessity, resort to that order of intellectual pursuits which requires little aid *ab extra*,—that order, in fact, which philosophically is called “subjective,” as drawing much from our own proper selves, or little (if anything) from extraneous objects.

90. And then, thirdly, we remark that such pursuits are peculiarly favourable to the culture of style. In fact they force that culture. A man who has absolute facts to communicate from some branch of study external to himself, as physiology, suppose, or anatomy, or astronomy, is careless of style; or at least he may be so, because he is independent of style, for what he has to communicate neither readily admits, nor much needs, any graces in the mode of communication; the matter transcends and oppresses the manner. The matter tells without any manner at all. But he who has to treat a vague question, such as Cicero calls a *questio infinita*, where everything is to be finished out of his own peculiar feelings, or his own way of viewing things (in contradistinction to a *questio finita*, where determinate *data* from without already furnish the main materials), soon finds that the manner of treating it not only transcends the matter, but

very often, and in a very great proportion, *is* the matter. In very many subjective exercises of the mind,—as, for instance, in that class of poetry which has been formally designated by this epithet (meditative poetry, we mean, in opposition to the Homeric, which is intensely objective), the problem before the writer is to project his own inner mind; to bring out consciously what yet lurks by involution in many unanalysed feelings; in short, to pass through a prism and radiate into distinct elements what previously had been even to himself but dim and confused ideas intermixed with each other. Now, in such cases, the skill with which detention or conscious arrest is given to the evanescent, external projection to what is internal, outline to what is fluxionary, and body to what is vague,—all this depends entirely on the command over language as the one sole means of embodying ideas; and in such cases the style, or, in the largest sense, *manner*, is confluent with the matter. But, at all events, even by those who are most impatient of any subtleties, or what they consider “metaphysical” distinctions, thus much must be conceded: viz. that those who rest upon external facts, tangible realities, and circumstantial details,—in short, generally upon the *objective*, whether in a case of narration or of argument,—must for ever be less dependent upon style than those who have to draw upon their own understandings and their own peculiar feelings for the furniture and matter of their composition. A single illustration will make this plain. It is an old remark, and, in fact, a subject of continual experience, that lawyers fail as public speakers in the House of Commons. Even Erskine, the greatest of modern advocates, was nobody as a senator; and the “fluent Murray,” two generations before him, had found his fluency give way under that mode of trial.<sup>1</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> According to Chesterfield, Murray ranked with Pitt as one of the first speakers of his day. “They alone can influence or quiet the House: they alone are attended to in that numerous and noisy assembly, that you might

why? How was it possible that a man's fluency in one chamber of public business should thus suddenly be defeated and confounded in another? The reason is briefly expressed in Cicero's distinction between a *quæstio finita* and a *quæstio infinita*. In the courts of law, the orator was furnished with a brief, an abstract of facts, downright statements upon oath, circumstances of presumption, and, in short, a whole volume of topics external to his own mind. Sometimes, it is true, the advocate would venture a little out to sea *proprio Marte*: in a case of *crim. con.*, for instance, he would attempt a little picture of domestic happiness drawn from his own funds. But he was emboldened to do this from his certain knowledge that in the facts of his brief he had always a hasty retreat in case of any danger that he should founder. If the little picture prospered, it was well: if not, if symptoms of weariness began to arise in the audience, or of hesitation in himself, it was but to cut the matter short, and return to the *terra firma* of his brief, when all again was fluent motion. Besides that, each separate transition, and the distribution of the general subject, offered themselves spontaneously in a law case; the logic was given as well as the method. Very often the mere order of chronology dictated the succession and arrangement of the topics. Now, on the other hand, in a House of Commons oration, although sometimes there may occur statements of fact and

hear a pin fall while either of them is speaking." Walpole says of one speech delivered in the House of Lords, that it was the only speech which in his time had real effect. De Quincey probably had in mind the well-known anecdote in Butler's 'Reminiscences,' describing Pitt's attack upon Murray: "It was on this occasion that Pitt used an expression that was once in every mouth. After Murray had suffered for some time [*i.e.* under Pitt's onslaught] Pitt stopped, threw his eyes around, then, fixing their whole power on Murray, said: 'I must now address a few words to Mr. Solicitor: they shall be few, but they shall be daggers.' Murray was agitated. The look was continued: the agitation increased. 'Judge Festus trembles,' exclaimed Pitt; 'he shall hear me some other day.' He sat down: Murray made no reply, and a languid debate is said to have shown the paralysis of the House."

opiose calculations, still these are never more than a text, at the very best, for the political discussion, but often no more than a subsequent illustration or proof attached to some one of its heads. The main staple of any long speech must always be some general view of national policy; and, in Cicero's language, such a view must always be *infinita*; that is, not determined *ab extra*, but shaped and drawn from the funds of one's own understanding. The facts are here subordinate and ministerial; in the case before a jury the facts are all in all. The forensic orator satisfies his duty if he does but take the facts exactly as they stand in his brief, and place them before his audience in that order, and even (if he should choose it) in those words. The parliamentary orator has no opening for facts at all, but as he himself may be able to create such an opening by some previous expositions of doctrine or opinion, of the probable or expedient. The one is always creeping along shore; the other is always out at sea. Accordingly, the degrees of anxiety which severally affect the two cases are best brought to the test in this one question — "*What shall I say next?*" — an anxiety besetting orators like that which besets poor men in respect to their children's daily bread. "This moment it is secured; but, alas for the next!" Now, the judicial orator finds an instant relief: the very points of the case are numbered; and, if he cannot find more to say upon No. 7, he has only to pass on and call up No. 8. Whereas the deliberative orator, in a senate or a literary meeting, finds himself always in this situation,—that, having reached with difficulty that topic which we have supposed to be No. 7, one of three cases uniformly occurs: either he does not perceive any No. 8 at all; or, secondly, he sees a distracting choice of No. 8's—the ideas to which he might next pass are many, but he does not see whither they will lead him; or, thirdly, he sees a very fair and promising No. 8, but cannot in any way discover off-hand

how he is to effect a transition to this new topic. He cannot, with the rapidity requisite, modulate out of the one key into the other. His anxiety increases, utter confusion masters him, and he breaks down.<sup>1</sup>

91. We have made this digression by way of seeking, in a well-known case of public life, an illustration of the difference between a subjective and an objective exercise of the mind. It is the sudden translation from the one exercise to the other which, and which only, accounts for the failure of advocates when attempting senatorial efforts. Once used to depend on memorials or briefs of facts, or of evidence not self-derived, the advocate, like a child in leading-strings, loses that command over his own internal resources which otherwise he might have drawn from practice. In fact, the advocate, with his brief lying before him, is precisely in the condition of a parliamentary speaker who places a written speech or notes for a speech in his hat. This trick has sometimes been practised; and the consternation which would befall the orator in the case of such a hat-speech being suddenly blown away precisely realizes the situation of a *nisi prius* orator when first getting on his legs in the House of Commons. He has swum with bladders all his life: suddenly he must swim without them.

92. This case explains why it is that all subjective branches of study favour the cultivation of style. Whatsoever is entirely independent of the mind, and external to it, is generally equal to its own enunciation. Ponderable facts and external realities are intelligible in almost any language: they are self-explained and self-sustained. But, the more closely any exercise of mind is connected with what is internal and individual in the sensibilities,—that is, with what is philosophically termed *subjective*,—precisely in that degree, and the more subtly, does the style or the embodying of the thoughts cease to be a mere sep-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Literary Reminiscences,' chap. 13.

arable ornament, and in fact the more does the manner, as we expressed it before, become confluent with the matter. In saying this, we do but vary the form of what we once heard delivered on this subject by Mr. Wordsworth. His remark was by far the weightiest thing we ever heard on the subject of style; and it was this: that it is in the highest degree unphilosophic to call language or diction "the dress of thoughts." And what was it then that he would substitute? Why this: he would call it "the *incarnation* of thoughts." Never in one word was so profound a truth conveyed. Mr. Wordsworth was thinking, doubtless, of poetry like his own: viz. that which is eminently meditative. And the truth is apparent on consideration: for, if language were merely a dress, then you could separate the two; you could lay the thoughts on the left hand, the language on the right. But, generally speaking, you can no more deal thus with poetic thoughts than you can with soul and body. The union is too subtle, the intertexture too ineffable,—each co-existing not merely *with* the other, but each *in* and *through* the other. An image, for instance, a single word, often enters into a thought as a constituent part. In short, the two elements are not united as a body with a separable dress, but as a mysterious incarnation. And thus, in what proportion the thoughts are subjective, in that same proportion does the very essence become identical with the expression, and the style become confluent with the matter.<sup>1</sup>

93. The Greeks, by want of books, philosophical instruments, and innumerable other aids to all objective researches, being thrown more exclusively than we upon their own unaided minds, cultivated logic, ethics, metaphysics, psychology,—all thoroughly subjective studies. The schoolmen, in the very same situation, cultivated precisely the same field of knowledge. The Greeks, indeed, added

<sup>1</sup> Cf. essay on 'Language,' § 19.

to their studies that of geometry; for the inscription over the gate of the Academy ("Let no one enter who is not instructed in geometry") sufficiently argues that this science must have made some progress in the days of Pericles, when it could thus be made a general qualification for admission to a learned establishment within thirty years after his death. But geometry is partly an objective, partly a subjective, study. With this exception, the Greeks and the Monastic Schoolmen trod the very same path.

94. Consequently, in agreement with our principle, both ought to have found themselves in circumstances favourable to the cultivation of style. And it is certain that they did. As an *art*, as a practice, it was felicitously pursued in both cases. It is true that the harsh ascetic mode of treating philosophy by the schoolmen generated a corresponding barrenness, aridity, and repulsiveness, in the rigid forms of their technical language. But, however offensive to genial sensibilities, this diction was a perfect thing in its kind; and, to do it justice, we ought rather to compare it with the exquisite language of algebra,—equally irconcilable to all standards of æsthetic beauty; but yet, for the three qualities of elliptical rapidity (that rapidity which constitutes very much of what is meant by *elegance* in mathematics), of absolute precision, and of simplicity, this algebraic language is unrivalled amongst human inventions. On the other hand, the Greeks, whose objects did not confine them to these austere studies, carried out their corresponding excellence in style upon a far wider, and indeed a comprehensive, scale. Almost all modes of style were exemplified amongst *them*. Thus we endeavour to show that the subjective pursuits of the Greeks and the Schoolmen ought to have favoured a command of appropriate diction; and afterwards that it did.

95. But, *fourthly*, we are entitled to expect that, wherever style exists in great development as a practice, it will

soon be investigated with corresponding success as a theory. If fine music is produced spontaneously in short snatches by the musical sensibility of a people, it is a matter of certainty that the science of composition, that counterpoint, that thorough-bass, will soon be cultivated with a commensurate zeal. This is matter of such obvious inference that in any case where it fails we look for some extraordinary cause to account for it. Now, in Greece, with respect to style, the inference *did* fail. Style, as an art, was in a high state of culture; style, as a science, was nearly neglected. How is this to be accounted for? It arose naturally enough out of one great phenomenon in the condition of ancient times, and the relation which that bore to literature and to all human exertion of the intellect.

### iii. *The Idea of Publication.*

96. Did the reader ever happen to reflect on the great idea of *publication*? An idea we call it; because even in our own times, with all the mechanic aids of steam-presses, &c., this object is most imperfectly approached, and is destined, perhaps, for ever to remain an unattainable ideal,—useful (like all ideals) in the way of regulating our aims, but also as a practicable object not reconcilable with the limitation of human power. For it is clear that, if books were multiplied by a thousandfold, and truths of all kinds were carried to the very fireside of every family,—nay, placed below the eyes of every individual,—still the purpose of any universal publication would be defeated and utterly confounded, were it only by the limited opportunities of readers. One condition of publication defeats another. Even so much as a general publication is a hopeless idea. Yet, on the other hand, publication in some degree, and by some mode, is a *sine qua non* condition for the generation of literature. Without a larger sympathy than that of his own personal circle, it is evident that no writer

could have a motive for those exertions and previous preparations without which excellence is not attainable in any art whatsoever.

97. Now, in our own times, it is singular, and really philosophically curious, to remark the utter blindness of writers, readers, publishers, and all parties whatever interested in literature, as to the trivial fraction of publicity which settles upon each separate work. The very multiplication of books has continually defeated the object in growing progression. Readers have increased, the engines of publication have increased; but books, increasing in a still greater proportion, have left as the practical result an average quotient of publicity for each book, taken apart, continually decreasing. And, if the whole world were readers, probably the average publicity for each separate work would reach a *minimum*; such would be the concurrent increase of books. But even this view of the case keeps out of sight the most monstrous forms of this phenomenon. The inequality of the publication has the effect of keeping very many books absolutely without a reader. The majority of books are never opened; five hundred copies may be printed, or half as many more; of these it may happen that five are carelessly turned over. Popular journals, again, which carry a promiscuous miscellany of papers into the same number of hands, as a stage-coach must convey all its passengers at the same rate of speed, dupe the public with a notion that here at least all are read. Not at all. One or two are read from the interest attached to their subjects. Occasionally one is read a little from the ability with which it treats a subject not otherwise attractive. The rest have a better chance certainly than books, because they are at any rate placed under the eye and in the hand of readers. But this is no more than a variety of the same case. A hasty glance may be taken by one in a hundred at the less attractive papers; but read-

ing is out of the question. Then, again, another delusion, by which all parties disguise the truth, is the absurd belief that, not being read at present, a book may, however, be revived hereafter. Believe it not! This is possible only with regard to books that demand to be studied, where the merit is slowly discovered. Every month, every day indeed, produces its own novelties, with the additional zest that they *are* novelties. Every future year, which will assuredly fail in finding time for its own books,—how should it find time for defunct books? No, no; every year buries its own literature. Since Waterloo there have been added upwards of fifty thousand books and pamphlets to the shelves of our *native* literature, taking no account of foreign importations. Of these fifty thousand possibly two hundred still survive; possibly twenty will survive for a couple of centuries; possibly five or six thousand may have been indifferently read; the rest not so much as opened. In this hasty sketch of a calculation we assume a single copy to represent a whole edition. But, in order to have the total sum of copies numerically neglected since Waterloo, it will be requisite to multiply forty-four thousand by five hundred at the least, but probably by a higher multiplier. At the very moment of writing this — by way of putting into a brighter light the inconceivable blunder as to publicity habitually committed by sensible men of the world — let us mention what we now see before us in a public journal. Speaking with disapprobation of a just but disparaging expression applied to the French war-mania by a London morning paper, the writer has described it as likely to irritate the people of France. O genius of arithmetic! The offending London journal has a circulation of four thousand copies daily; and it is assumed that thirty-three millions, of whom assuredly not twenty-five individuals will ever see the English paper as a visible object, nor five ever read the passage in question, are to be mad-

dened by one word in a colossal paper laid this morning on a table amongst fifty others, and to-morrow morning pushed off that table by fifty others of more recent date.<sup>1</sup> How are such delusions possible? Simply from the previous delusion, of ancient standing, connected with printed characters: what is printed seems to every man invested with some fatal character of publicity such as cannot belong to mere MS.; whilst, in the meantime, out of every thousand printed pages, one at the most, but at all events a very small proportion indeed, is in any true sense more public when printed than previously as a manuscript; and that one, even that thousandth part, perishes as effectually in a few days to each separate reader as the words perish in our daily conversation. Out of all that we talk, or hear others talk, through the course of a year, how much remains on the memory at the closing day of December? Quite as little, we may be sure, survives from most people's reading. A book answers its purpose by sustaining the intellectual faculties in motion through the current act of reading, and a general deposition or settling takes effect from the sum of what we read; even that, however, chiefly according to the previous condition in which the book finds us for understanding it, and referring them to heads under some existing arrangement of our knowledge. Publication is an idle term applied to what is not published; and nothing is *published* which is not made known *publicly* to the understanding as well as the eye; whereas, for the enormous majority of what is printed, we cannot say so much as that it is made known to the eyes.

98. For what reason have we insisted on this unpleasant view of a phenomenon incident to the limitation of our

<sup>1</sup> At the present time it is quite possible, and in fact of almost daily occurrence, that a paragraph which appears one day in an English newspaper, should, on the following day, be placed impressively before the eyes of millions of people of all the leading nationalities.

faculties, and apparently without remedy? Upon another occasion it might have been useful to do so, were it only to impress upon every writer the vast importance of compression. Simply to retrench one word from each sentence, one superfluous epithet, for example, would probably increase the disposable time of the public by one twelfth part; in other words, would add another month to the year, or raise any sum of volumes read from eleven to twelve hundred. A mechanic operation would effect *that* change; but, by cultivating a closer logic and more severe habits of thinking, perhaps two sentences out of each three might be pruned away, and the amount of possible publication might thus be increased in a threefold degree. A most serious duty, therefore, and a duty which is annually growing in solemnity, appears to be connected with the culture of an unwordy diction; much more, however, with the culture of clear thinking,—that being the main key to good writing, and consequently to fluent reading.

#### iv. *The Theatre and the Forum as Modes of Publication.*

99. But all this, though not unconnected with our general theme, is wide of our immediate purpose. The course of our logic at this point runs in the following order. The Athenians, from causes assigned, ought to have consummated the whole science and theory of style. But they did *not*. Why? Simply from a remarkable deflexion or bias given to their studies by a difficulty connected with *publication*. For some modes of literature the Greeks *had* a means of publication, for many they had *not*. That one difference, as we shall show, disturbed the just valuation of style.

100. Some mode of publication must have existed for Athens: that is evident. The mere *fact* of a literature proves it. For without public sympathy how can a litera-

ture arise? or public sympathy without a regular organ of publication? What poet would submit to the labours of his most difficult art, if he had no reasonable prospect of a large audience, and somewhat of a permanent audience, to welcome and adopt his productions?

101. Now then, in the Athens of Pericles, what *was* the audience, how composed, and how insured, on which the literary composer might rely? By what channel, in short, did the Athenian writer calculate on a *publication*? This is a very interesting question, and, as regards much in the civilisation of Greece, both for what it caused and what it prevented, is an important question. In the elder days,—in fact we may suppose through the five hundred years from the Trojan expedition to Pisistratus and Solon,—all *publication* was effected through two classes of men: the public reciters and the public singers. Thus, no doubt, it was that the Iliad and Odyssey were sent down to the hands of Pisistratus, who has the traditional reputation of having first arranged and revised these poems. These reciters or singers to the harp would probably rehearse one entire book of the Iliad at every splendid banquet. Every book would be kept in remembrance and currency by the peculiar local relations of particular states or particular families to ancestors connected with Troy. This mode of publication, however, had the disadvantage that it was among the arts ministerial to sensual enjoyment. And it is some argument for the extensive diffusion of such a practice in the early times of Greece that, both in the Greece of later times, and, by adoption from her, in the Rome of cultivated ages, we find the *ἀκροαματα* as commonly established by way of a dinner appurtenance—that is, exercises of display addressed to the ear, recitations of any kind with and without music—not at all less frequently than *δραματα*, or the corresponding display to the eye (dances or combats of gladiators). These were doubtless inheritances from

the ancient usages of Greece, — modes of publication resorted to long before the Olympic Games by the mere necessitous cravings for sympathy, and kept up long after that institution, as in itself too brief and rare in its recurrence to satisfy the necessity.

102. Such was the earliest effort of publication, and in its feeble infancy; for this, besides its limitation in point of audience, was confined to narrative poetry. But, when the ideal of Greece was more and more exalted by nearer comparison with barbarous standards, after the sentiment of patriotism had coalesced with vindictive sentiments, and when towering cities began to reflect the grandeur of this land as in a visual mirror, these cravings for publicity became more restless and irrepressible. And at length, in the time of Pericles, concurrently with the external magnificence of the city, arose for Athens two modes of publication, each upon a scale of gigantic magnitude.

103. What were these? The *Theatre* and the *Agora*<sup>1</sup> or *Forum*: publication by the Stage, and publication by the Hustings. These were the extraordinary modes of publication which arose for Athens: one by a sudden birth, like that of Minerva, in the very generation of Pericles; the other slowly maturing itself from the generation of Pisis-tratus, which preceded that of Pericles by a hundred years. This double publication, scenic and forensic, was virtually, and for all the loftier purposes of publication, the press of Athens. And, however imperfect a representative this may seem of a typographical publication, certain it is that in some important features the Athenian publication had separate advantages of its own. It was a far more effective and correct publication in the first place, enjoying every

<sup>1</sup> "Amongst the vicarious modes of publication resorted to by the Ancients in default of the Printing-Press, I have forgotten to mention the Roman Recitations in the Porticos of Baths, &c." (De Quincey, Preface to 'Collected Writings').

aid of powerful accompaniment from voice, gesture, scenery, music, and suffering in no instance from false reading or careless reading. Then, secondly, it was a far wider publication: each drama being read (or heard, which is a far better thing) by 25,000 or 30,000 persons, counterbalancing at least forty editions such as we on an average publish; each oration being delivered with just emphasis to perhaps 7000. But why, in this mention of a stage or hustings publication, as opposed to a publication by the printing-press, why was it, we are naturally admonished to ask, that the Greeks had no press? The ready answer will be, — because the art of printing had not been discovered. But that is an error, the detection of which we owe to the present Archbishop of Dublin.<sup>1</sup> The art of printing *was* discovered. It had been discovered repeatedly. The art which multiplied the legends upon a coin or medal (a work which the ancients performed by many degrees better than we moderns, — for we make it a mechanic art, they a fine art) had in effect anticipated the art of printing. It was an art, this typographic mystery, which awoke and went back to sleep many times over from mere defect of materials. Not the defect of typography as an art, but the defect of *paper* as a material for keeping this art in motion, — *there* lay the reason, as Dr. Whately most truly observes, why printed books had no existence amongst the Greeks of Pericles, or afterwards amongst the Romans of Cicero. And why was there no paper? The common reason applying to both countries was the want of linen rags, and that want arose from the universal habit of wearing woollen garments. In this respect Athens and Rome were on the same level. But for Athens the want was driven to a further extremity by the slenderness of her commerce with Egypt, whence only any substitute could have been drawn.

104. Even for Rome itself the scarcity of paper ran

<sup>1</sup> See Whately's 'Rhetoric,' p. 2, note.

through many degrees. Horace,<sup>1</sup> the poet, was amused with the town of Equotuticum for two reasons: as incapable of entering into hexameter verse from its prosodial quantity (*versu quod dicere non est*); and because it purchased water (*vænit vilissima rerum aqua*),—a circumstance in which it agrees with the well-known Clifton, above the hot wells of Bristol, where water is bought by the shilling's worth. But neither Horatian Equotuticum nor Bristolian Clifton can ever have been as "hard up" for water as the Mecca caravan. And the differences were as great in respect to the want of paper between the Athens of Pericles or Alexander and the Rome of Augustus Cæsar. Athens had bad poets, whose names have come down to modern times; but Athens could no more have afforded to punish bad authors by sending their works to grocers—

"in vicum vendentem pus et odores,  
Et piper, et quicquid *chartis amicitur ineptis*"<sup>2</sup>—

than London, because gorged with the wealth of two Indies, can afford to pave her streets with silver. This practice of applying unsaleable authors to the ignoble uses of retail dealers in petty articles must have existed in Rome for some time before it could have attracted the notice of Horace, and upon some considerable scale as a known public usage before it could have roused any echoes of public mirth as a satiric allusion, or have had any meaning and sting.

105. In that one revelation of Horace we see a proof how much paper had become more plentiful. It is true that so long as men dressed in woollen materials it was impossible

<sup>1</sup> Satires, I. 5, ll. 87, 88.

<sup>2</sup> Horace, Epistles, II. i. ll. 269, 270. The first line should read *in vicum vendentem tus et odores*. In Conington's translation:

"Down to the street where spice and pepper's sold,  
And all the wares waste paper's used to fold."

to look for a *cheap* paper. Maga<sup>1</sup> might have been printed at Rome very well for ten guineas a copy. Paper was dear, undoubtedly, but it could be had. On the other hand, how desperate must have been the bankruptcy at Athens in all materials for receiving the record of thoughts, when we find a polished people having no better tickets or cards for conveying their sentiments to the public than shells! Thence came the very name for civil banishment, viz. *ostracism*, because the votes were marked on an *ostrakon*, or marine shell. Again, in another great city, viz. Syracuse, you see men reduced to *petalism*, or marking their votes by the petals of shrubs. Elsewhere, as indeed many centuries nearer to our own times in Constantinople, bull's hide was used for the same purpose.

106. Well might the poor Greeks adopt the desperate expedient of white plastered walls as the best memorandum-book for a man who had thoughts occurring to him in the night-time. Brass only, or marble, could offer any lasting memorial for thoughts; and upon what material the parts were written out for the actors on the Athenian stage, or how the elaborate revisals of the text could be carried on, is beyond our power of conjecture.

107. In this appalling state of embarrassment for the great poet or prose writer, what consequences would naturally arise? A king's favourite and friend like Aristotle might command the most costly materials. For instance, if you look back, from this day to 1800, into the advertising records or catalogues of great Parisian publishers, you will find more works of excessive luxury, costing from a thousand *francs* for each copy all the way up to as many *guineas*, in each separate period of fifteen years than in the whole forty among the wealthier and more enterprising publishers of Great Britain. What is the explanation? Can the very moderate incomes of the French gentry afford to patronize

<sup>1</sup> 'Blackwood's Magazine.'

works which are beyond the purses of our British aristocracy, who, besides, are so much more of a reading class? Not so: the patronage for these Parisian works of luxury is not domestic, it is exotic: chiefly from emperors and kings; from great national libraries; from rich universities; from the grandees of Russia, Hungary, or Great Britain; and generally from those who, living in splendid castles or hotels, require corresponding furniture, and therefore corresponding books, because to such people books are necessarily furniture,—since, upon the principles of good taste, they must correspond with the splendour of all around them. And in the age of Alexander there were already purchasers enough among royal houses, or the imitators of such houses, to encourage costly copies of attractive works. Aristotle was a privileged man. But in other less favoured cases the strong yearnings for public sympathy were met by blank impossibilities. Much martyrdom, we feel assured, was then suffered by poets. Thousands, it is true, perish in our days, who have never had a solitary reader. But still the existence *in print* gives a delusive feeling that they *may* have been read. They are standing in the market all day, and somebody, unperceived by themselves, may have thrown an eye upon their wares. The thing is possible. But for the ancient writer there was a sheer physical impossibility that any man should sympathize with what he never could have seen, except under the two conditions we have mentioned.

108. These two cases there were of exemption from this dire physical resistance,—two conditions which made publication possible; and, under the horrible circumstances of sequestration for authors in general, need it be said that to benefit by either advantage was sought with such a zeal as, in effect, extinguished all other literature? If a man could be a poet for the stage, a *scriptor scenicus*, in that case he was published. If a man could be admitted as an orator,

as a regular *demagogus*, upon the popular *bema* or hustings, in that case he was published. If his own thoughts were a torment to him, until they were reverberated from the hearts and flashing eyes and clamorous sympathy of a multitude, thus only an outlet was provided, a mouth was opened, for the volcano surging within his brain. The vast theatre was an organ of publication; the political forum was an organ of publication. And on this twofold arena a torch was applied to that inflammable gas which exhaled spontaneously from so excitable a mind as the mind of the Athenian.

109. Need we wonder, then, at the torrent-like determination with which Athenian literature, from the era 444 B.C. to the era 333 B.C., ran headlong into one or other channel, — the scenical poetry or the eloquence of the hustings? For an Athenian in search of popular applause or of sympathy there was no other avenue to either; unless, indeed, in the character of an artist, or of a leading soldier: but too often, in this latter class, it happened that mercenary foreigners had a preference. And thus it was that, during that period when the popular cast of government throughout Greece awakened patriotic emulation, scarcely anything is heard of in literature (allowing for the succession to philosophic chairs, which made it their pride to be private and exclusive) except dramatic poetry on the one hand, comic or tragic, and political oratory on the other.

110. As to this last avenue to the public ear, how it was abused, in what excess it became the nuisance and capital scourge of Athens, there needs only the testimony of all contemporary men who happened to stand aloof from that profession, or all subsequent men even of that very profession who were not blinded by some corresponding interest in some similar system of delusion. Euripides and Aristophanes, contemporary with the earliest practitioners of name and power on that stage of jugglers, are overrun with expressions of horror for these public pests. "You have

every qualification," says Aristophanes<sup>1</sup> to an aspirant, "that could be wished for a public orator: *φωνη μιαρα* — a voice like seven devils; *κακος γεγονας* — you are by nature a scamp; *ἀγοραιοσ εἰ* — you are up to snuff in the business of the forum." From Euripides might be gathered a small volume, relying merely upon so much of his works as yet survives, in illustration of the horror which possessed him for this gang of public misleaders: —

Τουτ' εἶσθ' ὁ θνητων εὐ πολεις οἰκουμενας  
 Δομους τ' ἀπολλυτ' — οἱ καλοι λιαν λογοι.<sup>2</sup>

111. "This is what overthrows cities admirably organised, and the households of men,—your superfine harangues." Cicero, full four centuries later, looking back to this very period from Pericles to Alexander, friendly as he was by the *esprit de corps* to the order of orators, and professionally biassed to uphold the civil uses of eloquence, yet, as an honest man, cannot deny that it was this gift of oratory, hideously abused, which led to the overthrow of Athens and the ruin of Grecian liberty: "Illa vetus Græcia, quæ quondam opibus, imperio, gloria floruit, hoc uno malo concidit, — *libertate immoderata ac licentia concionum.*" Quintilian, standing on the very same ground of professional prejudice, all in favor of public orators, yet is forced into the same sorrowful confession. In one of the Declamations<sup>3</sup> ascribed to him he says, "Civitatum status scimus ab oratoribus esse conversos"; and in illustration he adds the example of Athens: "sive illam Atheniensium civitatem (quandam late principem) intueri placeat, accisas ejus vires animadvertemus *vicio concionantium.*" Root and branch, Athens was laid prostrate by her wicked Radical orators; for Radical, in the elliptic phrase of modern politics, they were almost

<sup>1</sup> 'Knights,' l. 218.

<sup>2</sup> 'Hippolytus,' ll. 486, 487.

<sup>3</sup> cclxviii.

to a man; and in this feature above all others (a feature often scornfully exposed by Euripides) those technically known as οἱ λεγοντες, the speaking men, and as οἱ δημαγωγοί,<sup>1</sup> the misleaders of the mob, offer a most suitable ancestry for the modern leaders of Radicalism,—that with their base, fawning flatteries of the people they mixed up the venom of vipers against their opponents and against the aristocracy of the land.

Ἐπογλυκαινειν ῥηματιοις μαγειρικοις —

“subtly to wheedle the people with honeyed words dressed to its palate”: this had been the ironical advice of the scoffing Aristophanes.<sup>2</sup> That practice made the mob orator contemptible to manly tastes, rather than hateful. But the sacrifice of independence — the “pride which licks the dust” — is the readiest training for all uncharitableness and falsehood towards those who seem either rivals for the same base purposes, or open antagonists for nobler. And, accordingly, it is remarked by Euripides that these pestilent abusers of the popular confidence would bring a mischief upon Athens before they had finished, equally by their sycophancies to the mob and by their libels of foreign princes. Hundreds of years afterwards, a Greek writer, upon reviewing this most interesting period of one hundred and eleven years, from Pericles to Alexander, sums up and repeats the opinion of Euripides in this general representa-

<sup>1</sup> With respect to the word “demagogues,” as a technical designation for the political orators and partisans at Athens (otherwise called οἱ προστάται, those who headed any movement), it is singular that so accurate a Greek scholar as Henry Stephens should have supposed *linguas promptas ad plebem concitandum* (an expression of Livy’s) *potius των δημαγωγων fuisse quam των ῥητορων*; as if the demagogues were a separate class from the popular orators. But, says Valckenaer, the relation is soon stated: not all the Athenian orators were demagogues, but all the demagogues were in fact, and technically were called, orators. — DE Q.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Knights,’ l. 216. The first word should be ὑπογλυκαινων.

tive portrait of Attic oratory, with respect to which we wish to ask, Can any better delineation be given of a Chartist, or generically of a modern Jacobin?—‘Ο δημαγωγος κακοδιδασκαλει τους πολλους, λεγων τα κεχαρισμενα — “The mob-leader dupes the multitude with false doctrines, whilst delivering things soothing to their credulous vanity.” This is one half of his office,—sycophancy to the immediate purseholders, and poison to the sources of truth; the other half is expressed with the same spirit of prophecy as regards the British future, και διαβολαις αυτους εξαλλοτριου προς τους αριστους,—“and by lying calumnies he utterly alienates them in relation to their own native aristocracy.”

112. Now this was a base pursuit, though somewhat relieved by the closing example of Demosthenes, who, amidst much frailty, had a generous nature; and he showed it chiefly by his death, and in his lifetime, to use Milton’s words,<sup>1</sup> by uttering many times “odious truth,” which, with noble courage, he compelled the mob to hear. But one man could not redeem a national dishonour. It *was* such, and such it was felt to be. Men, therefore, of elevated natures, and men of gentle pacific natures, equally revolted from a trade of lies, as regarded the audience, and of strife, as regarded the competitors. There remained the one other pursuit of scenical poetry; and it hardly needs to be said what crowding there was amongst all the energetic minds of Athens into one or other of these pursuits: the one for the unworldly and idealising, the other for the coarsely ambitious. These, therefore, became the two *quasi* professions of Athens, and at the same time, in a sense more exclusive than can now be true of *our* professions, became the sole means of publication for truth of any class, and a publication by many degrees more certain, more extensive, and more immediate, than ours by the press.

113. The Athenian theatre published an edition of thirty

<sup>1</sup> P. L., XI. l. 704.

thousand<sup>1</sup> copies in one day, enabling, in effect, every male citizen capable of attending, from the age of twenty to sixty, together with many thousands of domiciled aliens, to read the drama, with the fullest understanding of its sense and poetic force that could be effected by natural powers of voice and action, combined with all possible auxiliaries of art, of music, of pantomimic dancing, and the whole carried home to the heart by visible and audible sympathy in excess. This, but in a very inferior form as regarded the adjuncts of art, and the scale of the theatre, and the *mise en scène*, was precisely the advantage of Charles I. for appreciating Shakspeare.

114. It was a standing reproach of the Puritans, adopted even by Milton,<sup>2</sup> a leaden shaft feathered and made buoyant by *his* wit, that the King had adopted that stage poet as the companion of his closet retirements. So it would have been a pity if these malignant persecutors of the royal solitude should have been liars as well as fanatics. Doubtless, even when king, and in his afflictions, this storm-vexed man did read Shakspeare. But that was not the original way in which he acquired his acquaintance with the poet. A Prince of Wales, what between public claims and social claims, finds little time for reading after the period of childhood,—that is, at any period when he can comprehend a great poet. And it was as Prince of Wales that Charles prosecuted his studies of Shakspeare. He saw continually at Whitehall, personated by the best actors of the time, illustrated by the stage management, and assisted by the mechanic displays of Inigo Jones, all the principal dramas of Shakspeare actually performed. That was publication with an Athenian advantage. A thousand copies of a book may be brought into public libraries, and not one of

<sup>1</sup> The number given in Plato's 'Symposium.' According to a recent estimate, the number of seats in the theatre of Dionysus at Athens was 27,500. See *Zeitsch. f. bild. Kunst.* XIII. 202.

<sup>2</sup> 'Eikonoklastes,' chap. I.

them opened. But the three thousand copies of a play which Drury Lane used to publish in one night were in the most literal sense as well as in spirit read,—properly punctuated by the speakers, made intelligible by voice and action endowed with life and emphasis: in short, on each successive performance, a very large edition of a fine tragedy was published in the most impressive sense of publication,—not merely with accuracy, but with a mimic reality that forbade all forgetting, and was liable to no inattention.

115. Now, if Drury Lane published a drama for Shakspeare by three thousand copies in one night, the Athenian theatre published ten times that amount for Sophocles. And this mode of publication in Athens, not co-operating (as in modern times) with other modes, but standing out in solitary conspicuous relief, gave an artificial bounty upon that one mode of poetic composition, as the hustings did upon one mode of prose composition. And those two modes, being thus cultivated to the utter exclusion of others which did not benefit by that bounty of publication, gave an unnatural bias to the national style, determined in effect upon too narrow a scale the operative ideal of composition, and finally made the dramatic artist and the mob orator the two sole intellectual professions for Athens. Hence came a great limitation of style in practice; and hence, secondly, for reasons connected with these two modes of composition, a general neglect of style as a didactic theory.