

upon a work which promises such meagre returns. When so many men of genius have written books upon almost every subject, which have cost them most arduous toil, what chance is there that a new author may find even an out-of-the-way nook in general libraries? If he succeed, he must have genius of pre-eminent quality; and not only genius, but also the vim to work as other authors before him have worked. Keep out of it, young man and woman, unless you are sure that you are one of the elect.

#### RHETORICALS.

Many of the students seem to think that the essays which they are required to write for rhetorical purposes are disagreeable and profitless nuisances, and they either try to get clear of writing them, or being unsuccessful in this, get them up in the quickest manner possible. No more mischievous idea with regard to literary culture could be entertained by a student than this. The two or three essays which are required each term of all students of the college classes, are designed, not for essays to please an audience, or for articles of interest to fill the columns of a newspaper, but as aids in becoming proficient writers. These essays are designed to serve a purpose in composition somewhat analogous to that of parsing and analysing in grammar—to put a knowledge of the rules and principles of composition to practical application. In short, this is one of the many ways to thorough culture and should no more be shunned by a student than a study in mathematics, classics, or the sciences. By those who have some ability as writers, the argument is often used that they have their style of writing, and the Professor has his, and that therefore his criticisms are unjust, oftentimes, because he is endeavoring to make their style conform to his own. They use the same old argument that Lessing, used in attempting to rebut the criticisms of Goeze:—"Every man has his

own style, just as his own nose, and it is neither christian-like nor polite to rally one on one's nose." Undoubtedly, criticisms are often made upon these rhetorical essays which are unjust, because of the difference between the nature and taste of the student and that of the Professor. But yet, while admitting this, we must acknowledge that there is such a thing in literary composition as style with its rules, limitations and governing principles, and with which every student should become familiar, and in a measure be governed by. Every artist, however much a genius, must study the principles of his trade and be taught by those more experienced than himself. No matter how brilliant an orator a man may naturally be, he must study the style of others, and profit thereby if he would become skilled in oratory. So it is with writers. They must learn and improve by studying the principles of composition, the style of other writers, and by having their own productions reviewed and criticised. Writers of repute may profit by the criticisms of a Johnson, Carlyle, Macaulay, Whipple, etc., etc., and by our many critical reviewers, but the less renowned writers of our colleges may profit most by the criticisms of the Professor who has this work in charge. And there is about as much probability that the peculiar style of the student, with whatever merit it may possess, will be vitiated by assimilation of the style of the Professor, as that one's peculiar style of language will be vitiated by the study of English grammar. Michael Angelo was so enraged because a friendly critic offered a criticism upon one of his favorite statues, that he threw a handful of marble dust in his face. Perhaps he might have profited by the criticism if he had received it in a friendly spirit, and thought up on it. So it is with some students in the rhetorical classes. The criticisms which the Professor makes upon some of their pet themes or sayings are received with anything but a friendly spirit and a candid, thoughtful mind.