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July 1892

On Certain Facts and Principles in the Development of Form in Literature

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University of Nebraska - Lincoln

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II. — *On Certain Facts and Principles in the Development of Form in Literature.*

By L. A. SHERMAN.

SOME ten years or more ago, on first attempting to teach English Literature historically, I found my attention peculiarly drawn to the differences of form between the sentences of More, Hooker, Lyly, and other early prosaists, and of approved stylists in our own age. Here was clearly an organic and sustained development, yet without scientific recognition of a single fact or principle of change. It seemed that something might easily be done towards determining the course of an evolution so evident and remarkable. But I had, or believed I had, no leisure for serious study of the subject, and found my interest inadequate to more than fitful theorizing as to what might one day be found at bottom. Certain phases in the development seemed probable enough, and from time to time I ventured talking incidentally to my classes concerning the structural reforms which must have preceded or enabled the simplicity and energy of our best modern prose. This was in reality, of course, much as if some barber surgeon of the middle age had assayed to divine and declare the processes of organic chemistry or embryology, and I think I realized the absurdity of it to some degree. At length it occurred to me it should be no long task at least to ascertain approximately how much the English sentence had shortened since the beginnings of modern prose. So I began simply counting the number of words in the periods of Chaucer, Fabyan, Ascham, Spenser, Lyly, and Joseph Hall, in order to determine an average for each and for the period in general, as means of comparison with later times. In this attempt I realized at once, what I had failed to comprehend before, that the punctuation in early writers is often signally false to both form and sense, therefore could

not fail to misrepresent the authors and period in hand. But all such considerations, until some sort of foothold might be reached, were disregarded; a period as found was taken as a period, no matter if beginning with a *which* or *when*, and ending without principal verb. The summaries obtained were as follows:—

CHAUCER.		FABYAN.	
(<i>Tale of Melibeus.</i>)		(<i>Chronicle, Ellis's ed., p. 362, par. 2.</i>)	
First hundred periods . . .	51.08	First hundred periods . . .	68.28
Second " " . . .	42.28	Second " " . . .	66.68
Third " " . . .	49.78	Third " " . . .	56.12
Remaining forty " . . .	23.45	Fourth " " . . .	65.77
Average 340 periods	48.99	Fifth " " . . .	58.26
		Average 500 periods	63.02
ASCHAM.		SPENSER.	
(<i>Toxophilus.</i>)		(<i>View of State of Ireland.</i>)	
First hundred periods . . .	41.98	First hundred periods . . .	49.78
Second " " . . .	43.71	Second " " . . .	50.24
Third " " . . .	46.43	Third " " . . .	53.67
Fourth " " . . .	49.81	Fourth " " . . .	47.56
Fifth " " . . .	66.08	Fifth " " . . .	47.88
Average 500 periods	49.60	Average 500 periods	49.82
LYLY.		JOSEPH HALL.	
(<i>Euphues.</i>)		(<i>Specialties; Hard Measure; Post-script.</i>)	
First hundred periods . . .	39.81	First hundred periods . . .	51.98
Second " " . . .	41.21	Second " " . . .	53.58
Third " " . . .	26.33	Third " " . . .	52.94
Fourth " " . . .	40.32	Remaining seventeen . . .	8.25
Fifth " " . . .	36.51	Average 317 periods	52.60
Average 500 periods	36.83		

The average of these results was found to be 50.14 words. This was then to be taken tentatively as an expression for the length of the English sentence down to Elizabethan times.

In selecting a like group from among modern authors, I took an example of the most diffuse and of the most condensed or laconic style that I could find by simple inspection, with three writers of standard but diverse excellence between. De Quincey, Macaulay, Channing, Emerson, and Bartol were the five names. The results from each author, given in complete hundreds to show the range and variation of sentence lengths and structures, were these:—

DE QUINCEY.

(Opium-Eater.)

20	40	61	37	22	76	37	22	11	11
41	12	35	98	26	10	30	28	34	60
16	22	32	41	73	45	32	31	10	17
88	33	72	34	20	27	15	3	15	32
5...27	7	9	10	52	94	53	53	5	56
14	25	47	81	37	46	15	16	39	11
45	11	9	12	29	59	47	33	58	4
7	4	37	70	39	44	9	73	23	13
8	33	41	35	37	18	35	17	27	19
10...94	16	41	43	11	62	13	8	12	17
3	33	34	36	11	9	29	61	18	18
21	24	19	35	7	44	12	40	21	46
10	44	33	25	36	15	19	63	72	59
7	66	28	141	6	22	10	4	65	27
15...45	21	40	37	43	13	76	4	66	3
20	14	87	57	10	35	5	21	79	15
58	54	17	25	18	10	23	57	34	15
37	41	17	11	94	21	40	63	56	23
102	36	47	41	15	11	25	6	8	43
20...27	51	15	21	13	9	43	17	45	54
29	3	26	17	68	31	13	22	38	42
57	4	38	47	17	19	14	15	13	114
82	7	34	16	22	29	30	26	48	29
43	9	37	16	45	12	31	60	23	27
25...36	8	38	71	35	20	26	17	79	54
6	19	56	15	83	18	32	33	5	42
15	9	38	40	14	23	43	38	14	39
46	2	8	53	7	38	24	5	17	51
39	10	21	17	16	8	34	92	31	11
30...37	10	33	40	27	6	15	6	27	74
44	39	33	31	21	13	32	29	50	32
21	12	43	13	28	7	20	65	20	34
47	2	21	8	37	11	52	20	22	92
64	12	36	8	60	44	43	50	44	24
35...22	29	37	29	22	15	37	6	39	11
44	82	84	38	14	5	31	13	59	38
15	12	42	74	37	23	35	24	3	31
46	15	70	12	5	34	59	56	13	28
46	3	21	54	28	20	5	14	3	39
40...81	3	66	82	23	15	47	35	30	34
7	6	17	16	38	39	19	35	22	45
21	4	32	82	53	6	23	37	32	46
105	7	27	65	46	84	39	56	25	48
30	13	18	53	14	40	30	26	22	15
45...43	3	41	39	100	19	35	34	55	14
22	3	51	18	52	17	37	35	11	22
39	36	29	49	16	16	57	13	15	19
47	95	87	30	30	39	9	52	110	16
18	71	34	30	28	18	25	43	61	34
50...7	11	47	24	15	43	50	30	85	60
	29.75		38.63		29.82		31.22		34.22

Average 500 periods, 32.73.

MACAULAY.

(Essay on History.)

	53	29	13	26	33	32	17	34
	14	31	26	23	30	24	15	15
	9	33	15	39	8	15	7	7
	27	19	15	9	14	28	21	11
5...	24	11	28	11	10	30	13	35
	40	10	8	15	10	57	36	33
	6	36	13	15	24	31	11	20
	8	10	26	13	29	49	14	30
	9	8	32	18	55	54	46	28
10...	24	19	18	7	57	96	19	14
	25	3	34	9	17	10	22	31
	4	20	15	24	8	97	14	6
	4	30	34	13	12	15	31	6
	10	31	14	14	29	40	26	13
15...	15	32	28	14	11	17	14	14
	16	24	30	16	31	39	22	9
	28	15	27	32	20	19	14	14
	8	42	59	12	9	6	15	62
	18	25	18	12	47	38	32	100
20...	31	33	11	9	26	37	10	27
	25	31	49	17	20	12	11	14
	11	30	12	11	8	17	21	33
	28	18	10	17	20	62	23	53
	7	88	13	22	10	32	47	37
25...	28	15	10	18	41	26	40	9
	20	62	13	45	18	7	4	11
	29	13	77	16	51	7	11	24
	6	83	21	14	23	13	39	14
	29	90	14	19	24	10	32	20
30...	22	28	11	29	25	22	24	18
	30	33	20	16	24	49	44	27
	23	27	20	5	15	53	23	32
	16	23	47	24	22	17	9	7
	13	18	27	35	19	10	29	25
35...	16	26	20	22	22	45	19	9
	49	14	7	11	13	17	23	19
	24	18	42	41	31	30	11	12
	30	17	11	7	13	22	14	14
	19	12	16	50	28	12	16	7
40...	32	21	19	12	22	11	11	18
	16	12	35	7	9	35	35	16
	65	13	39	31	9	30	18	11
	8	11	24	8	25	48	59	18
	17	15	17	21	19	33	37	14
45...	41	35	8	40	11	18	25	34
	14	4	35	22	19	16	23	19
	13	10	31	21	20	21	29	30
	11	8	28	8	43	10	21	17
	4	48	19	12	15	35	7	25
50...	8	12	14	27	20	22	10	10
		23.23		21.26		25.95		22.20

MACAULAY — *Continued.*

9	40	6	16	26	13	15
9	32	6	17	50	4	33
51	43	8	26	36	6	27
33	8	6	24	11	16	33
5...58	45	19	19	8	22	6
81	12	65	16	15	24	20
7	13	21	13	25	12	5
5	17	24	10	17	66	115
20	19	8	21	13	14	15
10... 5	18	20	23	29	27	13
7	23	11	50	18	17	13
15	10	23	70	18	17	14
18	7	7	17	24	13	26
13	17	5	35	36	12	39
15...17	15	42	50	22	6	19
13	22	3	19	15	11	42
18	24	16	14	25	18	16
20	7	7	15	23	56	16
15	3	25	24	25	19	9
20...20	3	16	28	33	18	24
46	34	15	51	16	19	16
10	14	58	65	9	14	44
11	10	40	13	16	41	560
15	23	73	52	7	10	
25...32	30	22	5	20	7	
35	22	17	67	32	42	
23	10	17	54	44	14	
26	22	17	37	98	29	
5	12	19	7	36	30	
30...17	14	9	14	11	15	
4	15	19	13	7	28	
9	17	33	26	16	23	
14	17	17	23	41	29	
15	17	16	23	14	19	
35...20	18	11	9	10	14	
12	12	28	40	11	30	
16	24	68	7	18	42	
19	13	29	19	23	17	
10	26	6	18	6	27	
40...13	8	9	29	14	38	
44	40	18	13	15	50	
21	19	30	47	29	29	
21	8	9	26	32	14	
11	35	11	21	45	23	
45...18	21	11	16	65	58	
39	18	13	15	25	9	
27	12	28	29	13	21	
12	16	14	33	60	54	
10	33	29	9	19	58	
50...25	13	7	29	16	39	
	<hr/>					
	19.65		23.47		24.78	

Average 722 sentences, 23.00.

CHANNING.

(Self-Culture.)

	28	29	26	46	38	21	21	71
	23	62	36	18	26	7	34	16
	37	28	29	14	6	12	6	19
	15	41	32	13	31	9	15	35
5...	23	22	22	18	34	23	51	26
	25	11	10	27	34	11	18	8
	14	31	22	18	44	83	13	22
	15	21	69	22	26	22	13	9
	10	18	51	18	24	26	17	21
10...	10	28	18	43	8	29	36	69
	29	39	41	59	68	24	29	24
	32	4	30	27	88	46	9	23
	17	18	10	10	32	17	52	7
	28	35	20	31	24	41	24	10
15...	28	46	48	4	10	13	32	13
	8	31	19	16	23	21	39	23
	11	32	38	57	20	14	20	8
	14	10	8	15	24	32	12	22
	11	4	19	41	18	22	42	18
20...	33	5	20	37	13	21	21	36
	21	6	44	23	33	22	15	99
	16	14	30	23	52	15	32	21
	78	18	8	17	11	25	47	8
	19	55	39	51	21	17	13	22
25...	21	58	12	25	13	59	33	29
	19	22	12	14	15	30	17	38
	18	37	4	19	15	30	39	33
	5	14	35	1	19	15	37	20
	15	16	1	60	25	18	10	28
30...	57	49	4	35	75	15	34	11
	4	15	24	26	11	38	35	47
	62	14	9	65	38	24	14	22
	22	17	22	9	15	23	99	41
	10	45	27	14	16	29	17	52
35...	20	9	8	1	20	21	18	7
	8	12	20	52	29	20	74	47
	13	15	20	43	15	16	16	27
	31	9	7	17	29	31	22	26
	67	28	14	28	26	10	10	17
40...	42	27	18	14	20	45	55	43
	30	24	12	37	24	15	24	18
	72	10	18	6	40	53	21	19
	70	23	16	9	13	15	5	18
	31	8	10	14	17	27	21	15
45...	16	14	14	22	8	17	5	8
	45	21	34	26	28	30	22	27
	34	16	34	26	20	28	6	30
	17	5	23	69	27	16	15	46
	26	15	43	17	12	46	83	12
50...	53	32	39	85	12	4		26
		<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>
		25.16		25.51		25.38		26.80

CHANNING — *Continued.*

78	17	26	12	9	14	8
22	29	61	28	70	43	47
21	20	10	29	9	18	22
29	16	14	53	28	20	9
5...16	25	15	66	58	47	59
9	14	33	4	24	19	20
25	33	10	18	35	11	8
13	20	8	109	22	47	9
68	35	14	11	26	16	7
10...22	10	19	29	7	16	12
4	7	20	10	8	12	7
10	18	24	7	41	23	53
8	12	14	48	27	14	32
11	36	33	68	30	31	10
15...19	7	22	33	36	4	40
18	10	13	26	26	4	29
58	7	14	55	31	97	21
9	59	37	58	7	16	52
27	10	27	31	4	12	25
20...36	31	28	18	30	10	47
75	28	5	16	14	58	46
22	23	34	25	18	39	22
1	27	26	7	19	25	15
14	21	9	15	6	17	13
25...31	34	11	27	11	13	16
33	23	18	22	59	5	43
8	8	28	24	28	23	9
19	20	44	47	19	47	8
10	36	16	47	78	27	12
30...14	20	14	40	5	37	6
18	29	32	31	29	14	16
21	41	51	22	17	37	10
11	14	18	20	22	9	40
22	12	16	16	21	14	11
35...47	44	33	13	15	20	25
18	36	31	18	12	7	13
7	12	6	13	6	26	20
12	42	20	54	19	9	15
57	12	33	26	18	15	10
40...12	12	28	10	44	29	11
10	34	17	14	13	29	8
19	38	34	10	27	22	18
22	69	12	18	36	52	6
15	7	10	15	21	42	25
45...12	14	10	20	28	42	29
13	23	40	20	20	60	35
21	187	27	25	32	24	9
33	57	28	23	38	46	1
5	58	6	18	14	49	4
50...22	53	52	6	16	29	18
	<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>	<hr/>
	25.77		25.48		25.73	1031

Average 750 periods, 25.35.

EMERSON.

(The American Scholar, and Divinity School Address.)

	10	30	12	16	31	36	12	13
	12	18	22	10	5	28	23	15
	46	24	11	7	4	68	17	13
	29	42	22	8	4	19	35	46
5...	12	36	6	18	6	8	23	21
	47	5	20	13	14	8	10	48
	17	8	10	18	10	19	23	23
	20	8	4	10	12	16	34	7
	11	55	6	12	5	5	11	29
10...	39	17	21	13	5	69	8	7
	26	7	28	15	9	12	12	63
	15	9	34	7	9	7	23	26
	17	9	39	34	37	59	38	11
	49	10	11	19	14	10	26	14
15...	39	20	8	30	12	19	10	12
	15	19	11	27	9	15	11	6
	11	30	13	8	44	8	16	5
	30	32	9	10	21	21	9	14
	22	6	7	15	18	27	5	12
20...	33	27	21	14	38	7	48	62
	36	11	45	20	17	31	5	4
	10	13	6	7	8	17	8	46
	26	10	14	15	7	59	4	43
	21	9	14	8	8	7	14	66
25...	27	7	14	15	20	10	50	12
	21	9	42	8	10	23	65	20
	11	22	44	7	27	14	19	18
	8	18	59	21	45	25	29	22
	25	18	19	18	28	17	36	24
30...	15	5	34	21	14	16	16	1813
	19	56	18	11	10	19	32	
	17	18	14	13	77	10	26	
	11	10	8	8	8	14	5	
	15	6	22	15	13	6	28	
35...	13	18	10	16	18	22	40	
	18	16	21	33	5	25	15	
	19	27	17	51	5	32	8	
	11	10	34	19	27	33	139	
	8	36	34	79	28	22	20	
40...	9	5	14	38	25	40	10	
	12	33	10	14	21	16	17	
	8	40	11	4	7	37	5	
	5	9	43	48	9	9	17	
	26	33	12	21	38	26	5	
45...	18	12	19	20	23	19	6	
	35	12	18	7	28	21	7	
	2	5	30	15	43	15	12	
	11	11	20	20	6	16	23	
	55	7	44	82	15	8	28	
50...	19	28	13	12	23	32	28	
		19.57		19.88		20.22		

EMERSON — *Continued.*

15	4	8	61	11	14	33
19	13	19	9	15	18	58
21	27	9	13	39	14	34
11	15	15	8	37	64	18
5...11	30	11	14	21	33	13
13	20	40	10	26	77	6
19	6	23	15	30	55	7
9	13	31	15	38	18	18
32	11	31	29	25	15	21
10...15	64	28	4	39	24	21
16	3	11	18	15	46	36
55	16	15	12	17	24	72
19	8	17	14	20	32	13
35	5	18	19	18	12	51
15...20	12	35	26	20	31	50
20	34	9	39	7	17	21
11	14	10	22	35	14	13
10	15	18	47	5	15	29
15	39	10	21	24	24	11
20...21	25	11	25	14	16	30
9	9	19	42	16	57	51
27	5	11	33	14	20	19
15	7	7	21	50	14	39
2	9	17	22	10	6	40
25...17	17	20	54	24	11	111
23	14	16	20	52	3	16
40	50	24	18	10	3	17
16	6	11	32	16	18	18
19	6	30	13	30	13	14
30...30	4	14	6	25	17	14
7	7	30	47	26	14	43
13	51	16	11	16	8	43
22	31	12	7	18	9	23
28	18	33	10	51	7	17
35...38	15	6	5	36	5	8
18	15	17	28	10	15	18
4	7	12	15	14	3	10
13	16	18	25	18	4	7
16	18	15	22	7	5	19
40...9	12	14	3	13	5	13
12	15	30	9	19	6	35
9	35	13	13	5	41	16
33	10	5	8	10	21	15
17	12	23	14	16	14	14
45...12	32	24	20	47	17	13
8	36	31	32	38	6	48
8	7	48	5	9	18	23
21	15	26	12	3	12	22
18	28	41	30	31	22	51
50...20	14	7	58	13	41	37
						16
	18.06		20.15		21.01	17
						70

Average 732 periods, 20.71.

1472

BARTOL.

(Radicalism and Father Taylor.)

13	10	20	10	23	4	32	49	6
20	13	16	8	36	7	13	45	8
17	7	59	4	27	6	8	46	18
14	3	9	7	36	12	17	112	14
5...15	30	30	13	22	12	32	9	10
15	10	9	23	6	18	13	17	6
11	5	18	30	6	6	34	10	16
3	18	5	9	35	6	8	16	11
7	7	20	25	7	5	3	17	9
10...16	12	18	19	26	9	32	22	6
13	13	6	12	7	10	14	17	20
12	12	6	34	16	19	20	33	12
21	9	10	25	27	4	11	43	5
19	11	27	16	21	6	37	17	14
15...19	52	40	7	17	16	31	22	30
5	11	21	17	5	6	7	5	16
12	13	21	14	5	7	15	14	6
17	22	5	13	4	10	23	24	15
9	18	34	4	7	16	33	5	11
20...56	33	13	29	20	11	8	6	14
13	15	12	28	16	13	5	5	22
6	29	17	17	13	12	18	13	10
18	11	47	5	8	20	15	31	4
8	8	13	4	7	7	48	22	23
25...16	7	12	4	3	15	37	24	26
12	6	7	19	3	22	35	16	6
13	11	16	10	7	14	30	5	22
5	33	16	63	10	14	48	5	7
25	6	15	9	7	9	27	32	5
30...7	12	13	14	15	23	22	4	6
12	28	16	23	35	24	29	25	12
20	14	20	33	14	19	13	9	13
9	23	18	9	24	22	18	5	43
6	7	33	4	25	10	12	61	10
35...14	18	21	17	11	8	33	12	49
16	25	16	36	10	30	30	4	23
34	13	8	17	24	15	16	4	11
31	17	28	31	10	22	9	20	43
13	23	27	12	31	7	9	14	15
40...41	10	5	34	14	15	17	8	15
5	8	9	12	10	9	62	13	4
21	23	5	28	22	5	46	10	20
7	26	9	8	21	13	27	7	5
12	4	48	13	26	19	6	12	5
45...6	16	20	7	5	23	—	13	11
15	15	10	17	21	5	10 03	58	24
11	28	12	8	7	12	—	15	17
17	41	8	17	9	25	—	10	19
24	25	25	5	6	13	—	13	14
50...18	31	16	17	6	17	—	24	15
	<hr/>							
	16.11		17.49		14.28			17.59

BARTOL— *Continued.*

	7	6	9	20	4	37	8	19
	9	9	23	6	5	6	15	74
	22	16	11	6	26	20	9	7
	13	7	25	6	20	7	13	7
5...	22	27	31	13	27	70	9	8
	7	25	10	13	26	17	27	7
	7	11	13	23	13	14	8	13
	9	9	16	19	7	20	22	7
	27	23	38	10	10	53	33	5
10...	14	16	15	11	7	11	16	11
	13	25	8	9	19	5	48	9
	7	16	19	38	13	6	21	
	6	20	13	6	15	11	38	1127
	8	21	10	7	7	11	5	
15...	9	6	28	51	35	9	6	
	15	14	12	15	24	6	15	
	11	12	19	17	7	13	12	
	7	20	17	21	10	10	19	
	3	9	28	20	15	8	22	
20...	3	5	19	23	36	11	27	
	4	15	18	16	5	10	17	
	5	18	17	11	30	11	24	
	5	34	12	28	11	7	18	
	10	19	13	19	6	9	30	
25...	49	17	12	10	12	10	33	
	34	18	9	4	24	8	5	
	14	17	8	8	23	27	18	
	12	19	10	3	18	12	14	
	9	39	8	19	18	13	13	
30...	9	18	29	6	20	7	13	
	9	26	12	4	13	11	56	
	11	6	9	9	18	7	6	
	19	14	10	26	18	8	10	
	7	14	13	34	6	11	8	
35...	11	12	9	28	5	12	16	
	10	33	11	27	5	14	38	
	65	20	12	25	10	18	26	
	6	16	13	38	10	14	26	
	10	9	11	33	10	19	13	
40...	6	18	12	10	28	48	19	
	37	7	24	7	25	18	11	
	9	10	12	9	10	11	25	
	27	13	14	16	44	6	10	
	5	38	29	15	39	16	53	
45...	6	20	6	20	5	25	16	
	13	10	22	4	19	11	7	
	16	13	10	9	15	23	10	
	14	10	4	10	18	12	13	
	25	8	7	7	12	17	34	
50...	28	26	10	10	15	43	5	
		<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>		
		15.38		15.49		16.21		

Average 805 periods, 16.63.

Adding now the several footings, I found 23.53 as the average of the selections, or very nearly half that obtained for the authors of the first group. The comparison thus turned out essentially as expected, furnishing evidence that the English prose sentence had dropped something like half its weight since Shakespeare's times.

But this array of figures was clearly of further interest. Now that the number of words in consecutive sentences was definitely exhibited, strange facts and features of style were indicated or suggested. The length of one sentence, it was shown, might be echoed unconsciously into the next, as notably in Macaulay's groups of seventeens. Noteworthy was Macaulay's failing for odd, and De Quincey's for prime, numbers, as also Macaulay's partiality to seven and nine for final digits. But the really remarkable thing was the apparently constant sentence average in the respective authors. Could it be possible that stylists as eminent and practised as these are subject to a rigid rhythmic law, from which even by the widest range and variety of sentence lengths and forms they may not escape? At once pushing the suspicion to a proof, I made, first, an extended test in Macaulay's *Essays*: result, 23 +, the number obtained before; then in Channing: average again, 25. The variation in each hundred periods from these respectively was so slight, it seemed best to make special trial of the *Opium-Smoker*, in which greater fluctuations had above been marked. The averages of the remaining sentences of the work, taken by hundreds as before, were these:—

Sixth hundred	29.09	Fifteenth hundred	35.32
Seventh "	30.39	Sixteenth "	40.29
Eighth "	32.94	Seventeenth "	39.29
Ninth "	33.92	Eighteenth "	38.12
Tenth "	32.88	Nineteenth "	31.24
Eleventh "	34.09	Twentieth "	31.42
Twelfth "	34.42	Twenty-first "	33.57
Thirteenth "	29.57	Twenty-second "	32.09
Fourteenth "	38.58	Remaining twenty-five	31.16

Complete average 2225 periods, 33.65.

Several other tests were next made in various writers, with essentially like findings. Even an author as far back as Hooker yielded from the first book of the *Polity*, 725 periods, 44.08, 40.84, 37.03, 41.63, 42.40, 45.14, 47.83, for the consecutive hundreds. Bacon was found to be 28 consistently in the *Essays*. Milton at first seemed refractory, but was forced to own to no less an average than 60. Dryden reached 45, Addison stopped at 37. Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, *Junius*, Carlyle, Newman, Beecher, Lowell, and Higginson fell into line regularly with the rest. No evidence appearing to the contrary, it seemed likely enough that sentence rhythm was a universal law. At any rate, it was not necessary to delay longer upon what was relatively an unimportant point. There was plenty to do ahead. The right way and the only way to learn the facts and principles of English prose development was plainly to study the literature objectively, with scalpel and microscope in hand. Yet, with the aid of certain of my students and others, I gave further a little time to the question whether the sentence average was constant in a given author for different works and periods of production. In Macaulay no variation was found between the *Milton* or the *Machiavelli* and the *Pitt Essay*; none between the first and the fifth volume of the *History*. De Quincey was seen to have been writing in 1852 and 1857 ("*California*" and "*China*" respectively) the same length of sentence as had been determined from the *Opium-Eater* (pub. 1821). Channing likewise had not altered between 1812 and 1842, and even Carlyle showed no change for worse or better, in respect to sentence proportions, between the *Edinburgh Essays* and his *Frederick the Great*.

On now taking up the main task with some seriousness, I soon found the principal lines along which the English sentence had approached its modern simplicity and strength. But the process of following out the various phases of the development appeared so complex and tedious that I was dismayed. It was too much to attempt without coöperation. Having the responsibility as editor of filling the gap between

two principal articles in the second number of our UNIVERSITY STUDIES, I put together certain chief facts and findings from the analysis in the paper "Some Observations upon the Sentence-length in English Prose," hoping to attract other hands to the work. But, though I outlined with some clearness the course of investigation to be followed, no one of those communicating with me concerning it seemed drawn to the task, or, as I thought, to realize the promise it held out of solving some or many of the mysteries of literature. Clearly, by study of individual styles the course of evolution in modern prose English might be traced. Moreover, if it were true that each author writes always in a consistent numerical sentence average, it would follow that he must be constant in other peculiarities, as proportion of verbs, substitutes for verbs, conjunctions, etc., if a sufficiently large number of sentences were taken as the basis. Meanwhile, in a series of communications to *Science* (beginning with the issue for March 22, 1889) upon a kindred topic, it had been seriously questioned whether there could be any such thing as consistency in such cases,—except perhaps on the basis of many thousand sentences. The first thing therefore to be done was to demonstrate undeniably the fact of a constant numerical average. For this I chose Macaulay's *History of England*. The style of this was noticeably less stereotyped and regular than of the *Essays*, there was much curt dialogue, there were long descriptions. If the findings for the *Essays* were confirmed in the *History* as a whole, the case would be closed, at least for Macaulay. I had devised a plan of accurately registering the results in counting, and had reached such facility with the method that I no longer dreaded the drudgery of such a task. In about three weeks of the summer of 1889 I finished the five volumes. The following were the results obtained. Each entry is the average of one hundred periods in consecutive order throughout.

	30.69	22.17	20.93	19.86	21.11	21.52	19.30	24.43	25.49
	24.62	21.60	20.65	16.92	22.13	23.93	18.42	20.52	25.62
	25.39	27.69	22.60	19.46	19.33	24.02	20.74	25.09	27.22
	24.18	27.30	22.91	21.21	24.00	21.44	18.46	28.50	24.93
5...	24.43	24.41	23.06	20.52	21.00	20.11	24.36	25.47	23.36
	26.11	17.29	24.89	19.27	27.48	23.58	22.05	23.83	29.93
	26.13	17.88	23.08	19.84	21.02	26.46	19.69	22.00	20.82
	24.50	20.42	24.57	17.87	19.78	18.16	19.38	19.23	25.85
	25.84	21.01	22.97	18.27	22.82	18.96	20.24	20.28	23.66
10...	29.01	21.78	24.37	23.03	23.52	19.98	22.76	23.26	26.63
	23.90	20.53	24.76	21.04	24.88	23.02	23.13	23.83	26.46
	23.59	23.52	25.16	21.34	27.13	28.07	21.19	23.26	23.85
	24.80	21.44	29.65	20.47	22.87	21.92	24.17	21.83	22.85
	25.94	18.55	23.98	21.56	19.20	23.07	29.61	23.10	24.42
15...	21.27	23.17	26.00	21.12	26.78	20.59	27.71	22.81	21.26
	25.18	21.28	26.63	21.26	28.60	24.26	26.66	20.30	
	24.93	23.24	24.32	16.89	26.95	22.96	27.31	23.75	
	24.13	22.36	20.47	19.88	23.90	24.77	22.73	20.49	
	21.57	24.44	26.77	23.69	24.70	22.28	24.10	24.13	
20...	26.79	25.15	25.59	23.85	25.68	22.97	23.53	24.63	
	23.22	24.51	23.66	20.88	21.55	21.66	27.41	20.27	
	24.19	22.39	22.22	24.14	25.36	24.30	25.46	23.17	
	24.60	17.04	22.58	30.34	21.14	19.19	23.18	23.25	
	22.88	21.75	23.75	22.58	17.93	24.45	21.78	22.10	
25...	26.38	21.15	22.85	25.91	23.29	22.40	21.34	24.85	
	24.96	21.00	21.04	21.53	19.66	25.95	26.74	26.02	
	25.32	21.50	17.47	27.92	28.04	20.03	25.70	23.87	
	22.75	20.69	17.22	28.06	19.46	20.31	28.22	24.27	
	23.15	19.10	24.88	24.98	24.44	21.70	24.25	27.90	
30...	25.24	19.41	21.99	29.54	22.52	23.99	25.67	23.41	
	21.85	18.27	23.86	23.83	22.78	21.28	24.81	25.77	
	20.92	19.01	24.68	25.99	21.20	18.29	22.60	23.80	
	24.45	17.36	20.83	25.54	21.05	17.49	23.46	25.93	
	21.93	22.59	23.15	22.86	26.06	18.99	22.43	28.02	
35...	22.80	21.42	16.32	24.27	28.45	20.73	25.93	24.38	
	21.74	18.85	20.63	27.51	28.50	24.96	20.99	24.68	
	24.65	20.48	22.42	25.77	27.27	25.91	20.88	21.87	
	24.04	23.07	24.86	22.86	24.07	29.21	24.79	24.04	
	26.86	18.88	21.01	30.21	25.28	24.54	22.26	26.05	
40...	25.93	30.91	18.18	29.76	23.51	30.30	21.13	24.72	
	26.27	21.12	27.05	27.45	23.24	25.49	20.90	23.61	
	25.88	23.87	25.76	24.16	23.48	23.39	25.68	25.26	
	28.16	22.33	26.11	23.74	25.67	26.52	24.72	25.18	
	21.61	20.79	24.46	26.08	24.00	22.86	21.78	29.45	
45...	25.18	27.19	24.00	21.64	18.07	24.77	25.60	25.23	
	25.16	24.67	22.44	22.12	24.06	24.95	26.41	26.62	
	23.06	28.04	23.27	22.61	24.67	24.71	25.30	25.41	
	24.09	22.65	19.76	22.54	27.15	20.46	21.33	26.64	
	24.64	24.19	26.30	23.97	25.25	21.15	20.23	24.15	
50...	25.90	23.31	21.89	23.87	24.96	26.04	25.22	21.27	

The entries in the following columns are the averages of the consecutive thousands. The footings are the averages by five thousands.

26.09	22.13	23.00	19.62	22.21	21.81	20.54	23.26
24.21	22.36	25.33	21.11	25.06	23.39	25.01	22.81
24.20	20.85	21.76	25.58	22.33	22.39	24.97	23.91
23.51	21.08	21.59	25.86	24.81	23.17	22.92	24.92
24.99	23.81	24.10	23.81	24.05	24.03	23.71	25.28
<u>24.61</u>	<u>22.05</u>	<u>23.16</u>	<u>23.20</u>	<u>23.69</u>	<u>22.96</u>	<u>23.42</u>	<u>24.03</u>

The entries here are the averages of the consecutive thousands as before. The footings are the averages by ten thousands:—

26.09	23.00	22.21	20.54
24.21	25.33	25.06	25.01
24.20	21.76	22.33	24.97
23.51	21.59	24.81	22.92
24.99	24.10	24.05	23.71
22.13	19.62	21.81	23.26
22.36	21.11	23.39	22.81
20.85	25.58	22.39	23.91
21.08	25.06	23.17	24.92
23.81	23.81	24.03	25.28
<u>23.33</u>	<u>23.18</u>	<u>23.32</u>	<u>23.73</u>

Number of words in the remaining 1579 sentences, 38,696. Average for the entire *History*, 23.43.

The data now in hand confirmed certain apparent differences between the style of the *Essays* and of the *History*. The latter is written with less "curious care"; the long sentences are much longer; curt phrases are far more numerous. Yet, in spite of the greater centrifugal force, the style keeps to its orbit. What centripetal principle could be potent enough to counteract all erratic tendencies so perfectly? When long sentences had prevailed for a page or two, short were sure to follow in similar succession, as the figures showed. After the dialogue passages and consequent reduced averages, seemingly by a sort of reaction, full-rounded

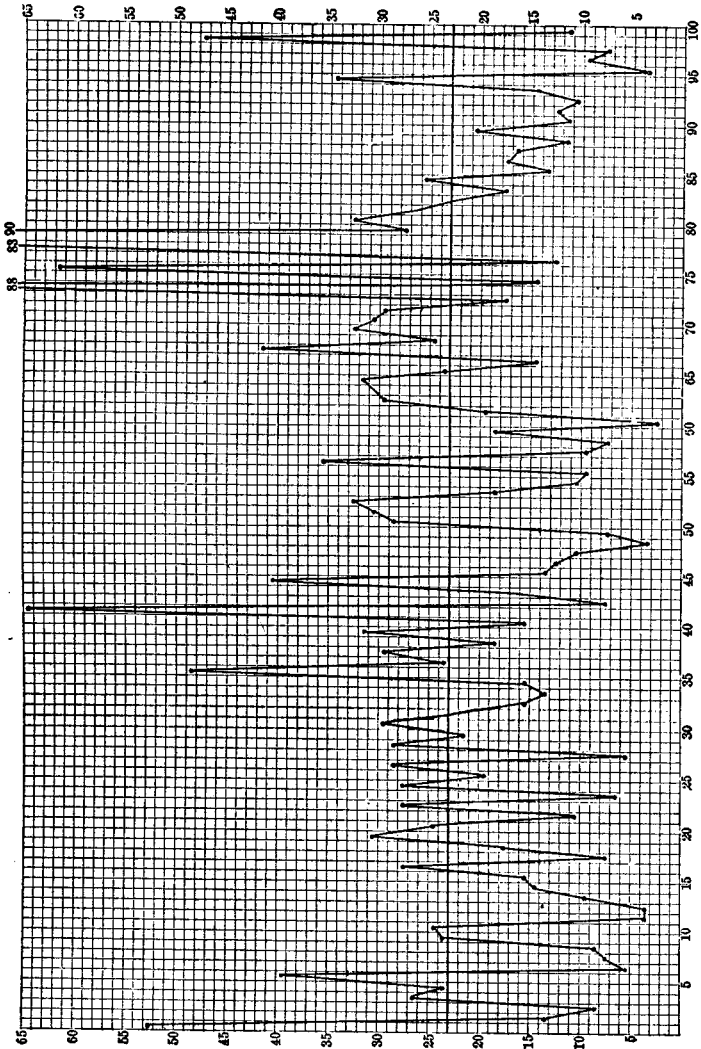
periods and high averages take their place.¹ Instead of a lesser final aggregate for the *History* on account of the abundant dialogue, this was larger than for the *Essays* by a respectable fraction. The evidence seemed to indicate the operation of some kind of sentence-sense, some conception or ideal of form which, if it could have its will, would reduce all sentences to procrustean regularity. A single act may or may not signify with respect to character, but the sum of a man's deeds for a day or a week will exhibit his ideals and principles and other springs of action. Here, then, in this 23.43 was the resultant of the forces which had made Macaulay's literary character. How the many short sentences are kept at equilibrium by the few long periods is illustrated on next page by a diagram of the sentence-lengths from the first two columns on page 4. The horizontal numberings indicate the sentences in order from one to one hundred; the vertical show the number of words in the respective periods.

¹ In the *History* was observed the same fondness for seven as a final digit as had appeared in the figures from the *Essay* above. There was relatively a certain number of sentences — and in one case no less than four consecutively — containing just seven words. Thinking this might be connected in some way with the fact that Macaulay's sentence average was an odd number, I went through forty thousand of the sentences, to ascertain whether even or odd numbers predominated. But I found that the sentences containing each an odd number of words were not more numerous than those of even, as the following summary will show:—

In first 5000 sentences	2455 even,	2545 odd.
“ second “ “	2536 “	2464 “
“ third “ “	2462 “	2538 “
“ fourth “ “	2482 “	2518 “
“ fifth “ “	2491 “	2509 “
“ sixth “ “	2504 “	2496 “
“ seventh “ “	2537 “	2463 “
“ eighth “ “	2534 “	2466 “

In 40,000 sentences 20,001 even, 19,999 odd.

But why should the even and the odd sentences alternate in preponderance? This surely could not be fortuitous merely. Other mysteries there were in plenty and seemingly more solvable. The lists abounded in strange runs and ranges of figures, in which it seemed some law should be at once discerned by the mathematically or psychologically expert. For my own part, after a few ineffectual attempts to decipher something, I gave up the task.



In the general investigation pursued before the publication of the article alluded to above, it was noted, first, that Macaulay, Channing, Emerson, and Bartol wrote a great number of simple sentences, while the earlier authors very few. Chaucer's *Melibens* showed but four per cent of these; Hooker's first book of the *Ecclesiastical Polity*, thirteen; but Macaulay's *Essay on History*, not less than forty. It was evident that Macaulay and his fellows were under some constraint to write simple sentences only. But it was further noticed that when any one of these writers found it necessary to use a long or complex period, it was likely to turn out very long and complex indeed; so that in this they agreed with and even rivalled the authors of the first era. Here then were in operation two active principles, one analytic, one synthetic. So far as appeared after an extended examination, Channing and Macaulay were the first to write in accordance with the former. The prosaists who since Chaucer had employed the latter appeared to show a progressive improvement, both in decrease of predication and in articulation, — or, as Spencer would say, in bringing the heterogeneous out of the homogeneous. For the prose periods of Chaucer and Spenser abounded in coördinate rather than subordinate constructions of every kind. A comparison of the prose with the poetry of each proved their poetic sentences much more organic and articulate, and much less synthetical. There were far less predications in the latter, the periods did not seem half so long. In short, their poetry seemed as simple and clear as anybody's, but their prose was practically unreadable. The prose might really be of the same kind as the poetry, but was at least centuries behind it in sentential development.

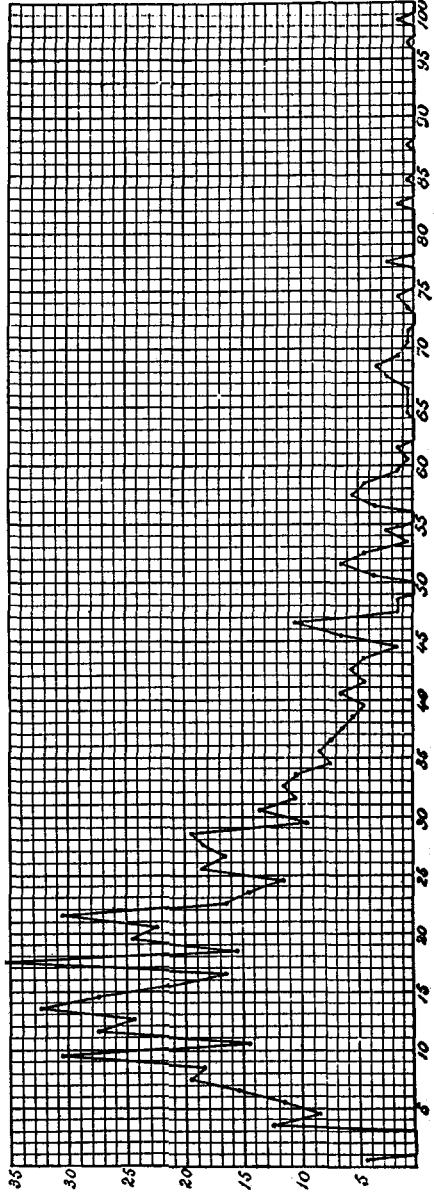
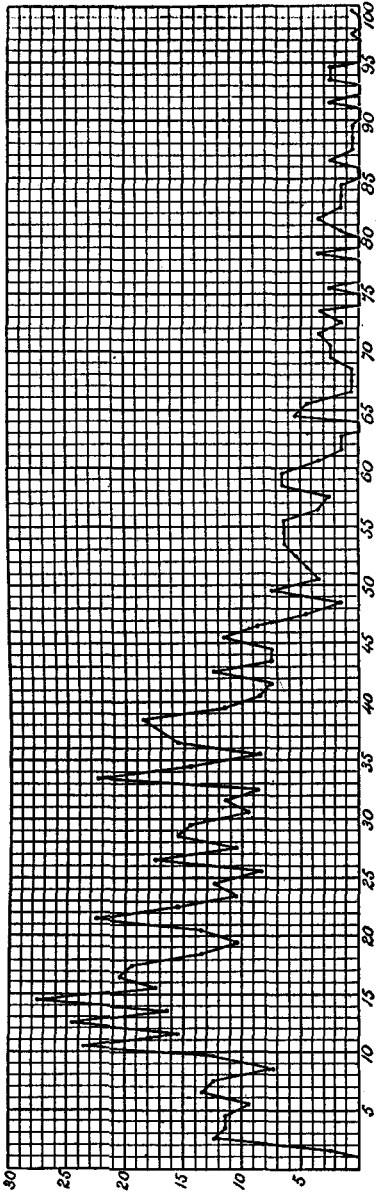
The analytical principle as observed in Channing and Macaulay appeared to mean, Put in a simple sentence no more than can be brought before the mind pictorially or symbolically in a single view. If this meaning be yet but potential, not yet translated into successive propositions, let it be realized to the mind and expressed by instalments in some logical order, each fact or judgment, since an integral part

of the whole, in a sentence by itself. But the synthetic principle amounts to an impulse to develop the whole meaning in some way within the limits of a single sentence. Thus Chaucer, at the opening of the Prologue, wishing to express the idea that it was the return of spring that sent palmers and pilgrims forth upon their journeyings, brings all the facts leading up or accessory to the final proposition into one period of eighteen lines. Spenser, too, in the *Faerie Queene*, first tells collectively all he has in mind to say of Una and the Red Cross Knight without halt or division, except at close of stanzas. He uses no short sentence until he gets (stanza vi.) to the Dwarf. There is no other period in the first ten stanzas of the poem so short as the one now met with. The suspicion that the reason for its brevity is in the matter rather than the instinct of manner, is confirmed on comparison with the sentences preceding. If the Dwarf had possessed, in Spenser's conception, either traditions or character—save laziness, there would in all likelihood have been no stop until the end of the ninth line. On the other hand Chaucer, beginning a few periods beyond his synthetic introduction to the *Prologue*, writes a large per cent of as clear-cut analytic sentences as it would be easy to find in any modern prosaist.

The question next to be settled was evidently the relation of the analytic sentence to the synthetic. Could it be possible that the one was derived from the other, or were both equally the products of some common principle? Did the prevalence of analytic sentences in modern prose mean simply the introduction of oral form into polite literature? The decrease in the numerical length of prose sentences was clearly only an incident in some sustained course of development. Just what that development had been could now be known if some one were willing to investigate diligently along one or two lines already indicated. Fortunately the work had not long to wait. In the summer of 1889 Mr. G. W. Gerwig, graduate of this institution that year, proposed special study in literature for the degree of M.A. As a subject for the thesis to be pre-

pared I suggested an examination into the decrease of predication and sentence-weight since Chaucer. The investigation, faithfully and even enthusiastically carried through, embraced the principal authors in the prose side of our literature, as also many of the poets, and a number of prominent names outside of English. The averages from the several authors were consistent, and taken as a whole unequivocally established the fact of a systematic decrease of sentential complexity and weight, towards the oral norm. The thesis, with some subsequent extension, will be published as the second paper in the present series on the development of literary form, but the following extracts will show the general character of the results obtained. The exhibit includes per cent of predications, per cent of simple sentences, and per cent of predications avoided through use of present participles, past participles, and appositives. The authors are arranged according to per cent of predications.

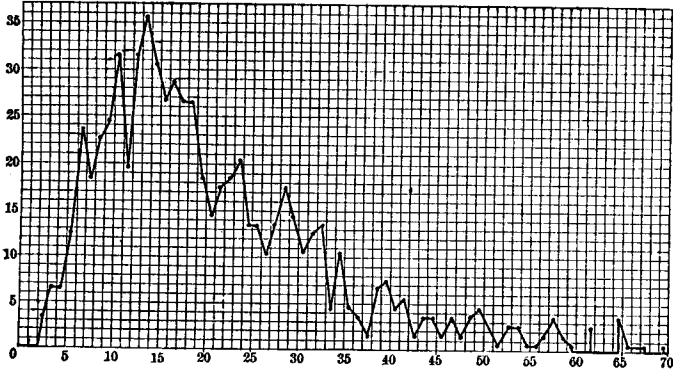
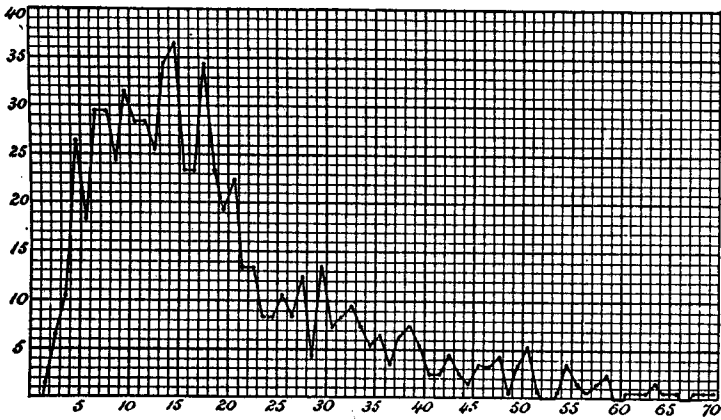
	Periods	Per cent. pred.	Per cent. sim. sent's	Per cent. clauses saved	Pres. Partc.	Past Partc.	Appositives
Spenser (<i>View of S. of I.</i>)	1069	5.44	8	6.74	23.5	15.5	.3
Chaucer (<i>Melibeus</i>) . . .	480	5.25	4	1.02	3.2	1.9	.4
Dryden (<i>Dramatic Poesy</i>)	521	4.89	6	4.88	17.4	7.6	1.1
Milton (<i>Areopagitica</i>) . . .	500	4.87	6	9.31	31.6	17.2	.4
Hooker (<i>Eccles. Polity</i>) . . .	500	4.12	12	8.73	28.6	10.8	0.
Sidney (<i>Defence of Poesy</i>)	473	3.98	10	9.27	22.6	15.2	.6
Bolingbroke (<i>S. of History</i>)	500	3.72	13	3.46	2.8	9.6	1.2
De Quincey (<i>Opium Eater</i>)	500	3.69	14	5.48	9.1	11.4	.2
Ruskin (<i>Sesame and Lilies</i>)	718	3.50	18	6.63	13.3	10.1	1.
Bacon (<i>Essays</i>)	500	3.12	19	2.87	6.6	2.6	0.
Newman (<i>Apologia</i>)	500	2.96	16	4.34	7.4	6.4	.2
Channing (<i>Self-Culture</i>)	500	2.56	31	5.82	6.8	7.4	1.4
Lowell (<i>Lessing</i>)	500	2.52	23	5.78	7.4	5.8	3.
Everett (<i>Poetry, Comedy, and Duty</i>)	500	2.39	32	3.55	4.8	3.2	.8
Grant (<i>Memoirs</i>)	500	2.34	31	8.93	12.5	9.	1.8
Emerson (<i>History, Friendship</i>)	500	2.26	37	3.81	3.	5.6	.6
Macaulay (<i>Essay on Hist.</i>)	722	2.18	40	4.90	3.	7.	12.
Bartol (<i>Radical Problems</i>)	462	1.97	45	8.8	14.7	3.	.9



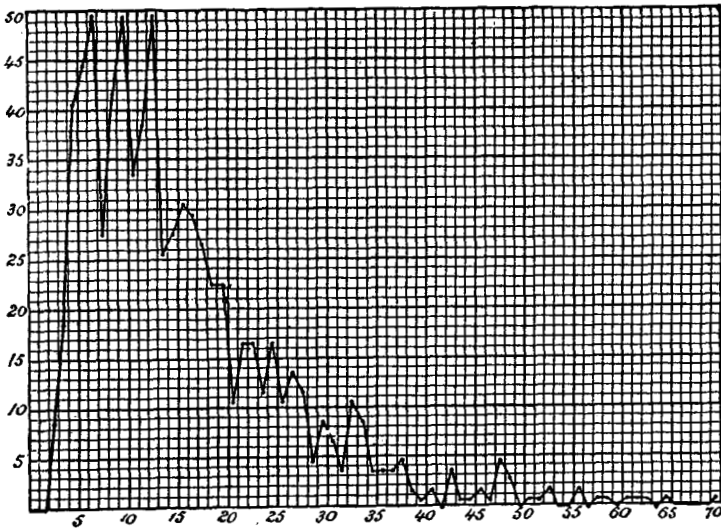
Here was evidence in plenty of a systematic decrease in sentence length and weight. That the principle at work was something more than economy of effort in sentence-making seemed clear. The goal of the development was the everyday oral sentence structure. On reaching that the decrease in predication and sentence weight would doubtless cease. Here then was apparently the explanation of the mystery found in Macaulay's style as exhibited on p. 18. The short analytic sentences were of the conversational kind; the long counterbalancing periods were of the book sort, that had made our earlier prosaists so hard to read. The real interpretation of the results thus far might be summarized in the observation that the oral sentence-sense was fast prevailing over the literary sentence form. Proof of this was best exhibited by gathering together periods of the same length in the authors examined. The change from De Quincey to Channing, for instance, is exhibited in the diagrams, on the page opposite, of their respective summaries from pp. 3 and 6, 7.

The figures at the side of these and following diagrams indicate the number of times sentences of a given length occur; those at the bottom of the plates the number of words in sentences. The exhibit from Channing covers the 750 periods of *Self-culture*, except two, one of 187 words and one of 109, the former of which could not be shown upon a practicable scale. The curve of De Quincey includes, in addition to the 500 periods exhibited on page 3, the next 200, for fair comparison with authors following. From the latter diagram eight periods—of 102, 105, 141, 110, 114, 125, 176, 114 words respectively—have been perforce excluded.

In marked contrast with the preceding we may compare the following curves respectively from Macaulay and Emerson. These show their sentence length of maximum frequency as determined from the periods given on pp. 4, 5 and 8, 9. Of sentences containing more than seventy words, ten are here omitted from Macaulay, and seven from Emerson.

MACAULAY: *Essay on History.*EMERSON: *American Scholar; Divinity School Address.*

It will at once be noted how much heavier is the bulk of Emerson's sentences in lengths from 3 to 10 than Macaulay's. But compare (pp. 10, 11) Bartol's.



BARTOL: Radicalism; Father Taylor.

What, then, was the meaning of the decrease in predications and sentence lengths now shown? They seemed to indicate pretty clearly the trend of rhetorical progress in modern days. It is of the essence of the times to covet high culture, but not to exploit it. Men are becoming more and more specialistic, but less and less professional. Some of the most polished of present stylists studiously eschew seeming better than conversational writers. The style of the future is likely to be yet more informal and easy than the best examples of this sort now extant. It will not probably abound in numerical averages as low as Bartol's or Emerson's, and will be less disjointed and staccato. An informal organic sentence need not be long, but must not be weighed down with predications. Effective individual styles not hard to find in the periodical literature of these days will average perhaps as high as twenty words of numerical length, yet show not above 1.60 predications per sentence, nor less than 65 per cent of simple sentences.

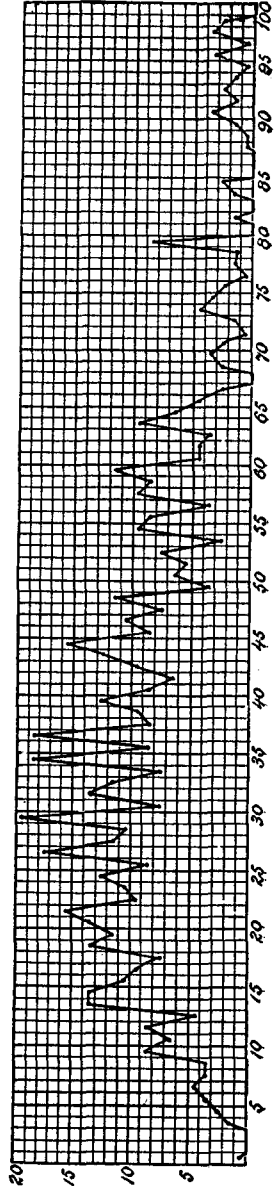
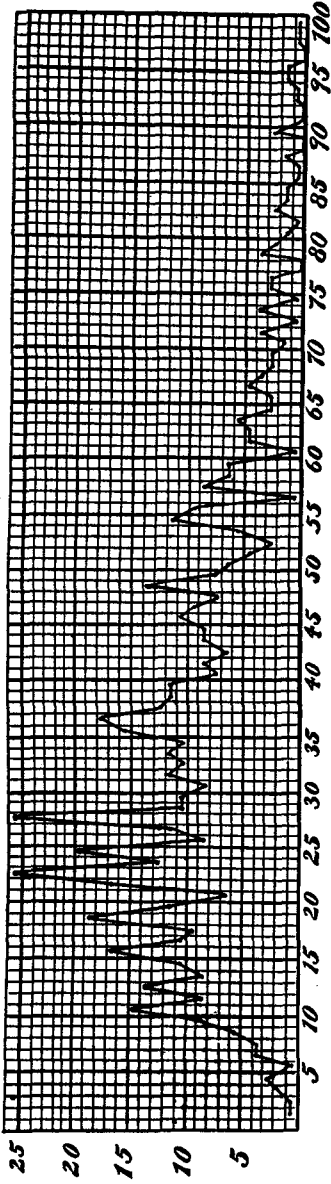
Hence the exhibits from Emerson and Bartol indicate rather revolutionary or transitional than final forms. As has been already pointed out, the development is most assuredly not headed towards laconism and sentences averaging each three words or less, but towards the most organic and perfect oral norm. That reached, men will write, — at least in sentence structure, — essentially as they speak, and the gap between written and spoken English, except in vocabulary, will be closed up. The practice of dictating to stenographers and the increasing personal use of type-writers by professional authors are unmistakably aiding and hastening this consummation.¹

The principal difference between the oral and the literary sentence is the greater heaviness of the latter. Much of the matter in books, which inexpert readers find either unintelligible or 'dry,' is wholly within the range of their experience or knowledge, and could be made edifying to them if told by word of mouth, or rewritten in oral sentences. We must be careful to distinguish here between *heaviness* and *weight*. A man who usually talks in very easy sentences may, in course of a knotty argument, stiffen his periods very appreciably. His sentences for the time being may be weighty, but unless containing more predications than necessary will not be heavy. Heaviness can be properly applied only to what is burdensome, and, in styles, only to what requires conscious effort in the reading. Weighty meaning need not therefore be heavy; and very frequently heavy compositions do not contain meaning of much weight. Popularly speaking, we of course use 'weight' for 'heaviness' without much risk of ambiguity, and in best styles have little occasion to employ it in any other sense. There are fortunately in this generation few writers of the first class who do not succeed, like the best French stylists, in so casting strong meaning in light clauses as to keep the reader unaware

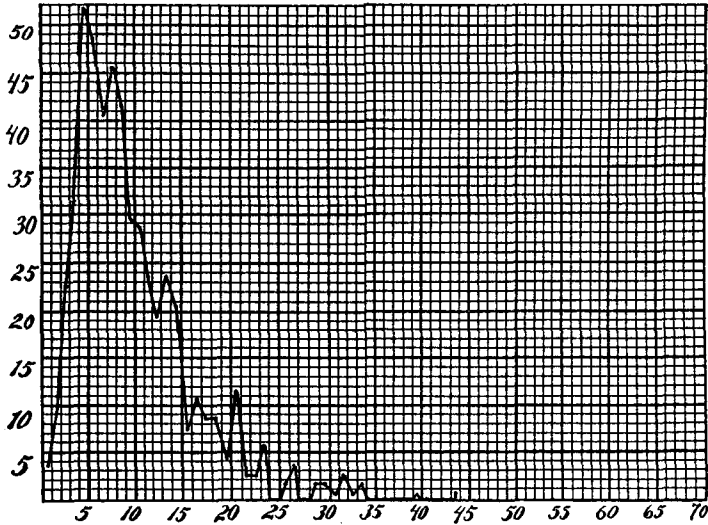
¹ A somewhat fuller, though elementary, discussion of the differences between oral and written English, along lines here suggested, has been attempted by the author in Chapter XXIV. of his *Analytics of Literature*; Boston, 1892.

of their real weight. Also there are unfortunately too many writers of the second or third class who may warrantably remind us of the sixteenth century prosaists. But perhaps the best examples of heavy writing are to be found among the early compositions of high-school and college students. It would be hard to say whence they derive the synthetic sentence sense evinced in first attempts at literary English. What makes short-period styles is the oral sentence-sense given free play as in ordinary informal talk. The prime difficulty encountered by teachers of composition is in making students give up their stiff, elephantine sentences and write simply, in plain mother tongue phrases and terms. The whole of our rhetorical education — after we have learned to speak correctly — is often nothing but the process of taming and subduing our literary sentence-sense to practicable oral standards.

Heaviness, then, is a relative term. The styles of those who, like Newman, address the educated exclusively, will not be heavy to their proper public, though unintelligible to common readers. Hooker is to-day hard reading for the audience which Newman addresses, but was apparently not heavy to his own narrower circle. The relative heaviness of Hooker and Newman is seen by comparison from the table, p. 21, of their respective per cents of predications and of clauses saved. Hooker has perhaps a slight advantage over Newman in preponderance of oral sentences, as would appear from the diagrams (p. 28), of the sentence lengths respectively from the First Book of the *Polity*, and a corresponding portion (first 700 periods) from the *Idea of a University*. As we descend to popular literature, the sentence of maximum frequency grows shorter and shorter, reaches approximately in Macaulay the oral length, and later passes considerably below. For it is evident that literary purveyors of the *Fire-side Companion* order would hardly succeed in working off such enormous editions if the style they write in were not less 'heavy' than ordinary talk. The readers of such literature are either boys not yet equal to the sentence weight



of the 'Oliver Optic' novels, or unprivileged older intellects that never will feel quite at home with ordinary newspaper English. Hence we shall not be surprised to find *five* as the sentence length of maximum occurrence, through 500 periods, in a story in *Saturday Night*, — as this diagram will show.



The analysis, therefore, which was begun so idly and inconsequentially, had little by little suggested conclusions of some moment. It had indicated the course of sentential simplification, as also the inorganic conditions which had made simplification necessary. The influence of classical learning had the effect of fastening a heavy unoral diction upon the English literary world. From that the race has been slowly but effectually liberating itself; so that we are to-day almost emancipated from mediævalism in literature as in all things else. We have nearly unlearned how to write in ponderous bookish wise, and nearly learned how to be as natural with the pen as with the voice. Moreover, while we have been lowering our sentence proportions to something like normal spoken forms, there are writers who are

carrying the movement to an extreme. What the oral sentence average with best speakers is it would be unsafe to say until considerable investigation has been made upon that point, — probably not much above or under twelve words.

After the objective plan had been tried with the above effect, it was applied further upon prose elements and usages with results that can be only enumerated here. It was quickly apparent that our literary prose had passed variously through a coördinating, a subordinating, and a suppressive stage, — just as each child learns to speak, and later to write, its mother English. The first articulate sentences of children are strung together by *ands*. At the age of eight or earlier, they begin to subordinate unimportant predications by the use of *because*, or *if*, or *when*, and like connectives. Finally, at twelve or over, they will have learned to dispense with a good share of their predicatives, by leaving conjunctions without verb, or by participial or absolute constructions. The fact last named cleared up also the remnant of the mystery concerning decrease in sentence weight. The same method of search for elements, and of development through them, was applied to the poetic side of our literature with not less success. It was quickly demonstrated that the peculiar richness of Keats' and Shelley's poetry is due to the abounding use of phrases, — these the product of a long development, — and that Shakespeare's as well as Tennyson's and Browning's power lies chiefly in their use of allegoric thoughts condensed to single terms. The other Teutonic literatures were found to exhibit also a like course of development and like results. A provisional and pedagogic treatment of the principles just designated has been given in Chapters VIII.—X., and XX.—XXIII. of the work already mentioned; but complete investigation is in progress by competent hands.