

**HANDBOOK OF RHETORICAL
ANALYSIS. STUDIES IN STYLE AND
INVENTION. DESIGNED TO
ACCOMPANY THE AUTHOR'S
PRACTICAL ELEMENTS OF RHETORIC**

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Handbook of Rhetorical Analysis. Studies in Style and Invention. Designed to Accompany the Author's Practical Elements of Rhetoric by John F. Genung

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*DESIGNED TO ACCOMPANY THE AUTHOR'S PRACTICAL
ELEMENTS OF RHETORIC.*

BY

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IN ANHERST COLLEGE.

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PREFACE.

THE selections that make up this Handbook, while fairly representative, so far as they go, of the authors from whose works they are taken, are not to be regarded as introductions to the authors as such, still less as studies in the history and development of English prose literature. They are simply, as the title indicates, extracts to be analyzed, in style and structure, for the purpose of forming, from actual examples, some intelligent conception of what the making of good literature involves: taken from the best writers, because it is safer to study models of excellence than examples of error; taken from several writers, because it is not wise to make an exclusive model of any one author's work, however excellent; and taken for the most part from recent writers, not because these are better than writers of earlier time, but because they are more likely to illustrate the usages practically needed in this century.

"I think, as far as my observation has gone," says Mr. John Morley, "that men will do better for reaching precision by studying carefully and with an open mind and a vigilant eye the great models of writing, than by excessive practice of writing on their own account." In a general way such testimony as this to the value of the study of literary models is universal. Biographies of authors are full of it; reports, gleaned from every available source, of "books which have influenced me," and accounts of the great literary works which have been at eminent writers' elbows, constant companions and inspirers, are eagerly read and treasured for their helpfulness to workers who aspire to like eminence. But while the question of the what is so copiously answered, the question of the how remains for the most part unapproached. **Its**

answer has hardly got farther than the general idea that all one has to do is to choose, with proper respect for one's tastes and aptitudes, some great masterpiece or some great author's works, and then read, read, read, until the general indefinite influence of the style has soaked into and thoroughly saturated the reader's mind. To this, as one way of study, no objection is here offered, provided the works be wisely, and perhaps it ought to be said variously, chosen. For one kind of discipline it undoubtedly has its value. Such reading as this may, however, be so pursued as to be anything but "studying carefully and with an open mind and a vigilant eye," and so it may miss its vaunted value; indeed, it begins to benefit the student only when he begins to interpret the vague impressions that he has received, by referring them to definite principles, only when there begins to be evolved in his mind some scientific explanation, however crude, of the literary phenomena he has observed. This is the main secret of the benefit derived from literary study by those great authors who write with Virgil and Milton and Burke at their elbows. Their own constant efforts in the same kind of work have sharpened their vision to recognize in their favorite models concrete solutions of their daily literary problems. Thus they have come to answer, each for himself, the question how to study models; and in each case the answer means that the student has evolved from his research some kind of a *science of rhetoric*, — one-sided, it may be, and inadequate, but still such a science as he can utilize in his own work. Valuable indeed such a result is, and it is interesting to all readers to know what great masterpiece of literature infused its influence into each eminent author's style. Unfortunately, however, such result answers the question of the how for only one person; it does not contribute to progress all along the line. Each new student must begin as helplessly and as much at sea as if nothing of the kind had ever been done; he has to make the way he finds. And the reason why so many students who enter hopefully on a course of study of this kind find it a delusion and a disappointment — for such is the fact — is, that they have not pursued it intelligently enough or sys-

tematically enough to have reached definite practical deductions for their own guidance in matters literary.

Nor is the problem fully solved by making the deductions and presenting them, in scientific form and order, to the student. The study of the text-book of rhetoric is indeed, like the study of literary models, one important element in the circuit of rhetorical training; nor should either element be thrown away for the sake of the other. "This ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." But to complete the circuit, connection must be made. It is not because theory is bad, but because theory alone, without its application in practice or in the concrete, is inadequate, that the text-book is so often found a failure. One cannot become a writer, it is justly urged, by learning rules and conning ready-made philosophizings on style and invention. It is not so often urged, because the thing has not so often been tried, but it is equally true, that one cannot become a writer by studying models of writing, without evolving therefrom the very rules and philosophizings that in their abstracted form people are so ready to reject. Becoming a writer, that is, actual practice in subduing the detailed requisites of expression until they become pliant and ready servants of the writer's will, occupies a position distinct from either of these, being the third element in the rhetorical circuit. Theory, example, practice, — these are the three.

The present Handbook is an attempt to supply the second of these, in a series of selections from the best prose writers; and so to connect these with the theory, as found in the text-book, that the student may be enabled to make, or to discover, his own rhetoric. Thus the book aims to supply, in some degree and from the constructive point of view, what has hitherto seemed most lacking, namely, a practical answer to the question how to study literary models. How far the attempt has succeeded, can be ascertained, of course, only by the test of actual study, being an attempt hitherto for the most part untried. What lies on the surface, as the most obvious feature of the book, is the ordered and progressive character of the selections and of the annotations