The Development of English Prose with Special Reference to Ornamentation

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English prose is an ocean current. In its beginnings, it was small and insignificant; none of the myriad life that moved therein dreamed of the importance which attached to it or of the noble flood it was to become. Gradually it broadened and deepened, sweeping far away from its broken source to encircle distant islands and to warm them into blooming fertility; until at length all eyes have turned from the wide expanse of passive ocean and centered upon this massive and tumultuous stream. He who embarks upon the study of this prose is in danger of being so carried along by its power that he pays small heed to the source whence it came, to the difficult and affluent currents, or even to the grand changes of direction.

The study of literature is usually carried on with but a single object, to discover what has been written. Perhaps it is because this is the first thing to be done, the essential foundation for all knowledge, that its importance has been so highly magnified. It is necessary before progress can be made to acquaint oneself with all that has been accomplished in the chosen field; it is necessary to place oneself as nearly as possible in line with the foremost investigators.
Before advancing into the future. It is not enough merely to understand present facts and conditions. It is necessary to discover how the conditions arose and in what manner the facts may be correlated. True in the study of English prose, the very beginnings are the most important; and it is very doubtful if a correct appreciation of English literature can be obtained without a knowledge not only of its beginnings but also of the earliest development of any literature.

But a higher object lies behind the mere study of the has-been. It is to discover our destination. If certain tendencies have consistently shown themselves in the past, it may be assumed they will continue to appear. If the stream is now at flood moving with tremendous rapidity, one may safely assert that many leagues are yet to be traversed before the momentum can die away. Is this broad current of English prose to be swallowed up in some mighty Waelstrom, or is it to find a wider region and be absorbed in a broad ocean of the future?

Study must be carried on from two points of view. If possible the relation of each individual to his own time must be discovered, and next his work compared with that of his contemporaries. Then this
is done but half is done. Each man or some representative man should be compared with the exponent of each other period, the points of likeness and of difference marked, and the amount and direction of change carefully noticed.

As the woodman in clearing a forest first removes the underbrush, so is it necessary to remove the merely verbal differences between respective epochs. Such expressions as "into" for "to," verb constructions in "th" and "st," and the use of the auxiliary "do" for emphasis are to be quite ignored in tracing the course of prose. They are mere nameless discarded along with the jerking and the gaiter. To be sure they were good English and entitled to recognition; but since their disease has been brought about rather by good taste than by natural development, they mark no essential tendencies.

Critics of a past age have a two-fold task. First, to discover the defects and the excellencies—the peculiarities—of each individual writer and how he was separated by his personality from the current of the period; and second, to expose and examine the characteristics of the age, the fundamental tendencies common to all writers. Men of talent living contemporaneously differ in ability and in cast of thought. They have tricks
of speech and narrow prejudices; but they
grow in a common ground. By measuring these
men, comparing one with another and
pruning off personal peculiarities, we may
arrive at some idea of the soil from which
they sprang.

It is very probable that the tone of
an epoch can better be ascertained through the
study of inferior writers than through the
study of masters. The humbler foliage clings
close to earth; the giant Shakespearian oak
lifts its top so far above its brothers that
I may look at once through all the path-
ways of the past and all the endless vistas
of the future. An error denoting superficial
observation is to refer the making of an
epoch to the great men who lived therein.
It is equally as erroneous to give to the
epoch all the credit of producing the
great men. It is the fortuitous conjunction
of favorable circumstances and vast intellects
that produce Cæsars and Cæsareans. Students
are peculiarly prone to lose sight of individual,
to note only philosophic tendencies, to conclude
that great men are produced by invariable
law and that epochs would have been the
same without the genius. Without the epoch
there would have been no great man; without
the great man the epoch would have been
vastly different. But since the influence of
the genius upon his age is accurately reflected in the plodding writer, and since, too, humble mediocrity embodies the spirit of his age, directed of the blinding glory with which the genius surrounds it, a student can more clearly perceive basic tendencies in him than in men infinitely his superior. The earth is the same; but one may study a cloud far more easily than a mountain.

The natural course of prose development would seem to be the one taken by the earliest literatures. Later literatures would be more or less perfect copies of the old. If there were great writers in the ancient era, their example would naturally attract imitators. The influence then that should tend to make two literatures similar are, the natural order of succession, the prestige of great and accepted authors, and the innate dislike of mankind to innovations. The opposite tendencies, those producing differences in nature of work, are, changed habits and environment, difference in language and idiom, and the deep fear of equalling predecessors. It is appalling the gloom that a great man may cast upon posterity. If some one should attempt to rival him in the same field, he is called an imitator; if he opens a new territory, he is branded as a seeker for flashy notoriety. Each succeeding great man blocks the way in one more
direction, and in time we shall be surrounded, hummed in, tossed back from Dunyan to Homer and from Bacon to Aristotle.

The two tendencies of literature, toward the repetition of the old and toward the introduction of the new, may alternate in force. In English poetry they did alternate. Each was victorious for a time and ruled the empire not to the exclusion but to the great subordination of its rival. In time a compromise has been arrived at, and each are recognized as component parts, as equal and perhaps hostile forces. The complete amalgamation of the two is hardly yet accomplished. In prose on the contrary the two forces have ever been nearly equal in power. Except for a disease in the time of Elizabeth where the classical grew rankly, the two have flourished and intertwined on common ground. Their union is now complete and final; they are one single plant, and its name is not Anglo-Saxon style nor Latin style, but simply English.

In Greece and Rome poetry preceded prose in its rise and developed steadily into better and better form. The brilliant course of Greek prose was cut short by the conquest of the country, but one may assume it would have taken the form its prototype of Rome actually took. Latin prose after years
of slow growth, suddenly blossomed into full
vigor and beauty in the time of Caesar, one
short generation before Latin poetry reached its
height. The Latin of Cicero, Livy, Sallust, and
above all of Caesar himself was never after
equalled by Roman authors in beauty and
simplicity. In its simplicity lay its beauty.
Figures were in abundance, but they served
to illustrate the context, not by their conceits
to ornament the diction.

After this generation had passed away,
however, there arose a class of writers whose
first object was to please, to surprise, to dazzle
the reader by the magnificence of their language.
What they said was of less moment than how
they said it. Long arrays of sentences un-
balanced, strange and complex verbal forms,
and galleries of images distorted and unnatu-
ral—these were the tricks that the Romans
of the silver age relied upon to attract
notoriety. This Silver Latin the over ornamental,
descended into the Spanish and thence centuries
later into the English where it well-nigh rev-
olutionized the prose of that country.

Without ornament, however, literature is
nothing, only catalogues and dictionaries are
produced. By ornament is not meant fanci-
ful turns of expression, not always imagery.
The simplest and most literal manner of
saying a thing may be the most effective
method of adorning it. By ornamentation is meant any device which lends to a production an attraction not inherent in the subject.

Since this is usually accomplished by means of imagery, it may be well to define psychologically, if possible, the relation of figures to plain statement. Take, for instance, a forcible figure from Rome Fuller, "Some grounds .... frowned with thorns." Here are plainly four separate centres of intelligence here, four concepts, to speak technically—grounds, thorns, frown, and lastly personality, or life, call it what you will. The plain statement is a linking together of these two concepts between which a relation is to be pointed out, in this case, "Some grounds were thorny." But this is done not by passing directly from one to another, but by first introducing and interposing a third concept, frown. "Some grounds frowned", and here the essence of the figures comes in. The concept "frown" has in the mind hitherto been associated with a fourth concept, that of personality, the displeased human face probably. When the concept "frown" is excited, the fourth concept is immediately awakened. It at once supersedes the first concept, ground, in importance, because the unexpectedness of its appearance invests it with intense interest.
and the sentence is concluded, "with thons", while the fourth concept occupies the seat of honor. By this means a distinct relation is established between the four concepts, only three of which are directly stated, the fourth, excited by sympathy, or in simpler language, by the imagination, being the most important.

But it may be objected that if the statement had been, "Some grounds were made disagreeable by thoms as the human face is by frownos," it would still be figurative. It is true. The four concepts are present as formerly, but the process of unification between "thoms" and "frownos" and between "grounds" and "personality" is assisted by a deliberate push. The result is that the unification is completed with ease, each of the four concepts losing greatly in force and distinctness. The connection is nevertheless unusual and unexpected, and the difference, therefore, in the two methods of expressing the thought is not essential. A figure, then, is the establishment of a true connection between concepts not habitually associated.

Certain figures are natural; others appear even to the most unobservant reader as strained or distorted. What is the difference, psychologically, between the strained figure and the natural? Once more let us take an example. Robert Greene, in speaking of a
jealous man at a feast, says, "True sate poor Menaphon keeping his teeth guards of his stomach." The concepts here are no less than seven: Menaphon; teeth, literally; teeth, signifying will; guard, meaning to assist; guard, meaning to repress; stomach, literally; stomach, as a symbol of anger. The two literal connections made are between teeth and stomach and between will and anger. These two sets of concepts are not usually associated in the mind, and no stepping stone is provided by which we may pass from one to the other. Therefore, we do not readily grasp the meaning. We must stop, make a conscious effort, remember that the stomach was once held to be the seat of anger, and by this bridge arrive at the full meaning of the figure. The strain is not in forcing a connection of remote concepts, but in establishing communion among concepts two or more of which are not directly suggested. To this class belong all so-called far-fetched figures, puns, conceits, and sharp turns of expression.

Art may clothe this deformity in such a manner that it passes almost unnoticed.

"And Antony,

Enthron'd in the market place, did sit alone,

Wailing to the air; which, but for vacancy,

Had gone to gape on Cleopatra too,

And made a gap in nature."
In this the use of the literal and the sudden personification of it (air) arouses two concepts with but one direct statement; others, the form, the calmness of Air, its conception of human beauty, all follow without direct statement, and the reader is obliged to leap rather than step from one concept to another. Yet, though the skill of the writer, the strain in the figure is scarcely noticeable; perhaps no one, however, can escape a shiver at its extravagance.

Extravagance is the most common of the weapons used by early writers to ornament their diction. Not that they meant their treatment to be extravagant, but that this was the error into which they most readily fell. Behind extravagance lies a fundamental principle of the human mind about which there is no reasoning the why or the wherefore, that only so much is pleasing as enables the full essence to be apprehended. A little of almost anything, let it affect what faculty it may, is pleasing. Even the foulest odor ceases to be offensive when reduced to minute particles. The mind revolts at tracing out in detail a process already understood. Any mode of expression, then, which imparts directly what the understanding has beyond doubt anticipated is extravagant. It is not verbosity, for no more words may have been employed than were necessary to express the idea, the idea itself was superfluous.
As an illustration, take the following extract from Bacon's essay on "The true greatness of a State." He has undertaken to prove that wealth is a benefit to the state under certain conditions, the first of which is, that it be joined to warlike instincts. Says he,

"It is a thing that cannot be denied, that in equality of valour the better purses is an advantage. For like as in wrestling between man and man, if there be a great overmatch in strength, it is to little purpose though one have the better breath; — already few can have failed to grasp his full meaning. At this point we all say, 'that is apt figure!' If Bacon had stopped, his figure would have been perfect and in the modern style. But he goes on.

"But if the strength be near equal, then he that is short winded will, if the wager consists of many falls, in the end have the worst; — no human being of average intellect can now be in the least doubt of the entire idea. It is as plain as sunlight. Anything farther is tautology; it is tedious, it is uncomely in the highest degree to read farther upon this same idea, the utmost application of which has been fully seen.

"So it is in the war, if it be a match between a valiant people and a cowardly, the advantage of treasure will not serve; but if they be near in valour, then the better
moneyed state will be the better able to continue the
war, and so in the end prevail."

And now the impatient mind has been for
some time thinking, "Well, when he is through
chewing this mixture, I hope he will swallow it
and give us something else." This illustrates the
radical difference between early and modern
figures; the former applies the figures in full,
thus holding the mind into a clockwork world;
the latter leaves out all unessential in the
figure itself and all application of it, thereby
spurring the mind into daring activity.

But the extravagance in the passage quoted
from Shakespeare is wholly different; it consists
in the corroboration of ideas one of which is unworthy the other. The air is one of the greatest
manifestations of nature, and to think of it
as interested in the beauty of a woman
is repugnant to common sense. Not only may
figures thus be extravagant, but they may be
so even when they are appropriate and when
a new idea is added with each phrase if
they be carried so far that the mind is
surfeited. This also rests upon the principle
that all beyond a bare sufficiency is repulsive.
It is true when one figure is used with a
number of applications, or when a number
of figures are employed to enforce the same
idea. As illustration of both forms I
quote from Goethe.
"A thief is a shrewd member in a commonwealth, he empties our bags by force, these (players) & ransack our purses by permission; he spoils us secretly, these rifle us openly; he gets the upper hand by blows, these by merry jests; he sucks our blood, these our manners; he wounds our body, these our soul; ... he suffereth for his offences, these stand without punishment under our noses."

"He perceive not that trouble and toil draw us to life, ease and idleness bring destruction; that sorrow and anguish are virtuous books, pleasure and sport the devil's huts; that honest recreation quickeneth the spirits, and play is venemous arrows to the mind; that hunters deceive most when seeming to walk for their delight, they craftily fetch the deer about; that players counterfeiting a show to make us merry, shoot their nets to work our misery; that when comedy comes upon the stage, Cupid sets up a spring for woodcocks, which are entangled ere they despy the line, and caught before they mistrust the snare."

Another element of unpleasantness is extremely prominent in the extract just quoted. It is the balanced structure, balance of sentence, phrase, and even word. Perhaps there are no other forms of expression which lend such grace and effectiveness to diction as the balanced and the periodic when judiciously used, and no other forms are so liable to injudicious use.
What can be more charming than this sentence of B. N. [Translator of Herodotus] describing the effect upon Cyrus of the threats of his enemy?

"These words, with Cyrus, came in at one ear and went out at the other, lighter in value than the wind in weight." What more urbane than Macbeth's insinuous speech?

"Here had we now our country's honor roof'd,
Here the graced presence of our Banquo present;
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
Than pity for mischief?"

Alliteration is another of the extravagances of ornament. It is a legitimate descendant of Anglo-Saxon tendencies, and it is far less frequently employed than might be expected. To show to what ends it was yet carried sometimes, this extract is inserted.

"Our wrestling at arms is turned to yelling in ladies' laps; our courage to cowardice; our running to riot; our bowls into bolles, (bowle, for playing); and our darts to dishes.

Having defined terms, let us pass to a study of the periods of English prose, their defects, their virtues, and their peculiarities. And first let the statement be made that any separation into periods will be as arbitrary as the sub-division of species of insects. English prose is an unbroken cable around which much more may have gathered, and from which many strands may hang; but its continuity is perfect. One may touch a
certain point and say, "This prose is vastly different from that of a century before," but he will be unable to point out the line of demarcation. For convenience' sake, let the prose be divided into five periods: 1. From the earliest to and through the Elizabethan age; 2. From that time until the middle of the 17th century; 3. From then until the close of the century; 4. Eighteenth century prose; 5. Nineteenth century prose, early and late.

The earliest attempts at literature in English were without the help of Latin models. But the conquest of England stopped its development. When the language, after the anarchy of the next three centuries, once more settled into something like quiet, Latin words and idioms had become so much a part of the vernacular that they never lost their force. English became ever ready from that time until this to seize and appropriate a work of Latin origin; even the mere sound of the classic tongue was able to move the hearts of all cultured Englishmen. The ruggedness of spoken English was contrasted unfavorably with the delicate melody of the Sapphic meter or the noble swing of the stately hexameter. It remained for future to show that English was (equally) as beautiful as it was powerful. But those who now sneer at early English authors for writing in Latin should remember that greater beauty in English was made
possible only through their appreciation of the classics and their introduction of the introduction through their influence of Latin. What an advantage has English over all other tongues living or dead on account of its two-fold origin!

Early English prose, then, should show traces of Latin influence. But as the best Latin authors alone were studied by the cultured of England, we should expect the virtues of that language and not the vices, or at least in a less degree, to be the object of imitation.

This is actually the case. Not that Latin is always imitated, but that where it is imitated its virtues alone are the model. The distinctively Latin element is ever present, for the authors were classical students rather than English. They wrote in the vernacular for the avowed purpose of reaching a particular class of people; all that they wished to say well is hoped to make literature of the said in Latin. Their sentences were long and involved, their parts connected by childlike "ands" and "buts" and "soon", stuffed with all the associations any words might call up, sometimes balanced but not too often, seldom musical and then having only the accidental and rugged rhythm that comes with deep feeling and vigorous thinking. Melody in a sentence as a thing to be sought for
in itself was unknown to them. Yet with all the length of the sentence, the thought is not obscured. By a different punctuation their productions, without changing the order of the words, may be rendered far less burdensome to the eye and more intelligible to the mind than much of the work of later writers. Why? The explanation lies in the fact that the men living in this early period were deep thinkers and put down their ideas, which in great minds are always clear, in homely words in the order used in conversation. They knew art only in Latin. They had not yet learned artifice. Therefore, while too many clauses enumerate the sentence, each clause in itself is clear and potent.

The English element consisted in the use of homely words in the proper sequence, in the employment of English rather than classical idioms, in a slight probably unconscious tendency toward alliteration, and in fact to almost all of what may be called ornamentation. The form corresponding to the Latin ablative absolute is nearly wanting, and the final battle cry of the verb, coming upon the field after all its friends are down, is seldom heard. It usually leaves the brink of the fight along with its kindred.

The ornamentation is not in this period self-conscious. Only such expressions are used as occur naturally to the writer. One can
scarcely imagine the early English author bit-
ing his quill and searching the ceiling for an appropriate simile. He is in a hurry, and if an idea does not present itself in a figurative form, it is set down with its bald-
ness unrelieved. For this reason these figures acquire a homely force that sometimes startles the person who half asleep is poring over their now uninteresting pages.

"But death," says Fabian, "that is to all persons equal, lastly took him in his divine dance."

"I beheld the pretty fish wondrouslly darting with their red vermilion fins, and their scalas like the bright silver."

"For fetched colours of strange antiquity," says Niles in a sentence of almost Shakespearean dignity. Farther on he says, "He that can catch an ink horn term by the tail, him they count to be a fine Englishman."

Simple and effective as these figures are, it cannot be denied that there may be found cumbersome and awkward, that the balanced sentence is occasionally allowed to run to seed, and that synonymous in the fashion of the law are often incongruously heaped up. Nevertheless, they are not Latinisms in the sense that similar phenomena of later periods are Latinisms. That is, they are not imitative of Latin forms. They are English forms whose creation was caused by the thorough classic training of the writer. So deeply had
they become imbued with Cicero and Horace, their mother tongue had taken on as by second nature some of the characteristics of the Latin. They did not go deliberately to work, for they would have thought it unworthy of the trouble, to make for the vernacular idiom corresponding to Latin forms. Such expressions as the following must be referred, then, not to conscious imitation of Latin but to habits of thinking induced by long study of the classics.

"And as, for you, we have surely just cause to lament you as brethren, and yet juster cause to rise against you as enemies, and most just cause to overthrow you as rebels:"

That condemn grace and thank we ought to give to the writers of history, who with their great labours, have done so much profit to the human life; they shew, open, manifest, and declare to the reader, by example of old antiquity, what we should inquire, desire, and follow; and also what we should eschew, avoid and utterly fly; for when we see, behold and read the ancient acts, feats, and deeds, how and with what labour, danger, and peril they were gestic and done. etc.

This balance and repetition was not yet studied, but one may easily see how from the English language was to rim to extremes. As the forms just given are forms foreign to English style, so the following are examples of idios, humor, or alliteration for the most part native in their origin.
"And some said that when Constantine was gotten away (from the stocks), I was fallen for anger in a wonderful rage. But surely, though I would not have suffered him to go, if it would have pleased him to have tarried still in the stocks, yet when he was neither so fickle for lack of meat but that he was strong enough to break the stocks, nor waken so lame of his legs with lying but that he was light enough to leap the walls, ... neither was I ... so angry with any man of mine that I spoke them any evil word for the matter more than to my porter that he should see the stocks mended, that the prisoner stole not in again. For never will I for my part be so unreasonable as to be angry with any man that saith if he can, when he findeth himself that he sitteth not at his ease."

"And thus were these two noble princes, both of most loyal blood, brought up in great wealth, likely long to live, reign, and rule in the realm, by traitorous tyranny taken, deprived of their estate, shortly shut up in prison, and finally slain and murdered."

These are the great phenomena of the period. Individuals may have been superior to them, may have contradicted in their works all the conclusions I have arrived at in this study; but the general course seems to have been as painted out. Burke may have had the "silver melody" of Dryden, Foxe may have been able to draw a graphic portrait, Latines may have used sentences remarkable
for their forceful brevity, Polinshed may have anticipated the future in his study of character rather than fact; yet for all this the tendency of the times was toward ruggedness, emptiness of outline, prolixity, and narrowness of view. Or rather the period was enveloped in this fog and striving somehow to emerge from it.

Only two of the efforts to accomplish that end amounted to anything in future time, and both are due to a new motive—the desire to make literature of the English language. It led in the first instance to refinements of sound, to extremes of alliteration, to quaint and monotonous balance, to strained and unnatural figures, in short to all the extravagances in expression which might be thought an improvement upon bare statement. It led in the second instance to a more legitimate melody, a rhythm that belonged to prose and not to verse, to careful attention to sentence structure upon English traditions, to increased prolixity and more logical connection of parts, and to disregard, finally, of Latin example.

As the former manifestation is the more prominent at first and seemed then to be the main channel of the divided current, it demanded our first attention. John Lyly was the man who made the style popular, and from a character of his creation it takes its name. But Lyly did not invent the style. It was gradually growing in English before his time, and he only seized a golden opportunity. If his "Euphues"
had never been published, Euphues probably would still have had its day; but on the other hand, common sense might have won the victory and Euphues been but a slight malaria instead of a severe Typhoid.

Lyly obtained his ideas from the Spanish literature which had, in turn, inherited them from the Silver Latin, and now it found the second stage in the imitation of a master, where the vice not the virtue are the model. Classical learning had spread, and to Caesar and Horace and Livy were added Martial, Statius, Lucan, and Columella. These as well as the Spanish were imitated, and the result was an English style as painful to read as it is foreign to native modes of thought.

Euphues consisted in a neat and continued alliteration, in a delicate rhythm each beat of which was repeated at least once, in figures whose selection was determined not by aptness but by supposed elegance, selected largely from objects in natural history, and in unflawing and accurate balance of one part against another. The balanced structure is the most prominent feature. It eclipsed Elizabethan common sense and cast a deep shadow over the prose literature of the day. The balance extended to every part forever minute in the sentence, and, combined with the rhythmical element, formed a mixture which does very well in small doses but which in continued treatment never fails to
occasion nausea. The figures were no longer spontaneous. Nature was ransacked for everything that might be twisted into a simile, and the more the searcher found the better he was pleased. He put them all in, and all the ideas became obscure in the swarm of insects that fed upon it.

Examine the following in detail. "Ye, but," says Greene in Pandosto, "conscience is a worm (balance) that ever biteth but never ceaseth (balance of ever against never and biteth against ceaseth): that which is rubbed with the stone Galactitic will never be hot (fictitious figure); flesh dipped in the sea Aegenn will never be sweet (another fictitious figure, balanced word for word against the first): the herb Figion being once bit with an asp, never grows (false figure): and conscience once stained with innocent blood, is always tied to a guilty remorse (innocent blood balanced against guilty remorse, the whole against the herb Figion, and with it against the first two measures)." This is by no means the worst specimen that could be found, but it is sufficient to illustrate the extravagance of Euphues. Ornamentation is used for its own dear sake, and ideas are subordinated.

But Euphues is not altogether bad. The constant study to say elegantly what was to be said could not but result sometimes in well turned phrases. Indeed, isolated specimens
except of the extreme type do not sound badly; their constant repetition of them is the distressing feature. For instance, this sentence from Gosson though rigidly Euphuistic and not at all a model of style, is yet rather pleasing than otherwise when separated from its context.

"If this were as well noted as ill seen, or as openly punished as secretly practiced, I have no doubt but the same would be scared to dry up the effect, and these pretty rabbits very cunningly ferreted from their burrows."

And in this from Greene, where deep feeling justifies rhythm, Euphuistic excesses rise into pathos.

"And shall they, sweet Babe, be committed to Fortune, when thou art already spited by fortune? Shall the seas be thy harbour, and the hard boat thy cradle? Shall thy tender mouth, instead of sweet kisses, be nipped with bitter storms? Shall thou have the whistling winds for thy lullaby, and the salt sea from instead of sweet milk?"

Lyly was the exponent, Rutterham the elucidator of verbal pyrotechnics. Besides these two, the invasion conquered completely a large number of the best English writers. Gosson, Lodge, Greene, Hayward surrendered unconditionally to the fashion. Bacon, Sydney, Shakespeare, Doeker, Donne, these and many others were half persuaded. Their prose work more than
smacks of artificiality. In some places it is without doubt Euphuistic; in other portions it is not. Few authors of the day did not sometimes yield to the spell even though they deplored (most) its absurdities. It was probably the most potent "fad" that ever convulsed the English language.

Strange to say, its influence upon later times was for the better. The force of the rhythm in particular cases was not lost upon a people who were seeking to make for their language a lasting literature. Their common sense was applied to Euphuism if fell, but it left behind the better part of it. The power of music in the language had been demonstrated, and English never sank again into the dry ash heap it once had been. A strength it always had had. Euphuism added to this a reserve power of melodic and sensitive expression to be used indeed only upon impassional themes, but in these cases wonderfully effective.

The second of the periods into which English prose has been divided has no well defined beginning or end. It shows a growth in common sense throughout the 17th century and a change in the line of rhythmical expression. The first sign of the period is the absence of the old childishness. The things of which they speak are no longer words to the writer, only to the audience they address. They have learned all that can be learned in classic Latin, and they
convey their knowledge as master, not as co-workers. The desire to write English had sucked in one by one not only the humbler men, but also the higher, poets, historians, theologians. Even the philosophers showed signs of a (snarling) regard for their native tongue. Gradually the old simplicity of structure gave place to an intricate and pedantic style, the lass in directness being more than compensated for in the added melody. The parts of the discourse were as closely united as the links in a coat of mail, and nothing was left out. Every thought was painfully elaborated, every figure was carefully chosen, wrought to perfection, and strained to its full power of application. Poetry was carried beyond the outermost limits of good sense, and one must work his way slowly through the briars before he can grasp the stock of the idea. Latin in the first part of the period was the sole model. Men sought, of deliberate purpose, to find in the vernacular equivalent forms for Cicero's polished sentences. Their motive, then, was different from that of their predecessors, but the results they obtained were often precisely similar.

The writers of the first part of this epoch were much less in favor than the Euphrasites, and their progress was made under discouragement. Even the greatest of them swerved slightly from his path under the attraction of the mighty Euphrasism, and modern times owe a deep debt to those few writers who preserved steadfastly the purity of the language. Their self-
Conscience was the most prominent characteristic. When English was first written, it was without any idea on the part of the writer that it would ever become literature. Hence it was unmeditated, lacking like conversation in continuity, having sudden inconsistencies in thought, and in spite of this possessing a sturdy vigor. When later students saw that even these rough beginnings were of considerable merit, they set to work to fix a standard for the vernacular. Ephesius, as has been stated, was one result of this; it seeking by a direct evolution to make of English a polished language. But the more cool headed, realizing that only slow growth results in permanent progress, began to lop off one by one the imperfections of their predecessors. This is the process that has been going on ever since.

When Ephesius had run its course, it united once more with the main current and added thence in forming modern prose. Ephesius did not die as suddenly as it sprang up; it wasted away insensibly, and traces of it could long afterward be detected. The process of decay at first was hardly noticeable. Overbury says, "He offered courtesy, to show them, rather than himself, humble." Lyly would have said "to show them humble, rather than himself meek." Later on extravagance in form began to wear away before extravagance in meaning. Says Ar-gehart: "That generous and worthy knight, the author's father, having been unparalleledly
wronged (a Latin ablative absolute) by false wicked
and corrupt men, himself being of all men
living the purest, most honest and most honest
in his dealings....

By the time of Halvinus writings, 1653, Euphues was a far less control. It had
sunk to so subordinate a place that it no
longer troubled the scholar, but the tendency
was not yet obliterated. It exerted a strong
influence upon the later prose of the 17th century,
increasing and making regular its melody.
Whenever deep feeling appeared, new in theology
which had always been but little under the
spell of Euphues, the balanced sentence and
the subtle alliteration was called into service
to render the passion effective.

It has just been stated that in theology
Euphues was least apparent to be found.
This, of course, is because sermons were composed
primarily to be spoken, and in such the
absurdities of Euphues are most apparent.
The tendency toward minute application and
amplification is naturally most prominent here.
Vales is not content with saying that truth
is more ancient than error, for error is
nothing but deviation and swerving from the
truth; he goes on to say, “there is no truth there;
first, there could be no error, since there could
be no swerving from that which is not.”

Vales, however, is hardly a representative
theologian of that age. He published nothing,
and was not ambitious of becoming a power in literature. Hall or Chillingworth are more characteristic. Their long unedited and uninteresting sermons, their letters and often powerful controversial papers, and their patience and faith in a position once taken up, are qualities pertaining to the age. They differ from Latimer and earlier divines in their want of fiery vigor, of the rugged and often vulgar idiom, and in their power to polish and courteous phrases, over logical sequence and subtle melody.

"E'en Jeremy Taylor, the greatest of them, was author of no such stinging sentences as these. "Then, say I, if thou wilt not make restitution, thou shalt go to the devil for it. Now choose thee either restitution, or else endless damnation.... Alack, alack; make restitution; for God's sake make restitution; ye will cough in hell else, that all the devils there will laugh at your coughing. There is no remedy but restitution open or secret; or else hell. " He delights rather in such expressions as these."... And a wise man in the variety of chances, like the nape or center of a wheel in the midst of all the circumvolutions and changes of posture without violence or change, save that it turns gently in compliance with its changed parts, and is indifferent which part is up and which is down." "It may be he went yesterday to a wedding, merry and bright,
and then he felt his sentence, that he must return home and die; nor feared that then the angel was to strike his stroke, till his knees kissed the earth, and his head trembled with the weight of the rod which God put into the hand of an exterminating angel.

In history, analysis of character gradually took the place of bare statement of fact. The study of motives and causes that resulted in events was yet almost unknown, but Clarendon was a master in the analysis of the persons of whom he spoke. The closer introspection of the age produced a free thinking Hobbes and a broad minded Cudworth; but no philosophy can explain the appearance in this period of an impassioned dreamer like Drummond. Even Sir Thomas Browne seems the product not of his own but of a later age. And when L'Estrange, the first journalist, is reached the transition, or rather the development into the third period is well advanced.

And yet what is this third period and all succeeding periods but a continuation of the same tendencies? It is only that in each one, a sufficient progress has been made to warrant a separate treatment. Yet in this period an undercurrent may possibly be perceived that might have proved disastrous to literature. It is a scattering, a divergence of ideals, not a divergence due to dissimilar individual tastes, but due to a lack of a definite aim or of a fixed authority which might determine what was and
what was not worthy. Perhaps the cause lies in
the fact that education was as yet confined to
classic principles. Locke said, "If any one
among us have a facility or purity more than
ordinary in his mother tongue, it is owing to
chance, or his genius, or anything, rather than
to his education, or any care of his teacher.

Left time to grope blindly about, the authors
in the previous period showed strong individual
distinctions, in this period, gave indications of
parting company altogether. What could be more
widely separated than the styles of Dryden, of
Temple, and of Algernon Sydney; or of Ryce
and John Bunyan? They seem hardly to
have belonged to the same race.

Yet the danger was concealed, and later
on, when Swift and Addison appeared, a new
danger was impending. It was that the
language might lose its life in its struggle
to be regular. To be sure there is no vigor
like Swift's and no grace superior to Addison's;
but when these men were gone, if their prin-
ciples should prevail without the infusion of
their personality, English prose would be a
level but barren plain.

As it was, ornamentation sank into the
one idea, simplicity. Balanced sentence, allit-
eration, extravagance, well nigh disappeared,
even figures grew scarce. It seemed that the
language was approaching a desert. Before wrote
page after page where not a flower bloomed
It was vigorous certainly. "Justice is always violence to the party offending." But this charm was in the case of the journey, not in the beauty of the scenery. Of course this scarcity of figures lent to their, when they did come, an added significance. And it must be admitted that these figures were always appropriate, straight-forward, and under wise restraint.

"Show the muses of their passion," says Pyner.

"I found myself as on a miry bog that short if I did but sit," Byngaw.

"She [Beaut.]," says Balfe, "may be kept under and suppressed, but her dignity still remains with her even when she is in chains.... She has lived very reticent indeed, very, sometimes so buried, that only some few of the discerning parts of mankind could have a glimpse of her; with all that, she has stenzy is her; she knows not how to die, and from the darkest clouds that shade and cover her, she breaks from time to time with triumph for her friends, and terror to her enemies.

The old style ornamentation still lingered, but lingered in obscurity. Dryden, who stands as the first writer of true modern English prose, did not disdain the courtly balance. "In fine, let us allow, that he had as much fancy, as when he pleased he could write wit; but that he wanted so much judgement, as seldom to have written humour, or described a pleasant folly."
Algernon Sidney shows traces of the Latin. "As
the meanest piece of wood and stone, being
placed by a wise architect, conveys to the eye
beauty of the most glorious building."

But on the whole regularity made such
studies that it seemed all-powerful. A regulator
for regularity was needed, and in the fourth
period, the 18th century, this prophet rose.
His name was Johnson. Johnson's ability was
not so transcendent, but his personality was so
overpowering that he became the sole and final
authority in all matters pertaining to letters.
This was what the language required. The
languages were now avoided. The carelessness
and triviality of Pepys, the stiltedness of
Bunyan, the timidness of Temple were all
subordinated by his example as well as com-
mand to the profundity and rhythm of Dryden
or Tickton, and to the simplicity of Addison
and Swift. And yet this simplicity which
might result in baldness was not altogether
sanctioned. Johnson believed in regularity, and he
did perhaps more than any other man to
bring the language under due control, yet
a regularity that tended toward desolation he
condemned. He even sought to infuse a
life and color into English by going back
to Euphuism. Was it John Lyly in 1590
who said these things?—

"Without good humour, learning and
bravery can only confer that superiority which
swells the heart of the lion in the desert, where he roars without reply, and ravages without resistance.

"I have a wife whose beauty first subdued me, and whose wit confirmed her conquest, but whose beauty now serves no other purpose than to entitle her to tyranny, and whose wit is only used to justify perverseness."

"Whoever thinks it necessary to regulate his conversation by antiquated rules, will be rather despised for his futility than caressed for his politeness."

"These paradoxes, therefore, have more of genius but less of truth; they often please but they never convince."

This is Samuel Johnson writing in 1751. But he did not carry the form to a dangerous extent, his use of it was judicious and beneficial, and he interwove it with different forms, sentences of remarkable brevity and force, sentences too of elephantine length and weight, by which he is chiefly remembered, sentences of the python's sinuosity, and sentences of flushed and honest dignity. By thus gathering and attaching to his single person all the flying strands of English style he pointed to, even if he failed to embody, a fixed ideal for all English writers.

Johnson was so clearly the 18th century that it is difficult to treat of anyone but him. Yet he, with almost all his contemporaries
with in prose and poetry, lacked one thing, a heart. Gibbon, Berkeley, Robertson, Hume, flowed grandly on with nothing to break the continuity of their perfect art. Adam Smith and Bentham and Chesterfield are all great names in literature, but they were cold spectators of what they described, not participators therein. The great novelists necessarily put more of themselves into their work, and yet it was not a real personality. It was either, as with Richardson, what they would wish to be, or, as with Fielding and Smollett, only that portion which was in their opinion entertaining. But there was one great writer who felt all that he said and concealed none of his feelings. It was Burke. No other work of the century can show such depth of dignified pathos as is in Burke's reply to the Duke of Bedford. He is speaking of the death of his son.

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"Had it pleased God to continue to me the hopes of succession, I should have been, according to my mediocrity.... a sort of founder of a family.... But a Deposer whose power we are little able to resist, and whose wisdom it behoves us not at all to dispute, has ordained it in another manner, and (whatever my querulous weakness might suggest) a far better. The storm has gone over me; and I lie like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me.... There and
prostrate there, I must unfeignedly recognize the Divine justice, and in some degree submit to it.... I am alone. I have none to meet my enemies in the gate.... They who ought to have succeded me have gone before... I owe to the dearest relation (which ever must subsist in memory) that act of piety, which he would have performed to me; I owe it to him to show that he was not descended... from an unworthy parent."

"Pictureque as was Locke in the previous period and as were Reynolds and Burke in this, the tenuity in ornamentation was still downward. If the great names be omitted, among the rest few genuine figurative expressions are to be found, I venture, than in any series of writers in any other age whatsoever. Even in the greater writers, figures are by no means abundant, but when they do appear, they are perfect."


"Controversy," says Congreve Middleton, "to truth is like a gentle wind to trees; it shakes the head but fastens the root."

Toward the close of the century a feeling of impatience toward all restraint, especially the classical, grew up. In poetry the movement was extremely strong because there the bight of rules is most deadly and its most irksome. But in prose, instead
of overthrowing the laws so long established, the new element merely blew into the withered nostrils the breath of life. The old soil, re-
fertilized, sent forth once more its wonderful vegetation in all its old luxuriance. This period, then, was not so much a development as it was a revivification. The old orniments were brought out and reburmeded, but they were worn with a prudence and a good
taste entirely foreign to their former wearers. As a result, the earlier portion of the 19th century can show literary productions to be compared only with the work of the Elagabalae. The two epochs are closely related in spirit, so closely that their branches may be said to interlace across the level roadway between; but the consequenees of the earlier period is the result of ignorance of restraint rather than, as in the poetry of the later period, of defiance of it.

Joseph D'Israeli was among the first to censure the old homage to classical. With fine contempt he remarked that Dennis, before he ventured to be placed, was compelled to consult Aristotle, but it was ever Aristotle explained by Dennis. Wordsworth in poetry principally and Coleridge for the most part in prose explained and exemplified the new movement. The impulse was found outside of England, theory in Germany, practice in France; but the country showed a literary development all its own. Poesy became figurative and
romantic in the highest degree, yet it remained regular. The old framework was used, but it was filled in with multitudinous forms, with beauty with pathos with humor, with all the various emotions that vibrate in a quick and earnest people. Thereby effects were produced such as the old writers had never dreamed of. Hood, Scott, Jane Austen, De Quincey, Coleridge, all blazed and shone in a glory that put completely in darkness all but a few of their predecessors.

The heart, the life, the power of the writer to put himself in his work, these are the essentials of the early 19th century. "The mind that has fellow but a single lay," says Addison, from the arctic circ of his heart, "sprouts upon follies that are only to be killed by a constant and assiduous culture." But Scott says, "O, what a tangled web we weave, When first we practice to deceive!"

The first quarter of the century was a period of revolution, but at length the rational desire for law and order gained the upper hand, and the early principles were combined, in such men as Tennyson, with a smoothness and melody never before reached. prose shared in the tendency toward delicacy, and Matthew Arnold, for instance, showed a grace and ease and perhaps a tactlessness peculiar to the present century. A few men, as Ruskin, were similar in force to the old brutality of De Quincey, others, as Lowell,
returned to the extreme figurative style of Eliza-
deth's age, but without either the excesses of the
Euphuists or the pedantry of their rivals.

Whether, then, are we tending? We have
seen the language arise, avoid unlettered daw-
gers, develop its every side, until at length
it seems little can be added to the exquisite
manner of expressing thought of which we
have had so many examples. The literature
of to-day greatly exceeds in quantity if not
in quality that of any other age. The impulse
is undiminished. Thus it was immediately
preceding the Elizabethan age. But this also
it was in Greece after the final literary
outburst. Are we to have a third great period,
or is our empire over? Are two ages of genius
and two only vouchsafed to each people?
The answer is to be sought for not in the language
itself, but in the force moving among the
masses.

In Greece, after her second glory, develop-
ment had ceased. The people were apathetic,
indifferent, the subordinate although the teachers
of Rome. In Elizabeth's time, England was
just beginning to take its place among the
great nations of the globe. The French Revo-
lution awakened the legions of liberty and
thus called forth the Romantic era. What
have we now? In all the five thousand
years of authentic history, there has never been
so great a change in the customs, conveniences,
industries, and daily life of the people as there has been in the last century. The industrial development is still going on, and a great literature demands that the moving forces be behind not before it. Then there is a halt, as a halt there must be then the fires of genius will blaze throughout the land; then poetry will spring up surpassing that of the Chaldean age as much as our civilization surpasses theirs; then will prose be written, deeper, more earnest, more musical than any that has yet enlightened our planet. As the advance of all other ages is but an infant step to the dizzying sweep of progress in the 19th century, so will the noble efforts of the past be to the noble literature of the future.

How fortunate we are to live beneath the sun of the 19th century! The equality of man before the law has been taught. In preach the equality of all mankind, not simply of man. In preach of right to equal opportunities, we demand reward on the basis of effort, not of attainment, we ask the abolition instead of the punishment of crime, and we hope that the whole shall extend its deep sympathy and assistance even to the most humble individual as a worthy member of the brotherhood of the human race. Stern reality knows not their dreams; but the spirit of altruism and idealism ever marches onward, and we are nearer
now and are approaching more rapidly to our goal than ever before in earthly annals.

These forces are abroad in the land, but they have no voice. When will she who now but points in silence lose the bonds of her tongue and speak her message to the world? Perhaps three hundred years are yet to pass, perhaps but twenty, but speak she will at last, and then Milton will be third instead of second and Shakespeare second instead of first. And when she speaks, her language will be that most perfect medium of expression known to the earth, that tongue which has spoken for the greatest variety of human investigators and philosophers, that tongue which lends itself so perfectly at once to the voice of deepest passion, to the most comprehensive reasoning, the most sublime ecstasy, the most delicate melody, to the simplest of plain statements or to the most gorgeous of rhetoric; she will speak through the lips of the Anglo-Saxons.

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For convenience in my own study I made out the chart following. They may be of some interest to you as well as convenient for reference to some of authors alluded to in the paper.
Frank T. Whitgift

Master's Thesis

June 5, 1896.

Eug. L.A.