

fulfil the promise of your outset, the pleasing surprise which you gave them in commencing will not cause them to pardon you the disappointment.¹

From these rules you will easily infer that the introduction must be short, relatively to the whole sermon. A long and ambitious *exordium* is ruinous to all subsequent effect. It wastes time; it consumes the preacher's strength; it exhausts the sensibility of the people before the stage of the sermon for which it is needed. Young writers are usually inclined to dilate too much upon their preliminary topics. This is because they are zealous for thoroughness, and being inexperienced in the work of composition, they do not know how largely the whole discourse will grow upon their hands, when amplified in the same proportion. It is far better to abridge the introductory parts than to be compelled, by an ill-judged waste of time there, to mar the more important thoughts near the close. For this, as well as other reasons, it is well that the young preacher should not attempt to write his introduction until the discussion has been either written, or at least expanded in the mind.²

¹ Horace Ep. ad Pisones, lines 136-145 :

“Nec si incipies ut scriptor cyclicus olim;
 ‘Fortunam Priami cantalo et nobile bellum.’
 Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatu?
 Parturiunt monotes, nascetur ridiculus mus.
 Quanto rectius hic, qui nil molitur inepte:
 ‘Dic mihi, Musa, virum captæ post tempora Trojæ,
 Qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes.’
 Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem,
 Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat,
 Antiphatem, Scyllamque, et cum Cyclope Charybdin.”

² Cicero de Or. L. ii., c. 77, § 315. “Hisce omnibus rebus conside-