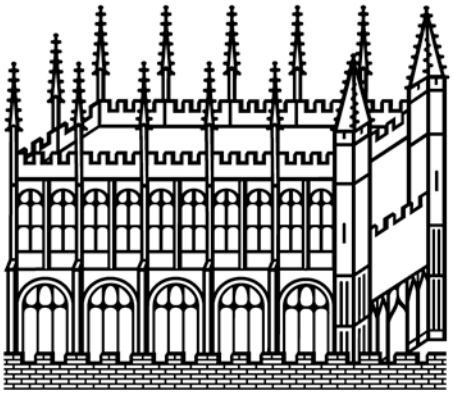

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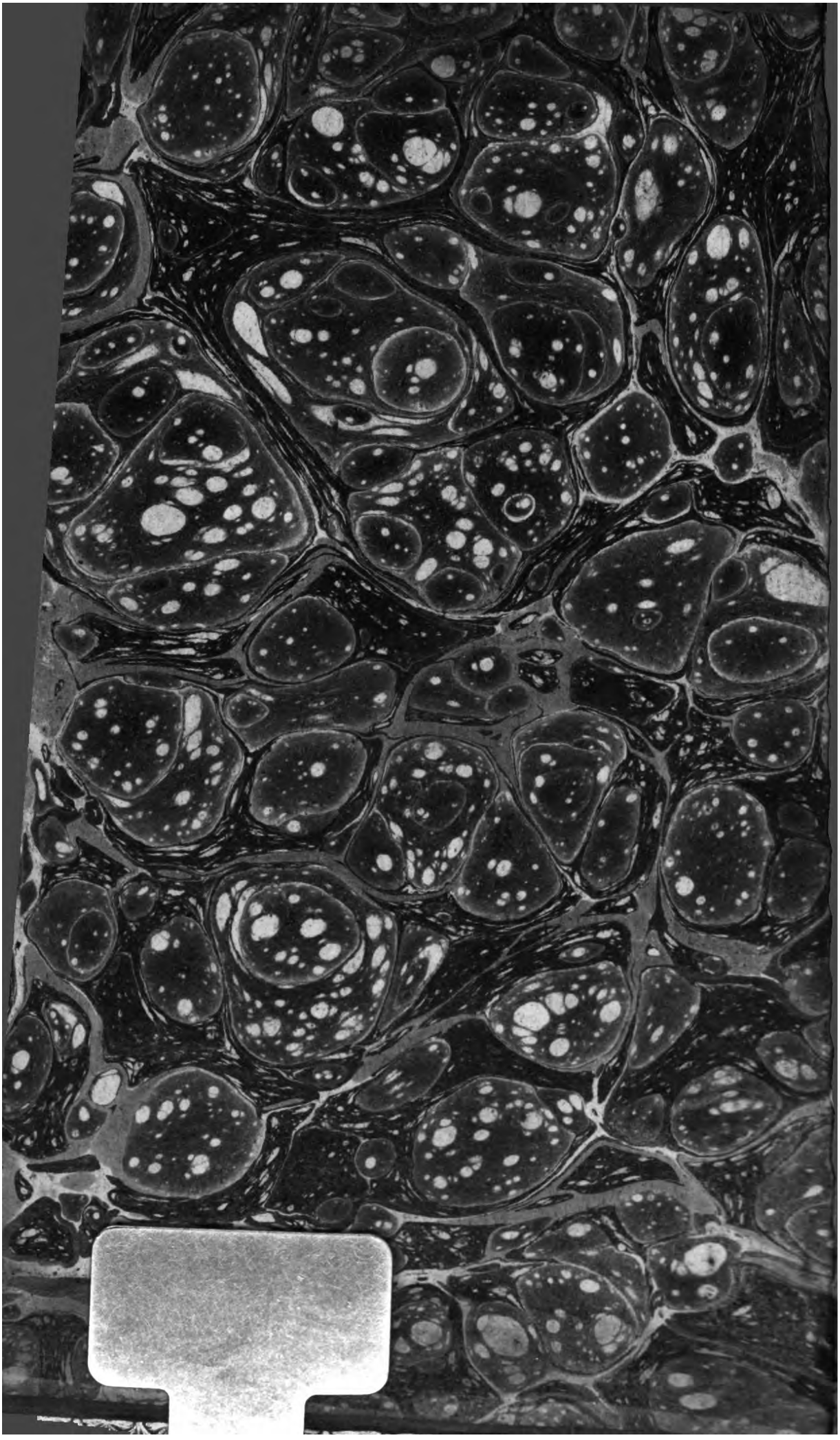

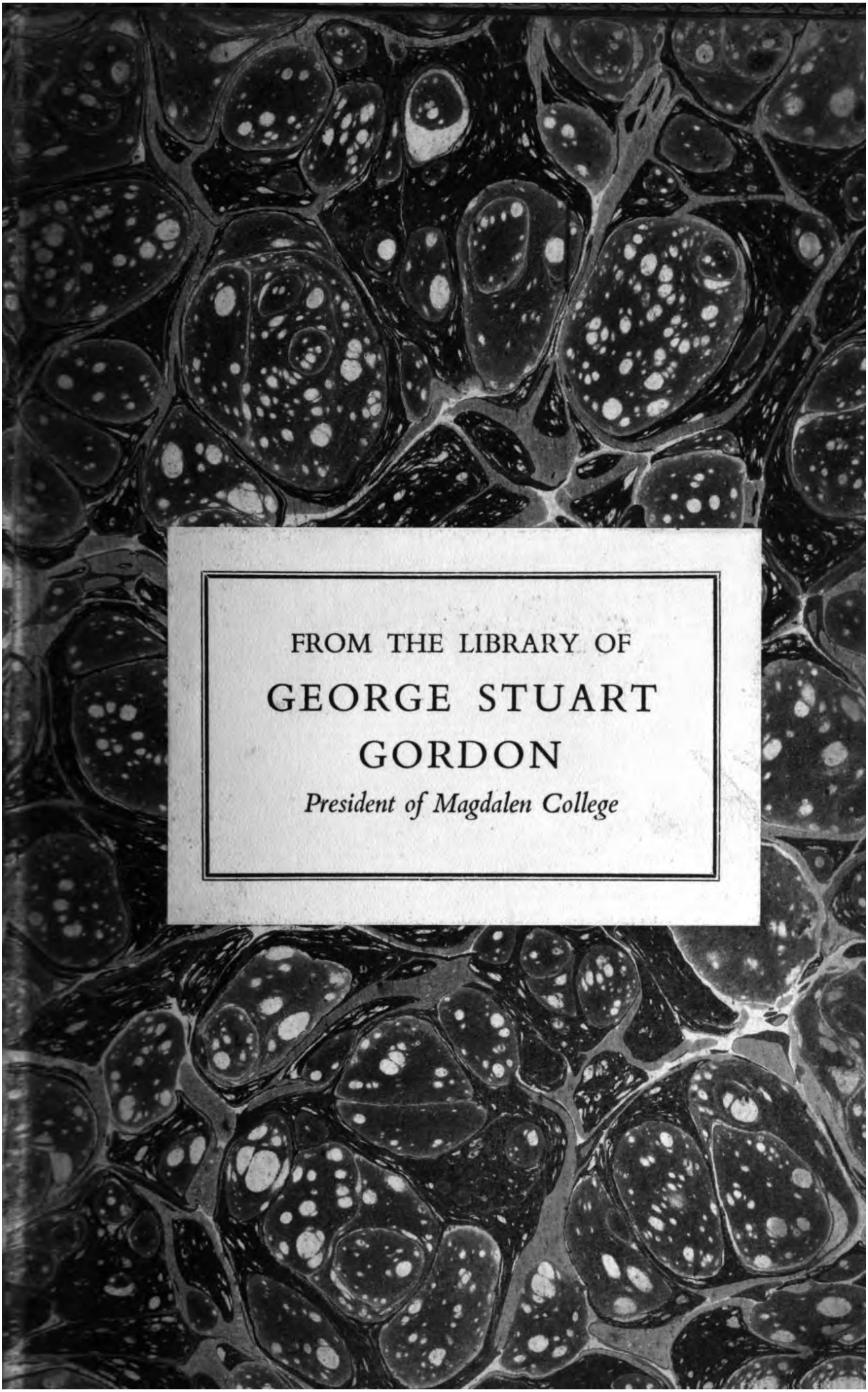
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TATLER, SPECTATOR,

AND

GUARDIAN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY S. WHITTINGHAM,

DEAN STREET;

FOR JOHN SHARPE, OPPOSITE YORK HOUSE,

PICCADILLY.

1804.

ESSAYS,

BIOGRAPHICAL, CRITICAL, AND HISTORICAL,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE

TATLER, SPECTATOR,

AND

GUARDIAN.

BY NATHAN DRAKE, M. D.

AUTHOR OF LITERARY HOURS, &c.

Modestè tamen et circumspecto judicio de tantis viris pronuntiandum est.

QUINTILIANUS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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CONTENTS.

VOL. II.

PART III.

Page

Essay 2. On the Progress and Merits of English Style, and on the Style of Addison in particular 1

Essay 3. On the Critical Abilities and Taste of Addison 117

Essay 4. On the Humour and Comic Painting of Addison..... 168

Essay 5. On the Fable, Imagery, and Allegory of Addison 219

Essay 6. On the Moral Tendency of the Periodical Writings of Addison 319

ESSAYS,

BIOGRAPHICAL, CRITICAL, AND HISTORICAL.

PART III.

ESSAY II.

ON THE PROGRESS AND MERITS OF ENGLISH STYLE, AND ON THE STYLE OF ADDISON IN PARTICULAR.

In a work, the chief purpose of which is to illustrate the periodical writings of the BRITISH CLASSICAL ESSAYISTS, the consideration of STYLE must necessarily hold an important rank; and it is my wish that these volumes should include a satisfactory account of its progress, and its different stages. Without such a detail, and a series of quotations to define the actual state of style in successive periods, it will be impossible to appreciate the gradual improvements of the language, or to ascertain the peculiar merits, in this respect,

of those classics which more immediately fall within our province.

To carry this plan into effectual execution, it will be proper to commence at that era when composition assumed some degree of polish and grammatical precision; to trace it thence in all its ameliorations to the pages of Addison, and, after dwelling at some length upon this elegant author, to continue the research, in a succeeding volume, through that long chasm which occurs between the close of the *Guardian* and the appearance of the *Rambler*, a production which forms a new epoch in our style, and whence the series of our Essayists, and the chain of composition, remain uninterrupted and entire.

By the almost unanimous suffrage of criticism, the age of Queen Elizabeth has been fixed upon as the period when our language, shaking off with gigantic strength the incumbrances of rude antiquity, first developed its powers, and asserted its pretensions to classical estimation. "From the authors which rose in the time of Elizabeth," observes Johnson, "a speech might be formed, adequate to all the purposes of use and elegance. If the language of theology were extracted from *Hooker* and the translation of the Bible; the terms of natural knowledge from *Bacon;* the phrases of policy, war, and navigation, from *Ra-*

leigh; the dialect of poetry and fiction from *Spenser* and *Sidney*; and the diction of common life from *Shakspeare,* few ideas would be lost to mankind, for want of English words, in which they might be expressed *."

This eulogium, however, is excessive; for, though the writers of the Elizabethan age merit much praise for the improvements which they effected in the diction of their fathers, they are still, in their prose compositions, abundantly quaint, uncouth, and tedious. They pared away, it is true, a considerable portion of the heavy matter which clogged the periods of their predecessors; but they preserved a quantity frequently sufficient to obscure their meaning, and to render their productions, to readers of the present day, almost insufferably prolix.

To this superabundance of materials, to the adoption of twenty words where ten would better answer the purpose, was added another defect more radically injurious to the genius and idiom of our language. Enraptured with the writings of pagan antiquity, which were *then* studied with uncommon ardour, and with all the intoxication of a first attachment, the literati of that day were not content with a profuse introduction of classical allusion, quotation, and my-

* Preface to his Dictionary.

thology, but they rashly endeavoured to mould the very structure of the English language, in conformity to that of Greece and Rome. The consequence of this absurd attempt was a very frequent use of the most violent inversions, totally foreign to our idiom, and which imparted to composition an air of barbarous and pedantic stiffness.

These defects, the natural consequence, perhaps, of a peculiar state of literature, must for ever preclude the authors of Elizabeth's reign from being deemed models of style. To their efforts, however, much good may be attributed; the public mind was awakened to a sense of the copiousness, the energy, and strength of its native tongue; the very faults to which we have alluded exhibited these qualities in a remarkable degree; and a wish to polish and refine, to cut off superfluities, and to render diction perspicuous, was soon after displayed, and produced a more accurate attention to selection of words and harmony of arrangement.

We shall begin our *series* of instances from the middle of Elizabeth's reign, dividing it into three periods; the first extending from 1580 to the restoration in 1660; the second from the restoration to the accession of Queen Anne, in 1702; and the third from this last era to the year 1714,

when ADDISON had published his best productions.

On this plan, the first author of consequence who presents himself, is the heroic SIR PHILIP SIDNEY. Having in 1580 quarrelled with Edward Vere Earl of Oxford, who, from his union with the daughter of Lord Treasurer Cecil, had great influence with the Queen, he retired from court, and during this recess employed his leisure in the composition of a romance, which, under the appellation of *Arcadia,* was published in 1590, about four years after his decease.

Sir Philip was the most elegant and accomplished character of his day; as a soldier and a scholar he was deemed unrivalled; and the style in which his works are written was considered by his contemporaries as singularly polished and perfect. The following are favourable specimens of the composition of his once celebrated Arcadia, which has undergone fourteen editions, and has prefixed to it not less than forty encomia, all, except one, in Latin verse, from the principal literary characters of the period:

" But within som dayes after, the marriage betweene *Argalus* and the fair *Parthenia* being to bee celebrated, *Daiphantus* and *Palladius* selling som of their jewels, furnished themselves of very fair apparel, meaning to do honor to their loving host;

who as much for their sakes, as for their marriage, set forth each thing in most gorgeous manner. But all the cost bestowed did not so much enrich, nor all the fine decking so much beautifie, nor all the daintie devices so much delight, as the fairness of Parthenia, the pearl of all the maids of Mantinea: who as shee went to the temple, wherein love and beautie were married; *her lips, though they were kept close with modest silence, yet with a pretty kinde of natural swelling, they seemed to invite the guests that look't on them; her cheeks blushing, and withal, when shee was spoken unto, a little smiling, were like roses, when their leaves are with a little breath stirred* *."

The imagery in the lines marked by Italics is peculiarly beautiful, nor is the preceding part by any means so quaint and uncouth as the general style of the Arcadia. An ampler extract, however, will be necessary to enable the reader to ascertain the merits and defects of the composition. For this purpose I have selected a description of a stag-chase:

"Then went they together abroad, the good Kalander entertaining them with pleasant discoursing, how well hee loved the sport of hunting when hee was a young man, how much, in the comparison thereof, hee disdained all cham-

* Arcadia, tenth edition, 1655, p. 30.

ber delights, that the sun, how great a journey soever hee had to make, could never prevent him with earliness, nor the moon, with her sober countenance, dissuade him from watching till midnight for the deer's feeding! O, said hee, you will never live to my age, without you keep yourselves in breath with exercise, and in heart with joifulness: too much thinking doth consume the spirits; and oft it falls out, that while one thinks too much of his doing, hee leavs to do the effect of his thinking. Then spared hee not to remember, how much *Arcadia* was changed since his youth: activitie and good fellowship beeing nothing in the price it was then held in; but, according to the nature of the old-growing world, still wors and wors. Then would hee tell them stories of such gallants as hee had known: and so with pleasant companie beguiled the time's haste, and shortned the waie's length, till they came to the side of the wood, where the hounds were in couples staying their coming, but with a whining accent craving libertie; many of them in color and marks so resembling, that it shewed they were of one kinde. The huntsmen handsomely attired in their green liveries, as though they were children of summer, with staves in their hands, to beat the guiltless earth, when the hounds were at a fault, and with

horns about their necks, to sound an alarum upon a silly fugitive: the hounds were straight uncoupled; and ere long the stag thought it better to trust to the nimbleness of his feet, then to the slender fortification of his lodging: but even his feet betraied him; for howsoever they went, they themselvs uttered themselvs to the sent of their enemies; who, one taking it of another, and somtimes believing the winde's advertisement, sometimes the view of (their faithful counsellors) the huntsmen, with open mouths then denounced war, when the war was already begun; their crie being composed of so well-sorted mouths, that any man would perceive therein som kinde of proportion, but the skilful woodmen did finde a musicke. Then delight and varietie of opinion drew the horsemen sundry waies, yet cheering their hounds with voice and horn, kept still (as it were) together. The wood seemed to conspire with them against his own citizens, dispersing their nois through all his quarters, and even the nymph *Echo* left to bewail the loss of *Narcissus*, and became a hunter. But the stag was in the end so hotly pursued, that (leaving his flight) hee was driven to make courage of despair; and so turning his head, made the houndes with change of speech to testifie that hee was at a bay: as if from hot pur-

suit of their enemie, they were suddenly come to a parley.

"But *Kalander* (by his skill of coasting the countrie) was amongst the first that came into the besieged deer; whom when some of the younger sort would have killed with their swords, hee would not suffer: but with a cross-bow sent a death to the poor beast, who with tears shewed the unkindness hee took of man's crueltie *."

Few, if any, amongst the most eager of the numerous class of romance readers of the present century would find it possible to wade through a thick folio of such composition as this. However distinguished Sir Philip Sidney might be for the manly beauty of his person and the heroism of his character, his literary productions are unfortunately remarkable for little else than their feebleness, tautology, and conceit. Here, however, occur no phrases which are not genuine English; no *sesquipedalia verba*, no words of a foot and a half long, and few inversions or deviations from the idiom of the language. Coldness and puerility of conception, and, with few exceptions, a total want of energy and compression in the style, are the defects which have hurried the *Arcadia* into oblivion.

Far superior to Sir Philip Sidney in every re-

* Lib. i. p. 34.

quisite for good composition, the venerable HOOKER claims the highest station among the writers of Elizabeth's reign. If his language abound too much in inversions, it yet possesses a dignity and force, and in general an attention to grammatical accuracy, hitherto unknown to our literature. Even in the present day it may be read and admired: Lowth has spoken highly of its merits; and Webb in his *Literary Amusements* thus beautifully expresses his opinion:

> Come, Hooker, with thee let me dwell on a phrase
> Uncorrupted by wit, unambitious of praise:
> Thy language is chaste, without aims or pretence;
> 'Tis a sweetness of breath from a soundness of sense.

The style of Hooker, however, is not without some striking defects: though the words for the most part are well chosen and pure, the arrangement of them into sentences is intricate and harsh, and formed almost exclusively on the idiom and construction of the Latin. Much strength and vigour are derived from this adoption; but perspicuity, sweetness, and ease are too generally sacrificed. There is, notwithstanding these usual features of his composition, an occasional simplicity in his pages, both of style and sentiment, which truly charms.

The opening of the preface to his Ecclesiastical

Polity is a striking instance of that elaborate collocation, which, founded on the structure of a language widely different from our own, was now the fashion of the age:

"Though for no other cause, yet for this, that posterity may know we have not loosely, through silence, permitted things to pass away as in a dream, there shall be, for men's information, extant this much concerning the present state of the church of God established amongst us, and their careful endeavours which would have upheld the same."

It is not, however, in every page that this forced construction is to be met with; as a specimen of style not very uncommon in the works of Hooker, and approaching much nearer to the idiom of his native tongue, the following passage may be adduced:

"Death is that which all men suffer, but not all men with one mind, neither all men in one manner. For being of necessity a thing common, it is through the manifold persuasions, dispositions, and occasions of men, with equal desert both of praise and dispraise, shunned by some, by others desired. So that absolutely we cannot discommend, we cannot absolutely approve, either willingness to live, or forwardness to die.

And concerning the ways of death, albeit the choice thereof be only in his hands, who alone hath power over all flesh, and unto whose appointment we ought with patience meekly to submit ourselves (for to be agents voluntarily in our own destruction, is against both God and nature); yet there is no doubt, but in so great variety, our desires will and may lawfully prefer one kind before another. Is there any man of worth and virtue, although not instructed in the school of Christ, or ever taught what the soundness of religion meaneth, that had not rather end the days of this transitory life, as *Cyrus* in Xenophon, or in Plato Socrates, are described, than to sink down with them, of whom *Elihu* hath said, *Momento moriuntur*, there is scarce an instant between their flourishing and not being? But let us which know what it is to die, as Absalon, or Ananias and Sapphira died; let us beg of God, that when the hour of our rest is come, the patterns of our dissolution may be Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David; who, leisureably ending their lives in peace, prayed for the mercies of God to come upon their posterity; replenished the hearts of the nearest unto them with words of memorable consolation; strengthened men in the fear of God, gave them wholesome instructions of life, and confirmed

them in true religion; in sum, taught the world no less virtuously how to die, than they had done before how to live *."

Of the occasional sublimity and beauty both in thought and diction, which enliven the folio of Hooker, some evidence may be deemed necessary. I therefore bring forward the annexed sentence, as a proof of energy and felicity of construction inferior to no subsequent attempts:

" Of law, there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world. All things in heaven and earth do her homage; the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power. Both angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy †."

The ease, simplicity, and sweetness, which mark the diction of the next example, together with the exquisite sentiment which terminates it, cannot be sufficiently admired. Soliciting the archbishop for retirement from the temple for the purpose of study, he observes,

" I have searched many books, and spent many thoughtful hours; and I hope not in vain; for I

* Book v. p. 250, edition of 1682. † Vide p. 103.

write to reasonable men. But, my lord, I shall never be able to finish what I have begun, unless I be removed into some quiet country parsonage, where I may see God's blessings spring out of my mother earth, and eat mine own bread in peace and privacy *."

From a contemporary author of higher rank, and of eminent knowledge of the world, the celebrated but unfortunate SIR WALTER RALEIGH, a style more consonant to the genius of the language, and approximating nearer to present usage, may naturally be expected. "Raleigh," remarks Hume, "is the best model of that ancient style, which some writers would affect to revive at present." The observation is well founded; the diction of Raleigh is more pure and perspicuous, and more free from inversions, than that of any other writer of the age of Elizabeth or James the First. A couple of extracts from his great work, "The History of the World," which was published in April 1614, will fully confirm this opinion. He thus describes the passage of Xerxes over the Hellespont, when marching against the liberties of Greece:

"He gave order, that a bridge upon boats

* Walton's Life of Hooker, prefixed to the Ecclesiastical Polity, p. 17.

should be made over the *Hellespont* between *Abidus* and *Sestos*, the sea there having a mile of breadth, wanting an eighth part; which, after the finishing, was by a tempest torn asunder and dissevered: whereupon *Xerxes*, being more enraged than discouraged, commanded those to be slain that were masters of the work, and caused six hundred threescore and fourteen gallies to be coupled together, thereon to frame a new bridge; which, by the art and industry of the Phenicians, was so well anchored to resist both winds blowing into and from the *Euxine* sea, as the same being well boarded and railed, the whole army of seventeen hundred thousand foot, and fourscore thousand horse, with all the mules and carriages, passed over it into *Europe* in seven days and seven nights, without intermission. This transportation of armies did *Cæsar* afterwards use; and Caligula, that mad emperor, in imitation of Xerxes' bridge, did build the like.

"The bridge finished, and the army brought near to the sea-side, Xerxes took a view of all his troops, assembled in the plains of *Abidus*, being carried up, and seated on a place over-topping the land round about it, and the sea adjoining: and after he had gloried in his own happiness, to behold and command so many nations, and so powerful an army and fleet, he sud-

denly (notwithstanding) burst out into tears, moved with this contemplation, that in one hundred years there should not any one survive of that marvellous multitude *."

In relating the fatal battle of Cannæ, Sir Walter has given the following picture of the Consul Æmilius, which I have selected, as it introduces an act of high heroism drawn from the annals of our native country:

"Æmilius—who could not sit his horse, whilst the battle yet lasted, and whilst the spaces were somewhat open, by which he might have withdrawn himself, was now (had he never so well been mounted) unable to fly, having in his way so close a throng of his own miserable followers, and so many heaps of bodies as fell apace in that great carnage. It sufficeth unto his honour, that in the battle he fought no less valiantly, than he had warily before both abstained himself, and dissuaded his fellow-consul from fighting at all. If, when the day was utterly lost, it had lain in his power to save his own life, unto the good of his country, never more needing it; I should

* Book iii. Sect. 2. p. 404. I quote from the eleventh edition of the History of the World, published in London in 1736, in two volumes folio, and which, though accurately printed as to matter, from a copy revised by Sir Walter himself, has injudiciously adopted the modern orthography.

think that he either too much disesteemed himself, or, being too faintly minded, was weary of the world, and his unthankful citizens. But if such a resolution were praise-worthy in *Æmilius*, as proceeding out of *Roman* valour, then was the *English* virtue of the Lord *John Talbot*, viscount *Lisle*, son to that famous Earl of *Shrewsbury*, who died in the battle of Chastillon, more highly to be honoured. For Æmilius was old, grievously, if not mortally wounded, and accountable for the overthrow received; *Talbot* was in the flower of his youth, unhurt, easily able to have escaped, and not answerable for that day's misfortune, when he refused to forsake his father; who foreseeing the loss of the battle, and not meaning to stain his actions past by flying in his old age, exhorted this his noble son to be gone and leave him *."

The next character who demands our notice in the history of style, is the founder of genuine philosophy, the immortal BACON, who has been almost as much celebrated for his diction, as his matter. Ben Jonson affirms, "that he may be named and stand as the mark and acme of our language †." Addison, in the Tatler, N° 267, declares that he had "all the beautiful lights, graces,

* Book 5. Section 8. p. 626.

† Discoveries, Whalley's Edition, vol. vii. p. 100.

and embellishments of Cicero. One does not know," says he, " which to admire most in his writings, the strength of reason, *force of style*, or brightness of imagination;" and Lord Orrery, at a much later period, is of opinion, that " Lord Bacon is the first author who has attempted any style that can be relishable to the present age*."

That the composition of Lord Bacon, especially in his scientific works, was in general perspicuous, will not be denied; but that he reached the acme of our language, and exhibited the graces of Cicero, is surely hyperbolical praise. Hume, though he possessed not a due esteem for the intellectual powers of Bacon, has given, perhaps, no unjust description of his style; " he possessed not," says he, " the elegance of his native tongue; his style is stiff and rigid." The latter part of this censure will certainly apply to the major portion of his historical and miscellaneous productions, which are frequently very quaint and pedantic; but will not, I think, attach to his English philosophical works. In these, a plain but manly eloquence is often to be found; and the following passage from his admirable books on the Advancement of Learning, where nume-

* Remarks on the Life and Writings of Swift, p. 234, edit. 1752.

rous pages equally well written occur, will, I have no doubt, confirm the assertion:

"It is an assured truth, and a conclusion of experience, that a little or superficial knowledge of philosophy may incline the minde of man to atheisme; but a farther proceeding therein doth bring the minde backe againe to religion: for in the entrance of philosophy, when the second causes, which are next unto the senses, doe offer themselves to the minde of man, if it dwell and stay there, it may induce some oblivion of the highest cause; but when a man passeth on farther, and seeth the dependance of causes, and the workes of providence, then, according to the allegory of the poets, hee will easily beleeve that the highest linke of nature's chayne must needs be tyed to the foot of *Jupiter*'s chayre. To conclude, therefore, let no man upon a weake conceite of sobriety, or an ill applyed moderation, thinke or maintaine, that a man can search too farre, or be too well studied in the *Booke of God's word*, or in the *Booke of God's workes*; divinity or philosophy; but rather let men endeavour an endlesse progresse, or proficience in both: only let men beware that they apply both to charity, and not to swelling; to use, and not to ostentation; and againe, that they doe not un-

wisely mingle, or confound these learnings together *."

Of the miscellaneous productions of Lord Bacon, the *Essays, Civil and Moral,* are beyond comparison the most valuable. No book contains a greater fund of useful knowledge, or displays a more intimate acquaintance with human life and manners. The style, however, is not pleasing; it is devoid of melody and simplicity, and the sentences are too short and antithetic. I insert a portion of his essay on *studies* as a specimen.

" Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chiefe use for delight, is in privatenesse and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgement and disposition of businesse. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the generall counsels, and the plots, and marshalling of affaires, come best from those that are *learned.* To spend too much time in studies, is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgement wholly by their rules is the humour of a scholler. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that

* Of the Advancement of Learning, p. 11, 12, 4to. 1633.

need proyning by *study:* and studies themselves, doe give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemne studies; simple men admire them; and wise men use them: for they teach not their owne use; but that is a wisdome without them, and above them, won by observation. Reade not to contradict, and confute; nor to beleeve and take for granted; nor to finde talke and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some bookes are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested: that is, some *bookes* are to be read only in parts; others to be read but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. *Some bookes* also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others: but that would be, onely in the lesse important arguments, and the meane sort of *bookes;* else distilled bookes, are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, hee had need have a great memory; if hee conferre little, hee had need have a present wit; and if he reade little, he had need have much cunning, to seeme to know that, hee doth not. *Histories* make men wise; *poets* witty; the *mathematicks* subtill; *na-*

tural philosophy deepe; *morall* grave; *logicke* and *rhetorick* able to contend *."

One of the most entertaining and popular writers of the reign of James the First, was ROBERT BURTON, the author of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, which was first published in 1617, in quarto, and afterwards underwent so many editions in folio, as to prove a capital estate to the bookseller. Burton was a man of great learning and ingenuity, and his style and manner had considerable influence on the literature of his age. His book is for the greater part a cento, and the quotations abound in almost every page. Where, however, his own language is suffered to appear, and especially on subjects interesting to himself, the style, for the period he wrote in, is uncommonly clear and brilliant. Dr. Johnson has declared, that the " Anatomy of Melancholy was the only book that ever took him out of bed two hours sooner than he wished to rise;" and in another place he observes, " it is, perhaps, overloaded with quotation. But there is a great spirit and great power in what Burton says, when he writes from his own mind †."

Many modern authors have had recourse to

* Essayes or Counsels, civill and morall, 4to. 1632, p. 292, 293, 294.

† Boswell's Life of Johnson, vol. ii. p. 116, 455.

the "Anatomy of Melancholy," as to a store-house of imagery and recondite literature; and very lately *Sterne*, generally esteemed one of our most original writers, has been copiously traced by Dr. Ferriar through the folio of Burton. As a specimen of the style of this very curious and amusing work, I have chosen an eulogium upon fishing; this, among other sports and exercises, Burton recommends as a cure for melancholy.

"Fishing," says he, "is a kinde of hunting by water, bee it with nets, weeles, baites, angling, or otherwise, and yeelds all out as much pleasure to some men, as dogs, or hawkes; *when they draw their fish upon the banke*, saith *Nic. Henselius Silesiographiæ, cap.* 3. speaking of that extraordinary delight his countrymen tooke in fishing, and in making of pooles. *James Dubravius* that *Moravian*, in his booke *de pisc.* telleth, how travelling by the highway side in *Silesia*, he found a nobleman *booted up to the groines*, wading himselfe, pulling the nets, and labouring as much as any fisherman of them all; and when some belike objected to him the basenesse of his office, he excused himselfe, *that if other men might hunt hares, why should not he hunt carpes?* Many gentlemen in like sort with us will wade up to the armeholes, upon such occasions, and voluntarily un-

dertake that to satisfie their pleasure, which a poore man for a good stipend would scarce be hired to undergoe. *Plutarch* in his booke *de soler. animal.* speakes against all fishing, *as a filthy, base, illiberall imployment, having neither wit nor perspicacity in it, nor worth the labour.* But he that shall consider the variety of baits for all seasons, and pretty devices which our anglers have invented, peculiar lines, false flies, several sleights, &c. will say, that it deserves like commendation, requires as much study and perspicacity as the rest, and is to be preferred before many of them. Because hawking and hunting are very laborious, much riding, and many dangers accompany them; but this is still and quiet: and if so be the angler catch no fish, yet he hath a wholesome walke to the brooke side, pleasant shade, by the sweet silver streames, he hath good aire, and sweet smels of fine fresh meadow flowres, he hears the melodious harmony of birds, he sees the swannes, herons, ducks, water-hens, cootes, &c. and many other fowle, with their brood, which he thinketh better then the noyse of hounds, or blast of hornes, and all the sport that they can make *."

The language of Burton, when not encum-

* Anatomy of Melancholy, Partition 2. Member 4.

bered by quotation, which too frequently gives an air of stiffness and pedantry to his pages, is remarkable for purity in its words and idiom; a circumstance the more meritorious, as about this period a considerable innovation was taking place in the diction of our English literati. This appeared before the public, carried to a most extravagant height, in the works of SIR THOMAS BROWNE; first in his *Religio Medici*, written in 1635, and published in 1642, and afterwards still more conspicuously in his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica, or Enquiries into Vulgar and Common Errors*. In these productions, which in point of information possess no small degree of merit, Sir Thomas has been at incredible pains to introduce all the exotic terms he could muster. Some with a happy effect, but the greater part throws such an obscurity round his subject, or places it in such a ludicrous light, that the knowledge he wishes to communicate is either not understood, or, if perceived, is unhappily associated with ideas of ridicule and contempt. Dr. Johnson, who was partial to Browne, and who scrupled not to purloin many of his ponderous words, has nevertheless described his style with much critical acumen. "It is vigorous," remarks he, "but rugged; it is learned, but pedantic; it is deep, but obscure; it strikes, but does not please; it

commands, but does not allure: his tropes are harsh and his combinations uncouth. He fell into an age, in which our language began to lose the stability which it had obtained in the time of Elizabeth; and was considered by every writer as a subject on which he might try his plastic skill, by moulding it according to his own fancy. Milton, in consequence of this encroaching licence, began to introduce the Latin idiom: and Browne, though he gave less disturbance to our structures and phraseology, yet poured in a multitude of exotic words; many indeed useful and significant, which, if rejected, must be supplied by circumlocution, such as *commensality* for the state of many living at the same table; but many superfluous, as a *paralogical* for an unreasonable doubt; and some so obscure, that they conceal his meaning rather than explain it, as *arthritical analogies* for parts that serve some animals in the place of joints.—His style is, indeed, a tissue of many languages; a mixture of heterogeneous words, brought together from distant regions, with terms originally appropriated to one art, and drawn by violence into the service of another."

On scientific subjects the use of erudite terms, in order to avoid circumlocution, will readily be admitted, provided they are clear and appropri-

ate; but to accumulate them until confusion and obscurity ensue, is too often the fate of Sir Thomas Browne. For instance, after describing what crystal is not, he thus proceeds to define what it is:

"It is a mineral body in the difference of stones, and reduced by some unto that subdivision, which comprehendeth gemms, transparent and resembling glass or ice, made of a lentous percolation of earth, drawn from the most pure and limpid juyce thereof, owing unto the coldness of the earth some concurrence or coadjuvancy, but not immediate determination and efficiency, which are wrought by the hand of its concretive spirit, the seeds of petrifaction and gorgon of itself. As sensible phylosophers conceive of the generation of diamonds, iris, berils. Not making them of frozen icicle, or from meer aqueous and glaciable substances condensing them by frosts into solidities, vainly to be expected even from polary congelations: from thin and finest earths, so well contempered and resolved, that transparency is not hindered; and continuing lapidifical spirits, able to make good their solidities, against the opposition and activity of outward contraries: and so leave a sensible difference between the bonds of glaciation, which if the mountains of ice about the northern seas,

are easily dissolved by an ordinary heat of the sun; and the finer legatures of petrification, whereby not only the harder concretions of diamonds and saphirs, but the softer veins of chrystal, remain indissolvable in scorching territories, and the *negro* land of Congor.

"The principle and most gemmary affection is its tralucency: as for irradiancy or sparkling, which is found in many gemms, it is not discoverable in this; for it cometh short of their compactness and durity: and therefore requireth not the energy, as the saphir, granate, and topaz, but will receive impression from steel, in a manner like the turchois. As for its diaphanity or prespicuity, it enjoyeth that most eminently; and the reason thereof is its continuity; as having its earthy and salinous parts so exactly resolved, that its body is left imporous and not discreted by atomical terminations. For that continuity of parts is the cause of prespicuity, it is made prespicuous by two waies of experiment*."

If on topics of science a profusion of learned words be objectionable, on more familiar themes such a style must prove utterly absurd. The diction, however, of Browne is nearly alike, whether the subject be trivial or abstruse. In treat-

* Pseudodoxia Epidemica, p. 41, 42. folio, 3d edition, 1658.

ing of vulgar superstitions, he notices the custom of foretelling events by spots upon the nails in the following curious manner.

"That temperamental dignotions, and conjecture of prevalent humours, may be collected from spots in our nails, we are not averse to concede. But yet not ready to admit sundry divinations, vulgarly raised upon them."——And again

"Of lower consideration is the common foretelling of strangers from the fungous parcel, about the weeks of candles: which only signifieth a moist and pluvious ayr about them, hindering the avolation of the light and favillous particles." Or, to adduce one more example:

"A strange kind of exploration and peculiar way of rhabdomancy is that which is used in mineral discoveries; that is, with a forked hazel, commonly called *Moses* his rod, which freely held forth, will stir and play if any mine be under it *."

That in any age such a style as this should be admired, and should create numerous imitators, who, not content with its adoption on subjects of science or natural history, employed it in biography, criticism, and miscellaneous literature, cannot but excite astonishment. Of its effect

* Pseudodoxia, p. 229, 230.

when chosen for biographical detail the following is the most extraordinary instance that I have ever met with. It is taken from a Life of the admirable Crichton, written by Sir Thomas Urquhart. Crichton had composed a drama in the Italian language, which included fifteen characters, all of which he himself personated; his success in the attempt Sir Thomas thus describes:

"The logofascinated spirits of the beholding hearers and auricularie spectators, were so on a sudden seized upon, in the risible faculties of the soul, and all their vital motions so universally affected in this extremity of agitation, that, to avoid the inevitable charms of his intoxicating ejaculations, and the accumulative influences of so powerful a transportation, one of my lady dutchess chief maids of honor, by the vehemence of the shocks of these incomprehensible raptures, burste forth into a laughter, to the rupture of a veine in her bodie, &c."—Another young lady "not being able to support the well beloved burthen of so excessive delight and intransing joyes of such mercurial exhilarations, through the ineffable extasie of an overmastered apprehension, fell back in a swoon, without the appearance of any other life in her than what, by the most refined wits of theological speculators, is conceived to be exerced by the purest parts of

the separated entelechies of blessed saints, in their sublimest conversations with the celestial hierarchies *."

From this intolerable affectation let us turn to the manly and majestic diction of MILTON, whose prose works, owing to the controversial nature of their contents, have been too much neglected. Than the style of Milton, however, in these his polemic writings, nothing frequently can be more lofty, sonorous, and strong; his words are pure and of native growth, and his only fault appears to have arisen from an indiscriminate adoption of classical arrangement in the structure of his sentences. This, though it impart an air of dignity and forced splendour to his composition, has too often rendered his pages to the mere English reader, stiff, obscure, and harsh. Notwithstanding this objection, it may without fear of contradiction be asserted, that no author previous to the restoration has written with greater energy or purity.

Milton early commenced his ecclesiastical warfare, and, in 1642, published *The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelacy*. In this production he nobly declares, and in the spirit of sincerity and truth, his motives for the undertaking. The passage is forcible and eloquent,

* Urquhart's Vindication of Scotland.

and proves that for conscience sake alone, relinquishing the pleasures of fancy and of taste, he embraced a task which might expose him to obloquy and reproach.

"Concerning this wayward subject against prelaty," he remarks, "the touching whereof is so distasteful and disquietous to a number of men, as by what hath been said I may deserve of charitable readers to be credited, that neither envy nor gall hath entered me upon this controversy, but the enforcement of conscience only, and a preventive fear, lest the omitting of this duty should be against me, when I would store up to myself the good provision of peaceful hours: so lest it should be still imputed to be, as I have found it hath been, that some self-pleasing humour of vain glory has incited me to contest with men of high estimation, now while green years are upon my head; from this needless surmisal I shall hope to dissuade the intelligent and equal auditor, if I can but say successfully, that which in this exigent behoves me, although I would be heard, only if it might be, by the elegant and learned reader, to whom principally for a while I shall beg leave I may address myself: to him it will be no new thing, though I tell him, that if I hunted after praise by the ostentation of wit and learning, I should not write

thus out of mine own season, when I have neither yet completed to my mind the full circle of my private studies (although I complain not of any insufficiency to the matter in hand) or were I ready to my wishes, it were a folly to commit any thing elaborately composed to the careless and interrupted listening of these tumultuous times. Next, if I were wise only to my own ends, I would certainly take such a subject, as of itself might catch applause; whereas this has all the disadvantages on the contrary; and such a subject, as the publishing whereof might be delayed at pleasure, and time enough to pencil it over with all the curious touches of art, even to the perfection of a faultless picture; when, as in this argument, the not deferring is of great moment to the good speeding, that if solidity have leisure to do her office, art cannot have much. Lastly, I should not chuse this manner of writing, wherein, knowing myself inferior to myself, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account, but of my left hand."

The ardent spirit of Milton, and the malignant accusations of his opponents, not unfrequently brought forth in his controversial publications a warmth and asperity of expression not probably well calculated to promote his views. In ex-

tenuation of this zeal, he has, in his Treatise of Reformation, thus solemnly appealed to heaven in favour of his integrity :

" Here withal," says he, " I invoke the immortal deity, revealer and judge of secrets, that wherever I have in this book plainly and roundly, though worthily and truly, laid open the faults and blemishes of fathers, martyrs, or christian emperors, or have otherways inveighed against error and superstition with vehement expressions, I have done it neither out of malice, nor list to speak evil, nor any vain glory, but of mere necessity, to vindicate the spotless truth from an ignominious bondage."

A still more interesting example of Milton's style, which breathes all that devotional enthusiasm, and that high confidence in his own powers, which elevated this great poet so far above the ordinary sons of men, may be selected from his work on the Reason of Church Government :

" Time serves not now, and, perhaps, I might seem too profuse to give any certain account of what the mind at home, in the spacious circuits of her musing, hath liberty to propose to herself, though of highest hope and hardest attempting ; whether that epic form, whereof the two poems of Homer, and those other two of Virgil and Tasso, are a diffuse, and the book of Job a brief,

model; or whether the rules of Aristotle herein are strictly to be kept, or nature to be followed; which in them that know art, and use judgment, is no transgression, but an enriching of art: and lastly, what king or knight, before the conquest, might be chosen, in whom to lay the pattern of a christian hero. And as Tasso gave to a prince of Italy his choice, whether he would command him to write of Godfrey's expedition against the infidels, Belisarius against the Goths, or Charlemain against the Lombards; if to the instinct of nature, and the emboldening of art aught may be trusted, and that there be nothing adverse in our climate or the fate of this age, it haply would be no rashness, from an equal diligence and inclination, to present the like offer in our antient stories. Or whether those dramatic constitutions, wherein Sophocles and Euripides reign, shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a nation —Or, if occasion shall lead, to imitate those magnific odes and hymns, wherein Pindarus and Callimachus are in most things worthy. But those frequent songs throughout the law and prophets, beyond all these, not in their divine argument alone, but in the very critical art of composition, may be easily made appear over all the kinds of lyric poesy to be incomparable. These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift

of God, rarely bestowed, but yet to some (though most abuse) in every nation; and are of power besides the office of a pulpit, to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune; to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what he works, and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his church; to sing victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ; to deplore the general relapses of kingdoms and states from justice and God's true worship. Lastly, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in virtue amiable or grave, whatsoever hath passion or admiration in all the changes of that, which is called fortune from without, or the wily subtleties and refluxes of man's thoughts from within; all these things, with a solid and treatable smoothness to paint out and describe, teaching over the whole book of sanctity and virtue, through all the instances of example, with such delight, to those especially of soft and delicious temper, who will not so much as look upon truth herself, unless they see her elegantly drest; that whereas the paths of honesty and good life ap-

pear now rugged and difficult, though they be indeed easy and pleasant, they will then appear to all men both easy and pleasant, though they were rugged and difficult indeed."—

"The accomplishment of these things," he proceeds, "lies not but in a power above man's to promise; but that none hath by more studious ways endeavoured, and with more unwearied spirit that none shall, that I dare almost aver of myself, as far as life and free leisure will extend. Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader that for some few years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amourist, or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite; nor to be obtained by the invocation of dame Memory and her siren daughters; but by devout prayer to that eternal spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases; to this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs; till which in some measure be compassed at mine own peril and cost, I refuse

not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loth to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges that I can give them. Although it nothing content me to have disclosed thus much before hand; but that I trust hereby to make it manifest with what small willingness I endure to interrupt the pursuit of no less hopes than these, and leave a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with chearful and confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noise and hoarse disputes, put from beholding the bright countenance of truth, in the quiet and still air of delightful studies."

If we now pause to take a retrospect of our best prose writers from 1580 to the restoration in 1660, including SIDNEY, HOOKER, RALEIGH, BACON, BURTON, BROWNE, and MILTON, it will appear that our language during this period was formed upon no regular or legitimate model. Each author arrogated to himself the right of innovation, and their respective works may be considered as experiments how far their peculiar and often very adverse styles were calculated to improve their native tongue. That they have completely failed to fix a standard for its structure cannot be a subject of regret to any man who has impartially weighed the merits and defects of their diction. A want of neatness, precision, and simplicity, is

usually observable in their periods, which are either eminently enervated and loose, or pedantic, implicated, and obscure. Nothing can be more incompact and nerveless than the style of Sidney, nothing more harsh and quaint, from an affectation of foreign and technical terms, than the diction of Browne. If we allow to Hooker and Milton occasional majesty and strength, and sometimes a peculiar felicity of expression, it must yet be admitted, that though using pure English words, the elaboration and inversion of their periods are such as to create, in the mere English reader, no small difficulty in the comprehension of their meaning; a fault, surely of the most serious nature, and ever productive of aversion and fatigue. To Raleigh, Bacon, and Burton, we are indebted for a style which, though never rivalling the sublime energy and force occasionally discoverable in the prose of Milton, makes a nearer approach to the just idiom of our tongue than any other which their age afforded.

It is to the Restoration, however, that we must look for that period when our language, with few exceptions, assumed a facility and clearness, a fluency and grace, hitherto strangers to its structure. The study of French literature, which had attained considerable elegance and precision, was at this era brought into fashion by the Stuarts,

who, during their exile on the continent, having imbibed a strong taste for the beauties of the language, gave, on their return to England, every encouragement to its cultivation. At a time when composition in this island was singularly pompous, stiff, and harsh, the introduction of the lighter graces and more perspicuous arrangement of French periods could not fail of proving eminently serviceable.

It may be deemed remarkable, that the first writer who has given us a specimen of elegance and unaffected ease in prose, should be the witty and metaphysical COWLEY. This once celebrated poet had resided much upon the continent, and was intimately acquainted with French literature, and a great favourite with the exiled family. On the accession of Charles the Second, he revisited his native country, and during a rural retirement of seven years occasionally employed his pen in the composition of *Essays* on various subjects. These, which were published after his death, form a complete opposition to the usual style of his poetry. The elaboration, stiffness, and cold conceit, which characterize the latter, are no where apparent in these pleasing productions, which display a simplicity of language and sentiment of a very fascinating kind, and a modulation and arrangement of period by many

degrees more equable, easy, and flowing, than can be found in any preceding writer of English prose.

Delighted with the country, and with the important and salutary employments of its cultivators, he has thus, in his Essay on Agriculture, expressed his opinion of its pleasures and utility:

"The first wish of Virgil was, to be a good philosopher; the second, a good husbandman; and God (whom he seemed to understand better than most of the most learned heathens) dealt with him just as he did with *Solomon;* because he prayed for wisdom in the first place, he added all things else which were subordinately to be desired. He made him one of the best philosophers and best husbandmen; and to adorn both those faculties, the best poet: he made him besides all this a rich man, and a man who desired to be no richer. *O fortunatus nimium, et bona qui sua novit.* To be a husbandman is but a retreat from the city; to be a philosopher, from the world; or rather, a retreat from the world, as it is man's, into the world, as it is God's. But since nature denies to most men the capacity or appetite, and fortune allows but to a very few the opportunities or possibility of applying themselves wholly to philosophy, the best mixture of human affairs that we can make are the employments of a country life.—

"We are here among the vast and noble scenes of nature; we are there (alluding to courts and cities) among the pitiful shifts of policy: we walk here in the light and open ways of the divine bounty; we grope there in the dark and confused labyrinths of human malice: our senses are here feasted with the clear and genuine taste of their objects, which are all sophisticated there, and for the most part overwhelmed with their contraries. Here pleasure looks (methinks) like a beautiful, constant, and modest wife; it is there an impudent, fickle, and painted harlot. Here is harmless and cheap plenty, there guilty and expenceful luxury.

"I shall only instance in one delight more, the most natural and best natured of all others, a perpetual companion of the husbandman; and that is, the satisfaction of looking round about him, and seeing nothing but the effects and improvements of his own art and diligence; to be always gathering of some fruits of it, and at the same time to behold others ripening, and others budding; to see all his fields and gardens covered with the beauteous creations of his own industry; and to see, like God, that all his works are good *."

This passage, though very beautiful, may be

* Cowley's Works, vol. ii. p. 704, 705, 707, 708. 10th edit. 1707.

considered as a fair specimen of the usual diction of Cowley. Let us, however, turning over a few leaves, take the commencement of any succeeding essay. He opens the sixth, on *Greatness*, in the following manner:

"Since we cannot attain to greatness, says the Sieur de Montagn, let us have our revenge by railing at it: this he spoke but in jest. I believe he desired it no more than I do, and had less reason, for he enjoyed so plentiful and honourable a fortune in a most excellent country, as allowed him all the real conveniences of it, separated and purged from the incommodities. If I were but in his condition, I should think it hard measure, without being convinced of any crime, to be sequestered from it, and made one of the principal officers of state. But the reader may think that what I now say is of small authority, because I never was, nor ever shall be put to the trial: I can therefore only make my protestation:

> If ever I more riches did desire
> Than cleanliness and quiet do require,
> If e'er ambition did my fancy cheat
> With any wish so mean as to be great,
> Continue, heav'n, still from me to remove
> The humble blessings of that life I love.

"I know very many men will despise, and some pity me for this humour, as a poor spirited

fellow; but I'm content, and, like Horace, thank God for being so. *Dii bene fecerunt, inopis me quodque pusilli finxerunt animi.* I confess, I love littleness almost in all things. A little convenient estate, a little chearful house, a little company, and a very little feast, and if I were ever to fall in love again (which is a great passion, and therefore, I hope, I have done with it) it would be, I think, with prettiness, rather than with majestical beauty *."

Here we behold a style widely different from any which the nation had been in the habit of admiring. The improvement is obvious and great; and to Cowley we may justly ascribe the formation of a basis on which has since been constructed the present correct and admirable fabric of our language. His words are pure and well-chosen, the collocation simple and perspicuous, and the members of his sentences distinct, harmonious, not clogged with supernumerary words, nor dragging at the close.

The year which closed the life of Cowley witnessed likewise the death of JEREMY TAYLOR, a theologian of great popularity, and whose writings contributed not a little to improve the style as well as the morals of the nation. His best-known work, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy*

* Vol. ii. p. 742, 743.

Living and Dying, and which was published about the era of the Restoration, is remarkable, not only for brilliancy of imagery, but, considering the period in which he wrote, for purity and simplicity of diction. His sentences are usually clear and compact, and, where the occasion calls for it, are modulated with uncommon sweetness and harmony. The following are specimens which display both the richness of his imagination, and the beauty of his expression.

"Some are called *at age* at fourteen, some at one and twenty, some never; but all men late enough, for the life of a man comes upon him slowly and insensibly. But as when the sun approaching towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to the cock, and calls up the lark to mattens, and by and by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns, like those which deck'd the brows of Moses when he was forced to wear a veil, because himself had seen the face of God; and still, while a man tells the story, the sun gets up higher, till he shews a fair face and a full light, and then he shines one whole day, under a cloud often, and sometimes weeping great and little

showers, and sets quickly: so is a man's reason and his life *."

"It is a mighty change that is made by the death of every person, and it is visible to us who are alive. Reckon but from the sprightfulness of youth, the fair cheeks and the full eyes of childhood, from the vigourousness and strong flexure of the joints of five and twenty, to the hollowness and dead paleness, to the loathsomness and horror of a three-days burial, and we shall perceive the distance to be very great and very strange. But so I have seen a rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood, and at first it was fair as the morning, and full with the dew of heaven, as a lamb's fleece: but when a ruder breath had forced open its virgin-modesty, and dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirements, it began to put on darkness, and to decline to softness, and the symptoms of a sickly age: it bowed the head, and broke its stalk, and at night having lost some of its leaves and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and worn-out faces. The same is the portion of every man and every woman; the heritage of worms and serpents, rottenness and cold dishonour †."

* Holy Dying, 8vo. 23d edition, page 17, 1719.

† Ditto, p. 8.

Several years elapsed, however, before the examples of Cowley and Taylor had their due weight. In the mean time, namely in 1673, CLARENDON closed his elaborate History of the Rebellion. This celebrated work, estimable for its accuracy, impartiality, and variety of incident, is written in a style which was once highly admired, but is now justly condemned for its prolixity and involution. Clarendon has dropped the inversions of Hooker and Milton; but he has drawn out his periods to such a length, and embarrassed them with so many parentheses, and with such a number of slenderly connected particulars, that the reader, though occasionally gratified by sonorous and dignified phraseology, is soon bewildered amid the labyrinth of his sentences, and compelled in almost every page to retrace with care its various mazes, in order to ascertain a meaning. Of these *periods of a mile* the closing sentence of the annexed passage affords a curious instance. I shall mark its commencement and termination by capitals.

"It was by many impatiently wondered at then, and, no doubt, will be more censured hereafter, that notwithstanding all these invasions, and breaches upon the regal power, and all these vast preparations to destroy him, the king, hitherto, put not himself into a posture of safety;

or provided for the resistance of that power, which threaten'd him; and which, he could not but know, intended whatsoever it hath since done; and though they had not yet formed an army, and chosen a general, yet, he well knew, they had materials abundantly ready for the first, and particular, digested resolutions, in the second; which they could reduce to publick acts whensoever they pleased. It is very true, he did know all this, and the unspeakable hazards he run, in not preparing against it. But the hazards, which presented themselves unto him on the other side, were not less prodigious: he had a very great appearance of the nobility; not only of those, who had from the beginning walked, and governed themselves by the rules the law prescribed, and in that respect, were unblameable to king and people: but of others who had passionately and peevishly (to say no worse) concurred in all the most violent votes and actions, which had been done from the beginning: for besides the Lord *Spencer* (who had been chosen their lieutenant of Northamptonshire, but was recovered to a right understanding, of which he was very capable, by his uncle the Earl of Southampton) the Lord Paget likewise, who had contributed all his faculties to their service, and to the prejudice of the king's from

before the beginning of the parliament; had been one of their teizers to broach those bold high overtures, soberer men were not, at first, willing to be seen in; and had been, as a man most worthy to be confided in, chosen lord lieutenant of one of the most confiding counties, the county of Buckingham (where he had, with great solemnity and pomp, executed their ordinance, in defyance of the King's proclamation) and had subscribed a greater number of horses for their service, upon their propositions, than any other of the same quality; convinced in his conscience, fled from them, and besought the King's pardon: and, for the better manifesting the tenderness of his compunction, and the horror he had of his former guilt, he frankly discovered whatsoever he had known of their counsels; and aggravated all the ill they had done, with declaring it to be done to worse and more horrid ends, than many good men believed to be possible for them to propose to THEMSELVES *."

A work of many volumes, abounding in sentences as protracted and involved as the above, must necessarily excite fatigue, if not disgust, even in the most patient student. It is not always, however, that the style of Clarendon is

* Clarendon's History, Part i. vol. ii. book v. p. 651, 652, 8vo. edit. of 1720.

thus prolix; he is sometimes, though not frequently, clear and rapid; and the follow ingaccount of the erection of the King's standard at Nottingham, in 1642, may be considered as a specimen of his best mode of composition.

"According to the proclamation, upon the twenty-fifth day of August, the standard was erected, about six of the clock in the evening of a very stormy and tempestuous day. The King himself, with a small train, rode to the top of the Castle Hill; Varney, the knight-marshal, who was standard-bearer, carrying the standard, which was then erected in that place, with little other ceremony than the sound of drums, and trumpets: melancholy men observed many ill presages about that time. There was not one regiment of foot yet brought thither; so that the train'd-bands, which the sheriff had drawn together, were all the strength the King had for his person, and the guard of the standard. There appear'd no conflux of men in obedience to the proclamation; the arms and ammunition were not yet come from *York*, and a general sadness covered the whole town. The standard was blown down the same night it had been set up, by a very strong and unruly wind, and could not be fixed again in a day or two, till the tempest was allayed. This was the melancholy state of

the King's affairs, when the standard was set up *."

Contemporary with Clarendon flourished the acute mathematician and divine, ISAAC BARROW; a man of a vast and comprehensive mind, and of a rich and glowing imagination. As he beheld his subject in the clearest and strongest light, his style is correspondently forcible and expressive; as he revolved it in all its bearings and associations, and deeply felt the emotions which he endeavoured to convey, his composition is copious, vehement, and sublime. To the diction of Barrow sufficient honour has not been given; if he be occasionally incorrect and redundant, he is never tame or obscure; and there is a spirit, an impetuosity and vigour in his language, which powerfully excites and sustains attention.

Though an appearance of negligence in his style be sometimes observable, owing probably to the warmth and profusion of his ideas, it is well known that he paid great attention to the study of his native language. He consequently found it difficult to please himself; and he generally transcribed his sermons three or four times before he was satisfied with their diction. It is to this patient assiduity, this *limæ labor*, that we may ascribe his freedom from that intricacy and pro-

* Book v. p. 720.

traction which mark the periods of Clarendon. In Barrow the sentences are perspicuously arranged and divided; seldom, if ever, tedious by their length, and usually closing with cadence and dignity.

The following passage from his sermon on *The Duty and Reward of Bounty to the Poor*, which was published by himself, and after mature revision, will convey a satisfactory view of the merits of his composition:

"He whose need craves our bounty, whose misery demands our mercy, what is he? He is not truly so mean and sorry a thing, as the disguise of misfortune, under which he appears, doth represent him. He who looks so deformedly and dismally, who to outward sight is so ill bestead, and so pitifully accoutred, hath latent in him much of admirable beauty and glory. He within himself containeth a nature very excellent; an immortal soul, and an intelligent mind, by which he nearly resembleth God himself, and is comparable to angels: he invisibly is owner of endowments rendering him capable of the greatest and best things. What are money and lands? what are silk and fine linen? what are horses and hounds in comparison to reason, to wisdom, to vertue, to religion, which he hath, or (in despight of all misfortune) he may have if he please?

He whom you behold so dejectedly sneaking, in so despicable a garb, so destitute of all convenience and comfort, lying in the dust, naked or clad with rags, meager with hunger or pain, he comes of a most high and heavenly extraction: he was born a prince, the son of the greatest King eternal; he can truly call the Sovereign Lord of all the world his father, having derived his soul from the mouth, having had his body formed by the hands of God himself. In this, *the rich and poor,* as the wise man saith, *do meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.* That same forlorn wretch, whom we are so apt to despise and trample upon, was framed and constituted Lord of the visible world; had all the goodly brightnesses of heaven, and all the costly furnitures of earth created to serve him. *Thou madest him,* (saith the Psalmist of man) *to have dominion over the works of thine hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.* Yea, he was made an inhabitant of Paradise, and possessour of felicities superlative; had immortal life and endless joy in his hand, did enjoy the entire favour and friendship of the Most High. Such in worth of nature and nobleness of birth he is, as a man: and highly more considerable he is, as a christian. For, as vile and contemptible as he looks, God hath so regarded and prized him, as for his sake to descend from heaven, to cloath himself

with flesh, to assume the form of a servant; for his good to undertake and undergo the greatest inconveniences, infirmities, wants, and disgraces, the most grievous troubles and most sharp pains incident to mortal nature. God hath adopted him to be his child; the Son of God hath deigned to call him brother: he is a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost, a free denizen of the heavenly city, an heir of salvation, and candidate of eternal glory. The greatest and richest personage is not capable of better privileges than God hath granted him, or of higher preferments than God hath designed him to. He equally with the mightiest prince is the object of God's especial providence and grace, of his continual regard and care, of his fatherly love and affection; who, as good *Elihu* saith, *accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for they are all the work of his hands.* In fine, this poor creature whom thou seest is a man, and a christian, thine equal, whoever thou art, in nature, and thy peer in condition: I say not, in the uncertain and unstable gifts of fortune, not in this worldly state, which is very inconsiderable; but in gifts vastly more precious, in title to an estate infinitely more rich and excellent. Yea, if thou art vain and proud, be sober and humble; he is thy better, in true dignity much to be preferred before thee, far in

real wealth surpassing thee: for, better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich*."

To this extract I shall beg leave to adjoin another, which will afford the reader an admirable instance of energy and strength combined with great harmony of period. It is taken from a sermon on *A peaceable Temper and Carriage.*

"We are obliged to these duties of humanity, upon account of common interest, benefit, and advantage. The welfare and safety, the honour and reputation, the pleasure and quiet of our lives are concerned in our maintaining a loving correspondence with all men. For so uncertain is our condition, so obnoxious are we to manifold necessities, that there is no man, whose good will we may not need, whose good word may not stand us in stead, whose helpful indeavour may not sometime oblige us. The great *Pompey*, the glorious triumpher over nations, and admired darling of fortune, was beholden at last to a slave for the composing his ashes and celebrating his funeral obsequies. The honour of the greatest men depends on the estimation of the least, and the good-will of the meanest peasant is a brighter ornament to the fortune, a greater accession to the grandeur of a prince, than the most radiant gemme in his royal diadem.——It is but reason-

* Tillotson's Edition of Barrow, 1683, vol. i. p. 442, 443.

able, therefore, if we desire to live securely, comfortably, and quietly, that by all honest means we should endeavour to purchase the good-will of all men, and provoke no man's enmity needlesly; since any man's love may be usefull, and every man's hatred is dangerous *."

If we compare this energetic style with that of the friend and editor of Barrow, ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON, we shall be immediately struck with the contrast. Whilst richness, vehemence, and strength, characterize the productions of Barrow, simplicity, languor, and enervation, form the chief features in the diction of Tillotson. To the former belong a fervid fancy and a poetic ear, glowing figures and harmonious cadences; to the latter, perspicuity and smoothness, verbal purity and unaffected ease. If Barrow be occasionally involved, harsh, or redundant, Tillotson is too generally loose and feeble, and he seldom displays much, either of beauty or melody, in the arrangement or construction of his periods.

To Tillotson, however, the nation was indebted for the first *extensive* specimen of simplicity of style. Yet Cowley, it should be remarked, had already furnished one on a small scale, finished, perhaps, with greater sweetness and amenity, but not so uniformly pure and perspicuous.

A single passage from writings so equable in

* Barrow's Works, vol. i. p. 406.

their composition as the sermons of Tillotson, will be fully adequate to convey an accurate conception of their style:

"Nothing is more certain in reason and experience," remarks the Archbishop, "than that every inordinate appetite and affection is a punishment to itself; and is perpetually crossing its own pleasure, and defeating its own satisfaction, by overshooting the mark it aims at. For instance, *intemperance* in eating and drinking, instead of delighting and satisfying nature, doth but load and clog it; and instead of quenching a natural thirst, which it is extremely pleasant to do, creates an unnatural one, which is troublesome and endless. The pleasure of *revenge*, as soon as it is executed, turns into grief and pity, guilt and remorse, and a thousand melancholy wishes that we had restrained ourselves from so unreasonable an act. And the same is as evident in other sensual excesses, not so fit to be described. We may trust *Epicurus* for this, that there can be no true pleasure without temperance in the use of pleasure. And God and reason hath set us no other bounds concerning the use of sensual pleasures, but that we take care not to be injurious to ourselves, or others, in the kind or degree of them. And it is very visible, that all sensual excess is naturally attended with a double inconvenience: as it goes beyond the

limits of nature, it begets bodily pains and diseases: as it transgresseth the rules of reason and religion, it breeds guilt and remorse in the mind. And these are, beyond comparison, the two greatest evils in this world; a diseased body, and a discontented mind; and in this I am sure I speak to the inward feeling and experience of men; and say nothing but what every vicious man finds, and hath a more lively sense of, than is to be expressed by words.

"When all is done, there is no pleasure comparable to that of innocency, and freedom from the stings of a guilty conscience; this is a pure and spiritual pleasure, much above any sensual delight. And yet among all the delights of sense, that of health (which is the natural consequent of a sober, and chaste, and regular life) is a sensual pleasure far beyond that of any vice. For it is the life of life, and that which gives a grateful relish to all our other enjoyments. It is not indeed so violent and transporting a pleasure, but it is pure, and even, and lasting, and hath no guilt or regret, no sorrow and trouble in it, or after it: which is a worm that infallibly breeds in all vicious and unlawful pleasures, and makes them to be bitterness in the end *."

Our series will now conduct us to a writer more

* Tillotson's Works, vol. i. p. 334 and 335, folio edition of 1699.

ornamented and pleasing in his style than the Archbishop, and of equal purity and simplicity. SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE seems, like Montagne, to have poured his whole heart into his writings, and both his sentiments and diction possess a peculiar and indescribable charm. To the composition of no English author can the French term *naïveté* be more appositely applied; and to this engaging feature he has added a very great degree of beauty and melody in the arrangement of his sentences.

As an instance of the vivacious manner in which the impression of character is imparted to his style, I shall quote a short passage from his Observations on Gardening:

"For my own part, as the country life, and this part of it more particularly (namely, gardening), were the inclination of my youth itself, so they are the pleasure of my age; and I can truly say, that among many great employments that have fallen to my share, I have never asked or sought for any one of them, but often endeavoured to escape from them, into the ease and freedom of a private scene, where a man may go his own way and his own pace, in the common paths or circles of life.

"The measure of chusing well is, Whether a man likes what he has chosen, which, I thank God, has befallen me; and though among the

follies of my life, building and planting have not been the least, and have cost me more than I have the confidence to own; yet they have been fully recompensed by the sweetness and satisfaction of this retreat, where, since my resolution taken of never entering again into any public employments, I have passed five years without ever going once to town, though I am almost in sight of it, and have a house there always ready to receive me. Nor has this been any sort of affectation, as some have thought it, but a meer want of desire or humour to make so small a remove; for when I am in this corner, I can truly say with *Horace*:

Me quoties reficit gelidus Digentia rivus,
Quid sentire putas, quid credis amice precare?
Sit mihi quod nunc est etiam minus, ut mihi vivam
Quod superest ævi, si quid superesse volent Dii.
Sit bona librorum, et provisæ frugis in annum
Copia, ne dubiæ fluitem spe pendulus horæ,
Hoc satis est orasse Jovem qui donat et aufert.

Me when the cold Digentian stream revives,
What does my friend believe I think or ask?
Let me yet less possess, so I may live,
What ere of life remains, unto myself.
May I have books enough, and one year's store,
Not to depend upon each doubtful hour;
This is enough of mighty Jove to pray,
Who as he pleases gives and takes away *.

* Miscellanea, part ii. p. 137, 138, 139, 140, 8vo. edit. 1705.

It is a difficult task in a writer who cultivates simplicity, to avoid occasionally deviating into a lax and feeble manner; nor are there wanting passages in the works of Sir William Temple which betray a remission and negligence of style. These, however, are not frequent, nor would it be doing him justice to quote them as detracting considerably from the merits of his general diction. We shall therefore select the following piece of criticism, as a fair example of his usual tone of composition:

"*Homer* was, without dispute, the most universal genius that has been known in the world, and *Virgil* the most accomplished. To the first must be allowed the most fertile invention, the richest vein, the most general knowledge, and the most lively expression: to the last, the noblest ideas, the justest institution, the wisest conduct, and the choicest elocution. To speak in the painter's terms, we find in the works of *Homer*, the most spirit, force, and life; in those of *Virgil*, the best design, the truest proportions, and the greatest grace; the colouring in both seems equal, and, indeed, is in both admirable. *Homer* had more fire and rapture, *Virgil* more light and swiftness; or, at least, the poetical fire was more raging in one, but clearer in the other, which makes the first more amazing, and the

latter more agreeable. The ore was heavier in one, but in the other more refined, and better allayed to make up excellent work. Upon the whole, I think it must be confessed, that *Homer* was of the two, and perhaps of all others, the vastest, the sublimest, and the most wonderful *genius;* and that he has been generally so esteemed, there cannot be a greater testimony given, than what has been by some observed, that not only the greatest masters have found in his works the best and truest principles of all their sciences or arts, but that the noblest nations have derived from them the original, or their several races, though it be hardly yet agreed, whether his story be true, or fiction. In short, these two immortal poets must be allowed to have so much excelled in their kinds, as to have exceeded all comparison, to have even extinguished emulation, and in a manner confined true poetry, not only to their two languages, but to their very persons. And I am apt to believe so much of the true *genius* of poetry in general, and of its elevation in these two particulars, that I know not, whether of all the numbers of mankind, that live within the compass of a thousand years, for one man that is born capable of making such a poet as *Homer* or *Virgil*, there may not be a thousand born capable of making as great generals of ar-

mies, or ministers of state, as any the most renowned in story *."

We now approach an author of distinguished fame. DRYDEN, in prose as in verse, has attained to great excellence. No writer, indeed, seems to have studied the genius of our language with happier success. If in elegance and grammatical precision he has since been exceeded, to none need he give way, in point of vigour, variety, richness, and spirit. There is a raciness and a mellow tinting in his composition, which, with a felicitous selection of vernacular idiom, stamp upon his style a peculiar and pleasing originality.

"His prose," observes Congreve, "had all the clearness imaginable, together with all the nobleness of expression; all the graces and ornaments proper and peculiar to it, without deviating into the language or diction of poetry. I make this observation only to distinguish his style from that of many poetical writers, who, meaning to write harmoniously in prose, do in truth often write mere blank verse.

"I have heard him frequently own with pleasure, that if he had any talent for English prose, it was owing to his having often read the writings of the great Archbishop Tillotson."

To Tillotson, however, he is, in many respects, far superior; in fact, there is little similarity be-

* Miscellanea, p. 320, 321, 322.

tween their styles; for whilst the Archbishop, as we have already remarked, is frequently remiss and feeble, nothing languid or nerveless can be found in Dryden.

The highest compliment ever paid to his diction has been recorded by Mr. Malone; namely, *the imitation of Edmund Burke*, "who," says the critic, "had very diligently read all his miscellaneous essays, which he held in high estimation, not only for the instruction which they contain, but on acount of the rich and numerous prose in which that instruction is conveyed. On the language of Dryden, on which, perhaps, his own style was originally in some measure formed, I have often heard him expatiate with great admiration; and if the works of Burke be examined with this view, he will, I believe, be found more nearly to resemble this great author than any other English writer *."

In confirmation of this idea, Mr. Malone appeals to a passage in the beginning of Dryden's Discourse on Satire, and which, therefore, it will be necessary to quote:

"It is true, I have one privilege which is almost particular to myself, that I saw you † in the East, at your first arising above the hemisphere: I was as soon sensible as any man of that light,

* Malone's Dryden, vol. i. Advertisement, p. 7.

† Charles, Earl of Dorset and Middlesex.

when it was but just shooting out, and beginning to travel upwards to the meridian. I made my early addresses to your Lordship in my *Essay of Dramatic Poetry*, and therein bespoke you to the world; wherein I have the right of a first discoverer. When I was myself in the rudiments of my poetry, without name or reputation in the world, having rather the ambition of a writer than the skill; when I was drawing the outlines of an art, without any living master to instruct me in it; an art which had been better praised than studied here in England; wherein Shakspeare, who created the stage among us, had rather written happily, than knowingly and justly; and Jonson, who by studying Horace had been acquainted with the rules, yet seemed to envy to posterity that knowledge, and like an inventor of some useful art, to make a monopoly of his learning; when thus, as I may say, before the use of the loadstone, or knowledge of the compass, I was sailing in a vast ocean, without other help than the pole-star of the ancients, and the rules of the French stage amongst the moderns, which are extremely different from ours, by reason of their opposite taste; yet even then, I had the presumption to dedicate to your lordship—a very unfinished piece, I must confess, and which only can be excused by the little experience of the

author, and the modesty of the title, AN ESSAY. Yet I was stronger in prophecy than I was in criticism: I was inspired to foretell you to mankind, as the restorer of poetry, the greatest genius, the truest judge, and the best patron *."

To this extract, which is uncommonly rich, I shall add our author's opinion of the merits of Chaucer and Cowley, an example of his more subdued and usual style.

" In the first place, as he is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil. He is a perpetual fountain of good sense; learned in all sciences; and therefore speaks properly on all subjects. As he knew what to say, so he knows also when to leave off; a continence which is practised by few writers, and scarcely by any of the ancients, excepting Virgil and Horace. One of our late great poets † is sunk in his reputation, because he could never forgive any conceit which came in his way; but swept, like a drag-net, great and small. There was plenty enough, but the dishes were ill-sorted; whole pyramids of sweet-meats for boys and women, but little of solid meat for men. All this proceeded not from any want of knowledge, but of judgment. Neither did he want that in

* On the Origin and Progress of Satire. Malone's Dryden, vol. iii. p. 75, 76. † Cowley.

discerning the beauties and faults of other poets, but only indulged himself in the luxury of writing; and perhaps knew it was a fault, but hoped the reader would not find it. For this reason, though he must always be thought a great poet, he is no longer esteemed a good writer; and for ten impressions, which his works have had in so many successive years, yet at present a hundred books are scarcely purchased once a twelvemonth; for, as my last Lord Rochester said, though somewhat profanely, Not being of God, he could not stand.

"Chaucer followed nature every where; but was never so bold to go beyond her: and there is a great difference of being *poeta*, and *nimis poeta*, if we may believe Catullus, as much as betwixt a modest behaviour and affectation. The verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not harmonious to us; but it is like the eloquence of one whom Tacitus commends——it was *auribus istius temporis accommodata*. They who lived with him, and sometime after him, thought it musical; and it continues so even in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lydgate and Gower, his contemporaries: there is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, though not perfect. It is true, I cannot go so far as he

who published the last edition of him *; for he would make us believe the fault is in our ears, and that there were really ten syllables in a verse, where we find but nine. But this opinion is not worth confuting; it is so gross and obvious an error, that common sense (which is a rule in every thing but matters of faith and revelation) must convince the reader, that equality of numbers in every verse which we call heroick, was either not known, or not always practised in Chaucer's age. It were an easy matter to produce some thousands of his verses, which are lame for want of half a foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no pronunciation can make otherwise †. We can only say, that he lived in the infancy of our poetry, and that nothing is brought to perfection at the first. We must be children, before we grow men. There was an Ennius, and in process of time a Lucilius and a Lucretius, before Virgil and Horace. Even after Chaucer, there was a Spencer, a Harrington, a Fairfax, before Waller and Denham were in

* Speght, in 1597.

† This position, however, has been completely disproved by Mr. Tyrwhitt, who, in his edition of the *Canterbury Tales*, has admirably explained the versification and language of Chaucer, and shewn the former to be in general correct.

being; and our numbers were in their nonage till these last appeared *."

A transition must now be made to an author who, though contributing to the refinement of our language, has exhibited a style in almost every respect dissimilar to that which we have been immediately contemplating. SPRAT, bishop of Rochester, in his *History of the Royal Society*, and in his *Life of Cowley*, presents us, for the period in which he wrote, with composition of uncommon neatness, smoothness, and precision. Having given him this praise, however, we have nothing to add; a declaration which may excite some surprise when contrasted with the profuse eulogium which Dr. Johnson has bestowed on the style of this writer. They who shall study his pages will find no richness, ardour, or strength in his diction, but, on the contrary, an air of feebleness, and a species of imbecile spruceness, pervading all his productions. They must acknowledge, however, much clearness in his construction, and will probably agree that his cadences are often peculiarly well turned, especially those which terminate his paragraphs, and which sometimes possess a smartness which excites attention. A medium therefore must be taken between the extravagant praise of Dr. Johnson,

* Preface to the Fables. Malone's Dryden, vol. iii. p. 611, &c. &c.

and the unqualified condemnation of Lord Orrery; the former asserting that the Life of Cowley has been written by an author whose pregnancy of imagination and elegance of language have deservedly set him high in the ranks of literature *, whilst the latter declares that "upon a review of Sprat's works, his language will sooner give you an idea of one of the insignificant tottering boats upon the Thames, than of the smooth noble current of the river itself †."

We may justly consider Sprat as the first who introduced a peculiarly neat and clean style; not remarkable for much elegance it is true, or for much brilliancy or solidity of ornament; but perspicuous, pure, and, though generally faint, sometimes sharp and pointed. Two or three instances from his Life of Cowley shall accompany these remarks.

"In his life," remarks the Bishop of his friend, "he joined the innocence and sincerity of the scholar with the humanity and good behaviour of the courtier. In his poems he united the solidity and art of the one, with the gentility and gracefulness of the other.

"If any shall think that he was not wonderfully curious in the choice and elegance of all

* Lives of the Poets.

† Orrery's Remarks on the Life and Writings of Swift, p. 237, edition of 1752.

his words, I will affirm with more truth on the other side, that he had no manner of affectation in them; he took them as he found them made to his hands; he neither went before, nor came after the use of the age. He forsook the conversation, but never the language of the city and court. He understood exceeding well all the variety and power of poetical numbers; and practised all sorts with great happiness. If his verses in some places seem not as soft and flowing as some would have them, it was his choice, not his fault. He knew that in diverting men's minds, there should be the same variety observed as in the prospects of their eyes; where a rock, a precipice, or a rising wave, is often more delightful than a smooth even ground, or a calm sea. Where the matter required it, he was as gentle as any man; but where higher virtues were chiefly to be regarded, an exact numerosity was not then his main care. This may serve to answer those who upbraid some of his pieces with roughness, and with more contractions than they are willing to allow. But these admirers of gentleness without sinews, should know that different arguments must have different colours of speech; that there is a kind of variety of sexes in poetry, as well as in mankind: that as the peculiar excellence of the feminine kind, is smooth-

ness and beauty; so strength is the chief praise of the masculine.

"He had a perfect mastery in both the languages in which he writ: but each of them kept a just distance from the other; neither did his *Latin* make his *English* too old, nor his *English* make his *Latin* too modern. He excelled both in prose and verse; and both together have that perfection, which is commanded by some of the ancients above all others, that they are very obvious to the conception, but most difficult in the imitation.——

"His wit was so tempered, that no man had ever reason to wish it had been less: he prevented other men's severity upon it by his own: he never willingly recited any of his writings. None but his intimate friends ever discovered he was a great poet, by his discourse. His learning was large and profound, well composed of all ancient and modern knowledge. But it sate exceeding close and handsomely upon him: it was not imbossed on his mind, but enamelled *."

As in the first division of our series we had occasion to notice and to approve the style of Lord Bacon, so in the present shall we have equal commendation to bestow on the composition of ano-

* Cowley's Life, prefixed to his Works, 2 vols. 8vo, 10th edition, p. 17, 18, and 35.

ther very eminent cultivator of philosophy and science. In the year 1690, LOCKE published his *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, a work which has established an era in our literature, and which unfolds the highest powers of intellect, and the profoundest energies of metaphysical acuteness.

The diction he has adopted is, in general, such as does honour to his judgment. Relinquishing ornament and studied cadences, he is merely solicitous to convey his ideas with perspicuity and precision. No affectation, no conceits, no daring metaphors or inverted periods, disfigure his pages; all is clear, easy, and natural, exhibiting a plain and simple style accommodated to the purposes of philosophy.

To philologers of the nineteenth century, indeed, the style of Locke will, no doubt, appear imperfect. His sentences, though clear as to their import, are but negligently constructed, and are sometimes totally deficient in modulation. He abounds too in colloquial idiom, and his choice of words is not select. These are faults, however, which have only lately been detected through the progress and refinement of our language. In the age of Locke, and for half a century afterwards his works were justly deemed the purest model of philosophical composition.

The customary style of this very valuable writer may be sufficiently appreciated by a page from almost any part of his elaborate *Essay*. He thus delivers his opinion on the adaptation of our faculties to our situation.

"The infinite wise contriver of us, and all things about us, hath fitted our senses, faculties, and organs, to the conveniences of life, and the business we have to do here. We are able, by our senses, to know and distinguish things; and to examine them so far, as to apply them to our uses, and several ways to accommodate the exigencies of this life. We have insight enough into their admirable contrivances and wonderful effects, to admire and magnify the wisdom, power, and goodness of their author. Such a knowledge as this, which is suited to our present condition, we want not faculties to attain. But it appears not, that God intended we should have a perfect, clear, and adequate knowledge of them: that perhaps is not in the comprehension of any finite being. We are furnished with faculties (dull and weak as they are) to discover enough in the creatures, to lead us to the knowledge of the Creator, and the knowledge of our duty; and we are fitted well enough with abilities, to provide for the conveniences of living: these are our business in this world. But were

our senses altered, and made much quicker and acuter, the appearance and outward scheme of things would have quite another face to us; and, I am apt to think, would be inconsistent with our being, or at least well-being, in this part of the universe which we inhabit. He that considers how little our constitution is able to bear a remove into parts of this air, not much higher than that we commonly breathe in, will have reason to be satisfyed, that in this globe of earth allotted for our mansion, the all-wise architect has suited our organs, and the bodies that are to affect them, one to another. If our sense of hearing were but 1000 times quicker than it is, how would a perpetual noise distract us? And we should in the quietest retirement be less able to sleep or meditate, than in the middle of a sea-fight. Nay, if that most instructive of our senses, seeing, were in any man 1000 or 100,000 times more acute than it is now by the best microscope, things several millions of times less than the smallest object of his sight now, would then be visible to his naked eyes; and so he would come nearer the discovery of the texture and motion of the minute parts of corporeal things; and in many of them, probably, get *ideas* of their internal constitutions. But then he would be in a quite different world from other people: nothing

would appear the same to him, and others; the visible *ideas* of every thing would be different. So that I doubt whether he and the rest of men could discourse concerning the objects of sight, or have any communication about colours, their appearances being so wholly different. And perhaps such a quickness and tenderness of sight could not endure bright sun-shine, or so much as open day-light; nor take in but a very small part of any object at once, and that too only at a very near distance. And if by the help of such microscopical eyes (if I may so call them) a man could penetrate farther than ordinary into the secret composition and radical texture of bodies, he would not make any great advantage by the change, if such an acute sight would not serve to conduct him to the market and exchange; if he could not see things he was to avoid, at a convenient distance, nor distinguish things he had to do with, by those sensible qualities others do. He that was sharp-sighted enough to see the configuration of the minute particles of the spring of a clock, and observe upon what peculiar structure and impulse its elastick motion depends, would no doubt discover something very admirable: but if eyes so framed could not view at once the hand and the characters of the hour-plate, and thereby at a distance see what a clock it

was, their owner could not be much benefited by that acuteness; which, whilst it discovered the secret contrivance of the parts of the machine, made him lose its use *."

The abstruse and didactic nature of his subject seldom calls upon our author for more exalted diction than the passage we have just quoted affords. A few instances, however, do occur where a greater warmth of colouring is required, where for a few moments abstract reasoning recedes before the powers of imagination. An example of this kind we shall quote, in which both the imagery and style may be pronounced truly excellent.

"The memory in some men is very tenacious, even to a miracle: but yet there seems to be a constant decay of all our *ideas*, even of those which are struck deepest, and in minds the most retentive; so that if they be not sometimes renewed by repeated exercise of the senses, or reflection on those kind of objects which at first occasioned them, the print wears out, and at last there remains nothing to be seen. Thus the *ideas*, as well as children of our youth, often die before us: and our minds represent to us those tombs, to which we are approaching; where, though the

* Locke's Works, vol. i. p. 129, Book 2d. Chapter 23d. folio edition of 1714.

brass and marble remain, yet the inscriptions are effaced by time, and the imagery moulders away. The pictures drawn in our minds are laid in fading colours; and if not sometimes refreshed, vanish and disappear. How much the constitution of our bodies, and the make of our animal spirits are concerned in this, and whether the temper of the brain make this difference, that in some it retains the characters drawn on it like marble, in others like free-stone, and in others little better than sand; I shall not here enquire: though it may seem probable, that the constitution of the body does sometimes influence the memory; since we oftentimes find a disease quite strip the mind of all its *ideas*, and the flames of a fever in a few days calcine all those images to dust and confusion, which seemed to be as lasting as if graved in marble *."

We have thus reviewed a period of forty-two years, from the Restoration to the accession of Queen Anne; a period productive of many excellent writers, and of many improvements in English style. The cumbrous and inverted diction of the age of Elizabeth, which still lingered through the reigns of James and Charles the First, was now completely laid aside; and a

* Vol. i. p. 55, 56. Book 2d. Chapter the 10th.

better choice of words, a more perspicuous arrangement of sentences, and a greater simplicity of expression, were introduced.

Of the authors enumerated during this era, all contributed in no slight degree toward the amelioration of our language; but we may point with peculiar approbation to the sweetness and ease of COWLEY, to the dignified simplicity of TAYLOR, to the energy and copiousness of BARROW, to the elegance and naïveté of TEMPLE, and to the warmth and mellow richness of DRYDEN.

Though much was done by these illustrious ornaments of English literature to polish and reform their native tongue, much still was wanting to impart a systematic correctness, and to give that force and precision, that luminous and harmonious structure, of which by late experience we know the language to be susceptible.

The reign of Queen Anne, which commenced in 1702, has been generally esteemed, from the value of its literary productions, the *Augustan Age* of Great Britain; an appellation which, though not perfectly well founded, it maintained with little opposition until the accession of his present Majesty.

A period of national success and glory has been frequently found to add fresh nerves and vigour to the pursuits of literature and science.

The elevation to which Great Britain attained in consequence of the campaigns of Marlborough, and the powerful attitude which she assumed with regard to the nations on the continent, appear to have stimulated to enthusiasm the literary genius of our isle. The principal authors of Queen Anne's reign were likewise active political characters, and their influence in the state added much to their dignity and power. Swift, Addison, Bolingbroke, and Prior, at the same time that they held the first rank in the republic of letters, performed the most important services to government; all contributed to support what they deemed the cause of their country by their compositions, and the three latter likewise by official situations.

The writers who, immediately previous to Addison, contributed most essentially, though in very different ways, to enlarge and refine our language, were Dean Swift and Lord Shaftesbury.

The style of SWIFT, though it claim appropriate praise, has been extravagantly, and therefore injudiciously, applauded. Lowth has declared him the *most correct* of our prose writers; and Blair says that "he knew, almost, beyond any man, the purity, the extent, the *precision* of the English language; and therefore, to such as wish to attain a pure and *correct* style, he is one of the

most useful models." Of this latter encomium, part is true and part unfounded. No man has equalled Swift in the knowledge of the force and purity of English words, or in fecundity of idiomatic expression; but in collocation and grammatical accuracy, it were absurd, in the present day, to consider him as a model. Of his wit, humour, and intellectual powers, I entertain the highest opinion; and I deem his works a rich *copia verborum*, which displays, in an unprecedented degree, the independent wealth of his native tongue; but, in the arrangement of these words into sentences he is not only inattentive to harmony and grace, but he is for the most part singularly negligent and harsh. It is true, the plainness of his style frequently sets off to advantage the keenness of his wit; but except where the vulgarity of the character may require it, it will not be contended, I imagine, that careless construction can assist his views; and yet, notwithstanding the great authorities above-mentioned, I have little hesitation in asserting, that, in point of grammatical precision, he is inferior to several of his contemporaries. Mr. Sheridan, though an ardent admirer of the Doctor, and a repeater of the common idea with regard to his correctness, has in his preface and notes to the edition of

1784 *, with great propriety, pointed out many of his grammatical errors, solecisms, and inaccuracies; a service which might be considerably extended, and which, were prejudice set aside, would militate strongly against the popular opinion.

Great *verbal* purity and copiousness, a most extensive knowledge of idiom, and diction plain, forcible, and clear, form the *merits* of the Dean's style; a slovenly arrangement of sentences, an almost total want of modulation or smoothness, and frequent laxity in grammatical construction, are its *defects*.

From one of his best productions, the Tale of a Tub, which was published in the year 1704, I select two specimens; the first includes three or four inaccuracies, the second is nearly correct, and abounds in humour and idiomatic phraseology. The Dean thus commences *A Digression In Praise Of Digressions.*

"I have sometimes heard of an Iliad in a nutshell; but it has been my fortune to have much oftener seen a nutshell in an Iliad. There is no doubt that human life has received most wonderful advantages from both; but to which of the

* These are likewise retained in the very valuable edition by Nichols, in nineteen volumes 8vo. published in 1801.

two the world is chiefly indebted, I shall leave among the curious, as a problem worthy of their utmost inquiry. For the invention of the latter, I think the commonwealth of learning is chiefly obliged to the great modern improvement of digressions: the late refinements in knowledge, running parallel to those of diet in our nation, which, among men of a judicious taste, are dressed up in various compounds, consisting in soups and olios, fricassees and ragouts.

"It is true, there is a sort of morose, detracting, ill-bred people, who pretend utterly to disrelish these polite innovations; and as to the similitude from diet, they allow the parallel, but are so bold to pronounce the example itself, a corruption and degeneracy of taste. They tell us, that the fashion of jumbling fifty things together in a dish, was at first introduced, in compliance to a depraved and debauched appetite, as well as to a crazy constitution: and to see a man hunting through an olio, after the head and brains of a goose, a widgeon, or a woodcock, is a sign he wants a stomach and digestion for more substantial victuals *."

The following pleasant ridicule on the doctrine of transubstantiation, I have chosen as a favourable example of our author's composition:

* Tale of a Tub, Section 7th.

" Dining one day at an alderman's in the city, Peter observed him expatiating, after the manner of his brethren, *in* the praises of his sirloin of beef. Beef, said the sage magistrate, is the king of meat; beef comprehends in it the quintessence of partridge, and quail, and venison, and pheasant, and plumb-pudding, and custard. When Peter came home, he would needs take the fancy of cooking up this doctrine into use, and apply the precept, in default of a sirloin, to his brown-loaf: Bread, says he, dear brothers, is the staff of life; in which bread is contained, inclusive, the quintessence of beef, mutton, veal, venison, partridge, plumb-pudding, and custard: and to render all complete, there is intermingled a due quantity of water, whose crudities are also corrected by yeast or barm; through which means it becomes a wholesome fermented liquor, diffused through the mass of the bread. Upon the strength of these conclusions, next day at dinner, was the brown loaf served up in all the formality of a city feast. Come, brothers, said Peter, fall to, and spare not; here is excellent good mutton; or hold, now my hand is in, I will help you. At which word, in much ceremony, with fork and knife he carves out two good slices of a loaf, and presents each on a plate to his brothers. The elder of the two, not suddenly entering into

Lord Peter's conceit, began with very civil language to examine the mystery. My lord, said he, I doubt with great submission there may be some mistake. What, says Peter, you are pleasant; come then, let us hear this jest your head is so big with. None in the world, my lord; but, unless I am very much deceived, your lordship was pleased a while ago to let fall a word about mutton, and I would be glad to see it with all my heart. How, said Peter, appearing in great surprize, I do not comprehend this at all.— Upon which the younger interposing to set the business aright; my lord, said he, my brother I suppose is hungry, and longs for the mutton your lordship has promised us to dinner. Pray, said Peter, take me along with you; either you are both mad, or disposed to be merrier than I approve of; if you there do not like your piece, I will carve you another; though I should take that to be the choice bit of the whole shoulder. What then, my lord, replied the first, it seems this is a shoulder of mutton all this while. Pray, sir, says Peter, eat your victuals, and leave off your impertinence, if you please, for I am not disposed to relish it at present: but the other could not forbear, being over provoked at the affected seriousness of Peter's countenance: By G—, my lord, said he, I can only say, that to

my eyes, and fingers, and teeth, and nose, it seems to be nothing but a crust of bread. Upon which the second put in his word: I never saw a piece of mutton in my life so nearly resembling a slice from a twelve-penny loaf. Look ye, gentlemen, cries Peter in a rage, to convince you what a couple of blind, positive, ignorant, wilful puppies you are, I will use but this plain argument; by G—, it is true, good, natural mutton as any in Leadenhall market; and G— confound you both eternally, if you offer to believe otherwise. Such a thundering proof as this left no farther room for objection; the two unbelievers began to gather and pocket up their mistake, as hastily as they could. Why, truly, said the first, upon more mature consideration— Ay, says the other interrupting him, now I have thought better on the thing, your lordship seems to have a great deal of reason. Very well, said Peter; here, boy, fill me a beer-glass of claret; here's to you both with all my heart. The two brethren, much delighted to see him so readily appeased, returned their most humble thanks, and said, they would be glad to pledge his lordship. That you shall, said Peter; I am not a person to refuse you any thing that is reasonable: wine, moderately taken, is a cordial; here is a glass apiece for you: it is true natural juice from the

grape, none of your damned vintner's brewings. Having spoke thus, he presented to each of them another large dry crust, bidding them drink it off, and not be bashful, for it would do them no hurt. The two brothers, after having performed the usual office in such delicate conjunctures, of staring a sufficient period at Lord Peter and each other, and finding how matters were likely to go, resolved not to enter on a new dispute, but to let him carry the point as he pleased: for he was now got into one of his mad fits, and to argue or expostulate farther, would only serve to render him a hundred times more untractable *."

To the style and manner of Swift we possess a most striking contrast in the writings of LORD SHAFTESBURY, who, more than any other author of his age, was solicitous to round and polish his periods. All is elaborate in the composition of this nobleman, every page bearing witness to the unwearied diligence with which he modulated and constructed his diction. His sentences flow with the most studied cadence, and their clauses are distributed and balanced with the greatest accuracy and precision. His lordship possessed a rich and ardent imagination; and when describing the beautiful and sublime in nature, his lan-

* Swift's Works, Nichols's edition, vol. ii. p. 122, 123, 124, 125.

guage is uncommonly elegant and appropriate. His chief defects are stiffness, affectation, and an indiscriminate love of ornament; whilst at the same time it may be remarked, that though accurate and melodious in the collocation of his words, he not unfrequently exhibits a defective taste in their selection. Passionately attached to the study of the ancients, it was the wish of Shaftesbury to impart to his native language a classical refinement. In attempting this, however, he seems to have totally overlooked that noble simplicity, for which the best models of antiquity are so singularly distinguished. On subjects which require an ornamented diction, he is uniformly magnificent, lofty, and sonorous; but when he aims at ease, familiarity, and plainness of manner, at raillery, ridicule, and humour, he only partially divests himself of his former style; and with the view of lowering it to the nature of his theme, he frequently mingles trite and even coarse phraseology; a species of patchwork which never effects his purpose, and which is always aukward and constrained.

Of what Shaftesbury deemed a style of ease and simplicity, the following may be taken as an example:

"To pretend to enjoy society, and a free mind, in company with a knavish heart, is as ridiculous

as the way of children, who eat their cake, and afterwards cry for it. When men begin to deliberate about dishonesty, and, finding it go less against their stomach, ask slily, 'Why they should stick at a good piece of knavery for a good sum?' they should be told, as children, that they can't eat their cake and have it.

"When men, indeed, are become accomplish'd knaves, they are past crying for their cake. They know themselves, and are known by mankind. 'Tis not these who are so much envied or admired. The moderate kind are the more taking with us. Yet had we sense, we should consider 'tis in reality the thorow profligate knave, the very compleat unnatural villain alone, who can any way bid for happiness with the honest man. True interest is wholly on one side, or the other. All between is inconsistency, irresolution, remorse, vexation, and an ague-fit: from hot to cold; from one passion to another quite contrary; a perpetual discord of life; and an alternate disquiet and self-dislike.

"The truth is; as notions stand now in the world, with respect to morals, honesty is like to gain little by philosophy, or deep speculations of any kind. In the main, 'tis best to stick to common sense, and go no further. Men's first thoughts, in this matter, are generally better than their se-

cond: their natural notions better than those refin'd by study, or consultation with casuists. According to common speech, as well as common sense, honesty is the best policy: but according to refin'd sense, the only well-advis'd persons, as to this world, are errant knaves; and they alone are thought to serve themselves, who serve their passions, and indulge their loosest appetites and desires.——Such, it seems, are the wise, and such the wisdom of this world *!"

After this unfortunate attempt, let us hasten to produce a specimen of that style, in which our author was undoubtedly pre-eminent. In the passage I have now to quote, it is not, perhaps, easy to ascertain whether brilliancy of language or sublimity of imagination be most apparent.

"Behold! thro' a vast tract of sky before us, the mighty ATLAS rears his lofty head, cover'd with snow, above the clouds. Beneath the *mountain*'s foot, the rocky country rises into hills, a proper basis of the ponderous mass above: where huge embody'd rocks lie pil'd on one another, and seem to prop the high arch of heaven. See! with what trembling steps poor mankind tread the narrow brink of the deep precipices! From whence with giddy horror they look down, mis-

* An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour, Part iv. Sect. 1.

trusting even the ground which bears 'em; whilst they hear the hollow sound of torrents underneath, and see the ruin of the impending rock; with falling trees which hang with their roots upward, and seem to draw more ruin after 'em. Here thoughtless men, seized with the newness of such objects, become thoughtful, and willingly contemplate the incessant changes of this earth's surface. They see, as in one instant, the revolutions of past ages, the fleeting forms of things, and the decay even of this our globe; whose youth and first formation they consider, whilst the apparent spoil and irreparable breaches of the wasted mountain shew them the world itself only, as a noble ruin, and make them think of its approaching period.—But here mid-way the *mountain*, a spacious border of thick wood harbours our weary'd travellers: who now are come among the evergreen and lofty pines, the firs, and noble cedars, whose towring heads seem endless in the sky; the rest of trees appearing only as shrubs beside them. And here a different horror seizes our shelter'd travellers, when they see the day diminished by the deep shades of the vast wood; which closing thick above, spreads darkness and eternal night below. The faint and gloomy light looks horrid as the shade itself: and the profound stillness of these places

imposes silence upon men, struck with the hoarse echoings of every sound within the spacious caverns of the wood. Here *space* astonishes. *Silence* itself seems pregnant; whilst an unknown force works on the mind, and dubious objects move the wakeful sense. Mysterious *voices* are either heard or fancy'd: and various forms of *Deity* seem to present themselves, and appear more manifest in these sacred silvan scenes; such as of old gave rise to temples, and favour'd the religion of the antient world *."

We may consider the style of ADDISON as forming a medium between the dry and unornamented language of Swift, and the pompous and elaborated diction of Shaftesbury.

Addison had early imbibed an elegant and correct taste for prose composition; his travels, and especially their dedication, are strong proofs of his proficiency. In the latter, the highly-finished compliment to Lord Somers is expressed with equal grace and perspicuity.

"I had," he remarks, "a very early ambition to recommend myself to your lordship's patronage; which yet increased in me as I travelled through the countries of which I here give your lordship some account: whatever great impres-

* The Moralists, Part iii. p. 252, 253, 12mo edition of 1749, vol. ii.

sions an Englishman must have of your lordship, they who have been conversant abroad, will find them still improved. It cannot but be obvious to them, that though they see your lordship's admirers every where, they meet with very few of your well-wishers at Paris or at Rome. And I could not but observe, when I passed through most of the protestant governments in Europe, that their hopes or fears for the common cause rose or fell with your lordship's interest and authority in England."

To the various and important advantages derived from a critical knowledge of the ancient classics, he added an equal intimacy with the best prose authors in his native language; and as far as internal evidence can conduct us, it would appear that Cowley, Tillotson, and Temple, were his favourite writers. At least it may with truth be said, that he unites in a very striking degree the sweetness of the first, the simplicity and purity of the second, and the *naïveté* and vivacity of the third. With these engaging features, he has contrived to combine such a portion of exquisite grace and unaffected elegance as, notwithstanding the greater accuracy with which the language is now written, still renders his style the admiration and delight of every judicious cultivator of English philology.

It will likewise, I think, appear, that his works, if compared with those of his contemporaries, are entitled, contrary to the common opinion, to the palm of correctness. Swift, as hath already been observed, has been usually complimented with this virtue in composition; and the ascription has been propagated, with perhaps little examination, to the present day. He, however, who shall accurately analyse his "Proposal for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English tongue;" a subject which, more than any other, called for the most scrupulous attention to grammatical propriety, will probably be induced to change his preconception, and to confess that scarcely a page exists in this celebrated treatise, which does not convict the Dean of more than one violation of the laws of composition. If some of the best of Addison's papers be contrasted with this production of Swift, they will be found as superior to the Doctor's style in point of correctness, as they are acknowledged to be in amenity and grace *.

It has not unfrequently been asserted, but with-

* "Whoever has been reading this unnatural filth, (namely, the latter part of Gulliver's Travels) let him turn for a moment to a *Spectator* of Addison, and observe the philanthropy of that *classical* writer; I may add the *superior purity of his diction* and his wit."

Harris's Philological Enquiries, p. 538.

out due consideration, that the style of Addison is too generally feeble and relaxed. A little reflection on the nature of the subjects which usually employed his pen, would soon teach those who circulate this opinion to pause, and retract the censure.

Writing frequently on subjects which respect the minuter morals, and the decencies of domestic life, it was desirable that Addison should adopt a diction whose cast was at once easy and familiar, yet simply elegant. In carrying this design into execution he has exhibited consummate judgment and taste. His words, though plain, are expressive, and his idioms, with which he abounds, are so selected as to impart, when the occasion demands, a colloquial and perfectly unconstrained manner, without any portion of coarseness or vulgarity.

Even in this subdued and middle style he was singularly attentive, considering the period in which he wrote not only to grammatical purity, but to the modulation of his sentences, which, though never exhibiting any studied cadences, seldom fail to please the ear. Dr. Warton relates in his Essay on Pope, that Addison was so very particular in his compositions, that when the entire impression of a number was nearly thrown off, he would stop the press to insert a new preposi-

tion or conjunction; and the minute errata annexed to many of his papers in the original folio editions tend strongly to confirm the report. He would likewise, it appears, from an inspection of these lists of errata, often avail himself of the opportunity, not only of correcting typographical mistakes, but of altering such words or phrases as, upon reperusal, he conceived might admit of improvement. How early he commenced this critical diligence is apparent from Tatler, N° 117, the errors and corrections of which are thus noticed:

* Column 1, line 15, for *tastes*, read *relishes*.
Ibidem, — —— 29, — *times*, read *ages*.
——— ——— —— 38, — *the* whole, read *a* whole.
——— ——— —— 47, — *these*, read *this*.
——— ——— —— 48, — *satisfaction*, read *pleasure*.
Column 2, —— 19, dele *own*.
——— ——— —— 35, for *embraces*, read *embrace*.
——— 3, —— 18, dele *the*.
——— — —— 19, idem.
——— — —— 60, for *scare*, read *scarce*.

Of the familiar style of Addison, the following may be taken as a specimen:

"I was this morning awakened by a sudden shake of the house; and as soon as I had *got* a little out of my consternation, I felt another, which was followed by two or three repetitions

* The Tatler, in folio, consisted of four columns.

of the same convulsion. I got up as fast as possible, girt on my rapier, and snatched up my hat, when my landlady came up to me, and told me, that the gentlewoman of the next house begged me to step thither, for that a lodger she had taken in was run mad, and she desired my advice, as indeed every body in the whole lane does upon important occasions. I am not like some artists, saucy because I can be beneficial, but went immediately. Our neighbour told us, she had the day before let her second floor to a very genteel youngish man, who told her, he kept extraordinary good hours, and was generally at home most part of the morning and evening at study; but that this morning he had for an hour together made this extravagant noise, which we then heard. I went up stairs with my hand upon the hilt of my rapier, and approached this new lodger's door. I looked in at the key-hole, and there I saw a well-made man look with great attention on a book, and on a sudden jump into the air so high, that his head almost touched the ceiling. He came down safe on his right foot, and again flew up, alighting on his left; then looked again at his book, and holding out his right leg, put it into such a quivering motion, that I thought he would have *shaked* it off. He used the left after the same manner, when on a

sudden, to my great surprise, he stooped himself incredibly low, and turned gently on his toes. After this circular motion, he continued bent in that humble posture for some time, looking on his book. After this, he recovered himself, with a sudden spring, and flew round the room in all the violence and disorder imaginable, until he made a full pause for want of breath. In this interim my women asked what I thought. I whispered that I thought this learned person an enthusiast, who possibly had his first education in the Peripatetic *way, which was a sect of philosophers* who always studied when walking. But observing him much out of breath, I thought it the best time to master him if he were disordered, and knocked at his door. I was surprised to find him open it, and say with great civility and good mien, that he hoped he had not disturbed us. I believed him in a lucid interval, and desired he would please to let me see his book. He did so, smiling. I could not make any thing of it, and therefore asked in what language it was *writ*. He said, it was one he studied with great application; but it was his profession to teach it, and he could not communicate his knowledge without a consideration. I answered, that I hoped he would hereafter keep his thoughts to himself, for his meditation this

morning had cost me three coffee-dishes, and a clean pipe. He seemed concerned at that, and told me he was a dancing-master, and had been reading a dance or two before he went out, which had been written by one who taught at an academy in France. He observed me at a stand, and went on to inform me, that now articulate motions, as well as sounds, were expressed by proper characters; and that there is nothing so common, as to communicate a dance by a letter. I besought him hereafter to meditate in a ground-room, for that otherwise it would be impossible for an artist of any other kind to live near him; and that I was sure several of his thoughts this morning would have shaken my spectacles off my nose, had I been myself at study.

"I then took my leave of this virtuoso, and returned to my chamber, meditating on the various occupations of rational creatures *."

In this extract there are a few inaccuracies common to every writer of a period, when systematic grammar had not yet been established; as, for instance, *got* for *gotten*, *shaked* for *shaken*, and *writ* for *written*. There is one error, however, of greater consequence in this passage, more especially as it militates against perspicuity. Our author observes, that the person he is de-

* Tatler, N° 88.

scribing appeared to be an enthusiast, " who possibly had his first education in the Peripatetic way, *which was a sect* of philosophers." Sense and precision are here violated, the dogmata of a system being confounded with the persons who professed them. It should have been " the Peripatetic way, which was founded or established by a sect of philosophers." This is a solecism, however, not frequent in the writings of Addison, and though glaring to the critic of the nineteenth century, was little liable to detection when he offered his compositions to the public.

On subjects of a dignified and serious cast, or which are decorated with the magic hues of fancy, the style of Addison is uncommonly beautiful. It is metaphorical and rich, without losing any portion of its sweetness and simplicity; it is clear, graceful, and pure, and charms the more durably as it is free from antithesis, point, and forced construction.

Innumerable are the passages which present themselves for selection, as instances of a style which on topics of this nature has probably never been surpassed. With what exquisite propriety and beauty our author could adapt his diction to his subject, the following extracts, taken from his Essay on Westminster Abbey, will abun-

dantly prove. The theme is of the highest import, and the language correspondently solemn and impressive.

"Upon my going into the church," he remarks, "I entertained myself with the digging of a grave, and saw in every shovelful of it that was thrown up, the fragment of a bone or skull, intermixt with a kind of fresh mouldering earth, that some time or other had a place in the composition of a human body. Upon this, I began to consider with myself what innumerable multitudes of people lay confused together under the pavement of that ancient cathedral; how men and women, friends and enemies, priests and soldiers, monks and prebendaries, were crumbled amongst one another, and blended together in the same common mass; how beauty, strength, and youth, with old age, weakness, and deformity, lay undistinguished in the same promiscuous heap of matter.——

"I know that entertainments of this nature are apt to raise dark and dismal thoughts in timorous minds and gloomy imaginations; but for my own part, though I am always serious, I do not know what it is to be melancholy, and can therefore take a view of Nature in her deep and solemn scenes, with the same pleasure as in her most gay and delightful ones. By this means I

can improve myself with those objects which others consider with terror. When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tomb-stone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow. When I see kings lying by those who deposed them; when I consider rival wits placed side by side; or the holy men that divided the world with their contests and disputes; I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of the tombs, of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day, when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together *."

Equally striking and appropriate is the style of Addison, when employed on subjects whose gaiety and beauty call for diction of the greatest sweetness, vivacity, and elegance. Expatiating on the pleasures of a winter-garden, the picture he has drawn is rendered still more lovely by the powers of contrast. "When nature," he ob-

* Spectator, N° 26.

serves, " is in her desolation, and presents us with nothing but bleak and barren prospects, there is something unspeakably cheerful in a spot of ground which is covered with trees that smile amidst all the rigour of winter, and give us a view of the most gay season in the midst of that which is the most dead and melancholy. I have so far indulged myself in this thought, that I have set apart a whole acre of ground for the executing of it. The walls are covered with ivy instead of vines. The laurel, the horn-beam, and the holly, with many other trees and plants of the same nature, grow so thick in it that you cannot imagine a more lively scene. The glowing redness of the berries, with which they are hung at this time, vies with the verdure of their leaves, and is apt to inspire the heart of the beholder with that vernal delight which you have somewhere taken notice of in your former papers. It is very pleasant, at the same time, to see the several kinds of birds retiring into this little green spot, and enjoying themselves among the branches and foliage, when my great garden, which I have before mentioned to you, does not afford a single leaf for their shelter *."

On no topic, however, has he exhibited greater amenity and harmony of language than when he

* Spectator, N° 477.

describes the magic effect of light and colours; it is difficult to decide whether the imagery or the diction it is clothed in be most admirable. "We are every where entertained," he remarks, "with pleasing shows and apparitions; we discover imaginary glories in the heavens, and in the earth, and see some of this visionary beauty poured out upon the whole creation; but what a rough unsightly sketch of nature should we be entertained with, did all her colouring disappear, and the several distinctions of light and shade vanish? In short, our souls are at present delightfully lost and bewildered in a pleasing delusion; and we walk about like the enchanted hero in a romance, who sees beautiful castles, woods, and meadows; and at the same time hears the warbling of birds, and the purling of streams; but, upon the finishing of some secret spell, the fantastic scene breaks up, and the disconsolate knight finds himself on a barren heath, or in a solitary desart *."

Where the theme is such as to require much vigour and compression, the diction and collocation of our author will be often found to rival the most nervous writers in the language. Speaking of the unbounded influence of the Deity over the intellect and imagination of man, he illus-

* Spectator, N° 413.

trates the subject in the following emphatic manner:

"He can excite images in the mind without the help of words, and make scenes rise up before us, and seem present to the eye, without the assistance of bodies or exterior objects. He can transport the imagination with such beautiful and glorious visions, as cannot possibly enter into our present conceptions, or haunt it with such ghastly spectres and apparitions, as would make us hope for annihilation, and think existence no better than a curse. In short, he can so exquisitely ravish or torture the soul through this single faculty, as might suffice to make the whole heaven or hell of any finite being *."

In another part of the same paper, alluding to the dreadful symptoms of derangement, he employs language still more concise and energetic. "There is not a sight," says he, "in nature so mortifying as that of a distracted person, when his imagination is troubled, and his whole soul disordered and confused. Babylon in ruins is not so melancholy a spectacle."

There are passages also in the works of Addison which display the strength and elaboration, the point and antithesis for which modern composition, since the era of Johnson has been so re-

* Spectator, N° 421.

markably distinguished. One of these I shall quote from the *Freeholder*, the close of which will immediately strike the reader as the prototype of many a recent period. Reprobating the acrimony and party abuse of the political paper, entitled the *Examiner*, the author observes,

"No sanctity of character, or privilege of sex, exempted persons from this barbarous usage. Several of our prelates were the standing marks of public raillery, and many ladies of the first quality branded by name for matters of fact, which, as they were false, were not heeded, and if they had been true, were innocent *."

It is not meant to be denied, however, that the style of Addison partook, in some degree, of the inaccuracies and defects incident to the period of literature that we are contemplating. His grammar and syntax are not always correct, and what would now be termed inelegancies or vulgarisms, occasionally disfigure his pages. These blemishes, it must be remembered, are by no means frequent; but, as critical assertion is of little utility without proof, I shall adduce a few instances of the errors which sometimes violate the composition of this accomplished writer.

A strict attention to the laws of grammar and syntax is now exhibited by every writer who has

* Freeholder, N° 19.

any claims to literary distinction. In the days of Queen Anne, however, though termed the Augustan age of Great Britain, authors of the first eminence, and who have never been exceeded, perhaps, in the knowledge of the idiom and powers of the language, are not unfrequently found inattentive to the minutiæ of grammar. Of the classics of this favoured age, I have ventured, though contrary to common opinion, to consider Addison as, in this respect, the most correct. That he was not entirely exempt, however, from errors of a similar description, the two following instances, the first a solecism in syntax, the second in grammar, will sufficiently prove:

"We have the power of *retaining*, altering, and compounding those images which we have once received, *into* all the varieties, &c. &c. *"

"The last are, indeed, *more preferable*, &c. &c. †"

As I wish to be brief on this ungrateful subject, I shall subjoin but two examples of inelegant expression, and but two of inaccurate composition.

"I cannot *stick* to pronounce of *such a one* that whatever he may think, &c. ‡"

"If *a man considers* the face of Italy in general,

* Spectator, N° 411. † Spectator, N° 411.
‡ Spectator, N° 185.

one would think that Nature had laid it out into such a variety of styles and governments as *one finds* in it *."

"The wisest of men are sometimes *acted* by such unaccountable motives, *as the life of the fool,* and the superstitious is guided by nothing else †."

"I have already given my reader an account of a set of merry fellows, who are passing their summer together in the country, *being provided of a great house* ‡."

This last solecism frequently occurs in the writings of Sir Philip Sidney, an example of which may be seen in the commencement of the first quotation that we have given from this author.

The defects, however, which an accurate research may discover in the pages of Addison, are almost forgotten, when we take into consideration the many excellencies which have so justly given celebrity to his style and composition. These have been amply acknowledged, and by some of the first authors in our language, during the course of the last sixty years.

Mr. Melmoth thus admirably takes the lead in appreciating the merits of our author's diction and manner:

"I know not," says he, "whether Sir Wil-

* Travels. † Spectator, N° 191.
‡ Spectator, N° 440.

liam Temple may not be considered as the first of our prose authors, who introduced a graceful *manner* into our language; at least that quality does not seem to have appeared early, or spread far amongst us. But wheresoever we may look for its origin, it is certain to be found in its highest perfection in the essays of a gentleman, whose writings will be distinguished so long as politeness and good sense have any admirers. That becoming air which Tully esteemed the criterion of fine composition; and which every reader, he says, imagines so easy to be imitated, yet will find so difficult to attain; is the prevailing characteristic of all that excellent author's most elegant performances. In a word, one may justly apply to him what Plato, in his allegorical language, says of Aristophanes, that the *Graces* having searched all the world for a temple wherein they might for ever dwell, settled at last in the breast of Mr. Addison *."

Nor is DR. YOUNG less striking and emphatic in expressing his idea of Addisonian excellence:

" Addison," he remarks, " wrote little in verse, much in sweet, elegant, Virgilian prose; so let me call it, since Longinus calls Herodotus most Homeric; and Thucydides is said to have formed his style on Pindar. Addison's compositions are

* Fitzosborne's Letters, Letter 29th, dated 1746.

built with the finest materials, in the taste of the ancients; and (to speak his own language) on truly classic ground: and though they are the delight of the present age, yet I am persuaded that they will receive more justice from posterity. I never read him, but I am struck with such a disheartening idea of perfection, that I drop my pen. And, indeed, far superior writers should forget his compositions, if they would be greatly pleased with their own *."

The opinion of DR. BLAIR is equally favourable, and, at the same time, more determinate and clear.

"Of the highest, most correct, and ornamented degree of the simple manner," he observes, "Mr. Addison is, beyond doubt, in the English language, the most perfect example: and, therefore, though not without some faults, he is, on the whole, the safest model for imitation, and the freest from considerable defects, which the language affords. Perspicuous and pure he is in the highest degree; his precision, indeed, not very great; yet nearly as great as the subjects which he treats of require: the construction of his sentences easy, agreeable, and commonly very musical; carrying a character of smooth-

* Vide Observations on Original Composition; published in 1759.

ness, more than of strength. In figurative language, he is rich: particularly in similies and metaphors; which are so employed as to render his style splendid without being gaudy. There is not the least affectation in his manner; we see no marks of labour; nothing forced or constrained; but great elegance joined with great ease and simplicity *."

Dr. knox, likewise, a very learned and competent judge, has, in many parts of his elegant and interesting Essays, very happily characterised the numerous beauties which so remarkably distinguish the style of the chief author of the Spectator.

"Though the French," says he, "are disposed to deny the English the praise of taste, we have writers who can rival them in their pretensions to every excellence which can adorn composition. Our Addison, like some of the most celebrated ancients, possesses that sweetness, that delicacy, and that grace, which is formed to please the human mind, under all the revolutions of time, of fashion, and of capricious taste. It is not only the excellent matter which produces the effect of gently composing our passions while we are reading Addison; but it is also that

* Lectures on Belles Lettres, vol. ii. p. 37, first delivered in the year 1761.

sweet style, which cannot be read and tasted without communicating to the mind something of its own equability.—The great charm of his diction, which has delighted readers of every class, appears to me to be a certain natural sweetness, ease, and delicacy, which no affectation can attain. Truths of all kinds, the sublime and the familiar, the serious and the comic, are taught in that peculiar style, which raises in the mind a placid and equable flow of emotions; that placidness and equability, which are in a particular manner adapted to give permanency to pleasurable sensation. A work, which warms our passions, and hurries us on with the rapid vehemence of its style, may be read once or twice with pleasure; but it is the more tranquil style which is most frequently in unison with our minds, and which therefore, on the tenth repetition, as Horace says, will afford fresh pleasure *."

Lastly DR. JOHNSON, in his usual nervous and pointed diction, has thus judiciously discriminated the peculiarities and excellencies of our author's composition.

" His prose is the model of the middle style; on grave subjects not formal, on light occa-

* Vide Essays Moral and Literary, first published, anonymously, I believe, in 1777, N° 28, and 106, 14th edition.

sions not grovelling: pure without scrupulosity, and exact without apparent elaboration; always equable, and always easy, without glowing words or pointed sentences. Addison never deviates from his track to snatch a grace; he seeks no ambitious ornaments, and tries no hazardous innovations. His page is always luminous, but never blazes in unexpected splendour.

"It was apparently his principal endeavour to avoid all harshness and severity of diction; he is therefore sometimes verbose in his transitions and connections, and sometimes descends too much to the language of conversation; yet if his language had been less idiomatical, it might have lost somewhat of its genuine Anglicism. What he attempted, he performed; he is never feeble, and he did not wish to be energetic; he is never rapid, and he never stagnates. His sentences have neither studied amplitude, nor affected brevity; his periods, though not diligently rounded, are voluble and easy. Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison *."

The public has in a great measure sanctioned the opinions of these truly learned and discerning critics; and the style of Addison is to this

* Lives of the Poets, vol. ii. p. 140.

day justly held forth to the candidates for literary fame as a model of elegant simplicity. It has, however, been more admired than imitated; and very few since the publication of the Spectator have been able to imbue their composition with any considerable portion of Addisonian sweetness and grace.

The taste of the literary world, indeed, has lately, through the seductive influence of some powerful writers, been thrown into a very different channel. The splendid and elaborated diction of Johnson, Burke, and Gibbon, though exhibiting great strength and richness, and therefore admirably adapted to sustain the tone of very lofty subjects, has been indiscriminately, and therefore generally very improperly, assumed as the garb for almost every theme which life and literature afford; whilst the clear, the unaffected yet graceful language of Addison, calculated to clothe with exquisite propriety by far the greater part of moral and literary topics, has been seldom adopted even in the very departments where it ought more especially to have been employed. Of those who have cultivated a diction emulating the chaste beauties which distinguish the style of Addison, I can enumerate but three or four. Hume and Goldsmith have in their Essays made the nearest approach to this

model; some of the papers in the Mirror, likewise, are composed in a vein of great sweetness and delicacy, with regard both to selection and arrangement of language; and the moral and critical writings of Dr. Aikin display a style which unites the rare qualities of great accuracy, simplicity, and taste.

If we now look back upon the period included in this Essay, involving not less than one hundred and thirty years, we shall find, that from the era of Sidney to the publication of the Spectator, the English language, with few exceptions, had been gradually and successively improving, and at length acquired, in the compositions of Addison, a high degree of classical elegance and purity. The steps by which this near approach to perfection became attainable, will be accurately seen through the medium of the quotations that I have given, and which it has been my endeavour to select with a view as well to the interest of the matter as the illustration of style.

The attentive reader will soon discern that Addison, who was assiduous in preserving as much of the idiom of our ancient writers as his subject and the progress of refinement would allow, has imbibed much of the flavour and colouring of the best authors of our first period, of Hooker, Raleigh, and Bacon; and, on the other

hand, may be sometimes, though not often, traced in the lax and diffuse sentences of Sidney. Of the second era Cowley, Tillotson, and Temple, as hath already been observed, were his prototypes; and how much of sweetness, of beauty, and of grace, he has added to the improvements which they had already engrafted on composition, must be strongly felt by every person who contrasts their various productions.

It may, in short, without the least charge of partiality, be said, that, though with regard to the minutiæ of grammar and composition Addison may be found less accurate than the best writers of the present day,—in all the great qualities of style, in perspicuity, simplicity, and ease, in harmony, elegance, and amenity, he has been surpassed by none and equalled but by few.

PART III.

ESSAY III.

ON THE CRITICAL ABILITIES AND TASTE OF ADDISON.

To discriminate with accuracy the beauties and defects of composition, and to establish laws for its conduct, consonant to the general feelings of nature, and the practice of the best writers, form the basis of an art which has ever been highly esteemed in proportion to the progress of civilization and refinement.

In the early stages of society, though genius o the first-rate quality may exist, its efforts, though brilliant, are seldom under the controul of taste and judgment. The mighty name of Homer is usually pointed out as an exception; but the assistance which this great poet derived from his predecessors or contemporaries, and the state of literature of the period in which he flourished, are still involved in almost impenetrable obscurity. The internal evidence of his works proves

that he was versed in all the knowledge of his times; and it is reasonable to suppose, that he availed himself to the utmost of what previous ages had accumulated in precept and example *. However assisted, or however independent of others, he has left the world two productions, whose execution and construction have been the admi-

* "Homer," observes the Editor of the Bibliographical Dictionary, "has been generally stiled the *Father of Epic Poetry*.—This has ever appeared to me very improper. It is true he is the *oldest* Greek poet we know. But as the *Paradise Lost* of *Milton* plainly supposed that other Epic poems existed prior to this, and that *Milton* had read them, so does that of *Homer*. It is contrary to all the phænomena of the human mind, that so finished a work should have been the *first* essay of the kind. There can be no room to doubt but many poets flourished *before* Homer, and perhaps not a few Epic poems were made; and it would be rash to assert that even his is the best that ever was produced. As the *Paradise Lost*, necessarily supposes SPENSER'S *Fairy Queen:* that, TASSO'S *Gerusalemme Liberata:* that, VIRGIL'S *Æneid;* and the *Æneid*, the *Iliad* of HOMER; so the *Iliad* itself may stand in reference to as many preceding poems as the *Paradise Lost* does. As the *Æneid* never could have existed had not the *Iliad* gone before, on the plan of which it is all built: and, as the *Jerusalem Delivered* is a proceed from the *Æneid*, as the *Fairy Queen* is from the poem of *Tasso*, and the *Paradise Lost* from the whole; so I conjecture the *Iliad* is from the works of preceding poets. And if this conjecture be well fouuded, we are left to deplore the irreparable loss of a vast mass of intellect in the destruction of the works which preceded and gave birth to those of Homer!" *Vol. 4th, p.* 127, 128.

ration of posterity. To display the unity and integrity of his fable, the just bearings and concatenations of its various incidents; to awaken attention to the variety, strength, and beauty of his characters, and their fidelity as draughts from nature, has been the useful province of criticism.

Of still greater estimation is the duty of the critic when employed to develope or arraign the beauties and blemishes of vast but irregular genius, where the fascinations of transcendant ability is ever liable to consecrate even its most glaring defects. The usual result of talent emerging in an era unimbued with science and literature, and when neither good models nor precepts are accessible, is originality in style and conception; an originality, however, which strongly paints the state of society which gave it birth, exhibiting strong lights and shades, matchless beauty and sublimity, almost instantly contrasted with palpable and striking deformity.

Of this mixed character was *Shakspeare*, the most original, and, frequently, the greatest poet the world has yet seen. He is consequently a most appropriate object of criticism; and in no more useful task can this art be engaged than in weighing with impartiality his numerous excellencies and errors.

Of equal value are the exertions of the critic

when engaged in elucidating the productions of a more advanced stage of society, where genius is clothed in the panoply of profound and varied erudition. It is in this situation, where a few are truly learned, intimate with the best models of antiquity, and capable of emulating their proudest efforts, whilst the bulk of the people is still immersed in comparative ignorance, that the taste and judgment of the critic are most essentially necessary in familiarising and imparting a relish for excellence, which would otherwise neither be felt nor understood. This interesting and important service did Addison effectually perform for our sublime Milton, and, at the same time, presented his countrymen with the first specimen in their language of elegant systematic criticism.

To ascertain, however, with due precision, the great merits of Addison as a critic, it will be necessary to consider what steps had been previously taken in the island for the improvement of this branch of literature. Before we proceed, therefore, to estimate more particularly the value and utility of what our author has left us in this department, it will be proper to dwell, for a short time, on the origin and progress of English criticism, and to trace its course to the commencement of the eighteenth century.

Little attention had been paid to, and few

books of any worth published in English prose, before the middle of the sixteenth century. Those who aspired to the character of learning neglected the vernacular language for the Latin tongue, in which alone they could hope for a wide-extended circulation of their ideas. We may date indeed the first attempt to raise a model of English style from the Toxophilus of Roger Ascham, which appeared in the year 1545. It was composed professedly with the view of shewing with what elegance, purity, and precision the language might be written.

The consequence of the attempt was such as the ingenious author had in view. In fact, English criticism owes its birth to this production; for, struck with the novelty and beauty of the experiment, the minds of the literati were immediately turned toward the construction and improvement of their native tongue; and eight years after the publication of the Toxophilus, appeared for the first time in our language a work which could with propriety be termed a book of criticism.

This valuable treatise made its appearance in 1553, and is entitled "THE ARTE of RHETORIKE for the use of all suche as are studious of Eloquence, sette forthe in Englishe by THOMAS WILSON." Wilson was the first scholar of his age,

had been educated in King's College, and tutor to Henry and Charles Brandon, dukes of Suffolk. He took his degree of Doctor of Laws, and afterwards attained great eminence in the state. He was ambassador from Elizabeth to Mary Queen of Scots and the Low Countries, secretary of state, privy counsellor, and lastly, in 1579, Dean of Durham.

The ARTE of RHETORIKE not only contains rules for composing in English, but displays a most elegant and accomplished mind, and a perfect acquaintance with the best writers of antiquity. "It is liberal and discursive," observes Warton, "illustrating the arts of eloquence by example, and examining and ascertaining the beauties of composition with the speculative skill and sagacity of a critic *." It points out also, with great acuteness, the powers and compass of our language, the various energies and styles of which it is susceptible, and censures with just indignation those who attempt to corrupt it by the introduction of foreign words, or pedantic and affected phrases. In his third book, when treating of simplicity of style, he thus humourously ridicules these whimsical innovators.

"Among other lessons this should first be learned, that we never affect any straunge ynke-

* Warton's History of English Poetry, vol. 3d.

horne termes, but to speake as is commonly received: neither seking to be overfine, nor yet living over carelesse, using our speache as moste men do, and ordering our wittes as the fewest have doen. Some seke so farre for outlandishe Englishe, that they forget altogether their mother's language. And I dare sweare this, if some of their mothers were alive, thei were not able to tel what thei saie: and yet these fine Englishe clerkes wil saie thei speake in their mother tongue, if a man should charge them for counterfeityng the kinge's Englishe. Some farre journied gentlemen at their returne home, like as thei love to go in forrein apparel, so thei will pouder their talke with over sea language. He that cometh lately out of Fraunce will talke Frenche Englishe, and never blushe at the matter. Another choppes in with Englishe Italianated, and applieth the Italian phrase to our Englishe speakyng, the whiche is, as if an Oration that professeth to utter his mynde in plaine Latine, would needes speake poetrie, and farre fetched colours of straunge antiquitie. The lawier will store his stomache with the prating of pedlars. The auditour, in makyng his accompt and reckenyng, cometh in with *size sould,* and *cater denere,* for vi S. and iiij d. The fine courtier will talke nothyng but CHAUCER. The misticall wisemen, and

poeticall clerkes, will speake nothyng but quainte proverbes, and blinde allegories; delightyng muche in their own darknesse, especially when none can tel what thei do saie. The unlearned or folishe phantasticall, that smelles but of learnying (suche fellowes as have seene learned men in their daies) will so Latine their tongues, that the simple cannot but wonder at their talke, and thinke surely thei speake by some revelacion. I know them, that thinke RHETORIKE to stande wholie upon darke wordes; and he that can catche an ynke-horne terme by the taile, hym thei compt to be a fine Englishman and a good rhetorician. And the rather to set out this folie I will adde here suche a letter as William Sommer * himself, could not make a better for that purpose,—devised by a Lincolneshire man for a void benefice.

"TO THE LORDE CHANCELLOR.

"Ponderyng, expendyng, and revolutyng with myself, your ingent affabilitie, and ingenious capacitie, for mundane affairs, I cannot but celebrate and extoll your magnificall dexteritie above all other. For how could you have adapted suche illustrate prerogative, and dominicall superioritie,

* King Henry's Jester.

if the fecunditie of your ingenie had not been so fertile and wonderfull pregnant, &c. &c."

He speaks in the highest terms of those who studied to impart melody and grace to their periods, and gives ample directions for "joyning wordes together in apte order that the eare maie delite in hearyng the harmonie," a proof that Ascham's book had effected a complete revolution in the opinions of the learned as to the value of their vernacular language.

Wilson has contrived to render his Treatise on Rhetoric extremely interesting and curious by various traits of the manners and customs of our ancestors, and by occasionally inserting anecdotes and stories illustrative of the subject before him, and which are usually related with vivacity and humour. As this work, independent of its being the first book on English criticism, possesses great merit in point of style, I shall easily be pardoned inserting a second extract as a specimen of his narrative composition.

"An Italian," says he, "havyng a sute here in Englande to the Archbishoppe of Yorke that then was, and comynge to Yorke when one of the prebendaries there brake his bread, as they terme it, and thereupon made a solemne longe dinner, the whiche perhaps began at eleven and continued well nigh till fowr in the afternoone, at

the whiche diner this bishoppe was: it fortuned that as they were sette, the Italian knockt at the gate, unto whom the porter, perceiving his errand, answered, that my lorde bishoppe was at diner. The Italian departed, and retourned betwixte twelve and one; the porter answered they were yet at diner. He came againe at twoo of the clocke; the porter told hym thei had not half dined. He came at three a clocke, unto whom the porter in a heate answered never a worde, but churlishlie did shutte the gates upon him. Whereupon, others told the Italian, that ther was no speaking with my lord, almoste all that daie, for the solemne diner sake. The gentilman Italian, wonderyng muche at such a long sitting, and greatly greved because he could not then speake with the archbishoppe's grace, departed straight towardes London; and leavyng the dispatche of his matters with a dere frende of his, toke his journey towardes Italie. Three yeres after, it happened that an Englishman came to Rome, with whom this Italian by chaunce fallyng acquainted, asked him if he knewe the Archbishoppe of Yorke? The Englishman said, he knewe hym rightwell. I praie you tell me, quoth the Italian, *hath that archbishoppe yet dined?*"

The example of Wilson was speedily followed by others of inferior note. An Englishe Rhetoric

was published in 1555, by RICHARD SHERRY, school-master of Magdalen College, Oxford, another soon after by RICHARD RAINOLDE, and a tract appeared in 1571, by WILLIAM FULLWOOD, "teaching the manner and style howe to endyte and write all sorts of epistles and letters." These were, however, sterile and jejune performances, and added nothing to the stock of genuine criticism.

In the year 1573, however, the lovers of literature and criticism were favoured with a work which still holds a distinguished rank in the estimation of sound scholars, the "Schoolemaster" of ROGER ASCHAM, which, like his Toxophilus, exhibits a very improved model of style. Though professedly written with a view towards the attainment of the Latin tongue, it includes numerous very judicious observations on English composition and English writers, and, as Dr. Campbell has very truly observed, "is a book that will be always useful, and everlastingly esteemed, on account of the good sense, judicious observations, excellent characters of ancient authors, and many pleasant and profitable passages of English history, which are plentifully sprinkled therein *."

It was not long after these efforts to improve

* Biographia Britannica, vol. 1st.

the style of English prose, that an attempt was made to illustrate poetry and its versification. GEORGE GASCOIGNE, the poet, gave the public, in 1575, "Certain Notes of Instruction concerning the making of Verse or Rime in English." Gascoigne was intimately acquainted with the structure of English verse, and is said by Warton to have exceeded all the poets of his age in smoothness and harmony. It is worthy of remark that his satire, entitled the *Steele-Glass*, is written in blank verse. This little treatise is therefore valuable as the production of a master in the art.

In 1582, RICHARD MULCASTER, a celebrated philologist, and eminent for his skill in oriental literature, printed, during the time he was head master of Merchant Taylor's School, "The first part of the ELEMENTARIE, which entreateth chefely of the right writing of the English Tung." London, 4to. This is a work of considerable merit and utility, and contains many pertinent observations on the structure of the language. He is peculiar in his mode of orthoepy, which he endeavours to assimilate to the pronunciation of his times. "From analogy," says a writer in the Gentleman's Magazine, "he has formed many words which I do not remember to have seen in other writers; and several natives may be found, which our great Lexicographer has either not

recorded in his dictionary, or given a confined sense to *."

Shortly afterwards, namely, in 1586, WILLIAM WEBB published, "A Discourse of English Poetrie, together with the Authors Judgment touching the Reformation of English Verse," 4to. It displays no trifling acquaintance with the subject; but a great part of the work is occupied by a vain attempt to defend the uncouth fashion of English hexameters.

GEORGE PUTTENHAM gave to the world in 1589, "The Arte of English Poesie, contrived into three Books, 4to." He treats the subject systematically, and at considerable length; and several good remarks are to be met with on style, language, and versification. He has inserted numerous specimens of his own poetry. It became a popular work, and Bolton in his *Hypercritica* terms it "elegant, witty, and artificial."

Two years afterwards, in 1591, *Harrington* published a small work entitled an "Apology of Poetrie," and in 1595, the heroic SIR PHILIP SIDNEY wrote an admirable *Defence of Poesy*, calculated to repel a most indecent and virulent attack upon this charming art by the spirit of puritanic fanaticism. It abounds with the most judicious

* Gent. Magazine, July, 1800, p. 604.

precepts, and, in point of composition, is far superior to his customary style.

FRANCIS MERES, in 1598, printed his *Palladis Tamia, or Wit's Treasurie*; and, in 1602, THOMAS CAMPION published a small tract in 12mo. under the title of *Observations on the Arte of English Poesie*. Lond. By R. Field. He is an advocate for the Roman measures, as recommended by Webbe and Sydney, and in his twelfth page introduces a specimen of what he terms *Lincentiate Iambeckes*, which are, in fact, our blank verse.

We are indebted to Campion's Observations for a very elegant *Defence of Rhyme*, by SAMUEL DANIEL the poet, printed in 1603. He endeavours to prove that rhyme is the fittest harmony of words that comports with our language, and he dedicates his work to all the worthy lovers and learned professors of rhyme within his Majesty's dominions. The style of Daniel both in poetry and prose is, for the period in which he wrote, extremely chaste and pure.

The *Hypercritica* of EDMUND BOLTON, "or a Rule of Judgement for writing or reading our Historys," is the next work which claims our attention. It was written, though not published, in the year 1617, and is a production of great

curiosity and research. He delivers his opinion, in the fourth division of his book, with much good sense, on the chief English writers in prose and verse; but in a style somewhat quaint and uncouth, as will be immediately perceived from the title he has chosen to affix to this part of his undertaking. "Prime Gardens for gathering English, according to the true Gage or Standard of the Tongue about fifteen or sixteen Years ago." The *Hypercritica* of Bolton, however, though I have deemed its insertion necessary in this place, in order to preserve the chronology of English criticism, could be of no service to the student of the seventeenth century, as it continued locked up in manuscript until the year 1722, when Antony Hall first printed it at the close of his Continuation of Triveti Annales, Oxford, 8vo.

We have now to notice a piece of criticism whose merits are of a very superior kind, *The Discoveries* of BEN JONSON, written about the year 1630, and published after his death in 1640. This little tract displays the judgment and classical learning of Jonson to great advantage, and his style is unusually close, precise, and pure. I cannot avoid transcribing, as a specimen of his manner, the following admirable directions for writing well, and which should be indelibly impressed upon the mind of every student.

"For a man to write well," he observes, "there are required three necessaries. To read the best authors; observe the best speakers; and much exercise of his own style. In style to consider, what ought to be written; and after what manner; he must first think, and excogitate his matter; then choose his words, and examine the weight of either. Then take care in placing, and ranking both matter and words, that the composition be comely; and to do this with diligence and often. No matter how slow the style be at first, so it be laboured and accurate; seek the best, and be not glad of the forward conceits, or first words, that offer themselves to us, but judge of what we invent; and order what we approve. Repeat often, what we have formerly written; which besides that it helps the consequence, and makes the juncture better, it quickens the heat of imagination, that often cools in the time of setting down, and gives it new strength, as if it grew lustier, by the going back. As we see in the contention of leaping, they jump farthest, that fetch their race largest: or, as in the throwing a dart or javelin, we force back our arms, to make our loose the stronger. Yet if we have a fair gale of wind, I forbid not the steering out of our sail, so the favour of the gale deceive us not. For all that we invent doth please us in the con-

ception or birth; else we would never set it down. But the safest is to return to our judgment, and handle over again those things, the easiness of which might make them justly suspected. So did the best writers in their beginnings; they imposed upon themselves care and industry. They did nothing rashly. They obtained first to write well, and then custom made it easy and a habit. By little and little, their matter shewed itself to them more plentifully; their words answered, their composition followed; and all, as in a well-ordered family, presented itself in the place *."

Between the publication of the Discoveries of Jonson in 1640, and the appearance of Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* in 1667, no progress seems to have been made in English criticism. This Essay by our great poet, and which forms a remarkable era in our national literature, was his first effort in the art of criticism, and written "to vindicate the honour of the English Poets from the censures of those who unjustly preferred the French before them." It is in the form of dialogue, one of the most difficult modes of

* This tract by Ben Jonson, with Sidney's Defence of Poetry, were republished by Robinson in 1787, 8vo. and form the two best pieces which, previous to the Prefaces of Dryden, our ancient school of Criticism has afforded.

composition; yet is it conducted with singular felicity, and with much attention to preservation of character.

To the Essays, Prefaces, and Dedications of DRYDEN, English criticism is greatly indebted. Though making no pretensions to method or system, he has delivered, in a style extremely rich and copious, and, for the most part, with great taste and judgment, a vast variety of precepts on almost every branch of poetry. He taught his adversaries, in fact, to discover the defects of his own compositions, many of which were framed rather with the view of pleasing an ignorant audience than with the ambition of exemplifying the rules which he had himself promulgated. The attempt, likewise, to justify the numerous aberrations that he had been guilty of, especially in dramatic poetry, introduced into his critical doctrines frequent inconsistencies and contradictions.

While Dryden continued to favour the world with his very interesting dissertations, the last of which, his preface to the Fables, Ancient and Modern, and written probably in December, 1699, is the most lively and pleasing of the collection, several of his contemporaries, stimulated by his example, entered the same path to fame. Among these, the elegant and accomplished SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE claims a decided superiority. His *Mis-*

cellanea, the first part of which was published in 1672, include two Essays on Ancient and Modern Learning and on Poetry, which exhibit the critical acumen of the author to great advantage, being written in a popular manner, and with the accompanyment of a most fascinating style. The treatises too in the same volume on Heroic Virtue and Gardening, are full of research, and combine a great portion of entertainment, with innumerable instances of the author's goodness of heart, and general refinement of taste.

In 1675, EDWARD PHILLIPS published his "*Theatrum Poetarum*, or a complete Collection of the Poets, especially the most eminent of all Ages, the Ancients distinguish't from the Moderns in their several Alphabets. With some Observations and Reflections upon many of them, particularly those of our own nation. Together with a Prefatory Discourse of the Poets and Poetry in general."

It has generally been supposed, and upon no slight foundation, that Milton gave Phillips, who was his nephew, much assistance on this occasion. The internal evidence arising from the book is certainly in favour of the idea, as many of the criticisms exactly correspond with what we know to have been the peculiar opinions of the great poet. "There is good reason to suppose," says

a very learned and competent judge, "that Milton threw many additions and corrections into the THEATRUM POETARUM.—It contains criticisms far above the taste of that period: among these is the following judgment on Shakspeare, which was not then, I believe, the general opinion, and which perfectly coincides both with the sentiments and words of Milton in L'Allegro,

> "Or sweetest Shakspeare, Fancy's child,
> Warble his native wood-notes wild."

"In tragedy, never any expressed a more lofty and tragic height; never any represented nature more purely to the life: and where the polishments of art are most wanting, as probably his learning was not extraordinary, he pleases with a certain *wild* and *native* elegance *."

And in the History of English Poetry, speaking of the same book, he further remarks, "Such criticisms were not common after the national taste had been just corrupted by the false and capricious refinements of the court of Charles the Second †."

The Preface of Phillips more particularly seems to breathe the spirit and sentiments of Milton, and is written in a strain of peculiar eloquence and taste.

* Warton's Milton, 2d edition, p. 64.

† Vol. iii. p. 440.

Of the critic whom we have next to produce, though the learning and research may be praised, the want of candour and of judgment is so notorious, that few now can consult his works on elegant literature without absolute disgust. RYMER, though a good antiquary, and well acquainted with the history and progress of poetry, both in this and other nations, seems to have been utterly deficient in sensibility and taste; and his abuse of Beaumont, Fletcher, and Shakspeare, is unqualified, unjust, and gross in the extreme. Through his pieces, however, are dispersed some acute observations, and much historical information. They are entitled "The Tragedies of the last Age, considered and examined by the Practice of the Ancients, and by the common Sense of all Ages. In a letter to Fleetwood Shepherd, Esq. London, 1678," and "A short View of Tragedy; its original Excellency and Corruption. With some Reflections on Shakspeare, and other Practitioners for the Stage. London, 1693."

It is not denied, that these productions were of service to the art which they professed to improve. They familiarized, in some degree, the opinions of the ancient critics, and they excited the attention of superior minds. Dryden wrote some very valuable remarks on Rymer's first Essay; and the "Short View of Tragedy" merits notice

for its historical matter. The lovers of Shakspeare, however, who are now as numerous as his readers, must execrate, and justly, the critic who has termed Othello a "bloody farce, without salt or savour;" and who has declared, that "in the *neighing* of an horse, or in the *growling* of a mastiff, there is a meaning, there is as lively expression, and, may I say, more humanity, than many times in the tragical flights of Shakspeare *."

Dr. WILLIAM WOTTON, in 1694, published his "*Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning*," in which he opposes many of the opinions of Temple, though with temper and modesty. This work displays a considerable portion of erudition, and much critical knowledge, and, by incidentally exciting a long continued and well supported controversy, proved of essential service to general literature and criticism.

A very elaborate commentary on Paradise Lost was, in 1695, given to the public by PATRICK HUME, a Scotchman. This may be considered as the first attempt to illustrate an English classic by copious and continued notes; an example which has been followed in the last and present century, with regard to Shakspeare, on a very extended scale. The notes of Hume, though too often pedantic, heavy, and trifling, are not unfre-

* A short View of Tragedy, p. 95, 96, 146.

quently replete with entertainment and illustration; and to them, as Warton has justly observed, succeeding commentators "have been often amply indebted, without even the most distant hint of acknowledgment *."

The year 1696 brought forward the first effort of JOHN DENNIS in critical literature; "in which," observes the Biographia Britannica, "he so frequently exerted himself, that he came to be called the Critic, by way of distinction †." The first of Sir Richard Blackmore's series of epic poems was the subject of his strictures, and he named the work "Remarks on a book entitled Prince Arthur, an Heroic Poem. With some general critical Observations, and several new Remarks upon Virgil. London, 8vo. 1696."

Dennis possessed a very respectable portion of learning and acuteness, and was in the early part of his career esteemed both by Dryden and Congreve for his critical sagacity. Besides the remarks on Arthur, he published a discourse on "The Advancement and Reformation of modern Poetry," a tract on "The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry," and "Letters on the Genius and Writings of Shakspeare." All these contain many just and ingenious observations, and re-

* Warton's Milton, Preface, p. 7.

† Vide article Dennis, vol. v. by Dr. Kippis.

spectively contributed to raise his reputation. Had he paused here, his character and his works in criticism might have descended to posterity with some value attached to them; but his subsequent conduct to Pope and Addison was so gross and intemperate, and his attacks so evidently founded on malignant motives and personal animosity, that he became in a few years an object of derision and contempt; an event which, together with the neglect of his dramatic pieces, operating on an unusual portion of vanity and self-consequence, almost literally placed him in the frantic state in which he had been humorously, but cruelly drawn by Pope *.

Such had been the progress, and such was the state of English criticism, when ADDISON commenced that series of papers, which has eventually contributed more to the polish and refinement of the public taste, than any prior or succeeding effort.

The works of Dryden, the best and greatest critic who preceded the Spectator, were rather calculated for those who were entering as candidates for literary fame, than for the improvement of the many who might wish to imbibe a relish for the beauties of elegant genius; they were

* See Pope's "Narrative, concerning the strange and deplorable frenzy of Mr. John Dennis."

written, in fact, more with a view of teaching how to write than how to read; and implied in those who came to their perusal a very considerable portion of previous and scholastic knowledge.

The great defalcation of the period, when Addison stepped forth to enlighten the public mind, was a want of those general principles and views which lead to a just, though a somewhat superficial conception of the beauties and defects of composition. With few exceptions, our nobility and gentry, from whom example rapidly descends to the inferior orders of society, were not only ignorant of what they ought to admire, but, what was still worse, had little or no consciousness of their defects, and consequently felt no great impulse or desire to enter into what appeared to them, probably, a rugged and uninviting pursuit. Until therefore, by the most gentle and insinuating methods, they were awakened to a sense of their deficiencies, nothing could be hoped for or expected; and when this had been obtained, there was still a task of the utmost difficulty to achieve; to create an ardent admiration, and a love for the noblest productions of fancy and taste.

The talents of Addison were, happily, equal to the undertaking. To the keenest perception of

the beautiful and sublime in composition, he added a taste pre-eminently delicate and correct, and the most engaging and fascinating style that this country had ever witnessed; with these were combined the most unrivalled humour, a morality lovely and interesting as it was pure and philanthropic, and a fancy whose effusions were peculiarly sweet, rich, and varied.

To have published a formal treatise on the elements of criticism, or an elaborate commentary on the merits of a classic, ancient or modern, would, at the period that we are now reviewing, have availed nothing; they might have been perused, indeed, by a few retired scholars; but their effect on the public mind, on the national taste and literature, had been transient and unfelt. The mode which Addison adopted, of daily essays, avowedly intended for popular use; short, familiar, and unassuming; which occupied a very small portion of time, and embraced every interesting topic of the day, was the plan best adapted for gradually insinuating, under the guise of light reading and entertainment, the most valuable precepts of critical literature. That exquisite vein of ridicule, which distinguishes so remarkably the productions of Addison, which unveiled the follies and ignorance without hurting the feelings of mankind, speedily opened the eyes of

every rank, and rendered them both able and willing to detect and to supply their deficiencies. They derived, in fact, from these periodical papers, not only the power of perceiving their wants, but the opportunity of acquiring the accomplishments which they were now first taught to value and admire.

To kindle on the cheek of ignorance the blush of ingenuous shame, and to excite to emulation by the most alluring specimens of elegance and taste, were not, however, difficult as they were to execute, the only offices of Addison in his critical department. He had to clear away no inconsiderable mass of obstructing materials, of gross prejudices, of false wit, and false opinion. His earliest attempts in the Spectator, therefore, were to correct the vitiated taste of the public with regard to theatrical amusements, and to contemn the general adoption of trick, buffoonery, and conceit in composition, as a substitute for good sense, wit, and humour. His essays on the Opera, therefore, on Tragedy *, and on True and False Wit †, were calculated to expose the frivolity of the first, the bombast, indecencies, and irregularity of the second, and to give a luminous view of the vast distinction between the effusions

* Vide, N° 39, 40, 42, 44.

† —— N° 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63.

of genuine wit, and the paltry subterfuges of those who were then deemed the directors of literary opinion. It is scarcely necessary to say that he succeeded in these different objects; the stage became more rational and chaste, and the regions of pun, acrostic, and conundrum, of nonsense, obscenity, and affectation, fled, like the fabled fabrics of romance, before the wand of the disenchanter.

When this arduous task had been completed, when the meretricious colouring of false wit had faded at the touch of truth, it remained to place before the public eye a model of beauty, of grandeur, and of grace, whose style and structure should be such as to lay the foundation of a national school on the broad principles of classical simplicity and purity.

The choice of Addison has been sanctioned by universal approbation; and perhaps no effort in the annals of criticism has been productive of more salutary and decided effects, than the attempt to render popular the *Paradise Lost* of Milton. The literature of the country had been corrupted by the dissolute and inglorious reign of the second Charles; and the chill indifference of the warrior William had little tended either to improve the public taste, or to awaken a spirit of literary ambition. To vitiated learning or general ignorance, political prejudice was added;

and the noblest poem of any age or country was in danger of sinking into oblivion, when Addison stepped forth to bind the laurel on the brow of the poet, and to avert the reproach which menaced the reputation of Britain.

The mode, however, which our author adopted for the illustration of this admirable poem, has been censured by some modern critics of great acuteness and celebrity, though, in my opinion, without due allowance for the period in which the critique was produced, and for the circumstances necessary to render it effective. They appear to have formed the extravagant expectation, that, at an era when criticism was just rising into notice, and when, to render such a work as Milton's popular, it was, in the first place, essential to awaken the feelings and the taste of the people, Addison should have embraced the philosophical tone, the metaphysical research which distinguishes the present age; in fact, that, instead of merely pointing out the beauties and defects of the poem upon which he was commenting, he should have entered at large into the causes of grandeur, sublimity, pathos, &c.

Dr. Hurd, the most distinguished of our philosophical critics, after describing the plan which Longinus, Bouhours, and Addison pursued, ob-

serves, " as in sound criticism, candour must not be indulged at the expence of *justice*, I think myself obliged to add an observation concerning their *defects*; and that on what I must think the just principles here delivered. Though the method taken by these writers be scientifical, the real service they have done to criticism is not very considerable; and the reason is, they dwell too much in generals; that is, not only the *genus* to which they refer their *species* is too large, but those very subordinate species themselves are too comprehensive. Of the *three* critics under consideration, the most instructive is, unquestionably, Longinus. The *genus* itself, under which he ranks his several *classes*, is as *particular* as the species of the other two. Yet even *his* classes are much too general to convey any very distinct and useful information. It had been still better if this fine critic had descended to lower and more minute *particularities*, as subordinate to *each class*. For to observe of any *sentiment*, that it is *grand* or *pathetic*, and so of the other *species* of sublime, is saying very little. Few readers want to be informed of this. It had been sufficient, if any notice was to be taken at all of so *general* beauties, to have done it in the way which some of the best critics have taken, of merely pointing

to them. But could he have discovered and produced to observation those *peculiar* qualities in *sentiment*, which occasion the impression of *grandeur*, *pathos*, &c. this had been advancing the science of criticism very much, as tending to lay open the more secret and hidden springs of that *pleasure* which results from poetical composition.

"It gives one pain to refuse to such a writer as Mr. *Addison* any *kind* of merit, which he appears to have valued himself upon, and which the generality of his readers have seemed willing to allow him. Yet it must not be dissembled, that *criticism* was by no means his talent. His taste was truly elegant; but he had neither that vigour of understanding, nor chastised philosophical spirit, which are so essential to this character, and which we find in hardly any of the ancients besides Aristotle, and but in a very few of the moderns. For what concerns his *criticism on Milton* in particular, there was this accidental benefit arising from it, that it occasioned an admirable poet to be read, and his excellencies to be observed. But for the merit of the work itself, if there be any thing just in the *plan*, it was because Aristotle and Bossu had taken the same route before him. And as to his *own* proper observations, they are, for the most part, so general and indeterminate, as to afford but little instruc-

tion to the reader, and are, not unfrequently, altogether frivolous *."

Had our author pursued the plan which this learned critic has chalked out; had he written with the metaphysical acumen of a Harris or a Campbell, the gloom which overshadowed Milton had not been dispersed, nor would he himself have been intelligible to the bulk of his contemporaries. Addison, in fact, did that which a correct taste and sound sense dictated; he very justly thought it necessary, in the first place, at a period when the very principles of criticism had been little diffused, and the public mind but just awakened to a sense of its previous grossness and deficiencies, to allure and fix the reader by short and elegant essays on the beauties and composition of the poet that he was endeavouring to familiarize: to have philosophized on the qualities which occasioned the impressions of grandeur, sublimity, &c. he must necessarily have perceived, had he been ever so competent to the undertaking, would, owing to the unprepared state of society, and the want of a proper audience, have been useless and absurd.

The censure of Dr. Hurd appears to have arisen from a misconception as to the motive of Addison

* Hurd's Notes on the Epistle to Augustus, vol. ii. p. 112, 113, 114, 5th edition.

in publishing his critique. To cause Milton to be read and admired was not, as the Doctor supposes, the *accidental* benefit of his criticism, but its *sole aim* and *purport*. The means were admirably adapted to the end; no tedious disquisition, no recondite theory disgusted him who turned to the Spectator for interest and amusement; all was elegant and pleasing, and the very papers that we are noticing, though embracing a department of literature, generally esteemed dry and repulsive, became, from the fascinating garb in which they were dressed, the most popular of the collection. Their author had the satisfaction of contemplating the success of his labours. Milton became a permanent favourite with the public; and the national taste underwent an amelioration from this event, which has been progressively increasing to the present times.

The judgment of Addison in the plan that he adopted with regard to Milton, is the more to be commended, as he has elsewhere shewn himself capable of entering into the spirit of philosophical criticism with an acuteness and precision in that age totally unprecedented.

It is worthy of remark, however, that those who have blamed our author as totally defective in the philosophy of criticism, have entirely overlooked the work in which he has admirably exhibited

this talent, and have applied their strictures to essays designedly, and with the highest propriety, constructed on a popular plan. The papers on the *Pleasures of the Imagination* form, in fact, the earliest specimen of philosophical criticism in our language; and if due allowance be made, not only for the novelty of the subject, but of the mode of treatment too, deservedly call for distinguished praise.

Had the censurers of Addison's mode of criticism but taken the trouble of perusing the four-hundred and ninth Spectator, they would have found him laying down the very rules for philosophical criticism, which they profess themselves to be guided by, and upon which rules the Essay on the Pleasures of Imagination was directly constructed. I would request them, after digesting the following passage, to confess the futility of their charge.

"I could wish there were authors who, beside the mechanical rules, which a man of very little taste may discourse upon, would *enter into the very spirit and soul of fine writing, and shew us the several sources of that pleasure which rises in the mind upon the perusal of a noble work.*

"Our general taste in England is for epigram, turns of wit, and forced conceits, which have no manner of influence, either for the bettering or

enlarging the mind of him who reads them, and have been carefully avoided by the greatest writers, both among the ancients and moderns. I have endeavoured, in several of my speculations, to banish this gothic taste, which has taken possession among us. I entertained the town for a week together with an essay upon wit, in which I endeavoured to detect several of those false kinds, which have been admired in the different ages of the world, and at the same time to shew wherein the nature of true wit consists.—I have likewise examined the works of the greatest poet which our nation, or perhaps any other, has produced, and particularized most of those national and manly beauties which give a value to that divine work. I shall next Saturday enter upon an essay on 'The Pleasures of the Imagination;' which, though it shall consider the subject at large, will perhaps *suggest to the reader what it is that gives a beauty to many* passages of the finest writers, both in prose and verse."

The pleasures of the imagination are divided by Addison into *primary* and *secondary;* the former derived from the objects themselves, immediately present to our eyes, the latter from ideas of visual objects, as suggested by pictures, descriptions, &c.

The *great,* the *new,* the *beautiful,* are justly enu-

merated as sources of the primary pleasures; and he has dwelt with much beauty and truth of illustration on the emotions which they are calculated to effect, and on the final causes of those emotions.

This pleasing theory, which has suggested many ingenious trains of ideas to subsequent writers, and may be considered as the foundation of Akenside's noble poem, is chiefly defective in limiting the pleasures of imagination to mere objects of sight. Among the primary pleasures, should certainly have been reckoned those of *imitation, harmony, wit,* and *humour;* which, though perfectly uncombined with visible objects, are essentially sources of the materials which the imagination delights to employ.

Dugald Stewart, in his excellent Philosophy of the Human Mind, has noticed at some length this defect in Mr. Addison's theory. "According to the definitions adopted," says he, "in general, by modern philosophers, the province of imagination would appear to be limited to objects of sight." "It is the sense of sight," says Mr. Addison, "which furnishes the imagination with its ideas; so that by the pleasures of imagination, I here mean such as arise from visible objects, either when we have them actually in view, or when we call up their ideas into our minds, by paintings, statues, descriptions, or any the like

occasions. We cannot, indeed, have a single image in the fancy, that did not make its first entrance through the sight." Agreeably to the same view of the subject, Dr. Reid observes, that " Imagination properly signifies a lively conception of objects of sight; the former power being distinguished from the latter, as a part from the whole.

" That this limitation of the province of imagination to one particular class of our perceptions is altogether arbitrary, seems to me to be evident; for, although the greater part of the materials which imagination combines be supplied by this sense, it is nevertheless indisputable, that our other perceptive faculties also contribute occasionally their share. How many pleasing images have been borrowed from the fragrance of the fields and the melody of the groves; not to mention that sister art, whose magical influence over the human frame, it has been, in all ages, the highest boast of poetry to celebrate! In the following passage, even the more gross sensations of taste form the subject of an ideal repast, on which it is impossible not to dwell with some complacency; particularly after a perusal of the preceding lines, in which the poet describes 'the Wonders of the Torrid Zone:'

Bear me, Pomona! to thy citron groves;
To where the lemon and the piercing lime,
With the deep orange, glowing thro' the green,
Their lighter glories blend. Lay me reclin'd
Beneath the spreading tamarind that shakes,
Fann'd by the breeze, its fever-cooling fruit:
Or, stretch'd amid these orchards of the sun,
O let me drain the cocoa's milky bowl,
More bounteous far than all the frantic juice
Which Bacchus pours! Nor, on its slender twigs
Low bending, be the full pomegranate scorn'd;
Nor, creeping thro' the woods, the gelid race
Of berries. Oft in humble station dwells
Unboastful worth, above fastidious pomp.
Witness, thou best anana, thou the pride
Of vegetable life, beyond whate'er
The poets imag'd in the golden age!
Quick let me strip thee of thy spiny coat,
Spread thy ambrosial stores, and feast with Jove!

"What an assemblage of other conceptions, different from all those hitherto mentioned, has the genius of Virgil combined in one distich!

Hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata, Lycori;
Hic nemus: hic ipso tecum consumerer ævo.

"These observations are sufficient to shew, how inadequate a notion of the province of imagination (considered even in its reference to the sensible world) is conveyed by the definitions of Mr. Addison and of Dr. Reid.—But the sensible world, it must be remembered, is not the only

field where imagination exerts her powers. All the objects of human knowledge supply materials to her forming hand: diversifying infinitely the works she produces, while the mode of her operation remains essentially uniform. As it is the same power of reasoning which enables us to carry on our investigations, with respect to individual objects, and with respect to classes or genera; so it was by the same processes of analysis and combination, that the genius of Milton produced the Garden of Eden; that of Harrington, the Commonwealth of Oceana; and that of Shakspeare, the characters of Hamlet and Falstaff. The difference between these several efforts of invention consists only in the manner in which the original materials were acquired; as far as the power of imagination is concerned, the processes are perfectly analogous.

"The attempts of Mr. Addison and of Dr. Reid to limit the province of imagination to objects of sight, have plainly proceeded from a very important fact, which it may be worth while to illustrate more particularly;—that the mind has a greater facility, and, of consequence, a greater delight, in recalling the perceptions of this sense, than those of any of the others; while, at the same time, the variety of qualities perceived by it is incomparably greater. It is this sense,

accordingly, which supplies the painter and the statuary with *all* the subjects on which their genius is exercised; and which furnishes to the descriptive poet the largest and the most valuable portion of the materials which he combines. In that absurd species of prose composition, too, which borders on poetry, nothing is more remarkable than the predominance of phrases that recal to the memory glaring colours, and those splendid appearances of nature, which make a strong impression on the eye. It has been mentioned by different writers, as a characteristical circumstance in the Oriental or Asiatic style, that the greater part of the metaphors are taken from the celestial luminaries. 'The works of the Persians,' says M. de Voltaire,) 'are like the titles of their kings, in which we are perpetually dazzled with the sun and the moon.' Sir William Jones, in a short Essay on the Poetry of Eastern Nations, has endeavoured to shew, that this is not owing to the bad taste of the Asiatics, but to the old language and popular religion of their country. But the truth is, that the very same criticism will be found to apply to the juvenile productions of every author possessed of a warm imagination; and to the compositions of every people, among whom a cultivated and philosophical taste has not established

a sufficiently marked distinction between the appropriate styles of poetry and of prose.—The account given by the Abbé Girard of the meaning of the word *Phébus*, as employed by the French critics, confirms strongly this observation: ' Le Phebus a un brillant qui signifie, ou semble signifier, quelque chose: le soleil y entre d'ordinaire; & c'est peut-etre ce qui, en notre langue, a donné lieu au nom de *Phebus* *.'

" Agreeably to these principles, Gray, in describing the infantine reveries of poetical genius, has fixed, with exquisite judgment, on this class of our conceptions:

> Yet oft before his infant eye would run
> Such forms as glitter in the Muse's ray
> With orient hues———

" From these remarks it may be easily understood, why the word *imagination*, in its most ordinary acceptation, should be applied to cases where our conceptions are derived from the sense of sight: although the province of this power be, in fact, as unlimited as the sphere of human enjoyment and of human thought. Hence, the origin of those partial definitions which I have been attempting to correct; and hence too, the origin of the word *Imagination;* the etymology

* Synonymes Francois.

of which implies manifestly a reference to visible objects *."

With this exception, the papers on the Pleasures of the Imagination exhibit the genius and philosophical spirit of Addison to considerable advantage. The illustrations of the three sources that he has enumerated are conceived with great richness of fancy and purity of taste; and the ninth and tenth numbers, on the literature calculated to feed the imagination, and especially on the wild and terrific in poetry, are singularly pleasing.

"These descriptions," he observes," raise a pleasing kind of horror in the mind of the reader, and amuse his imagination with the strangeness and novelty of the persons who are represented in them. They bring up into our memory the stories we have heard in our childhood, and favour those secret terrors and apprehensions to which the mind of man is naturally subject.—Men of cold fancies and philosophical dispositions object to this kind of poetry, that it has not probability enough to affect the imagination. But to this it may be answered, that we are sure, in general, there are many intellectual beings in the world besides ourselves, and several species

* Vide Stewart's Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, p. 484 to 487.

of spirits, who are subject to different laws and economies from those of mankind: when we see, therefore, any of these represented naturally, we cannot look upon the representation as altogether impossible.

"The ancients have not much of this poetry among them; for, indeed, almost the whole substance of it owes its original to the darkness and superstition of later ages, when pious frauds were made use of to amuse mankind, and frighten them into a sense of their duty. Our forefathers looked upon nature with more reverence and horror, before the world was enlightened by learning and philosophy, and loved to astonish themselves with the apprehensions of witchcraft, prodigies, charms, and inchantments. There was not a village in England that had not a ghost in it; the church-yards were all haunted; every large common had a circle of fairies belonging to it; and there was scarce a shepherd to be met with who had not seen a spirit."

It is somewhat remarkable, and a strong proof of an inherent love in human nature for the vast, the awful, and the strange, that in an age of refinement such as the present, the taste for fictions of this supernatural cast should gain ground, and that to the highly cultivated as well as to the half-informed mind they should, if emanating

from superior genius, be alike welcome. The partiality may, however, in some measure, be attributed to the enthusiasm with which we now worship the memory and the works of Shakspeare, undoubtedly the greatest master of the wild and terrible that the world has ever seen. The revived taste too for Gothic architecture has, without doubt, assisted in influencing the popular opinion, and moulding the fashion of romantic literature.

Could these powerful superstitions be ever under the controul of talent, such as graces the pages of a Radcliffe, where the forms of terror, of beauty, and of pity, rise tinged with the most fascinating hues of fancy, they would be welcomed as the noblest and most impressive agents of poetry and fiction; but such has lately been the torrent of nonsense and puerility with which the circulating libraries, under the title of romance, have deluged the country, that no man who has any value for his time now dares to inspect a volume so designated.

From this short digression let us turn to add, that though several writers of the present day have affected to despise the critical abilities of Addison, among them will not be found the name of Samuel Johnson. "It is not uncommon," says this powerful writer, "for those who have

grown wise by the labour of others, to add a little of their own, and overlook their masters.

"Before the profound observers of the present race repose too securely on the consciousness of their superiority to Addison, let them consider his remarks on Ovid, in which may be found specimens of criticism sufficiently subtle and refined: let them peruse, likewise, his Essays on *Wit* and on the *Pleasures of Imagination*, in which he founds art on the base of nature, and draws the principles of invention from dispositions inherent in the mind of man, with skill and elegance, such as his contemners will not easily attain *."

Independent of these extended dissertations on Wit, on Milton, and on the Pleasures of Imagination, our author has dispersed throughout the Spectator and Guardian a variety of the most elegant and amusing pieces of criticism, such as might alone vindicate his claim with posterity to the honours of an accomplished critic. The Essays on Old English Ballads † and on the beauties of Sappho ‡ are written in a vein of the most exquisite taste and feeling; and the paper on Irregular Genius § closes with an encomium on

* Lives of the Poets, vol. ii. p. 137, 139.

† Spectator, N° 85.

‡ Ditto, N° 223 and 229.

§ Ditto, N° 592.

Shakspeare, which for its singularly happy imagery may set competition at defiance.

"Shakspeare," says he, "was born with all the seeds of poetry, and may be compared to the stone in Pyrrhus' ring, which, as Pliny tells us, had the figure of Apollo and the nine Muses in the veins of it, produced by the spontaneous hand of nature, without any help from art."

To the critical numbers (in the Spectator) already enumerated, we may add, as of nearly equal merit, the papers on the English Language *, on Genius and Pindaric Poetry †, on Ancient and Modern Literature ‡, on Pope's Essay on Criticism §, on Sacred Poetry and Music ‖, on Oratory ¶, and on a Fine Taste in Writing **.

These all display unequivocal marks of judgment and acuteness, and, as far as the limits and the nature of a periodical essay will admit, are full and satisfactory.

We can likewise affirm that the same refined taste which accompanied our author in the walks of polite literature equally distinguished him in the sister arts of painting, architecture, and gardening. The love of nature and simplicity, and

* Spectator, N° 135.
† Spectator, N° 160.
‡ Ditto, N° 249.
§ Ditto, N° 253.
‖ Ditto, N° 405.
¶ Ditto, N° 407.
** Ditto, N° 409.

an intimacy with the best productions of the schools, formed the ground work of his decisions; in gardening especially he has exhibited a taste little consonant to the opinions of his contemporaries, and almost assimilated with our present ideas of the picturesque in landscape. Bacon has affirmed perfection in gardening to be the most decisive proof of civilization; "a man shall ever see," he remarks, "that when ages grow to civility and elegancy, men come to build stately, sooner than to garden finely: as if gardening were the greater perfection *." It is, therefore, highly to the credit of Addison, that at a time when the style of gardening was in the highest degree stiff, formal, and unnatural, he not only introduced the beautiful scenery of Milton into notice, but took every opportunity of painting, in his periodical writings, the most lovely sketches of simple nature, and of recommending them as models for imitation. In his Essays on the Pleasures of Imagination he has strongly insisted on the superior charms of wildness and simplicity in the creation of pleasure grounds; and when, in a subsequent volume, he describes the garden of his choice, it is such as Brown or Mason would have delighted to wander in: "there is a fountain,"

* Bacon's Essays.

says he, "rising in the upper part of my garden, which forms a little wandering rill, and administers to the pleasure as well as the plenty of the place. I have so conducted it, that it visits most of my plantations; and have taken particular care to let it run in the same manner as it would do in an open field; so that it generally passes through banks of violets and primroses, plats of willow, or other plants, that seem to be of its own producing. There is another circumstance in which I am very particular, or as my neighbours call me, very whimsical: as my garden invites into it all the birds of the country, by offering them the conveniency of springs and shades, solitude and shelter, I do not suffer any one to destroy their nests in the spring, or drive them from their usual haunts in fruit time; I value my garden more for being full of blackbirds than cherries, and very frankly give them fruit for their songs. By this means I have always the music of the season in its perfection, and am highly delighted to see the jay or the thrush hopping about my walks, and shooting before my eyes across the several little glades and alleys that I pass through *."

In scenes such as these, whose flowers

* Spectator, vol. vii. N° 477.

———*not nice Art*
In beds and curious knots, but *Nature boon*
Pours forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,

most men of taste and genius have wished to reside. It was the prayer of Horace, that he might possess, *a Garden, a Rivulet,* and *a little Grove.*

Hortus ubi, et tecto vicinus jugis aquæ fons
Et paulum silvæ super his foret.
Sat. Lib. ii. Sat. vi. 2.

And that Virgil was enamoured of similar scenery, of the humble beauties of a garden arranged on Nature's plan, is evident from that exquisite passage in the fourth Georgic, where he poignantly expresses his regret on being obliged to wave a subject so congenial to his feelings:

Atque equidem, extremo ni jam sub fine laborum
Vela traham, et terris festinem advertere proram,
Forsitan et pingues hortos quæ cura colendi
Ornaret canerem, biferique rosaria Pæsti;
Quoque modo potis gauderent intyba rivis,
Et virides apio ripæ, tortusque per herbam
Cresceret in ventrem cucumis; nec sera comantem
Narcissum, aut flexi tacuissem vimen acanthi,
Pallentesque hederas et amantes litora myrtos.—
Verùm hæc ipse equidem, spatiis exclusus iniquis,
Prætereo, atque aliis post me memoranda relinquo.

Ah fav'rite scenes! but now with gather'd sail
I seek the shore, nor trust th' inviting gale;
Else had my song your charms at leisure trac'd,
And all the garden's varied arts embrac'd;

Sung, twice each year, how Pæstan roses blow,
How endive drinks the rill that purls below,
How trailing gourds pursue their mazy way,
Swell as they creep, and widen into day;
How verdant celery decks its humid bed,
How late-blown flow'rets round narcissus spread;
The lithe acanthus and the ivy hoar,
And myrtle blooming on the sea-beat shore.—
Ah! fav'rite scenes! to other bards resign'd,
I leave your charms, and trace my task assign'd.

SOTHEBY.

In short, as Mr. Mason has justly observed, the commencement of an actual reformation of gardening in this country may be dated from these essays of Addison, who forsook the clipped yew-trees, the jets d' eau, stone terraces, and embroidered knots of his tasteless contemporaries,

For hanging walks, and darksome groves,
Where sooth'd imagination roves,
Mid shelving rocks, with laurel crown'd;
Sequester'd caves, dark glades, and arched bowers,
Clear founts, with rich poetic powers
Endued, and purest classic ground.

Sannazarius apud Greswell.

If we now pause to recapitulate the ameliorations which Addison, as a critic, and a man of taste, introduced into the polite literature of his country, it will be but a merited tribute of applause if we assert, that to no man has it been under greater obligations. He corrected in a most effectual manner the bad taste which pre-

vailed both on the stage and in the literary world; he taught the public to admire, to understand, and even to emulate, the noblest efforts of sublimity, beauty, and pathos; he presented them with the first, and a very happy, specimen of philosophical criticism; and, by the fascination of his style and manner, he infused into his readers a love for the harmony and elegancies of composition.

To these invaluable gifts may be added his successful efforts to introduce a relish for nature and simplicity in the formation of landscape gardening, efforts which, through the joint endeavours of succeeding writers and artists, have at length rendered his native isle the Paradise of Europe.

PART III.

ESSAY IV.

ON THE HUMOUR AND COMIC PAINTING OF ADDISON.

THAT the moderns are superior to the ancients in the production of wit and humour, is a position which has been generally and successfully maintained. The more extended and diversified knowledge of modern Europe, its political institutions as springing from the feudal system, its gallantry and deference towards the fair sex, its religious liberty and contrasted manners, have mutually contributed to this effect. When again it is asserted that England has almost exclusively monopolized the praise of humour, and that the very term is peculiar to this island, it will, perhaps, be found that prejudice and partiality have had too ample a share in the formation of the opinion.

Although the word itself be not found in any other European language save our own, who will

deny that the quality it implies is not copiously and richly discoverable in the comedies of Moliere and the Quixote of Cervantes? Had it been affirmed that Great Britain was infinitely more *fertile* in authors of this class than her neighbours of the continent, the observation had been susceptible of satisfactory proof. The freedom of her constitution, and the consequent variety and independence of individual character, have acquired for her this distinguished honour. While France and Spain boast but of one or two eminent authors in this department, Britain points with exultation to a host of equal merit; to the justly celebrated names of Chaucer, Shakspeare, Butler, Swift, Addison, Arbuthnot, Fielding, Smollet, &c. writers whose knowledge of human life, and whose powers of ridicule and humour, have never been surpassed.

From this phalanx of genius it has become my province to select the name of Addison for peculiar consideration, and under this branch of my labours to offer a few observations on the predominant feature of his literary character,—his HUMOUR.

This, as exhibited in his periodical works, is of a texture peculiarly pleasing and delicate, yet possessing lineaments which decidedly stamp it with an air of originality. While the humour

of Swift and Pope is keen, bitter, and sarcastic, and but too often tinctured with malignity and spleen, a bland insinuating gaiety, and the cheerfulness of innocence and virtue, illumine with perpetual lustre the comic paintings of Addison. To correct the follies and vices of mankind, he has not thought it necessary to lay bare with stern severity their frailties, a practice which too generally hardens the offender; but has so mingled his reproof with the smiles of good nature, with the pleasantries of ludicrous association, and the sketchings of a sportive imagination, that the very objects of his censure and ridicule, whilst they felt the delineation to be just, acknowledged the skill of the artist, and joined in the general laugh.

"Addison," remarks Dr. Young, comparing his method of reform with that of Pope and Swift, "prescribed a wholesome and pleasant regimen, which was universally relished, and did much good; Pope preferred a purgative of satire, which, though wholesome, was too painful in its operation. Swift insisted on a large dose of ipecacuanha, which, though readily swallowed, from the fame of the physician, yet, if the patient had any delicacy of taste, he threw up the remedy instead of the disease."

Notwithstanding the peculiarities which indi-

vidualize and distinguish the *Humour* of Addison, some difference of opinion has arisen among critics of acknowledged celebrity, with regard to its nature and resources. The view which Dr. Johnson has taken of this characteristic excellence of our author has been much applauded.

"His humour," he observes, "is so happily diffused as to give the grace of novelty to domestic scenes and daily occurrences. He never outsteps the modesty of nature, nor raises merriment or wonder by the violation of truth. His figures neither divert by distortion, nor amuse by aggravation. He copies life with so much fidelity, that he can hardly be said to invent; yet his exhibitions have an air so much original, that it is difficult to suppose them not merely the product of the imagination *."

On this encomium of our learned Biographer, Dr. Beattie has bestowed lavish commendation.

"Dr. Johnson," he remarks, "here characterises the humour of Addison, with singular acuteness of thought and felicity of expression. Many writers seem to think that humour consists in violent and preternatural exaggeration; as there are, no doubt, many frequenters of the theatre, who find no want of comic power in the actor, who has a sufficient variety of wry faces

* Johnson's Lives, vol. ii. p. 139.

and antic gestures; and many admirers of farce and fun, with whom bombast and big words would pass for exquisite ridicule. But wry faces are made with little effort; caricatures may be sketched by a very unskilful hand; and he who has no command of natural expression may easily put together gigantic figures and rumbling syllables. It is only a Garrick who can do justice to Benedict and Ranger; but any candle-snuffer might personate Pistol and Bombardinian. Addison's humour resembles his style. Every phrase in the one, and circumstance in the other, appears so artless and so obvious, that a person who had never made the trial would be apt to think nothing more easy than to feign a story of Sir ROGER DE COVERLEY, or compose a vision like that of Mirza. But the art and the difficulty of both are such as Horace had in his mind when he said,

> Ut sibi quivis
> Speret idem: sudet multum, frustraque laboret
> Ausus idem. Tantum series juncturaque pollet,
> Tantum *de medio sumptis* accedit honoris *."

The opinion of Dr. Johnson, however, has not been assented to in the same unqualified manner

* De Arte Poetica. Vide Beattie's Notes on the Life of Addison.

by each succeeding critic. Dr. Aikin, commenting on the passage, observes:

"In this account there is truth, but not all the truth. It may apply to 'the domestic scenes and daily occurrences,' represented by this author; but much of his humour is also employed upon subjects of fancy and invention, in which the ludicrous is studiously sought after; and in not a few instances he manifestly draws with the pencil of a caricaturist, and effects his purpose by a happy exaggeration.

"It has frequently been his practice to seize some story or historical narration, and, adopting only the leading circumstance, to found on it a fiction of his own, of an entirely ludicrous nature; and in this species of humour he is, I think, peculiarly original. Of this kind may be mentioned his improvement of Sir John Mandeville's story of the freezing of words in the frigid zone; and his account of the Taliacotian manufactory of noses; both in the Tatler: his register of the Lover's Leap; description of Torcy's academy for politicians: dream of women carrying out their valuables from a besieged town; and trial of chastity by a breed of dogs; all in the Spectator. These admirable pieces of humour cannot justly be said to please by their adherence to nature and truth; on the contrary, they owe their merit to a

kind of agreeable extravagance, and to a creation of ludicrous imagery, artificially engrafted upon the subject. Many others of his pictures are fancy pieces of the caricature and grotesque kind. Such are the virtuoso's will; and most of the proceedings of the court of honour, in the *Tatler:* the citizen's and the lady's journal, and the widow's club, in the Spectator; the rebel officer's journal, in the Freeholder; and the scenes among the servants, in the play of the *Drummer*. In others he has receded still further from topics of real life, and has sported in scenes of pure invention. Examples of this are given in the transmigrations of a monkey, the dissections of a beau's head and a coquette's heart, the mountain of miseries, and that delightful tale, the antediluvian loves of Shalum and Hilpa. Thus it would seem that Addison rejected no promising source of the ludicrous, whether suggested by reading, observation, or fancy. It may, however, be admitted, that humour is most valuably employed where, besides the purpose of exciting a smile, his intent has been to satyrise some prevalent folly or violation of the properties of life. This has very frequently been his object, and no writer ever more happily combined good natured pleasantry with effectual ridicule. The sly simplicity of his strokes inflicted with a seem-

ing unconsciousness of intention, while it renders them more exquisite to attentive and sagacious readers, has perhaps often occasioned them to pass unnoticed *."

The representation of Dr. Aikin appears to me extremely just. Addison, though in no degree a broad caricaturist, has certainly delighted and excelled in imparting a peculiarly ludicrous and somewhat exaggerated cast of feature to the greater part of his humorous delineations. It is, in fact, of the essence of humour to dwell upon and enlarge to definite dimensions those parts of character or incident which are susceptible of ridicule and laughable association; beyond certain bounds, however, all is distortion of attitude or glare of colouring; and it is the merit of Addison that he knew where to pause, even in the seductive path of mere fancy and grotesque painting.

In delineating the follies and foibles of domestic life, the fashions and caprices of the passing day, our author has been so chaste and judicious in heightening the comic effect of his sketches, that, although every touch in the picture has its force, nothing appears overcharged; and the Spectator remains unconscious of the consummate art necessary to the result which he so greatly admires.

* Monthly Magazine, vol. ix. p. 2.

In those pieces, however, where the author has given up the reins to fancy and invention, where he passes beyond the common occurrences of life, he no longer conceals the means by which he obtains his purpose; and his resources, though happily sought for and applied, are evident to the attentive observer. Here the humour is certainly of a more open and exaggerated cast, its colouring more bold and decided, and, though never descending to absolute burlesque or extravagant caricature, is undoubtedly built upon imagery and incidents which frequently far exceed the usual laws and events of human nature.

To the papers already referred to by Dr. Aikin, as examples of each species of Addisonian humour, we may add, as illustrative of the first class, the description of Sir Harry Quickset's Visit *, and of Bickerstaff learning Fencing †, from the *Tatler;* both papers of exquisite natural humour. In the *Spectator,* the Essays on Clubs ‡, on Valetudinarianism §, on the Ladies Library ||, on the Use of the Fan ¶, on the Ideas entertained of the Spectator in the Country **,

* Tatler, N° 86.

† Tatler, N° 93.

‡ Spectator, N° 9, 72.

§ Spectator, N° 25.

|| Ditto, N° 37, 92.

¶ Ditto, N° 102.

** Ditto, N° 131.

on Sleepers *, on the Art of Disputing †, and on the Opening of the Spectator's Mouth ‡, are all admirable specimens of that indirect and unforced association of ludicrous ideas for which Addison has been so justly celebrated. From the *Guardian* also, though of a graver cast than its predecessors, we can select a few papers of similar merit; Simon Softly's Courtship, for instance §, and the Essays on the Tucker, and on the art of Flying ‖.

Of the second class, likewise, where fiction and a pleasant species of exaggeration form the chief sources of the humorous, some further specimens may be adduced. A great part of the proceedings of the court of judicature in the *Tatler* is of this description, especially that paper where the lover is drawn as struck stone dead by the loss of his snuff-box ¶, a relation which it is impossible to read with a fixed countenance, or without feeling the keen, though somewhat grotesque, ridicule of the representation. The two papers in the same work, descriptive of the characters of men and women under the appellation of musical instruments **, display a happy mix-

* Spectator, N° 184.
† Spectator, N° 239.
‡ Ditto, N° 550, 556.
§ Guardian, N° 97.
‖ Guardian, N° 100, 112.
¶ Tatler, N° 110.
** Tatler, N° 153, 157.

ture of humour and imagination; the idea, however, appears to have been taken from a communication in a volume entitled, "Philosophical Transactions and Collections," published in 1700.

"Sitting in some company," says the author, "and having been, but a little before, musical, I chanced to take notice, that, in ordinary discourse, *words* were spoken in perfect *notes;* and that some of the company used *eighths*, some *fifths*, some *thirds;* and that his discourse which was most pleasing, his *words*, as to their tone, consisted most of *concords*, and were of *discords*, of such as made up harmony. The same person was the most affable, pleasant, and best natured in the company. This suggests a reason why many discourses which one *hears* with much pleasure, when they come to be *read*, scarce seem the same things.

"From this difference of MUSIC in SPEECH, we may conjecture that of TEMPERS. We know the Doric mood sounds gravity and sobriety; the Lydian, buxomness and freedom; the Æolic, sweet stillness and quiet composure; the Phrygian, jollity and youthful levity; the Ionic is a stiller of storms and disturbances arising from passion. And why may not we reasonably suppose that those whose speech naturally runs into the notes peculiar to any of these moods, are like-

wise, in nature, hereunto congenerous? *C Fa ut*, may shew me to be of an ordinary capacity, though good disposition. *G Solre ut*, to be peevish and effeminate. *Flats*, a manly or melancholic sadness. He who hath a voice which will, in some measure, agree with all *cliffs*, to be good of parts, and fit for variety of employments, yet somewhat of an inconstant nature. Likewise from the TIMES: so semi-briefs, may speak a temper dull and phlegmatic; *minums*, grave and serious; *crotchets*, a prompt wit; *quavers*, vehemency of passion, and scolds use them. *Semi-brief-rest*, may denote one either stupid, or fuller of thoughts than he can utter; *minum-rest*, one that deliberates; *crotchet-rest*, one in a passion. So that, from the natural use of MOOD, NOTE, and TIME, we may collect DISPOSITIONS."

A great portion of the fiction, and all the humour, are, however, the creation of Addison, and are only to be exceeded by some of his papers under this head, in the *Spectator*. The infirmary for persons out of humour, originally the conception of Steele, but exquisitely wrought upon and improved by Addison in N° 440; the Fair for the Sale of Women *, and the Letter from the Ambassador of Bantam †, exhibit a combination equally whimsical and ludicrous. To

* N° 511. † N° 557.

these let us add the Vision of Aurelia's heart in the Guardian *, which, in point of fancy and satire, emulates the Dissections of the Beau's Head and Coquette's Heart alluded to by Dr. Aikin.

If we wish, however, to enjoy the humour of Addison in all its various shades and tintings, in its utmost state of perfection, indeed, as combining the species we have just considered, we must dwell at some length on the justly-celebrated characters of *Sir Roger de Coverley* and the *Tory Fox-Hunter*. Of these, the former, though the favourite of every reader of the Spectator, has been much misapprehended, and has, therefore, occasioned much disparity of opinion among the critics with regard to its consistency and keeping. After citing therefore the sentiments of three most ingenious writers, Doctors Johnson, Beattie, and Aikin, I shall endeavour so to arrange the papers including this inimitable portrait as to evince the inviolable integrity with which Addison conducted his part of the design.

"Of the characters feigned or exhibited in the Spectator," observes Johnson, "the favourite of Addison was Sir Roger de Coverley, of whom he had formed a very delicate and discriminated idea, which he would not suffer to be violated; and therefore when Steele had shewn him inno-

* N° 106.

cently picking up a girl in the Temple, and taking her to a tavern, he drew upon himself so much of his friend's indignation, that he was forced to appease him by a promise of forbearing Sir Roger for the time to come.

" The reason which induced Cervantes to bring his hero to the grave, *para mi sola nacio Don Quixote, y yo para el,* made Addison declare, with undue vehemence of expression, that he would kill Sir Roger; being of opinion that they were born for one another, and that any other hand would do him wrong.

" It may be doubted whether Addison ever filled up his original delineation. He describes his knight as having his imagination somewhat warped; but of this perversion he has made very little use. The irregularities in Sir Roger's conduct seem not so much the effects of a mind deviating from the beaten track of life, by the perpetual pressure of some overwhelming idea, as of habitual rusticity, and that negligence which solitary grandeur naturally generates.

" The variable weather of the mind, the flying vapours of incipient madness, which from time to time cloud reason without eclipsing it, it requires so much nicety to exhibit, that Addison seems to have been deterred from prosecuting his own design *."

* Lives of the Poets, vol. ii. p. 87, 88.

Dr. Beattie, who, perhaps, too hastily gave an unqualified approbation of Johnson's definition of Addisonian humour, has nevertheless chosen to differ widely from our poetical biographer in pourtraying the character of Sir Roger de Coverley.

" I am inclined to suppose," he remarks, "that the learned biographer had forgotten some things relating to that gentleman.

" He seems to think that Addison had formed an idea of Sir Roger, which he never exhibited complete; that he has given a small degree of discomposure to the knight's mind, but made very little use of it; that Sir Roger's irregularities are the effects of habitual rusticity, and of negligence created by solitary grandeur; and, in short, that Addison was deterred from prosecuting his own design with respect to Sir Roger.

" Now I beg leave to observe, in the first place, that it never was, or could be, Addison's purpose to represent Sir Roger as a person of disordered understanding. This would have made his story either not humorous at all, or humorous in that degree of extravagance, which Addison always avoided, and for avoiding which Dr. Johnson justly commends him. Sir Roger has peculiarities; that was necessary to make him a comic character; but they are all amiable, and tend to

good: and there is not one of them that would give offence, or raise contempt or concern, in any rational society. At Sir Roger we never laugh, though we generally smile; but it is a smile, always of affection, and frequently of esteem.

"Secondly, I cannot admit that there is in this character any thing of *rusticity*, (as that word is generally understood) or any of those habits or ways of thinking that solitary grandeur creates. No man on earth affects grandeur less, or thinks less of it, than Sir Roger; and no man is less solitary. His affability, good humour, benevolence, and love of society, his affection to his friends, respect to his superiors, and gentleness and attention to his dependents, make him a very different being from a rustic, as well as from an imperious landlord, who lives retired among flatterers and vassals. Solitary grandeur is apt to engender pride, a passion from which our worthy baronet is entirely free; and rusticity, as far as it is connected with the mind, implies aukwardness and ignorance, which, if one does not despise, one may pity and pardon, but cannot love with that fondness with which every heart is attached to Sir Roger.

"How could our author be deterred from prosecuting his design with respect to this personage? What could deter him? It could only be

the consciousness of his own inability; and that this was not the case he had given sufficient proof, by exemplifying the character so fully, that every reader finds himself intimately acquainted with it. Considering what is done, one cannot doubt the author's ability to have supported the character through a much greater variety of conversations and adventures. But the Spectator, according to the first plan of it, was now drawing to a conclusion; the seventh volume being finished about six weeks after the knight's death; and perhaps the tradition may be true, that Addison, dissatisfied with Steele's idle story of Sir Roger at a tavern *, swore (which he is said never to have done but on this one occasion) that he would himself kill Sir Roger, lest somebody else should murder him †."

The sentiments of Dr. Aikin on the character of Sir Roger display, as is usual with that writer, much ingenuity; he alludes to the apparent inconsistency of the portrait, and places the design of Addison, in the attribution of certain incidents and conduct to the knight, in a new point of view.

" An acute judge of moral propriety observed

* Spectator, N° 410.

† Beattie's edition of Addison's Works, vol. i.—Notes on the Life of Addison.

to me some time ago," says the Doctor, "that the character of Sir Roger, as exhibited in different parts of the Spectator, was by no means consistent. In the second number, written probably by Steele, he is described as a man of singularities, but proceeding from a particular vein of good sense: and though fond of retirement, and careless of appearances, since he was crossed in love; it is said, that in his youth he had been a fine gentleman, who supped with Lord Rochester and Sir George Etheredge, had fought a duel, and kicked a bully in a coffee-house. It is certain, that many of the subsequent displays of his character, in which he is represented as ignorant of the common forms of life, rustic, uninformed, and credulous, very ill accord with this supposed town education. Steele himself has been guilty of some of these deviations from the original draught; but Addison seems not at all to have regarded it, and to have painted after a conception of his own, to which he has faithfully adhered. *His* Sir Roger, though somewhat of an humourist in his manner, is essentially a benevolent, cheerful, hearty country gentleman, of very slender abilities and confined education, warmly attached to church and king, and imbued with all the political opinions of what was called the country party. Though he is made an object of

affection from the goodness of his heart, and the hilarity of his temper, yet his weaknesses and prejudices scarcely allow place for esteem; nor do we meet with any of that whimsical complication of sense and folly which Steele's papers exhibit, and which he accounts for on the supposition of a sort of mental infirmity, left by his amorous disappointment.

" I shall point out some of the particulars, which seem designed by Addison to lower him down to the standard of capacity, which he chose to allot to the abstract character of the country gentleman. His behaviour at church may pass as the oddity of an humourist, though it also plainly denotes the rustication of a sequestered life; but his half belief of witchcraft in the case of Moll White, is undoubtedly a satirical stroke on country superstition. Sir Roger seriously advises the old woman not to have communication with the devil, or hurt her neighbour's cattle; and it is observed, ' that he would frequently have bound her over to the county sessions, had not his chaplain, with much ado, persuaded him to the contrary.' At the assizes he gets up and makes a speech; but the Spectator says, ' it was so little to the purpose, that he will not trouble his readers with an account of it.' In the adventure with the gipsies, the knight

suffers them to tell him his fortune, and appears more than half inclined to put faith in their predictions. His notion that the act for securing the church of England had already begun to take effect, because a rigid dissenter, who had dined at his house on Christmas day, had been observed to eat heartily of plumb-porridge, is too palpable a stroke of raillery on the narrow conceptions of the high party to be mistaken. The whole description of Sir Roger's behaviour, at the representation of the Distressed Mother, is admirably humorous; but the figure the knight makes in it, is not at all more respectable in point of taste and knowledge, than that of Partridge in Tom Jones on a similar occasion. But it is in the visit to the tombs in Westminster Abbey, that Addison has most unmercifully jested on the good man's simplicity. Sir Roger, it seems, was prepared for this spectacle by a course of historical reading in the summer, which was to enable him to bring quotations from Baker's Chronicle in his political debates with Sir Andrew Freeport. He accordingly deals out his knowledge very liberally as he passes through the heroes of this profound historian. The shew-man, however, informs him of many circumstances which he had not met with in Baker; and this profusion of anecdotes makes him appear so extraordi-

nary a person to Sir Roger, that he not only kindly shakes him by the hand at parting, but invites him to his lodgings in Norfolk-street, in order 'to talk over these matters with him more at leisure.' The trait is pleasantly ludicrous, but somewhat *outré*, as applied to a person at all removed from the lowest vulgar *."

Of the opinions entertained by these learned critics, relative to the sentiments and conduct of Sir Roger de Coverley, those of Johnson appear to be the least perfect, and founded on a mistaken conception of the character. Dr. Beattie's delineation approaches much nearer the truth, and Dr. Aikin has still further opened the art and design of Addison.

With regard to the inconsistency complained of by the last-mentioned writer, in filling up the character of the worthy knight, it should be recollected, that three, if not four, artists were employed upon the same subject, and have each given a separate portrait. Steele, however, has the merit of having first applied his pencil to the canvass; and the sketch which he drew was in part adopted by Addison, and in part rejected. Steele soon acknowledged the improvement and superior conception of his friend; and, though he endeavoured to finish his picture as much as possi-

* Monthly Magazine, N° 55.

ble in the Addisonian style, the disparity in the outline still remains, and violates in some degree its unity and simplicity. Budgell, who had the advantage of comparing the two designs, adopted that of Addison, and exerted every effort to give it the colouring of his model. As for Tickell, totally mistaking the tendency and keeping of the character, he presented the public with a slight sketch, which so far from aiding the idea his predecessors had endeavoured to embody, offered violence to its most prominent and captivating features. The picture of Addison, in short, was rich, glowing, and complete, full of life, character, and unity ; Steele's had to a certain degree the claim of originality, but was discordant in its style and parts. Budgell exhibited a pleasing and pretty accurate copy of Addison's manner ; while Tickell vainly strove to share their fame by an ill-imagined caricature.

To be more explicit, however, we may remark, that of the *seven* papers which Steele wrote as illustrative of the character of Sir Roger, Numbers 2, and 6, were composed before Addison took up the subject. In the first of these he has represented the knight to have been in his youth, and before he was thwarted in the object of his passion, a perfect fine gentleman, and the companion of the first rakes in town ; an idea

which Addison, so far from adopting, has directly contradicted, by asserting in N° 115, that Sir Roger was, in the early period of his life, altogether a country gentleman, and the greatest fox-hunter and shooter in the neighbourhood. This trait Budgell has copied in the succeeding number, declaring that the knight in his *youth* had gone through the whole course of those rural diversions which the country abounds in;—he has, in his *youthful* days, taken forty coveys of partridges in a season, and tired many a salmon with a line consisting but of a single hair. The constant thanks and good wishes of the neighbourhood always attended him, on account of his remarkable enmity towards foxes: having destroyed more of those vermin in one year, than it was thought the whole country could have produced.

Another circumstance which Steele has introduced into his delineation of Sir Roger, and which Addison has not followed, is, that his rejection by the widow so affected his intellects as to produce a peculiar obliquity or derangement of mind. This he has made the knight himself confess in N° 118. "I am pretty well satisfied," says he, "such a passion as I have had is never well cured; and between you and me, I am often apt to imagine it has had some whimsical effect upon

my brain: for I frequently find, that in my most serious discourse I let fall some comical familiarity of speech or odd phrase that makes the company laugh." Now this is a feature not only very humiliating in itself, but in direct contradiction to a former assertion of Steele, who in N° 2 had expressly declared, that the Knight's "*singularities* proceed from his *good sense*," a position perfectly irreconcilable with the representation just given.

If we turn to Addison's first paper on the character of Sir Roger, we shall find him neither attributing his singularities to derangement, which would be degrading, nor to good sense, which would be absurd, but pourtraying a combination of natural qualities of very possible occurrence, and which he has so employed as at once to render their possessor an object of esteem and love. "My friend Sir Roger," he remarks, "amidst all his good qualities, is *something of a humourist*; his virtues, as well as imperfections, are as it were tinged by *a certain extravagance*, which makes them particularly his, and distinguishes them from those of other men. This cast of mind, as it is generally very innocent in itself, so it renders his conversation highly agreeable, and more delightful than the same degree of

sense and virtue would appear in their common and ordinary colours."

A third feature in Steele's portrait, which Addison did not approve of, and therefore refused to copy, was the supposed incontinence of the knight, who, it is said, " grew humble in his desires after he had forgot his cruel beauty, insomuch that it is reported he has frequently offended in point of chastity with beggars and gipsies," an insinuation which probably led the author of N° 410 to invent the offensive incident complained of by Addison.

It is obvious, therefore, that Sir Richard's delineation of the knight's character was in many parts of its outline essentially different from the subsequent picture of Addison, whose superior taste and execution enabled him to bring forth a more chaste and perfect production. That Steele, however, as observed in my former volume, not only acknowledged the happier conception of Addison, but imitated it with success, may be fully proved from two or three of his papers, which have imbibed no small portion of his friend's most finished manner. N° 107, for instance, on the benevolence of Sir Roger to his servants, and N° 109, descriptive of his picture gallery, with the knight's account of his ancestors, are full of

humour, and carry on the costume and design of Addison with undeviating felicity.

Steele's seven papers are Nos. 2, 6, 107, 109, 113, 118, and 174; and of these *four* contain circumstances and opinions not adopted by, and dissimilar to the draught of, Addison.

Addison has included nearly all his incidents relative to Sir Roger in sixteen essays. These, with their respective subjects, I shall enumerate, as they will immediately recal to the reader, and place in one view, the principal features of the character. N° 106, Addison's first paper of this series, contains Sir Roger de Coverley's choice of a chaplain; N° 110, his house haunted and exorcised; N° 112, his behaviour at church; N° 115, his exercises and sports in the country; N° 117, his opinion of Moll White, the supposed witch; N° 122, his conduct and speech at the assizes; N° 125, his adventure when a schoolboy; N° 126, his Tory principles; N° 130, his adventure with the gipsies; N° 131, a preserver of his game; N° 269, his conversation with the Spectator in Gray's Inn Walks; N° 295, his intended generosity to the widow; N° 329, his reflections on the tombs in Westminster Abbey; N° 335, his visit to the theatre and observations on the Distressed Mother; N° 383, his passage to, and opinion of, Spring Gardens;

N° 517, death of Sir Roger. If to these numbers we add a few slight traits, dispersed through some other papers of the same author; as, for example, in Nos. 119, 120, 123, and 435, we shall have a perfect idea of what Addison meant to convey in the execution of this inimitable delineation.

With the exception of Shakspeare's Falstaff, it is, perhaps, the most humorous and delightful character ever drawn. The mixture of benevolence, simplicity, and good humour, with comic eccentricity and harmless credulity; of general sound sense and partial ignorance, with political zeal and party prejudice; of social love and generous hospitality, with pride of ancestry and contempt of trade; of simplicity and dignity, of piety and superstition, form a picture, as coloured by Addison, which probably, in point of interest and adherence to nature, of peculiar comic effect and perfect consistency, no subsequent attempt will ever equal.

It is to be regretted, that Steele's first draught is not, in several respects, capable of being better combined with the more ample and accurate creation of Addison; part of the character, however, in N° 2, the whole of Nos. 107 and 109, the greatest portion of Nos. 113 and 118, descriptive of the widow and Sir Roger's amour, and the

dispute between the knight and Sir Andrew Freeport, in N° 174, together with the three papers of Budgell on Sir Roger's Rural Sports*, on his Opinion of Beards†, and on Sir David Dundrum's Advances to the Widow‡, are perfectly consonant to, and form a striking part of, the general character of the knight.

There is every probability, also, according to the ingenious conjecture of Dr. Aikin, that Addison intended, through the medium of Sir Roger's weaknesses, to convey an indirect satire on the confined notions and political prejudices of the country gentleman; though I cannot think that in so doing he has stript his character of esteem, or laid it open to contempt. Steele, indeed, has asserted, in giving the first sketch of Sir Roger, that owing to "a mirthful cast in his behaviour, he was rather beloved than esteemed;" but Sir Richard's early conception of the character had much more of levity and folly in it than appeared in the subsequent design of Addison. According to the former, he was a worn-out rake, and somewhat disordered in his intellects; by the latter he is represented, though possessing many singularities and some weaknesses, as essentially and uniformly pious, moral, and humane;

* Spectator, N° 116. † Ditto, N° 331.
‡ Ditto, N° 359.

qualities which, though they do not protect him from the smile due to the humorous peculiarities that he perpetually displays, are yet sufficiently powerful and important to secure both our love and esteem.

It was in the Freeholder that Addison more immediately attacked the party prejudices and credulity of the country gentleman. Under the character of the Tory Fox-hunter, second only in point of humour and felicity of execution to Sir Roger de Coverley, he exposes with keen humour and ridicule the bigotry and groundless apprehensions of the weak Tories.

As the essays including this admirable character form part of a paper exclusively appropriated to politics, they have consequently, since all interest has ceased to attach to the work as a whole, been for many years little read. They merit, however, perpetual notice, as exhibiting a portrait whose humour, independent of all temporary allusion, must ever delight. In an essay, therefore, on the comic painting of Addison, I have reason to suppose that the introduction of the Tory Fox-hunter will prove an acceptable present to the readers of the Spectator, forming, as it does, an excellent companion to the picture of Sir Roger de Coverley.

FREEHOLDER, N° 22.

MONDAY, MARCH 5.

Studiis rudis, sermone barbarus, impetu strenuus, manu promptus, cogitatione celer.

Vell. Paterc.

Unpolitely educated, expressing himself in vulgar language, boisterous, eager at a fray, and overhasty in taking up an opinion.

For the honour of his Majesty and the safety of his government, we cannot but observe, that those, who have appeared the greatest enemies to both, are of that rank of men, who are commonly distinguished by the title of Fox-hunters. As several of these have had no part of their education in cities, camps, or courts, it is doubtful whether they are of greater ornament or use to the nation in which they live. It would be an everlasting reproach to politics should such men be able to overturn an establishment which has been formed by the wisest laws, and is supported by the ablest heads. The wrong notions and prejudices which cleave to many of these country gentlemen, who have always lived out of the way of being better informed, are not easy

to be conceived by a person who has never conversed with him.

That I may give my readers an image of these rural statesmen, I shall, without further preface, set down an account of a discourse I chanced to have with one of them some time ago. I was travelling towards one of the remotest parts of *England*, when about three o'clock in the afternoon, seeing a country gentleman trotting before me with a spaniel by his horse's side, I made up to him. Our conversation opened, as usual, upon the weather; in which we were very unanimous, having both agreed that is was too dry for the season of the year. My fellow-traveller, upon this, observed to me, there had been no good weather since the Revolution. I was a little startled at so extraordinary a remark, but would not interrupt him till he proceeded to tell me of the fine weather they used to have in King *Charles* the Second's reign. I only answered, that I did not see how the badness of the weather could be the King's fault; and, without waiting for his reply, asked him, whose house it was we saw upon a rising ground at a little distance from us. He told me it belonged to an old fanatical cur, Mr. Such-a-one. "You must have heard of him," says he, "he is one of the Rump." I knew the gentleman's character upon hearing

his name, but assured him that to my knowledge he was a good churchman. "Ay!" says he with a kind of surprise, "we are told in the country, that he spoke twice in the Queen's time against taking off the duties upon *French* claret." This naturally led us into the proceedings of late parliaments; upon which occasion he affirmed roundly, that there had not been one good law passed since King *William*'s accession to the throne, except the act for preserving the game. I had a mind to see him out, and therefore did not care for contradicting him. "Is it not hard," says he, "that honest gentlemen should be taken into custody of messengers, to prevent them from acting according to their consciences? But," says he, "what can we expect when a parcel of factious sons of whores"—He was going on in a great passion, but chanced to miss his dog, who was amusing himself about a bush that grew at some distance behind us. We stood still until he had whistled him up; when he fell into a long panegyric upon his spaniel, who seemed indeed excellent in his kind: but I found the most remarkable adventure of his life was, that he had once like to have worried a dissenting-teacher. The master could hardly sit on his horse for laughing all the while he was giving me the particulars of this story, which, I found, had

mightily endeared his dog to him, and, as he himself told me, had made him a great favourite among all the honest gentlemen of the country. We were at length diverted from this piece of mirth by a post-boy, who, winding his horn at us, my companion gave him two or three curses, and left the way clear for him. "I fancy," said I, that post brings news from *Scotland*. I shall long to see the next *Gazette*." "Sir," says he, "I make it a rule never to believe any of your printed news. We never see, Sir, how things go, except now and then in *Dyer*'s letter, and I read that more for the stile than the news. The man has a clever pen it must be owned. But is it not strange that we should be making war upon Church of *England* men, with *Dutch* and *Swiss* soldiers, men of anti-monarchical principles? These foreigners will never be loved in *England*, Sir; they have not that wit and good breeding that we have." I must confess, I did not expect to hear my new acquaintance value himself upon these qualifications; but finding him such a critic upon foreigners, I asked him, if he had ever travelled? He told me, he did not know what travelling was good for, but to teach a man to ride the great horse, to jabber *French*, and to talk against passive obedience: to which he added, that he scarce ever knew a traveller in his life who had not for-

sook his principles, and lost his hunting seat. "For my part," says he, "I and my father before me, have always been for passive obedience, and shall be always for opposing a prince who makes use of ministers that are of another opinion. But where do you intend to inn to-night? (for we were now come in sight of the next town) I can help you to a very good landlord, if you will go along with me. He is a lusty jolly fellow, that lives well, at least three yards in the girth, and the best Church of *England* man upon the road." I had the curiosity to see this high church inn-keeper, as well as to enjoy more of the conversation of my fellow-traveller; and therefore readily consented to set our horses together for that night. As we rode side by side through the town, I was let into the characters of all the principal inhabitants, whom we met in our way. One was a dog, another a whelp, another a cur, and another the son of a bitch, under which several denominations were comprehended all that voted on the Whig side in the last election of burgesses. As for those of his own party, he distinguished them by a nod of his head, and asking them how they did by their Christian names. Upon our arrival at the inn, my companion fetched out the jolly landlord, who knew him by his whistle. Many endearments and

private whispers passed between them, though it was easy to see, by the landlord's scratching his head, that things did not go to their wishes. The landlord had swelled his body to a prodigious size, and worked up his complexion to a standing crimson by his zeal for the prosperity of the church, which he expressed every hour of the day, as his customers dropped in, by repeated bumpers. He had not time to go to church himself, but, as my friend told me in my ear, had headed a mob at the pulling down of two or three meeting-houses. While supper was preparing, he enlarged upon the happiness of the neighbouring shire; "for," says he, "there is scarce a Presbyterian in the whole county, except the bishop." In short, I found by his discourse that he had learned a great deal of politics, but not one word of religion, from the parson of his parish; and indeed, that he had scarce any other notion of religion, but that it consisted in hating Presbyterians. I had a remarkable instance of his notions in this particular. Upon seeing a poor decrepit old woman pass under the window where he sat, he desired me to take notice of her; and afterwards informed me, that she was generally reputed a witch by the country people; but that, for his part, he was apt to believe she was a Presbyterian.

Supper was no sooner served in, than he took occasion, from a shoulder of mutton that lay before us, to cry up the plenty of *England*, which would be the happiest country in the world, provided we would live within ourselves. Upon which, he expatiated upon the inconveniencies of trade, that carried from us the commodities of our country, and made a parcel of upstarts as rich as men of the most ancient families of *England*. He then declared frankly, that he had always been against all treaties and alliances with foreigners. "Our wooden walls," says he, "are our security, and we may bid defiance to the whole world, especially if they should attack us when the militia is out." I ventured to reply, that I had as great an opinion of the *English* fleet as he had; but I could not see how they could be paid, and manned, and fitted out, unless we encouraged trade and navigation. He replied, with some vehemence, that he could undertake to prove trade would be the ruin of the *English* nation. I would fain have put him upon it; but he contented himself with affirming it more eagerly, to which he added two or three curses upon the *London* merchants, not forgetting the directors of the *Bank*. After supper, he asked me if I was an admirer of punch, and immediately called for a sneaker. I took this occasion to insinuate the advantages of trade, by observ-

ing to him, that water was the only native of *England* that could be made use of on this occasion: but that the lemons, the brandy, the sugar, and the nutmeg, were all foreigners. This put him into some confusion; but the landlord, who overheard me, brought him off, by affirming, that for constant use there was no liquor like a cup of *English* water, provided it had malt enough in it. My squire laughed heartily at the conceit, and made the landlord sit down with us. We sat pretty late over our punch; and, amidst a great deal of improving discourse, drank the healths of several persons in the country, whom I had never heard of, that, they both assured me, were the ablest statesmen in the nation: and of some *Londoners*, whom they extolled to the skies, for their wit, and who, I knew, passed in town for silly fellows. It being now midnight, and my friend perceiving by his almanack that the moon was up, he called for his horses, and took a sudden resolution to go to his house, which was at three miles distance from the town, after having bethought himself, that he never slept well out of his own bed. He shook me very heartily by the hand at parting, and discovered a great air of satisfaction in his looks, that he had met with an opportunity of shewing his parts, and left me a much wiser man than he found me.

FREEHOLDER, N° 44.

MONDAY, MAY, 21.

Multaque præterea variarum monstra ferarum,
Centauri in foribus stabulant Scyllæque biformes:
Et centum-geminus Briareus, ac bellua Lernæ
Horrendum stridens, flammisque armata Chimæra,
Gorgones, Harpyæque, et forma tricorporis umbræ.
Corripit hic subitâ trepidus formidine ferrum
Æneas, strictamque aciem venientibus offert.
Et ni docta comes tenues sine corpore vitas
Admoneat volitare cavâ sub imagine formæ
Irruat, et frustra ferro diverberet umbras.

VIRG. Æn. vi. ver. 285.

Of various forms unnumber'd spectres more;
Centaurs, and double shapes, besiege the door:
Before the passage horrid *Hydra* stands,
And *Briareus* with all his hundred hands:
Gorgons, *Geryon* with his triple frame;
And vain *Chimæras* vomit empty flame.
The chief unsheath'd his shining steel, prepar'd,
Tho' seiz'd with sudden fear, to force the guard,
Off'ring his brandish'd weapon at their face;
Had not the *Sibyl* stopp'd his eager pace,
And told him what those empty phantoms were,
Forms without bodies, and impassive air.—

DRYDEN.

As I was last *Friday* taking a walk in the park, I saw a country gentleman at the side of *Rosa-*

mond's-pond, pulling a handful of oats out of his pocket, and with a great deal of pleasure gathering the ducks about him. Upon my coming up to him, who should it be but my friend the fox-hunter, whom I gave some account of in my twenty-second paper! I immediately joined him and partook of his diversion, until he had not an oat left in his pocket. We then made the tour of the park together; when after having entertained me with the description of a decoy pond that lay near his seat in the country, and of a meeting-house that was going to be rebuilt in a neighbouring market town, he gave me an account of some very odd adventures which he had met with that morning, and which I shall lay together in a short and faithful history, as well as my memory will give me leave.

My friend, who has a natural aversion to *London,* would never have come up, had not he been subpœnaed to it, as he told me, in order to give his testimony for one of the rebels, whom he knew to be a very fair sportsman. Having travelled all night, to avoid the inconveniences of dust and heat, he arrived with his guide, a little after break of day, at *Charing-cross;* where, to his great surprise, he saw a running footman carried in a chair, followed by a waterman in the same kind of vehicle. He was wondering at the extravagance

of their masters that furnished them with such dresses and accommodations; when on a sudden he beheld a chimney-sweeper conveyed after the same manner, with three footmen running before him. During his progress through the *Strand*, he met with several other figures no less wonderful and surprising. Seeing a great many in rich morning-gowns, he was amazed to find that persons of quality were up so early: and was no less astonished to see many lawyers in their bar-gowns, when he knew by his almanack that term was ended. As he was extremely puzzled and confounded in himself what all this would mean, a hackney-coach chancing to pass by him four Batts popped out their heads all at once, which very much frighted both him and his horse. My friend, who always takes care to cure his horse of such starting fits, spurred him up to the very side of the coach, to the no small diversion of the Batts; who seeing him with his long whip, horse-hair periwig, jockey-belt, and coat without sleeves, fancied him to be one of the masqueraders on horseback, and received him with a loud peal of laughter. His mind being full of idle stories, which are spread up and down the nation by the disaffected, he immediately concluded that all the persons he saw in these strange habits were foreigners, and received a great indignation

against them, for pretending to laugh at an *English* country gentleman. But he soon recovered out of his error, by hearing the voices of several of them, and particularly of a shepherdess quarrelling with her coachman, and threatening to break his bones in very intelligible *English*, though with a masculine tone. His astonishment still increased upon him, to see a continued procession of harlequins, scaramouches, punchinello's, and a thousand other merry dresses, by which people of quality distinguish their wit from that of the vulgar.

Being now advanced as far as *Somerset-House*, and observing it to be the great hive whence this swarm of chimeras issued forth from time to time, my friend took his station among a cluster of mob, who were making themselves merry with their betters. The first that came out, was a very venerable matron, with a nose and chin, that were within a very little of touching one another. My friend at the first view fancying her to be an old woman of quality, out of his good-breeding put off his hat to her, when the person pulling off his mask, to his great surprise appeared a smock-faced young fellow. His attention was soon taken off from this object, and turned to another that had very hollow eyes and a wrinkled face, which flourished in all the bloom

of fifteen. The whiteness of the lily was blended in it with the blush of the rose. He mistook it for a very whimsical kind of mask; but upon a nearer view he found that she held her vizard in her hand, and that what he saw was only her natural countenance, touched up with the usual improvements of an aged coquette.

The next who shewed herself was a female quaker, so very pretty, that he could not forbear licking his lips, and saying to the mob about him, "It is ten thousand pities she is not a churchwoman." The quaker was followed by half a dozen nuns, who filed off one after another up *Catharine-street*, to the respective convents in *Drury-lane*.

The esquire, observing the preciseness of their dress, began now to imagine, after all, that this was a nest of sectaries; for he had often heard that the town was full of them. He was confirmed in this opinion upon seeing a conjurer, whom he guessed to be the holder-forth. However, to satisfy himself, he asked a porter, who stood next him, what religion these people were of? The porter replied, "They are of no religion; it is a masquerade." Upon that, says my friend, I began to smoke that they were a parcel of mummers; and being himself one of the quorum in his own country, could not but wonder

that none of the *Middlesex* justices took care to lay some of them by the heels. He was the more provoked in the spirit of magistracy, upon discovering two very unseemly objects: the first was a judge, who rapped out a great oath at his footman; and the other a big-bellied woman, who, upon taking a leap into the coach, miscarried of a cushion. What still gave him greater offence was a drunken bishop, who reeled from one side of the court to the other, and was very sweet upon an *Indian* queen. But his worship, in the midst of his austerity, was mollified at the sight of a very lovely milk-maid, whom he began to regard with an eye of mercy, and conceived a particular affection for her, until he found, to his great amazement, that the standers-by suspected her to be a dutchess.

I must not conclude this narrative without mentioning one disaster which happened to my friend on this occasion. Having for his better convenience dismounted, and mixed among the crowd, he found upon his arrival at the inn, that he had lost his purse and his almanack. And though it is no wonder such a trick should be played him by some of the curious spectators, he cannot beat it out of his head, but that it was a cardinal who picked his pocket, and that this cardinal was a presbyterian in disguise.

FREEHOLDER, N° 47.

FRIDAY, JUNE 1.

——*cessit furor, et rabida ora quierunt.*

VIRG. Æn. vi. ver. 102.

Ceas'd is his fury, and he foams no more.

I QUESTION not but most of my readers will be very well pleased to hear, that my friend the fox-hunter, of whose arrival in town I gave notice in my forty-fourth paper, is become a convert to the present establishment, and a good subject to King GEORGE. The motives to his conversion shall be the subject of this paper, as they may be of use to other persons who labour under those prejudices and prepossessions, which hung so long upon the mind of my worthy friend. These I had an opportunity of learning the other day, when, at his request, we took a ramble together to see the curiosities of this great town.

The first circumstance, as he ingenuously confessed to me (while we were in the coach together) which helped to disabuse him, was seeing King *Charles* the First on horseback, at Charing-cross; for he was sure that prince would never have kept his seat there, had the stories been true

he had heard in the country, that forty-one was come about again.

He owned to me that he looked with horror on the new church that is half built in the *Strand,* as taking it at first sight to be half demolished: but upon enquiring of the workmen, was agreeably surprised to find, that instead of pulling it down, they were building it up; and that fifty more were raising in other parts of the town.

To these I must add a third circumstance, which I find had no small share in my friend's conversion. Since his coming to town, he chanced to look into the church of St. Paul, about the middle of sermon-time; where having first examined the dome, to see if it stood safe, (for the screw-plot still ran in his head) he observed, that the lord-mayor, aldermen, and city-sword were a part of the congregation. This sight had the more weight with him, as by good luck not above two of that venerable body were fallen asleep.

This discourse held us until we came to the Tower; for our first visit was to the lions. My friend, who had a great deal of talk with their keeper, enquired very much after their health, and whether none of them had fallen sick upon the taking of *Perth,* and the flight of the *Pretender?* and hearing they were never better in their lives,

I found he was extremely startled: for he had learned from his cradle, that the lions in the tower were the best judges of the title of our *British* kings, and always sympathized with our sovereigns.

After having here satiated our curiosity, we repaired to the Monument, where my fellow-traveller, being a well-breathed man, mounted the ascent with much speed and activity. I was forced to halt so often in this perpendicular march, that, upon my joining him on the top of the pillar, I found he had counted all the steeples and towers which were discernible from this advantageous situation, and was endeavouring to compute the number of acres they stood upon. We were both of us very well pleased with this part of the prospect; but I found he cast an evil eye upon several warehouses, and other buildings, that looked like barns, and seemed capable of receiving great multitudes of people. His heart misgave him that these were so many meeting-houses; but, upon communicating his suspicions to me, I soon made him easy in this particular.

We then turned our eyes upon the river, which gave me an occasion to inspire him with some favourable thoughts of trade and merchandize, that had filled the *Thames* with such crowds of

ships, and covered the shore with such swarms of people.

We descended very leisurely, my friend being careful to count the steps, which he registered in a blank leaf in his new almanack. Upon our coming to the bottom, observing an *English* inscription upon the basis, he read it over several times, and told me he could scarce believe his own eyes; for that he had often heard from an old attorney, who lived near him in the country, that it was the Presbyterians who burned down the city; whereas, says he, the pillar positively affirms it in so many words, that "the burning of this ancient city was begun and carried on by the treachery and malice of the popish faction, in order to their carrying on their horrid plot for extirpating the protestant religion, and old *English* liberty, and introducing popery and slavery." This account, which he looked upon to be more authentic, than if it had been in print, I found, made a very great impression upon him.

We now took coach again, and made the best of our way for the *Royal Exchange*, though I found he did not much care to venture himself into the throng of that place; for he told me he had heard they were, generally speaking, republicans, and was afraid of having his pocket picked amongst them. But he soon conceived a better

opinion of them, when he spied the statue of King *Charles* the Second standing up in the middle of the crowd, and most of the kings in *Baker's* Chronicle ranged in order over their heads; from whence he very justly concluded, that an anti-monarchical assembly could never choose such a place to meet in once a day.

To continue this good disposition in my friend, after a short stay at *Stocks-market,* we drove away directly for the *Meuse,* where he was not a little edified with the sight of those fine sets of horses which have been brought over from *Hanover,* and with the care that is taken of them. He made many good remarks upon this occasion, and was so pleased with his company, that I had much ado to get him out of the stable.

In our progress to St. James's-park (for that was the end of our journey) he took notice, with great satisfaction, that, contrary to his intelligence in the country, the shops were all open and full of business; that the soldiers walked civilly in the streets; that clergymen, instead of being affronted, had generally the wall given them; and that he had heard the bells ring to prayers from morning to night, in some part of the town or another.

As he was full of these honest reflections, it happened very luckily for us, that one of the

king's coaches passed by with the three young princesses in it, whom by an accidental stop we had an opportunity of surveying for some time: my friend was ravished with the beauty, innocence, and sweetness that appeared in all their faces. He declared several times that they were the finest children he had ever seen in all his life: and assured me that, before this sight, if any one had told him it had been possible for three such pretty children to have been born out of *England*, he should never have believed them.

We were now walking together in the Park, and, as it is usual for men who are naturally warm and heady, to be transported with the greatest flush of good-nature when they are once sweetened, he owned to me very frankly, he had been much imposed upon by those false accounts of things he had heard in the country; and that he would make it his business, upon his return thither, to set his neighbours right, and give them a more just notion of the present state of affairs.

What confirmed my friend in this excellent temper of mind, and gave him an inexpressible satisfaction, was a message he received, as we were walking together, from the prisoner for whom he had given his testimony in his late trial. This person, having been condemned for his part in the late rebellion, sent him word that

his majesty had been graciously pleased to reprieve him, with several of his friends, in order, as it was thought, to give them their lives; and that he hoped, before he went out of town, they should have a cheerful meeting, and drink health and prosperity to King *George*.

The character of the Tory Fox-hunter is, it must be confessed, in every respect less amiable and respectable than that of Sir Roger de Coverley; we neither love nor esteem him; for, instead of the sweet and benevolent temper of the knight, we are here presented with a vulgar, rough and totally uneducated squire, whose credulity and absurd prejudices are not softened down or relieved by those mild and tender feelings which so greatly endear to us almost every incident in the life of Sir Roger. The humour, nevertheless, is irresistible, and the ridicule so broad and keen, as fully to evince the powers of Addison in the province of severe satire. The suavity of his disposition, however, and the goodness of his heart, were such, that he seldom found a provocation sufficient to authorize, in his opinion, the use of weapons so formidable. But when the Freeholder appeared, the iniquity of rebellion, and the folly of opposing a mild and constitutional government, were so flagrant, that he

thought himself warranted in the adoption of a more bold and poignant style. He refused at all times, however, to wield the tomahawk of Swift; and his political satire, though occasionally pungent, is mildness itself when compared with the virulent composition of the Dean.

These master-pieces of comic painting, the characters of Sir Roger de Coverley and the Tory Fox-hunter, exhibit the humour and the wit of Addison in all their perfection; the sly, the playful, the insinuating and severe, severe, at least, as far as the moral virtue of Addison would allow, by turns delight and fascinate the reader, who at the same time perceives the costume and keeping of each piece preserved with a strict and inviolable integrity.

Had our author produced no other specimens of humorous delineation than what these sketches afford, he would have been entitled, from their great merit, to rank foremost among those who have displayed the most intimate knowledge of the human heart and character; the versatility and fecundity of his genius in this department, however, is almost unbounded; and scarce a foible of private or public life, of domestic or fashionable manners, but what has received from his pencil the ludicrous colouring best adapted to reform, without wounding the feelings of, the individual.

PART III.

ESSAY V.

ON THE FABLE, IMAGERY, AND ALLEGORY OF ADDISON.

HAVING considered, at some length, the merits and inventive powers of Addison in the delineation of humorous character, we shall now proceed to elucidate another striking feature in his writings, his love of fable, allegory, and oriental imagery.

No portions of the periodical compositions of our author have been more generally relished and admired than those which aim to instruct through the medium of narrative and fiction; and of these by far the greater part may be classed under the heads of Oriental Tales, Allegories, and Visions. To these Addison appears to have been greatly attached: "I have been always wonderfully delighted," he observes, "with fables, allegories, and the like inventions, which the politest and the best instructors of mankind

have always made use of. They take off from the severity of instruction, and inforce it at the same time that they conceal it*." As the exquisite propriety and beauty with which Addison conducted these fictions contributed in a very high degree toward rendering a taste for oriental fable more general, it will not be deemed irrelevant, if, previous to a particular enumeration of them, we offer a few observations on the peculiar character of oriental fiction, and on its introduction into Europe and this island.

The cultivation of oriental literature, which for the last half century has been prosecuted with uncommon ardour in this country, has furnished us with numerous and authentic specimens of the tales and poetry of the East, and has corrected many errors and prejudices formerly entertained relative to its language and imagery.

If we take Arabia as a province of the eastern world most fertile in the production of works of imagination, we shall find their fictions and poetry, though more bold and daring, both in incident and imagery, than the efforts of European fancy, yet extremely interesting, and sometimes pathetic. The vast, the wonderful, the wild, characterize, indeed, the major part of oriental fabling; but it is a mistake to suppose that these

* Tatler, N° 90.

romantic incidents are delivered in bombastic and highly inflated language; the purer ages of Arabian literature were remarkable for sweetness and simplicity of style; and the diction ascribed as a general defect of eastern composition, applies merely to its modern and degraded state. "The English reader will perhaps be surprized to find in these productions," remarks Professor Carlyle, alluding to his specimens of Arabian poetry, "so few of those lofty epithets and inflated metaphors which are generally considered as characteristic of the oriental mode of composition; he will probably be more surprized to hear, that during the flourishing periods of Arabian literature, this bombast style was almost unknown, and that the best writers, both of poetry and prose, expressed themselves in a language as chaste and simple as that of Prior or of Addison. True taste in composition is by no means restricted to certain ages or climates; for it is no more than good sense directed to a particular object, and will be found in every country, which is arrived at that point in civilization where barbarism has ceased, and fantastic refinement not yet begun. The writer who had obtained celebrity in the court of Bagdad during the splendour of the Khaliphat, would have smiled equally at the prosaic poetry of his European

contemporaries, the Bards and Troubadours, and at the poetic prose of his own countrymen, the present orientals*."

So early as the commencement of the seventh century of the christian era, the Arabian poetry and language had obtained considerable excellence; and from the age of *Lebid*, a poet contemporary with Mohammed, to the extinction of the Khaliphat by the Tartars in the 656th year of the Hegira, the compositions of the Arabians ceased not to do honour to their country and their genius.

During this illustrious period, and especially during the first five centuries of the Hegira, the elegant literature of the Arabians, both in prose and verse, was remarkable for its simplicity, energy, and beauty of style; and whether a poem or a tale were produced, true taste was seldom violated by the introduction of glaring metaphor or pompous language.

Of the pathos, and pastoral sweetness of the poetry of Arabia immediately anterior to the promulgation of Mohammedanism, the following elegy by *Lebid Ben Rabiat Alamary*, as translated by Professor Carlyle, is so exquisite a specimen, that I cannot withhold it from the reader; especially as it brings so decisive a proof of that sim-

* Specimens of Arabian Poetry, Preface, p. 2, 3.

plicity of style and tenderness of sentiment, which continued for so many centuries to grace the best compositions of Arabia. "Its subject," says the Professor, "is one that must be ever interesting to a feeling mind—the return of a person, after a long absence, to the place where he had spent his early years—it is, in fact, an Arabian DESERTED VILLAGE."

Those dear abodes which once contain'd the fair,
Amidst Mitata's wilds I seek in vain,
Nor towers, nor tents, nor cottages are there,
But scatter'd ruins, and a silent plain.

The proud canals that once RAYANA grac'd,
Their course neglected and their waters gone,
Among the level'd sands are dimly trac'd,
Like moss-grown letters on a mouldering stone.

RAYANA say, how many a tedious year
Its hallow'd circle o'er our heads hath roll'd,
Since to my vows thy tender maids gave ear,
And fondly listen'd to the tale I told?

How oft, since then, the star of spring, that pours
A never-failing stream, hath drench'd thy head?
How oft, the summer cloud in copious showers,
Or gentle drops, its genial influence shed?

How oft, since then, the hovering mist of morn
Hath caus'd thy locks with glittering gems to glow?
How oft hath eve her dewy treasures borne,
To fall responsive to the breeze below?

The matted thistles, bending to the gale,
Now clothe those meadows once with verdure gay;
Amidst the windings of that lonely vale
The teeming antelope and ostrich stray:

The large-ey'd mother of the herd, that flies
Man's noisy haunts, here finds a sure retreat,
Here tends her clustering young, till age supplies
Strength to their limbs and swiftness to their feet.

Save where the swelling stream hath swept those walls,
And giv'n their deep foundations to the light
(As the retouching pencil that recals
A long-lost picture to the raptur'd sight.)

Save where the rains have wash'd the gather'd sand,
And bared the scanty fragments to our view,
(As the * dust sprinkled on a punctur'd hand,
Bids the faint tints resume their azure hue.)

No mossy record of those once-lov'd seats
Points out the mansion to enquiring eyes;
No tottering wall, in echoing sounds, repeats
Our mournful questions and our bursting sighs.

Yet midst those ruin'd heaps, that naked plain,
Can faithful memory former scenes restore,
Recal the busy throng, the jocund train,
And picture all that charm'd us there before.

Ne'er shall my heart the fatal morn forget,
That bore the fair ones from these seats so dear—
I see, I see the crowding litters yet,
And yet the tent-poles rattle in my ear.

I see the maids with timid steps ascend,
The streamers wave in all their painted pride,
The floating curtains every fold extend,
And vainly strive the charms within to hide.

* It is a custom with the Arabian women, in order to give the veins of their hands and arms a more brilliant appearance, to make slight punctures along them, and to rub into the incisions a blue powder, which they renew occasionally, as it happens to wear out.

What graceful forms those envious folds inclose!
What melting glances thro' those curtains play!
Sure Weira's antelopes, or Judah's roes,
Thro' yonder veils their sportive young survey.

The band mov'd on—to trace their steps I strove,
I saw them urge the camel's hastening flight,
Till the white * vapour, like a rising grove,
Snatch'd them for ever from my aching sight.

Nor since that morn have I NAWARA seen,
The bands are burst which held us once so fast,
Memory but tells me that such things have been,
And sad Reflection adds that they are past †.

The same chastity and simplicity of style, which distinguish the best ages of Arabian poetry, are, likewise, to be found in their prose writings, produced during the same period. The *Arabian Tales,* or the *Thousand and One Nights,* are said, by those who are judges of the original, to be frequently specimens of the most simple and elegant diction. They were written, it is probable, during the most flourishing era of the

* The vapour here alluded to, called by the Arabians *Serab,* is not unlike in appearance (and probably proceeding from a similar cause) to those white mists which we often see hovering over the surface of a river, in a summer's evening, after a hot day. They are very frequent in the sultry plains of Arabia, and, when seen at a distance, resemble an expanded lake; but upon a nearer approach, the thirsty traveller perceives his deception.

† Carlyle's Specimens of Arabian Poetry, p. 5.

Khaliphat, in the space included between the eighth and twelfth centuries, when the language of Arabia, to use the words of Mr. Richardson, was "sublime, comprehensive, copious, energetic, delicate, majestic; adapted equally for the softness of love, or the poignancy of satire; for the mournfulness of elegy, or the grandeur of heroics; for the simplest tale, or the boldest effort of rhetoric *." What strongly corroborates the supposition of their antiquity is their freedom from any allusion to modern customs, manners, or events, to the use of gunpowder, or to the enterprising efforts of European travellers and navigators.

It may likewise be affirmed, that had they been recent productions, the offspring of the fifteenth, sixteenth, or seventeenth century, the language would have partaken of that inflation and turgidity, which almost invariably characterize the prose works of modern oriental writers. To be convinced of this, I have only to refer the reader to the *Tales of Inatulla*, as literally translated by Mr. Scott. These productions form a species of romance, under the title of *Bahar-Danush*, or *Garden of Knowledge*, written by the Persian Einaint Oollah, Anno Domini 1650, in the reign of the Emperor Shaw Jehaun. Than

* Preface to his Arabic Grammar.

the style of this work nothing can be more bombastic, puerile, and absurd; it is loaded with monstrous epithets, incongruous metaphors, and the most ridiculous conceits; while the incidents are, for the most part, licentious, trifling, and jejune.

It is to be regretted that, either from ignorance or false taste, the imitators of oriental fable have, in general, rather chosen to copy the tumid style, which for some centuries has prevailed among the prose writers of Persia, than the pure and correct manner of what may be termed the classical authors of Arabia. Hence have we been deluged with such a quantity of bloated composition, under the title of Oriental Tales. A most striking exception, however, to this erroneous taste, we possess in the writings of Addison, whose eastern tales and apologues are written in language of the greatest simplicity and purity.

If we take the Arabian Tales *, therefore, as a model, we shall perceive they may be defined, as containing a series of wild and wonderful incidents, copiously mingled with the superstitions and preternatural machinery of the East, faith-

* These have lately been very elegantly translated from the French version, by the Rev. Edward Forster; a very acceptable present to the public, as the old translation was not only incorrect, but coarse and vulgar in its diction.

fully illustrative of its manners and customs, and delivered in language of great perspicuity, simplicity, and elegance.

The usual objection to these narratives has been the lavish use which their authors have made of the marvellous and supernatural; but it should not be forgotten, as Mr. Hole has justly observed, that " the same kind of *credibility* is preserved in these tales, as the Greeks attached to the *speciosa miracula* of their poets; and ourselves to the vulgar superstitions of our own country. To such delusions as are derived from hoary antiquity, and are sanctioned by popular belief, the fancy easily assents, and we willingly suspend the operations of severer reason.

" Influenced by this principle, the Greeks listened with pleasure to the imaginary adventures of their Olympic deities: and, actuated by the same motive, we attend with equal delight to the incantations of the witches in Macbeth, and to Puck's whimsical frolics in the ' Midsummer Night's Dream.' Let us be cautious, therefore, of condemning the Arabs for a ridiculous attachment to the MARVELLOUS, since we ourselves are no less affected by it. They had a system of popular mythology, equally interesting to them as ours is to us; more so, probably, as being more generally credited. The characters also of their

ideal beings are as scrupulously preserved and discriminated, as of those who people the fairy regions of English poetry *."

The ardour and eager curiosity with which these romantic tales have ever been, and are still read by the natives of Arabia, and indeed throughout the East, have been more than once mentioned by observant travellers as truly astonishing. Colonel Capper, in his Observations on the Passage to India through Egypt, and across the Great Desert, has made some very pertinent remarks on this subject. "The Arabian Nights," he observes, "contain much curious and useful observation. They are by many people erroneously supposed to be a spurious production, and are therefore slighted in a manner they do not deserve. They were written by an Arabian †, and are universally read and admired, throughout Asia, by all ranks of men, both old and young: considered, therefore, as an original work, descriptive, as they are, of the manners and customs of the East in general, and also of the Arabians in particular, they surely must be thought to merit the attention of the curious; nor

* Hole's Remarks on the Arabian Nights, p. 11, 12.

† There is more reason to suppose they were written by various authors, and at different periods, of the best age of Arabian literature.

are they, in my opinion, destitute of merit in other respects; for although the extravagance of some of the stories is carried too far, yet, on the whole, one cannot help admiring the fancy and invention of the author, in striking out such a variety of pleasing incidents, pleasing I will call them, because they have frequently afforded me much amusement; nor do I envy any man his feelings, who is above being pleased with them. But before any person decides upon the merit of these books, he should be eye-witness of the effect they produce on those who best understand them. I have more than once seen the Arabians in the desert, sitting round a fire, listening to these stories with such attention and pleasure as totally to forget the fatigue and hardship, with which, an instant before, they were entirely overcome. In short, not to dwell any longer on this subject, they are in the same estimation all over Asia, that the adventures of Don Quixote are in Spain; and it is presumed no man of genius or taste would think of making the tour of that country, without previously reading the work of Cervantes."

Though it cannot be expected, owing to dissimilarity in manners, customs, and religion, that the same enthusiasm and interest which are so keenly felt by the natives of the East on the re-

citation of these tales, should be excited in the bosom of an European, yet, notwithstanding these dissimilarities, and the disadvantages which necessarily attend a translation, it is impossible for any person of lively feelings and a warm imagination, to peruse them without having his curiosity in a high degree awakened by the stupendous nature of the incidents, and without experiencing much gratification from the rich and authentic display of oriental costume and magnificence. Such have been the impressions very generally made by their perusal upon all ranks o society; and the multiplied editions which the English version has passed through, though, until the late one by Forster, very inadequate to the merits of the original, offer the most decisive proof of its popularity. "The work has been admired," says the British Critic, "and always will, for the simplicity of its narrative, combined with all that the most luxuriant imagination can require; for the accuracy of its representation of oriental manners; and for the interest and curiosity it awakens in the learned and unlearned, the young and the old. And we have known some of the most grave and most learned men retain, with delight, the impression made by these volumes *."

* Vide Forster's Preface to the Arabian Tales, p. 12.

It is well known that Addison was peculiarly partial to the Arabian Tales. That he read them in the version of Galland is evident from N° 535 of the Spectator, where he particularly mentions his translation, and has given us a fable from the collection. He appears, indeed, to have entered fully into their spirit, to have appreciated with great judgment their character and leading features, and to have imitated their chief beauties with singular taste and felicity. He it was also, who probably recommended to Phillips the translation of the *Persian Tales,* a genuine oriental work, from the French version of *Petis de la Croix.* The first volume of Phillips's Tales was published, I believe, in 1709, and the second is advertised on August 20th, 1714, at the close of N° 583 of the Spectator * ; and as about this time Phillips is supposed to have resided in the same house with Addison, it is not extravagant conjecture to conceive that he might have received occasional assistance from his pen.

The introduction of oriental fiction into Eu-

* The advertisement runs thus— *** Persian Tales, vol. ii. translated by Mr. Phillips, author of the Pastorals and the Distrest Mother. N. B. To prevent gentlemen being mistaken, who have bought the first volume, this is to inform them, that the edition of the Persian and Turkish Tales, this day published in 2 vols. is not translated by Mr. Phillips, but by an unknown hand.

rope, and consequently into this island, is a subject of singular curiosity; and as it will be useful, and at the same time entertaining, briefly to state its progress to the period of Addison, and previous to the consideration of his imitations of oriental fable, I shall endeavour so to arrange my materials, as, I flatter myself, to afford a clear view of the subject.

About the middle of the eighth century, the empire of the caliphs had attained prodigious power and splendour; and the court of Bagdad, shortly after the extinction of the dynasty of the Ommiades, began to cultivate with enthusiasm the arts of peace. *Abou Giafar Almansor*, the second caliph of the house of the Abassides, sated with conquest and the extension of dominion, commenced the patronage of literature and science with a taste and munificence which very soon excited a thirst for knowledge throughout the numerous provinces of his empire. Having established Bagdad as the metropolis of the Khaliphat, and which continued such for more than five hundred years, he invited to its magnificent palaces the most learned men from every quarter of the globe. Theology, poetry, and astronomy, were the favourite studies of Almansor; but he failed not to give liberal encouragement to every useful art, to every valuable branch of scientific pursuit.

It has been the fate of Almansor, however, to be eclipsed by the romantic lustre which surrounds the actions and the memory of his grandson. With the name of *Haroun al Raschid*, the friend of Charlemagne, and the hero of the Arabian Nights, every civilized nation is familiar. To the ambition and military prowess of his predecessors, he added the most zealous encouragement of learning; and whilst his enemies in the East felt the edge of his sword, Europe alone beheld him in the light of a disciple of the Muses.

Haroun died anno Domini 809, and was succeeded in a few years by his second son *Almamon*, the most munificent of the race of the Abassides. Almamon ascended the throne of the caliphs in 813, and for a period of twenty years reigned the Augustus of the oriental world. The life of this monarch was devoted to literature; and he was, without flattery or exaggeration, acknowledged to be unrivalled in the subtleties of the Aristotelian philosophy. He patronised, however, every known branch of art and science, and his unparalleled generosity gathered round him every scholar of merit and celebrity. Numerous agents were employed in the collection of books; and his accumulation of Greek manuscripts was invaluable both for its numbers and selection. These he took care to have translated into Arabic, and circulated through every part of his domi-

nions; while schools, libraries, and professors, were founded and supported at his expence, and on the most magnificent scale, in all the large cities of the empire.

While such were the meritorious exertions of the Arabians at Bagdad under their great caliphs Almansor, Haroun, and Almamon, an individual of the proscribed house of the Ommiades had founded a mighty empire in the West; and Spain beheld at Cordova a Caliphat, which rivalled the splendour of the eastern successors of the prophet. From the year 756, the period when *Abdalrhaman* unfurled the standard of revolt in Spain, to the middle of the eleventh century, literature and science were cultivated by the caliphs of Cordova with an ardour equal to that which animated their brethren on the banks of the Tigris.

In the tenth century, at a time when the rest of Europe was involved in utter darkness, the third and greatest of the Abdalrhamans, the eighth Caliph, and the first who adopted the title of Commander of the Faithful, occupied for more than fifty years the throne of Cordova. The grandeur and opulence of this prince was truly astonishing *; and, fortunately for Europe and

* For proofs of the lavish magnificence of the Caliphats of Bagdad and Cordova, see Literary Hours, vol. i. N° 15, 3d edition.

mankind, he was, likewise, devotedly attached to the interests of learning.

For several ages, indeed, after the Arabians had imbibed a love for literature, wherever their victorious arms were carried, philosophy and the arts followed in their train; and towards the close of the tenth century Egypt experienced the benefits of their instruction, by the establishment of the Fatimite caliphs at Cairo. These monarchs emulated the taste and patronage of their competitors at Bagdad and Cordova, and continued to foster and protect the sciences until the victories of Noureddin and Saladin, about the commencement of the third crusade, wrested the sceptre from their grasp.

Now, as christian Europe was, during the most splendid eras of Arabian literature, in a state of comparatively profound ignorance, it is obvious that any communication with a people so enlightened, so very superior as were then the inhabitants of Bagdad and Cordova in all the attainments of civilized life, must necessarily be attended with decided advantages on the part of the uninformed. Three circumstances, however, contributed greatly to prevent, even for more than two centuries, the intercourse essential to improvement: the bitter animosity, for instance, arising from difference of religion, a not unfounded jealousy of Saracenic arms and power,

and, more than all, that utter ignorance which disables an individual or a nation from discerning its own mental weakness and deficiencies. The distance of Bagdad and Cairo, also, was great, and the fatigues and dangers of travelling, to those who felt no ardent enthusiasm in the cause of literature, insuperable; whilst unhappily, at the same time, access to the Arabian science of Spain was altogether cut off by the sanguinary and perpetual warfare, and the deep-rooted hatred which so long subsisted between the Moors and Christians of that fertile country.

It is to the literature of Arabia, however, that the western world owes its resuscitation from a state of extreme torpor and imbecility; and if it were long before the philosophy and science of the Mohammedans made their due impression on the clouded intellects of Europe, still longer was it ere the fictions and the fancy of the East were allowed to mingle with the songs of the Harper, or the tales of the Trouveur.

Yet with the more solid and abstruse learning of the Arabians was combined no small portion of lawless imagination and striking superstition, and which, in the eleventh century, when curiosity was awakened, and a more direct communication was opened with the disciples of Mohammed, had a powerful effect on minds just roused

from the slumber of ages. To the doctrines of Greece, as displayed in the writings of her philosophers, mathematicians, and physicians, Arabia added much from her own stores, much of what was useful, and much that was tinged with the hues of fancy and credulity. Thus, with their astronomy, which had received many and great improvements under the caliphs Almansor and Almamon, was blended the fallacies of astrology; and nothing of moment was transacted, either in war, politics, or private life, without first consulting the aspect of the heavens. Again, with chemistry, still more exclusively of their own acquisition, an art, indeed, of which they may be said to have been the parents, and whose utility pervades every department of life, they contrived to associate the most wild and eccentric reveries; and the attainment of the philosopher's stone, and the elixir of life, the acquisition of inexhaustible treasure or ever-during existence, were firmly believed to be within the power of their favourite science. Amulets, rings, talismans, and charms, were, likewise, considered as the most profound and elaborate products of chemical research; these were inscribed with mystic characters, and were deemed of such potency, as not only to protect the wearer from the approach of evil, but to command and to con-

troul the elemental demons, and the spirits of another world. Lastly, if optics and perspective were their study, with the discovery of many ingenious and highly useful instruments, they boasted of globes of glass, which should reveal every passing event, and of tubes, through which might be discerned the secrets of futurity.

Pretensions such as these, however, as they served to stimulate curiosity and excite desire, might have a salutary effect on the apathy of the Christian world, and, no doubt, contributed to accelerate the communication of more important knowledge. The intercourse, notwithstanding, was for a long series of years very slight and partial, and chiefly carried on by the itinerant Jew physicians, who, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, travelled through both Asia and Europe in the practice of their profession; and being masters of various languages, and particularly of Latin and Arabic, the former the general medium of communication in the West, the latter in the East, were enabled to officiate as translators with considerable success and utility. They imported and naturalized not only the best philosophical works of the Arabians of Spain, but those likewise of the literati of Bagdad and Cairo, and proved eminently serviceable in disseminating a taste for oriental science.

" In process of time this dissemination of learning," observes a very eloquent and ingenious writer, " partial as it avowedly was, produced its effects and fruit. The love of it at last revived in European breasts, and students hastened in crowds to the schools of Spain for instruction. It would be amusing, and perhaps instructive, to give an account of the different men of learning who presided in their seminaries, to analyse their lectures, and exhibit a list of those European scholars whom the zeal of science sent over the Pyrenees. But such pleasing anecdotes are denied the learned; and the diligent enquiries of Brucker himself have produced nothing interesting on this subject. There is, however, no doubt but in the tenth and eleventh centuries their schools were thronged with students from different parts of Europe; and among these we find Gerbert, afterwards pope, under the name of Sylvester the Second. If such scholars were formed under their eye, we might wish their lecture-rooms had been still more crowded; for Gerbert was undoubtedly the most learned man of his time, and of his tutors we are obliged to think with sentiments of respect. His attainments, seen through the mist of ignorance or prejudice, were magnified into supernatural powers; and the geometrician and chymist swelled

into the magician, who, at will, controlled nature and her works. It would be grateful to record the names of Englishmen who sought knowledge in a distant soil, but, to a hasty search, three only occur. Wallis mentions Adelard, a monk of Bath, who, after acquiring mathematical knowledge in Spain, Egypt, and Arabia, translated Euclid from the Arabic; and Robert of Reading, a brother monk, and cotemporary scholar. Daniel Morlay is noticed by Wood; and Duck, the civilian, represents him as an indefatigable scholar, who, in quest of knowledge, had studied at Oxford, and visited Paris and Toledo*."

Though the sciences familiar to the Arabians, their arithmetic, algebra, and geometry, their medicine, natural history, and botany, their chemistry, astronomy, and philosophy, were very generally studied by Europeans in the eleventh century, few vestiges of the polite literature of the east, of its history, fictions, and poetry, are discernible during that early period. The wonderful delusions, indeed, connected with their magic, alchemy, and astrology, had made considerable progress, and had gained many proselytes; but the manners, customs, traditions, and fables of the Moors were neglected and unknown.

* Introduction to the Literary History of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, p. 130, 131.

To a Greek of the court of Constantinople are we indebted for one of the earliest efforts towards the introduction of oriental fable. About the year 1070, SIMEON SETH, an officer of the imperial household, and eminent for his knowledge of Eastern literature, translated from the Arabic into Greek, a fabulous history of the military adventures of Alexander the Great. This speedily appeared in a Latin version, and meeting with a rapid dispersion, induced Simeon to attempt a translation from the Persian and Arabic of a celebrated collection of apologues, which has since been circulated through Europe under the appellation of the Fables of Pilpay.

This beautiful series of fables, which was familiarized to Europe in a Latin imitation of Seth's version by PIERS ALFONSE, a converted Jew, as early as the year 1107, is now well known to have originated in India, and to have been the prototype of all the apologues ascribed to Æsop and succeeding fabulists. It soon became a kind of sacred book among the Persians and Arabians, and the favourite of Nushervan the Just, and of Mansour, the second Caliph of the dynasty of the Abassides. The very accomplished *Sir William Jones,* in a discourse delivered by him on the 26th of February, 1786, speaking of the Ethics of the Hindoos, observes; "their *Neetee*

Sastra, or System of Ethics, is yet preserved; and the fables of *Veeshnou Sarma*, whom we ridiculously call Pilpay, are the most beautiful, if not the most ancient, collection of Apologues in the world: they were first translated from the *Sanskreet* in the sixth century, by the order of *Buzerchumihr*, or *bright as the sun*, the chief physician, and afterwards the Vizeer of the great Anushirevan, and are extant under various names in more than twenty languages; but their original title is *Hitópadesa*, or *amicable instruction*; and, as the very existence of Æsop, whom the Arabs believe to have been an Abyssinian, appears rather doubtful, I am not disinclined to suppose, that the first moral fables which appeared in Europe were of Indian or Ethiopian origin." This account is corroborated by FRASER in his catalogue of Oriental manuscripts. "The ancient Brahmins of India," he remarks, "after a great deal of time and labour, compiled a treatise, which they called *Kurtuck Dumnik*, in which were inserted the choicest treasures of wisdom, and the perfectest rules for governing a people. This book they presented to their *Rajahs*, who kept it with the greatest secresy and care. About the time of Mahommed's birth, or the latter end of the sixth century, Noishervan the Just, who then reigned

in Persia, discovered a great inclination to see that book: for which purpose one *Burzuvia*, a physician, who had a surprizing talent in learning several languages, particularly the *Sanskerrit*, was introduced to him as the properest person to be employed to get a copy thereof. He went to India; where, after some years' stay, and great trouble, he procured it. It was translated into the *Pehluvi* language by him, and *Buzrjumehr* the vizir. *Noishervan* ever after, and all his successors the Persian kings, had this book in high esteem, and took the greatest care to keep it secret. At last *Abu Jaffer Mansour zu Nikky*, who was the second Khaliff of the Abassi reign, by great search, got a copy thereof in the *Pehluvi* language, and ordered *Imam Hossan Abdal Mokaffa*, who was the most learned of the age, to translate it into Arabic. This prince ever after made it his guide, and not only in affairs relating to the government, but in private life also *."

The version of Mokaffa was in the 515th year of the Hegira translated into Persic by *Abul Mala Nasser Allah Mustofi;* this was again polished at the request of the *Emir Soheli* by *Ali ben Hossein*

* Vide Preface to The Heetopades of Veeshnoo-Sarma, in a Series of connected Fables, translated from the Sanskreet, by Charles Wilkins, 8vo. London, 1787.

Vaez, and further corrected in the year 1002, under the orders of *Akbar*, the Great Mogul, by the learned *Abul Fazl*.

That the labours of Simeon Seth, and Piers Alfonse, were greatly instrumental in introducing a knowledge of oriental fable into Europe, and in awakening a taste for the style and wonders of eastern fiction, there can be little doubt. Their tendency also, at the same period, received a most striking impulsion from the commencement of those stupendous expeditions to the Holy-Land termed the *Crusades*, the first of which occurred in the year 1096, and is memorable for the immense number of persons of each sex, and of all ranks and ages, who encountered with enthusiasm the dangers and difficulties of such a daring attempt.

The result of the first Crusade, in which nearly a million of men in arms had embarked, was the conquest of Jerusalem; but the effect upon the minds and manners of those who survived the calamities of so distant an enterprise was much more permanent and important. They had beheld in the Greek Empire, and in the cities of Asia, a civilization, a magnificence and splendour to which they had hitherto been totally unaccustomed; and, though rude and barbarous in the extreme, they had felt a wish to emulate the

luxury that they admired, and had in some degree imbibed a taste for the marvellous and interesting fictions, the gorgeous and romantic achievements which were recited or celebrated in the East.

In little more than twenty years after this gigantic invasion of the Holy-Land, a work of great popularity appeared, and which is evidently tinged with oriental fancy and machinery. There is every reason to suppose that the fabulous chronicle, falsely ascribed to Archbishop Turpin, but now known to be the production of a monk a little anterior to the year 1122, was written on purpose to recommend the Crusades, and to keep alive the martial and religious enthusiasm already so successfully generated in the breasts of mankind. For this purpose the author has chosen the expulsion of the Saracens from Spain by Charlemagne; and in his twentieth chapter has artfully invented an episode, in which he sends his hero on a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre: an incident whose authenticity could not be doubted when vouched for by an archbishop, and which, as an animating example, had a wonderful effect on the credulous and warlike multitude.

A few years subsequent to the legend of the supposed Turpin, and about nine anterior to the second Crusade, GEOFFERY OF MONMOUTH, a Welsh

benedictine monk, translated from the Armoric language into Latin, at the request of Gaulter, archdeacon of Oxford, a *History of the Kings of Britain;* and as the pseudo Turpin had taken Charlemagne for his hero, the author of this chronicle fixed upon Arthur. Whatever may have been the age of the original, the translation of Geoffery, executed about the year 1138, is filled with imagery and incidents which could only have been derived from a communication with the East. In fact, the interpolations, the additions and forgeries of Geoffery, are in this translation extremely abundant; and he himself confesses that the prophecies of Merlin, and all the letters and speeches, originated in his own imagination. From what quarter he derived his supplemental imagery is evident in the first place from his mention of the Soldans and Arabians, and of the kings of Egypt, Media, Syria, Babylon, and Phrygia, and from the nature of the powers and faculties attributed to the inchanter Merlin, whose skill in magic, medicine, and mechanics, is entirely of an oriental cast. "On the whole," says Warton, after enumerating many of Geoffery's romantic incidents, "we may venture to affirm, that this chronicle, supposed to contain the ideas of the Welsh bards, entirely consists of Arabian inventions;" and in a subsequent page

he remarks, " no European history before these (the chronicles of Turpin and Geoffery) has mentioned giants, inchanters, dragons, and the like monstrous and arbitrary fictions. And the reason is obvious: they were written at a time when a new and unnatural mode of thinking took place in Europe, introduced by our communication with the east *."

The most beautiful fictions of Geoffery, and which are perfectly in the style of, and equal to any thing in, Arabian fable, are principally relative to Arthur, and his powerful assistant Merlin. It is remarkable, that these renowned personages are both conveyed away from this world by supernatural means, by the agency of fairies, who bear a striking resemblance to the peries of Persian romance. Arthur, who is represented by Geoffery and the Welsh bards as King of Britain, and the conqueror of Ireland, Gothland, Denmark, Norway, and Gaul, is at length dreadfully wounded, Anno Domini 542, by the treachery of his nephew, Modred, at the battle of Camlan in Cornwall, and is immediately borne away in a barge by an elfin princess, called Morgain le fay, to the vale of Avalon, or land of Faery; where, cured of his wound, he reigns with

* Warton's History of English Poetry, vol. i. Dissert. 1.

great splendour, waiting for the destined day which shall restore him to the throne of Britain.

Warton, in his Ode called *The Grave of King Arthur*, has thus beautifully availed himself of this romantic tradition:

——— when he fell, an elfin queen,
All in secret, and unseen,
O'er the fainting hero threw
Her mantle of ambrosial blue;
And bade her spirits bear him far,
In Merlin's agate-axled car,
To her green isle's enamell'd steep,
Far in the navel of the deep.
O'er his wounds she sprinkled dew
From flowers that *in Arabia grew:*
On a rich inchanted bed
She pillow'd his majestic head;
O'er his brow, with whispers bland,
Thrice she wav'd an opiate wand;
And to soft music's airy sound,
Her magic curtains clos'd around.
There, renew'd the vital spring,
Again he reigns a mighty king;
And many a fair and fragrant clime,
Blooming in immortal prime,
By gales of Eden ever fann'd,
Owns the monarch's high command:
Thence to Britain shall return,
(If right prophetic rolls I learn)
Borne on victory's spreading plume,
His ancient sceptre to resume;
Once more, in old heroic pride;
His barbed courser to bestride;
His knightly table to restore,
And brave the tournaments of yore.

The fiction seems immediately to have been derived from an Arabian or Persian romance; in the former, the fairies are called *Ginn*, and fairy-land *Ginnistan*; in the latter, one of the most eminent of the fairy-tribe or *Peri*, is termed *Mergian Peri*, or Mergian the fairy, whence, most probably, has arisen the *Morgian le fay* who preserved king Arthur, and who is said to have been instructed in the art of magic by Merlin *.

The fate of this enchanter, though removed from the earth like Arthur by the intervention of a fairy, was widely different from that which befel his illustrious prince; it is, however, equally a copy from oriental romance, in which the confinement in some vast cavern of magicians, dives, or genii, is a common incident: thus, the Peri

* From this Peri, observes Mr. Hole, "we may fairly derive Ariosto's *La Fata Morgana*, whose existence is still unquestioned by the vulgar in some parts of Italy. To the exertion of her supernatural powers they even now attribute a peculiar appearance, which the sky occasionally exhibits during the heat of summer over the strait between Calabria and Sicily. Palaces, groves, and gardens, appear in beautiful order and rapid succession. It is mentioned by Mr. Brydone, and accounted for by Mr. Swinburn, in a satisfactory manner, in the first volume of his travels into Sicily.—She was probably imported into Europe from the East at a very early period, with other beings of the same unsubstantial nature." Hole's Remarks on the Arabian Nights, p. 15.

Mergian is imprisoned for ages in a cavern by the Giant Demrusch *. "Merlin," says Mr. Ellis, "according to Geoffery of Monmouth and the romances, was the issue of a demon and a virgin. He was born in Britain, and was very serviceable to Arthur by his proficiency in magic, which, however, was at last the cause of his own destruction. Having communicated to his mistress, the young and beautiful Viviana, two spells; the one to lay her parents asleep, and the other to confine them whenever she might think proper; she employed the first to protect her chastity from his attempts, and made a more cruel use of the second, confining him in a forest, (other manuscripts say in a tomb) in which he died. His spirit, however, still hovered about the place, and his voice was often heard by passengers †."

Spenser has worked up this story relative to Merlin with much fire and imagination; with the addition of particulars and imagery, indeed, which strongly impress the mind, and give it perfectly the air of oriental necromancy and magic:

* Vide Herbelot. Bibl. Orient. p. 1017.

† Ellis's Notes to Way's Fabliaux, vol. i. p. 232.

—— the wise *Merlin* whylome wont, they say,
To make his wonne, lowe underneath the ground,
In a deepe delve, farre from the view of day,
That of no living wight he mote be found,
Whenso he counsel'd, with his sprights encompast round.

And if thou ever happen that same way
To travell, goe to see that dreadful place:
It is an hideous hollow cave, they say,
Under a rocke that lies a little space
From the swift *Barry*, tombling downe apace
Emongst the woody hilles of *Dyneuowre:*
But dare thou not, I charge, in any case,
To enter into that same balefull bowre,
For feare the cruel feends should thee unwares devowre.

But standing high aloft, lowe lay thine ear,
And thence such ghastly noise of yron chaines,
And brasen Caudrons thou shalt rombling heare,
Which thousand sprights with long enduring paines
Doe tosse, that it will stonne thy feeble brains,
And oftentimes great grones and grievous stounds,
When too huge toile and labour them constraines:
And oftentimes loud strokes, and ringing sounds
From under that deepe rock most horribly rebounds.

The cause, some say, is this: a little while
Before that Merlin dyde, he did intend
A brasen wall in compass to compile
About *Cairmardin*, and did it commend
Unto these sprights to bring to perfect end.
During which worke, *the Lady of the Lake*,
Whom long he lov'd, for him in haste did send;
Who, thereby forc't his workmen to forsake,
Them bound till his returne their labour not to slake.

In the mean time, through that false ladies traine,
He was surpris'd, and buried under bere,
Ne ever to his work return'd againe:
Nath'lesse those feends may not their work forbeare,
So greatly his commandement they feare,
But there doe toyle and travell day and night,
Untill that brasen wall they up doe reare:
For, Merlin had in magicke more insight
Than ever him before or after living wight.

For, he by words could call out of the sky
Both sunne and moone, and make them him obay:
The land to sea, and sea to maine-land dry,
And darksome night he eke could turne to day:
Huge hostes of men he could alone dismay,
And hostes of men of meanest things could frame,
Whenso him list his enemies to fray:
That to this day, for terror of his fame,
The feends do quake, when any him to them does name.

And, sooth, men say that he was not the sonne
Of mortall sire, or other living wight;
But wondrously begotten, and begunne
By false illusion of a guileful spright,
On a faire Lady Nonne, that whilome hight
Matilda, daughter to *Pubidius*,
Who was the lord of *Marthravall* by right,
And coosen unto king *Ambrosius:*
Whence he indued was with skill so marvellous*.

To enumerate all the circumstances in these chronicles, and immediately subsequent romances, which appear to be founded on imagery drawn from the newly opened communication with the East, would be to fill a volume. One more specimen, however, of Merlin's necroman-

* Faerie Queene, Book 3d. Canto 3. Stanza 7, &c. &c.

tic power, and which in part seems built on Arabian magic, I shall add from Geoffery's volume. To honour the memory of the Britons treacherously slain by Hengist, the British enchanter transported from the mountain of Kildare, in Ireland, those immense masses of stone called Stonehenge or the Giant's dance, and placed them on the plain of Ambresbury in Wiltshire, as a monument to his countrymen. These blocks, adds Geoffery, had been previously carried to Kildare by Giants from the farthest coasts of Africa, *and every stone possessed a healing virtue* *. This medicinal endowment is purely oriental.

It appears, therefore, that between the first and second Crusade, a taste for oriental fiction had not only arisen among Christian Europeans, but had made considerable progress; that the two great chronicles of Turpin and Geoffery of Monmouth, the most elaborate compositions in history which that period had produced, and the very basis, as it were, of European romance, were deeply tinged with Eastern fable, in part derived from an immediate communication with Asia, and in part from the intercourse which now subsisted with the Arabians of Spain. It should also be recollected, that during three, or even four preceding centuries, Europe had been prepared for

* Vide Geoffery of Monmouth, Thompson's Translation, edit. 1718, p. 245.

the reception of imagery of this cast by the wild, sublime, and even chivalric fictions of the Gothic nations, whose system of mythology, and enthusiastic love of poetry and enterprise, most undoubtedly laid the *prima stamina* of both romance and chivalry. In fact, at the period we are now arrived at, the poetry and the fables of the *Scalds*, the ancient title of the bards of Scandinavia, became first tinged with the luxuriant and beautiful fancy of Arabia and Persia, and continuing for some centuries to imbibe still greater portions of this rich and exquisite colouring, not only the imagery and the literature of the East became familiar, through the medium of translation, but an immense multitude of original pieces, in the form of prose or metrical tales, were composed; and which, in the hands of the Trouveurs of northern France, vied, in variety of incident and splendour of imagination, with the most celebrated narratives of Eastern fancy.

In the year 1147 the *second* Crusade was undertaken by the emperor Conrad the third, and Louis the seventh, king of France. "The armies of the second crusade," says Gibbon, "might have claimed the conquest of Asia: the nobles of France and Germany were animated by the presence of their sovereigns; and both the rank and personal characters of Conrad and Louis,

gave a dignity to their cause, and a discipline to their force, which might be vainly expected from the feudatory chiefs. The cavalry of the emperor, and that of the king, was each composed of seventy thousand knights, and their immediate attendants in the field; and, if the light-armed troops, the peasant infantry, the women and children, the priests and monks, be rigorously excluded, the full account will scarcely be satisfied with four hundred thousand souls. The West, from Rome to Britain, was called into action; the kings of Poland and Bohemia obeyed the summons of Conrad; and it is affirmed by the Greeks and Latins, that, in the passage of a straight or river, the Byzantine agents, after a tale of nine hundred thousand, desisted from the endless and formidable computation *."

The second passage of such a prodigious multitude of warriors and pilgrims through the Greek empire and the most civilized parts of the East, where art, science, and literature, elegance, luxury, and cultivated manners must have been obtruded upon them at every step, must necessarily have softened the ferocity and barbarism of the western chiefs, and excited some degree of curiosity and emulation. The Greek emperor, Manuel Comnenus, and his whole family, were not only en-

* Gibbon's Roman Empire, vol. xi. p. 106, 107.

couragers of learning, but learned themselves; Constantinople abounded in the most consummate works of art; and while the caliphs cherished literature with the fondest enthusiasm, the cities of Damascus and Bagdad furnished the most splendid specimens of oriental fancy and magnificence.

That an eager curiosity to visit the wonders of the East, independent of religious or military enthusiasm, was awakened by this second invasion, owing to the adventures and descriptions of its surviving heroes, may be inferred from the circumstance that in the interval between this and the third crusade, we may date the era of travelling into the East for the mere purposes of information and improvement. About the year 1160, *Benjamin of Tudela* in Navarre, a Jew physician, visited Constantinople, Judea, and Syria, with these laudable views, and may be esteemed, observes a learned author, "one of the first European travellers, who penetrated without a sword in his hand into the East."

There can be little doubt that the example had its due influence and effect, and that much accession to a knowledge of the East, its manners, customs, and literature, was the result of this and subsequent attempts. Much also was perpetually accruing to the stock of information from the ra-

pidly repeated aggression which the religious madness of Europe so eagerly prompted. The year 1188 ushered in a third crusade, in which the emperor Frederic Barbarossa, and the kings of France and England were engaged; the former pursuing the usual route by land, while Louis and Richard, with much less risque of danger and discomfiture, chose to navigate the Mediterranean.

The wonders of this expedition, the heroism and prowess of Richard, surnamed *Coeur de Lion*, have been the exhaustless theme of the minstrel, and have invested the gallant monarch of England with all the romantic glories of Arthur, or of Charlemagne. "It is obvious," says an able author, "how much the genius of romance must have been assisted by the Crusades, and what a fund of new and inexhaustible materials would be furnished to fancy and ingenuity, by a new country, new heroes, and new machinery. That indefinite desire of hearing and relating wonders, directed by the predominance of chivalry to particular objects, had now its fullest gratification. The author might not only quit the narrow regions of truth, but was barely expected to keep within the wide range of probability; and the reader, by an accommodating sympathy, might follow him in his flight, without being disgusted

with his extravagancies. A distant scene, like a distant period, gives the writer an arbitrary power of supposing almost all that he pleases; and we admit without reluctance, what we cannot contradict without difficulty. Romance was soon advanced. Arthur, and the knights of his round table; Charlemagne, with Roland and his compeers, saw their circle enlarged by additional heroes, by Godfrey and Tancred, Richard and Saladin. The machinery of the piece received the most striking embellishments from the introduction of oriental inventions. The horn of Roland was eclipsed by greater wonders, the speed of a horse outstripped by the flight of a dragon and a griffin; and Merlin himself with all his charms can be considered only as qualified for the humble agent of an Asiatic enchanter*."

In the period which elapsed between the commencement of the first crusade at the close of the eleventh century, and the termination of the third towards the end of the twelfth (a period of nearly one hundred years) a vast variety of tales and fables, many of which were oriental, had obtained a rapid circulation. Piers Alfonse, whom we have already mentioned as the translator of what are called Pilpay's fables, compiled early in the twelfth

* Introduction to the Literary History of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, p. 170.

century a collection of *Arabian* tales and apologues, under the title of *Clericalis Disciplina*, a dialogue in Latin, between an Arabian philosopher and his son Edric. This work, though never printed, was multiplied astonishingly in manuscript, owing to the practice which then obtained among the monks and priests of quoting these romantic stories as illustrative of the precepts which they inculcated in their sermons. It at length gave birth to a very large collection of legends in folio under the appellation of *Gesta Romanorum*, published by Peter Berchorius about the beginning of the fourteenth century, and which continued, for nearly three hundred years, to be the storehouse whence many a poet drew the materials of fiction.

As most of the oriental fables, however, in the Gesta Romanorum are taken either from the Clericales Disciplina of Alfonse, or consist of the scattered pieces which were introduced with the Arabian literature during the first century of the crusades*, it will be necessary in this stage of our enquiry to notice, as proofs of the early progress of a taste for oriental fiction, a few of the curious narratives with which the folio of Berchorius abounds.

* See Warton's Dissertation on the Gesta Romanorum, p. 5.

It is a compilation, indeed, in which, as Warton has justly observed, we might expect to find the original of Chaucer's Cambuscan:

> Or,——if aught else great bards beside
> In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
> Of turneys and of trophies hung,
> Of forests and inchantments drear,
> Where more is meant than meets the ear*.

Many editions in black letter of the Latin original, and of English, French, and Dutch translations, have been published during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. Of the original, the best edition is of the year 1488, and of the eight editions of the English version of Wynkyn de Worde, the first was printed in the year 1577, the last so late as 1699.

From the ample analysis which the late poet laureat has given of this singular collection, which contains one hundred and eighty-one stories or chapters, it may be pronounced to include a number of very wild and romantic, but, at the same time, very interesting fictions; and there can be little doubt but that a well executed translation of the best parts of this series of once popular narratives, accompanied by a body of illustrative notes, would at the present day, when our

* Milton's Il Penseroso.

ancient literature has become a study so general and attractive, meet with a welcome reception.

To enumerate all the tales and apologues which in this large collection appear to have been immediately drawn from oriental sources, would occupy a space very disproportioned to the limits that we must necessarily assign to this essay. We shall therefore content ourselves with the transcription but of two, which will, however, afford sufficient evidence of a very early acquired taste for the wonders of Arabian fiction.

The one hundred and twentieth chapter contains the relation of King Darius's legacy to his three sons. To the eldest he bequeaths all his paternal inheritance: to the second, all that he had acquired by conquest: and to the third, a ring and necklace, both of gold, and a rich cloth. All the three last gifts were endued with magical virtues. Whoever wore the ring on his finger, gained the love or favour of all whom he desired to please. Whoever hung the necklace over his breast, obtained all his heart could desire. Whoever sate down on the cloth, could be instantly transported to any part of the world that he chose.

"From this beautiful tale," remarks Warton, "of which the opening only is here given, Occleve, commonly called Chaucer's disciple, framed

a poem in the octave stanza, which was printed in the year 1614, by William Browne, in his set of eclogues called the SHEPHEARDE'S PIPE. Occleve has literally followed the book before us, and had even translated into English prose the *Moralization* annexed. He has given no sort of embellishment to his original, and by no means deserves the praises which Browne, in the following elegant pastoral lyrics, has bestowed on his performance, but which more justly belong to the genuine Gothic, or rather *Arabian*, inventor.

Well I wot, the man that first
Sung this lay, did quenche his thirst
Deeply as did ever one
In the Muses Helicon.
Many times he hath been seene
With the faeries on the greene,
And to them his pipe did sound
As they danced in a round;
Mickle solace would they make him,
And at midnight often wake him,
And convey him from his roome
To a fielde of yellow broome,
Or into the medowes where
Mints perfume the gentle aire,
And where Flora spreads her treasure
There they would begin their measure.
If it chanc'd night's sable shrowds
Muffled Cynthia up in clowds,
Safely home they then would see him,
And from brakes and quagmires free him.
There are few such swaines as he
Now adayes for harmonie.

"The history of Darius, who gave this legacy to his three sons, is incorporated with that of Alexander, which has been decorated with innumerable fictions by the Arabian writers *."

The following narrative, which occupies the hundred and seventh chapter, possesses incidents and imagery of the most decided oriental cast:

"There was an image in the city of Rome, which stretched forth its right hand, on the middle finger of which was written STRIKE HERE. For a long time, none could understand the meaning of this mysterious inscription. At length a certain subtle clerk, who came to see this famous image, observed, as the sun shone against it, the shadow of the inscribed finger on the ground at some distance. He immediately took a spade, and began to dig exactly on that spot. He came at length to a flight of steps, which descended far under ground, and led him to a stately palace. Here he entered a hall, where he saw a king and queen sitting at table, with their nobles and a multitude of people, all clothed in rich garments. *But no person spake a word.* He looked towards one corner, where he saw a polished carbuncle, which illuminated the whole room. In the opposite corner he perceived the figure of a man standing, having a bended bow

* Dissertation on the Gesta Romanorum, p. 57.

with an arrow in his hand, as prepared to shoot. On his forehead was written, 'I am, who am. Nothing can escape my stroke, not even yonder carbuncle, which shines so bright.' The clerk beheld all with amazement; and entering a chamber, saw the most beautiful ladies working at the loom in purple. *But all was silence.* He then entered a stable full of the most excellent horses and asses: he touched some of them, and they were instantly turned into stone. He next surveyed all the apartments of the palace, which abounded with all that his wishes could desire. He again visited the hall, and now began to reflect how he should return; 'but,' says he, 'my report of all these wonders will not be believed, unless I carry something back with me.' He therefore took from the principal table a golden cup and a golden knife, and placed them in his bosom; when the man who stood in the corner with the bow immediately shot at the carbuncle, which he shattered into a thousand pieces. At that moment the hall became dark as night. In this darkness, not being able to find his way, he remained in the subterraneous passage, and soon died a miserable death."

"This story," says Warton, "was originally invented of Pope Gerbert, or Sylvester the Second, who died in the year 1003. He was emi-

nently learned in the mathematical sciences, and on that account was styled a magician. William of Malmesbury * is, I believe, the first writer now extant, by whom it is recorded: and he produces it partly to shew that Gerbert was not always successful in those attempts which he so frequently practised to discover treasures hid in the earth, by the application of the necromantic arts. I will translate Malmesbury's narrative of this fable, as it varies in some of the circumstances, and has some heightenings of the fiction. 'At Rome there was a brazen statue, extending the fore-finger of the right hand; and on its forehead was written, *Strike here.* Being suspected to conceal a treasure, it had received many bruises from the credulous and ignorant, in their endeavours to open it. At length Gerbert unriddled the mystery. At noon-day, observing the reflection of the fore-finger on the ground, he marked the spot. At night he came to the place, with a page carrying a lamp. There, by a magical operation, he opened a wide passage in the earth; through which they both descended, and came to a vast palace. The walls, the beams, and the whole structure, were of gold; they saw golden images of knights playing at chess, with a king and queen of gold at a banquet, with nu-

* William of Malmesbury died A. D. 1143.

merous attendants in gold, and cups of immense size and value. In a recess was a carbuncle, whose lustre illuminated the whole palace: opposite to which stood a figure with a bended bow. As they attempted to touch some of the rich furniture, all the golden images seemed to rush upon them. Gerbert was too wise to attempt this a second time: but the page was bold enough to snatch from the table a golden knife of exquisite workmanship. At that moment, all the golden images rose up with a dreadful noise; the figure with the bow shot at the carbuncle; and a total darkness ensued. The page then replaced the knife, otherwise they both would have suffered a cruel death.' Malmesbury afterwards mentions a brazen bridge framed by the enchantments of Gerbert, beyond which were golden horses of gigantic size, with riders of gold richly illuminated by the most serene meridian sun. A large company attempt to pass the bridge, with a design of stealing some pieces of the gold. Immediately the bridge rose from its foundations, and stood perpendicular on one end: a brazen man appeared from beneath it, who struck the water with a mace of brass, and the sky was overspread with the most horrible gloom. Gerbert, like some other learned necromancers

of the Gothic ages, was supposed to have fabricated a brazen head under the influence of certain planets, which answered questions. But I forbear to suggest any more hints for a future collection of Arabian tales. I shall only add Malmesbury's account of the education of Gerbert.—' Gerbert, a native of France, went into Spain for the purpose of learning astrology, and other sciences of that cast, of the Saracens; who to this day occupy the upper regions of Spain. They are seated in the metropolis of Seville; where, according to the customary practice of their country, they study the arts of divination and enchantment. Here Gerbert soon exceeded Ptolemy in the astrolabe, Alchind in astronomy, and Julius Tirmicus in fatality. Here he learned the meaning of the flight and language of birds, and was taught how to raise spectres from hell. Here he acquired whatever human curiosity has discovered for the destruction or convenience of mankind. I say nothing of his knowledge in arithmetic, music, and geometry; which he so fully understood as to think them beneath his genius, and which he yet with great industry introduced into France, where they had been long forgotten. He certainly was the first who brought the algorithm from the Sara-

cens, and who illustrated it with such rules as the most studious in that science cannot explain. He lodged with a philosopher of that sect' *."

On tales such as these, circulated so early as 1100, and on the romantic collections of Simon Seth, Turpin, Geoffery of Monmouth, and William of Malmesbury, all of whose productions were deeply tinged with eastern incidents and fancy, were constructed a multitude of stories in verse,

* See Warton's Dissertations on the Gesta Romanorum. History of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 43, &c.—It is astonishing to what a number of modern poets and fabulators this ancient collection of tales has afforded materials. The beautiful story of the Hermit in Parnell is here very copiously detailed, and, as Mr. Hole asserts, from a Persian romance; and in the fifty-sixth chapter may be found the following remarkable narrative, which has been imitated by Caxton, by Giovanni Rucellai, by Boccaccio, Lydgate, Shakspeare, Davenant, Dryden, Strolberg, and Sayers. " A nobleman invited a merchant to his castle, whom he met accordingly upon the road. At entering the castle, the merchant was astonished at the magnificence of the chambers, which were overlaid with gold. At supper, the nobleman placed the merchant next to his wife, who immediately shewed evident tokens of being much struck with her beauty. The table was covered with the richest dainties; but while all were served in golden dishes, a pittance of meat was placed before the lady in a dish made out of a human skull. The merchant was surprised and terrified at this strange spectacle. At length he was conducted to bed in a fair chamber; where, when left alone, he observed a glimmering lamp in a nook or corner

or metrical fabliaux, the compositions for the most part of the northern French bards or *Trouveurs* of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These, though rude in their language and versification, frequently display much skill in the distribution and conduct of their fable, and exhibit a very intimate acquaintance with the marvellous and luxuriant fictions of Persia and Arabia.

In the old metrical romance of *Lybeaus Desconus,* of which an analysis has been given by Dr. Percy, in his Reliques of ancient English Poetry, the most essential rules of the epopeia are ob-

of the room, by which he discovered two dead bodies hung up by the arms. He was now filled with the most terrible apprehensions, and could not sleep all the night. When he rose in the morning, he was asked by the nobleman how he liked his entertainment. He answered, " There is plenty of every thing; but the skull prevented me from eating at supper, and the two dead bodies which I saw in my chamber from sleeping. With your leave, therefore, I will depart. The nobleman answered, ' My friend, you observed the beauty of my wife. The scull which you saw placed before her at supper, was the head of a duke, whom I detected in her embraces, and which I cut off with my own sword. As a memorial of her crime, and to teach her modest behaviour, her adulterer's skull is made to serve for her dish. The bodies of the two young men hanging in the chamber are my two kinsmen, who were murdered by the son of the duke. To keep up my sense of revenge for their blood, I visit their dead bodies every day. Go in peace, and remember to judge nothing without knowing the truth'."

served, and the story is at the same time both interesting, and rich in oriental fabling. One of the most striking parts of it bears a resemblance to the adventure of the clerk in the subterranean palace at Rome, just quoted from the Gesta, particularly in the circumstances of no one speaking; Sir Lybeaus enters a palace built by necromantic art, where, with the exception of minstrels who are playing, he can discover no human creature; and the moment he sits down at the high table, the lights are all quenched, the minstrels vanish, and, accompanied by loud claps of thunder and the blaze of lightning, the enchanted fabric falls to pieces.

As the passage is a remarkable specimen of the strong painting with which these ancient legends occasionally abound, I shall present it to the reader in the copy as published by Mr. Ritson.

Sir Lybeau's knyght certeys [1]
Rod ynto the palys,
And at the halle alyghte;
Trompes, schalmuses, [2]
He seygh befor the hyegh deys [3]
Stonde yn hys syghte.
Amydde the halle flore
A fere stark and store [4]
Was lyght and brende bright, [5]

[1] Courteous.
[2] Trumpets and shalms.
[3] He saw before the high table.
[4] A fire large and strong.
[5] Was lighted and burnt bright.

Nere the dore he yede,[6]
And ladde yn hys stede,
That wont was helpe hym yn fyght.
Lybeau's inner gan pace,
To se ech a place,
The hales yn the halle,[7]
Of mayne mor ne lasse[8]
Ne sawe he body ne face
But menstrales yclodeth yn palle.
Wyth harpe, fydele, and rote,[9]
Orgenes, and merry note,
Well mery they maden alle;
Wyth sytole, and sawtrye,[10]
So moche melodye
Was never wythinne walle.

Before ech menstrale stod
A torche fayre and good,
Brennynge fayre and bryght;
Inner more he yode,[11]
To wyte wyth egre mode[12]
Ho scholde wyth hym fighte.
He yede ynto the corneres,
And lokede on the pylers,
That selcouth wer of syghte,[13]
Of jasper, and of fyn crystall,
Swych was pylers and wall,
No rychere be ne myghte.

The thores[14] wer of bras,
The wyndowes wer of glas,

[6] *He yede*, he went.
[7] The corners in the hall.
[8] Of servants more nor less.
[9] *Rote*, a hurdy-gurdy.
[10] With dulcimer and psaltery.
[11] He went farther in.
[12] To know with eager mood who should with him fight.
[13] *Selcouth*, strange.
[14] *Thores*, doors.

Florysseth wyth imagerye,
The halle ypaynted was,
No rychere never ther was,
That he hadde seye wyth eye.
He sette hym an that deys, [15]
The menstrales wer yn pes, [16]
That wer so good and trye,
The torches that brende bryght
Quenchedé anon ryght,
The menstrales wer aweye. [17]

Dores and wyndowes alle
Beten yn the halle,
As hyt wer voys of thunder;
The stones of the walle
Over hym gon falle,
That thought hym mych wonder.
That deys began to schake,
The erthe began to quake
As he sat thus dismayde,
And held himself betrayde,
Stedes herde he naye, &c. *

A very leading feature in oriental fiction is the discovery of an enchanted palace or city, in which, by the power of necromancy, either no individual appears, or perfect silence, and a fixed posture are rigidly observed by the charm-bound inhabitants. This species of eastern magic has been frequently copied in the early metrical fabliaux of Europe; and the passage just given from

[15] At that table. [16] Were silent. [17] Vanished away.

* Ancient English Metrical Romances, vol. ii. p. 75.

Lybeaus Desconus is one of the most striking that I remember. It continues still to be a favourite resource of fancy among the Persian fabulators; and in the Tales of Inatulla, written so late as the seventeenth century, a similar scene of sorcery occurs in "The History of the Prince of Fultan and the Princess Mherbanou." The prince, having passed through a dangerous wilderness, had travelled with much fatigue for some days; when to his great joy there appeared before him, and at a little distance, a large and magnificent capital. "He advanced speedily to the gate, through which he beheld a city of such extent and grandeur, that Canaan would have owned itself inferior to its smallest street; and, in comparison with its humblest edifice, the palaces of Cæsar and the pavilion of Nomaan * shrunk into contempt. The houses were elegantly arranged, and the minarets justly proportioned as the stature of the beautiful of just height. The building of the squares accorded with each other, and the shops were distributed with the most pleasing symmetry. Not the shadow, however, of a mortal struck the mirror of the eye, nor did any inhabitants appear.

"The prince, on perceiving these circumstances, became alarmed, and from motives of caution dispatched his companions to the diffe-

* A famous king of Arabia.

rent quarters of the city; that, passing through the markets and streets, they might explore the track of man. Much as they walked about, and examined all parts with the ken of search, they found every place, house, and window, like the eye of the blind, unblessed by the sight of human beauty; but, what was more wonderful, in each habitation and chamber that they entered, they found the richest effects, preparations for festivity, the most elegant furniture, eatables and drinkables; apparel, beds, culinary apparatus, &c. were so arranged, that you would have supposed the occupiers had only moved to different chambers of the dwellings. Upon this, dread seized the mind of all, and apprehensions prevailed, lest the city might be the abode of Afreets *, or the residence of Peries, and some calamity occur. They were confounded, and, in great alarm returning, informed the prince of the strange appearance of the city.

"The prince observed, 'Certainly the population of this capital must have been destroyed by the Afreet Hullul; clearing, therefore, our minds from apprehension, let us examine the

* The Afreets were supposed to be the most terrible and cruel of all the orders of the Dives and Genii.

royal palace, as there either a ghole * or human being may meet us.' When they entered the edifice, they found it empty; but the buildings were most magnificent, and the gardens in high bloom and fragrance; so that, tempted by the beauty of the palace, the fine views and elegant pavilions scattered here and there, they walked on, till they came to a most splendid hall, after admiring which, they passed through shady allies adorned with fountains; in another quarter, their attention was attracted by flowers in various parterres, the wonderful paintings on the ceilings, the elegant carving on the arches, and the mosaic ornaments of the windows of the apartments they passed through; till at last, on entering a splendid chamber, they, to their surprise, beheld a beautiful youth in royal apparel, and a crown upon his head, reposing upon the bed of death, as if just fallen asleep †."

The twelfth century may, in fact, be consi-

* Ghole or *Ghul*, in Arabic, signifies any terrifying object, which deprives people of the use of their senses. Hence it became the appellative of that species of monster, which was supposed to haunt forests, cemeteries, and other lonely places; and believed not only to tear in pieces the living, but to dig up and devour the dead.

See the Notes to Caliph Vathek, p. 305.

† Scott's Translation, vol. ii. p. 316, &c.

dered as the period when Arabian fiction became familiar, and when romance assumed its perfect form. Two authors, whom we have not yet mentioned, contributed greatly to the spread and popularity of heroic achievements and preternatural adventures. Robert Wace, a native of Jersey, finished, in 1155, a poem of several thousand lines in French octosyllabic verse, the materials of which were principally taken from Geoffrey of Monmouth. This production, which Wace presented to Queen Eleanor, the wife of Henry the Second, obtained for the fictions of Geoffrey an almost unlimited circulation. Nor was this the only fruit of his pen; its fertility was great, and a series of poems on *Rollo* of *Normandy*, on *Richard sans Peur*, and on *Robert le Diable*, charmed in succession the lovers of romance. Contemporary with Wace and his rival in the favour of Henry the Second, lived Benoit de St. More, who composed in northern French a poem of twenty thousand verses on the Trojan war, and a poetical history of the Dukes of Normandy. These are filled with the most wild and wonderful events, and like the other poetry of the age strongly tinctured with oriental imagery.

In short, to adopt the language of a recent and a very amusing biographer, "the revival of learning is a phrase which might, without any

striking impropriety, be applied to the twelfth century. It was then that the night which threatened to bury all Europe in barbarism began to be dissipated; it was then that certain literary adventurers imported from the Saracens science, the investigation of nature, and the Aristotelian philosophy; it was then that *romance was invented,* and *poetry seemed* to be new created; and it was this period which was illustrated by the labours of Abelard, William of Malmesbury, Peter of Blois, John of Salisbury, and Joseph of Exeter; as well as of Turpin, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Benoit, and Wace *."

The thirteenth century opened with an event highly favourable to a still more intimate acquaintance with the East. The *fourth* crusade, which commenced in 1202, terminated the succeeding year with the important capture of Constantinople, the metropolis of the Greek empire. The possession of this splendid and luxurious city by the crusaders for a period of sixty years, must undoubtedly not only have tended to the improvement of their learning and taste, but must have greatly facilitated their intercourse with Asia, and of course their knowledge of oriental manners, customs, and fable. During this period also fresh swarms of western Europeans were per-

* Godwin's Life of Chaucer, vol. ii. p. 260.

petually passing through the Byzantine empire in their way to the Holy-land, and had now every opportunity of gratifying curiosity, and imbibing some portion of the literature and polish of the prostrate Greeks. The fifth, sixth, and seventh crusades, also, the two former of which occurred during the dominion of the Latin emperors, namely, in 1218 and 1248, kept vigorously open the communication with the East, and afforded time for a considerable familiarity with its marvellous fictions and embellishments.

Another powerful auxiliary to the introduction and knowledge of Asiatic imagery, which existed in the thirteenth century, was the increase of literary travellers. Though the martial enthusiasm, which had for nearly one hundred and eighty years continued to precipitate all Europe on the continent of Asia, expired in 1270; it was happily succeeded by an eager curiosity to visit the regions where such wonderful events had taken place; and the lovers of literature and science sate musing on those plains over which the warriors of the West had so lately poured with terror and destruction in their train.

To Marco Paulo de Veneto and William de Rubruquis, we are indebted for much valuable information relative to the eastern world. The enterprising genius of Marco had been stimulated

by the example of his father and uncle, both great and celebrated travellers; and he had the singular good fortune not only to obtain fame by his extensive journeys, but to accumulate, as their result, a very handsome property. The adventurous Venetian, after passing through Syria and Persia, and residing seventeen years in the court of the Khan of Tartary, returned to Europe, and published in his native dialect the narrative of his surprising expedition. His travels very early received a Latin version under the title of *De Regionibus Orientis;* and from the curious facts and marvellous incidents which they displayed were rapidly dispersed, and every where perused with avidity. Much credulity and some mistakes are necessarily to be expected, considering the period of their production; but with this allowance their general veracity is unimpeached, and they had the merit of exciting a spirit of enquiry, and of rendering a knowledge of the manners, customs, and literature of the East greatly more accurate and familiar.

Of William de Rubruquis but little is known; it appears, however, that he was a monk of the Franciscan order, and was sent, A. D. 1253, by Louis the Ninth, king of France, into Persic Tartary, to congratulate the Khan on his conversion to christianity; on the same mission likewise,

and nearly at the same time, Pope Innocent the Fourth sent Carpini; and their books, which are filled with the most wonderful and romantic stories, though mingled with much useful and curious matter, were widely diffused on their return.

In fact, the publication of these travels, the frequent immigrations of the Arabians into Europe, and the numberless tales of the crusaders who had penetrated into the Holy Land, produced such a multitude of wonders relative to eastern countries, that the monks, who had sufficient leisure and taste for the employment, collected these marvels into treatises under the titles of *Mirabilia Mundi, De Mirabilibus Indiæ et Arabiæ, De Mirabilibus Terræ Sanctæ,* &c. &c. To these we may add a countless succession of Fabliaux in French verse; such indeed is their number, that we may justly call the thirteenth century the age of metrical romance. Of this a very convincing proof may be drawn from the prologue to one of our first English romances in rhyme, entitled, *Richard Cuer Du Lyon,* and which is certainly known to have existed before the year 1300. Here about thirty romances are mentioned as popular both in France and England. Besides these, which are in verse, several very bulky prose romances were written at this period; the

most celebrated of which was composed at the request of Mattheo de Porta, archbishop of Salerno, by Guido de Colonna, a native of Messina, and finished in 1260. It is divided into fifteen books, written in Latin, and termed *Historia de Bello Trojano*. This work, which was speedily naturalized in various languages, and in the fifteenth century paraphrased by Lydgate and translated by Caxton, superseded the tales of Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis, and abounds, as Warton observes, with oriental imagery, of which the subject was extremely susceptible *.

During this century too, and part of the preceding, the communication with the Arabians of Spain, which had been much limited in the tenth and eleventh centuries by the mutual operation of ignorance and animosity, became more open and unreserved. They had ceased to be formidable, and were consequently viewed in a less odious light; whilst at the same time the newly acquired taste for oriental magnificence and fable, the result of the crusades, rendered their customs and literature objects of research, and materials for romantic embellishment.

It is a remarkable circumstance, and a proof of the rapid diffusion of oriental imagery, that towards he close of the thirteenth century the

* See Warton's History of English Poetry, vol. i. p. 126.

wilds of Scotland should produce a necromancer, of whose life the most marvellous events are intimately connected with the beautiful mythology of Persia. About the year 1270, flourished at Ercildoune, in the county of Berwick*, Thomas Lermont, commonly called Thomas the Rymer, or Thomas of Ercildoune. This extraordinary character, the Merlin of the North, was held in the highest veneration as a poet, a prophet, and a magician. His supernatural powers were universally ascribed to an intercourse with the Queen of Fairy, a being not of a diminutive form like the fairies of more modern poetry, but endowed with the most exquisite symmetry and beauty of person, and whose attractions were such as almost irresistibly to allure and charm those who beheld her.

Exactly of this nature were the Peris of Persia; and the term *Fairy*, or *Faërie*, observes Mr. Scott, is probably of oriental origin, and derived from the Persic, through the medium of the Arabic. "In Persic, the term *Peri*," he continues, "expresses a species of imaginary being, which resembles the Fairy in some of its qualities, and is one of the fairest creatures of romantic fancy. This superstition must have been known to the Arabs, among whom the Persian Tales or Ro-

* See Irving's Lives of the Scotch Poets, vol. i. p. 227.

mances, even as early as the time of MAHOMET, were so popular, that it required the most terrible denunciations of that legislator to proscribe them. Now in the enunciation of the Arabs, the term *Peri* would sound *Fairy*, the letter *P* not occurring in the alphabet of that nation; and, as the chief intercourse of the early crusaders was with the Arabs, or Saracens, it is probable they would adopt the term according to their pronunciation.—Of the Persian Peris, OUSELEY, in his Persian Miscellanies, has described some characteristic traits, with all the luxuriance of a fancy impregnated with the oriental association of ideas. However vaguely their nature and appearance is described, they are uniformly represented as gentle, amiable females, to whose character beneficence and beauty are essential. None of them are mischievous or malignant, none of them are deformed or diminutive, like the Gothic fairy. Though they correspond in beauty with our ideas of angels, their employments are dissimilar; and, as they have no place in heaven, their abode is different. Neither do they resemble those intelligences, whom, on account of their wisdom, the Platonists denominated dæmons; nor do they correspond either to the guardian genii of the Romans, or the celestial virgins of Paradise, whom the Arabs denominate Houri.

But the Peris hover in the balmy clouds, live in the colours of the rainbow, and, as the exquisite purity of their nature rejects all nourishment grosser than the odours of flowers, they subsist by inhaling the fragrance of the jessamine and rose. Though their existence is not commensurate with the bounds of human life, they are not exempted from the common fate of mortals.—Such are the brilliant and fanciful colours in which the imaginations of the Persian poets have depicted the charming race of the Peris; and, if we consider the romantic gallantry of the knights of chivalry, and of the crusaders, it will not appear improbable that their charms might occasionally fascinate the fervid imagination of an amorous Troubadour. But further, the intercourse of France and Italy with the Moors of Spain, and the prevalence of the Arabic as the language of science in the dark ages, facilitated the introduction of their mythology amongst the nations of the West. Hence, the romances of France, of Spain, and of Italy, unite in describing the fairy as an inferior spirit, in a beautiful female form, possessing many of the amiable qualities of the eastern Peri. Nay, it seems sufficiently clear, that the romancers borrowed from the Arabs, not merely the general idea concerning those spirits, but even the names of individuals amongst them.—

The description of these nymphs, by the troubadours and minstrels, is in no respect inferior to those of the Peris *."

That the fairy whose charms are supposed to have fascinated this ancient bard of Scotland is a creature of Persian imagination, and of the same species as the *Morgain la Faye* of *King Arthur*, the *Urgande la Deconnue* of *Amadis de Gaul*, and the *Fata Morgana* of *Ariosto*, is rendered probable from the nature of the traditions which have for near five hundred years prevailed in the north relative to this supernatural union. Thomas of Ercildoune, it is said, having accidentally met the Queen of Fairy on Huntly banks with hound and hawk, according to the costume of the fairies, was so enamoured with her appearance that he ventured to kiss her lips, and from that moment became subject to her will. She immediately conveyed him to Fairy-land, indued him with prophetic powers, and taught him all things, past, present, and to come. "After seven years residence," says Mr. Scott, "he was permitted to return to the earth, to enlighten and astonish his countrymen; still, however, remaining bound to return to his royal mistress, when she should intimate her pleasure. Accordingly, while

* Scott's Minstrelsy of the Scotish Border, vol. ii. p. 174, 1st edition.

THOMAS was making merry with his friends in the tower of Erceldoune, a person came running in, and told, with marks of fear and astonishment, that a hart and hind had left the neighbouring forest, and were, composedly and slowly, parading the street of the village. The prophet instantly arose, left his habitation, and followed the wonderful animals to the forest, whence he was never seen to return. According to the popular belief, he still "drees his weird" in Fairy-land, and is one day expected to revisit earth. In the mean while, his memory is held in the most profound respect. The Eildon Tree *, from beneath the shade of which he delivered his prophecies, now no longer exists; but the spot is marked by a large stone, called Eildon Tree Stone. A neighbouring rivulet takes the name of the Bogle Burn, (Goblin Brook) from the rhymer's supernatural visitants†." "Tradition further relates," adds Mr. Leyden, "that a shepherd was once conducted into the interior recesses of Eildon Hills, by a venerable personage, whom he discovered to be the famous rhymer, and who showed him an immense number of steeds in their capa-

* Eildon is a high hill, terminating in three conical summits, immediately above the town of Melrose, where are the admired ruins of a magnificent monastry.—SCOTT.

† Scott's Minstrelsy of the Scotish Border, vol. i. p. 248.

risons, and, at the bridle of each, a knight sleeping, in sable armour, with a sword and a bugle horn at his side. These, he was told, were the host of King Arthur, waiting till the appointed return of that monarch from Fairy-land *."

These wild and romantic superstitions, the offspring in a great measure of oriental fable, and which even to the present hour surround the venerable bard of Erceldoune with a kind of magic lustre, have been introduced by Mr. Leyden with so much beauty and poetic effect into his lately published poem entitled "Scenes of Infancy," and are, at the same time, so pleasingly illustrative of the subject in question, that I shall, without further preface, venture to transcribe them.

——————round Eildon-tree,
On glancing step appears the fairy queen;
Or, graceful mounted on her palfrey grey,
In robes that glister like the sun in May,
With hawk and hound she leads the moonlight ranks
Of knights and dames to Huntley's ferny banks,
Where RYMER long of yore the nymph embraced,
The first of men unearthly lips to taste.
Rash was the vow, and fatal was the hour,
Which gave a mortal to a fairy's power!—
A lingering leave he took of sun and moon;
—Dire to the minstrel was the fairy's boon!—

* Leyden's Scenes of Infancy, p. 173.

A sad farewell of grass and green leaved tree,
The haunts of childhood doomed no more to see.
Through winding paths, that never saw the sun,
Where Eildon hides his roots in caverns dun,
They pass,—the hollow pavement, as they go,
Rocks to remurmuring waves that boil below;
Silent they wade, where sounding torrents lave
The banks, and red the tinge of every wave;
For all the blood, that dyes the warrior's hand,
Runs through the thirsty springs of Fairy-land.
Level and green the downward region lies,
And low the ceiling of the fairy skies;
Self-kindled gems a richer light display
Than gilds the earth, but not a purer day.
Resplendent crystal forms the palace wall;
The diamond's trembling lustre lights the hall:
But where soft emeralds shed an umbered light,
Beside each coal-black courser sleeps a knight;
A raven plume waves o'er each helmed crest,
And black the mail, which binds each manly breast,
Girt with broad faulchion, and with bugle green—
Ah! could a mortal trust the fairy queen!
From mortal lips an earthly accent fell,
And Rhymer's tongue confessed the numbing spell:
In iron sleep the minstrel lies forlorn,
Who breathed a sound before he blew the horn.

So Vathek once, as Eastern legends tell,
Sought the vast dome of subterranean hell,
Where ghastly, in their cedar biers enshrined,
The fleshless forms of ancient kings reclined,
Who, long before primæval Adam rose,
Had heard the central gates behind them close,
With jarring clang the ebon portals ope,
And, closing, toll the funeral knell of hope.
A sable tapestry lined the marble wall,
And spirits cursed stalked dimly through the hall:

There, as he viewed each right hand ceaseless prest,
With writhing anguish, to each blasted breast,
Blue, o'er his brow, convulsive fibres start,
And flames of vengeance eddy round his heart;
With a dire shriek, he joins the restless throng,
And vaulted Hell returned his funeral song *.

Mysterious Rhymer! doomed by fate's decree
Still to revisit Eildon's lonely tree,
Where oft the swain, at dawn of hallow-day,
Hears thy black barb with fierce impatience neigh!
Say, who is he, with summons strong and high
That bids the charmed sleep of ages fly,
Rolls the long sound through Eildon's caverns vast,
While each dark warrior rouses at the blast,
His horn, his faulchion, grasps with mighty hand,
And peals proud Arthur's march from Fairy-land?
Where every coal-black courser paws the green,
His printed step shall evermore be seen:
The silver shields in moony splendour shine—
Beware, fond youth! a mightier hand than thine,
With deathless lustre, in romantic lay,
Shall Rhymer's fate, and Arthur's fame display †.

* The beautiful and romantic history of the caliph Vathek, though it occasionally betray the vestiges of European embellishments, is, in the ground-work, of oriental origin, and is understood to have been founded on certain MSS formerly in the collection of Edward Wortley Montague. The cast of the story in itself, the manners and allusions which pervade it, and the appropriate sublimity of the close, independent of the evidence in the notes, which might have been greatly augmented, indicate plainly, that it is not a fiction of the West. Leyden.

† Alluding to Mr. Walter Scott, the editor of the Minstrelsy of the Scotish Border, and of Sir Tristrem, the supposed production of Thomas Lermont.

Not only were the supposed preternatural circumstances attending the life of Thomas of Ercildoune founded on oriental magic and superstition; but his principal production in his capacity of poet, the very curious and celebrated metrical romance of *Sir Tristrem*, appears to have drawn much of its imagery from a similar source. This antique manuscript, lately discovered by Mr. Ritson in the library of the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh, and now just published by Mr. Scott, besides many valuable pictures of ancient manners, and much picturesque description, displays the usual accompaniments which so forcibly characterize the fictions of the West during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Sir Tristrem, for instance, slays a dragon and many giants; and his adventures with the fair Isoude have their origin in the operation of a potent drug.

With the close of the thirteenth century expired this wonder-working prophet of the North, whose memory and predictions were long revered and listened to in Scotland with all the awe and enthusiasm due to a being of superior nature.

The ensuing age was not less attracted by, nor cherished with less ardour, the splendid fables of the East, whose geography and literature became every day better known through the persevering zeal of travellers. The travels of Hai-

thon, a king of Armenia, who had explored the most remarkable countries of the East, and having turned monk at Cyprus, published his marvellous adventures about 1310, became extremely popular; and in 1322, *Sir John Mandeville*, seized with an irresistible desire of visiting countries so renowned in history and romance, commenced a pilgrimage into the East which occupied thirty-four years; and having visited Scythia, Armenia, Egypt, Arabia, Syria, Media, Mesopotamia, Persia, Chaldea, and China, on his return wrote his Itinerary in Latin, French, and English, the title of the English, which is the most comprehensive edition, being *The Voiage and Travailes of Sir John Maundeville, Knight, which treateth of the Way of Hierusaleme and of the Marveyles of Inde, with other Ilands and Countryes.*

The travels of Mandeville must have proved highly interesting to his contemporaries; as, independent of adventures and incidents sufficiently strange though true, his credulity has led him frequently to narrate for facts * the stories which were current in the regions he passed through, however wild or preternatural. His book, in short,

* It should be observed, however, that Sir John sometimes prefaces his most incredible stories with the expressions, "thei seyne," or "men seyn," "but, I have not sene it," &c.

includes a collection of oriental tales; and the coincidences between his *marveyles* and those which occur in many parts of the Arabian Nights have been pointed out in a very ingenious and amusing manner by the late Mr. Hole. Addison has, in N° 254 of the Tatler, ridiculed with infinite humour the propensities of Sir John towards the marvellous, though the incident on which he founds his raillery is not discoverable, I apprehend, in the pages of the worthy knight. It is in some measure true, however, that we read the "Voiage and Travaile" of Sir John "with as much astonishment as the travels of Ulysses in Homer, or of the Red-cross knight in Spenser. All is enchanted ground, and fairy-land *."

The fourteenth century is remarkable for the production of collections of tales, which assume a dramatic form, and a species of unity as subservient to a particular event. The compilations of Simeon Seth, and of Piers Alfonse were on the contrary mere unconnected narratives; and it is to Boccacio, who finished his Decamerone about the year 1360, that we owe the first specimen of a dramatic series. This elegant Italian supposes that ten young persons of both sexes retired from Florence during the plague of 1348 to a beautifully situated villa in the country. In this

* Tatler, N° 254.

retreat they agreed to pass ten days; and every day after dinner, instead of having recourse to chess for amusement, that each should recite a tale.

Of the hundred tales which the Decameron includes, many are translated from various authors, and several contain imagery evidently the growth of Arabian literature and fiction.

The example of Boccacio, whose work became extremely popular, was in a few years followed by the venerable English poets Gower and Chaucer; the former in his *De Confessione Amantis*, the latter in his Canterbury Tales. The poem of Gower, which is a collection of metrical tales, forming an English poem of eight books, cannot boast of a plan superior to that which endeavours to unite the narratives of the Decameron; it is, in fact, merely the confession of a lover to a priest of Venus, who is addressed under the appellation of *Genius*. "Here," says Warton, "as if it had been impossible for a lover not to be a good catholic, the ritual of religion is applied to the tender passion, and Ovid's Art of Love is blended with the breviary. In the course of the confession every evil affection of the human heart, which may tend to impede the progress or counteract the success of love, is scientifically subdivided; and its fatal effects exemplified by a

variety of apposite stories, extracted from classics and chronicles *."

In this elaborate compilation, which consists of monkish legends, gothic romances, and oriental tales, Gower seems to have crowded all the literature of his times; besides an abundant stock of eastern fiction, it copiously discusses the Arabian chemistry, astronomy, philosophy, and magic; and had it been less operose, and richer in its display of characters and manners, might have long retained its popularity.

Very shortly after the appearance of the *Confessio Amantis*, probably in the year 1390, Chaucer produced his *Canterbury Tales*, the noblest of his compositions, and one whose existence will probably be coequal with the language in which it is written.

Nothing will more adequately shew the superior genius of Chaucer than the plan that he has adopted in this admirable work. A number of pilgrims arrive at the Tabarde Inn, in Southwark, on their way to the shrine of Thomas à Beckett at Canterbury. They meet together at supper, in a large room set apart for travellers; and being greatly pleased with each other, agree, at the suggestion of their host, not only to pursue their journey together the next morning, but,

* History of English Poetry, vol. ii.

in order to render the road more interesting, that each individual should tell a story on his passage to, and another on his return from, the tomb of the Saint.

The result of this well-imagined meeting has been singularly happy. In the connecting incidents of Boccacio and Gower, there is little or no room for the display of character; here all is life, animation, and variety. The thirty pilgrims of Chaucer are drawn from every class of mankind, and are, consequently, in their rank, appearance, manners, and habits, very widely opposed. But what renders our admiration of the poet, however great, truly justifiable, is the astonishing skill with which he has undeviatingly supported his characters, and the exquisite address that he has shewn in adapting his stories to the different humours, sentiments, and talents of the reciters; so that the very soul of each personage is, as it were, developed through the medium of the circumstances which he records.

Dropping, however, any further consideration of the plan of this mighty undertaking, let us observe, that in conducting it Chaucer has exhibited a very intimate acquaintance with Arabian literature and fable. The SQUIER'S TALE, a narrative so singularly wild and interesting, that Milton has chosen to characterize its author by

an allusion to it, exclaiming, as impatient of its unfinished state,

> —— call up him that left half told
> The story of Cambuscan bold,

is entirely built on Arabian fiction, and discovers an accurate knowledge likewise of Arabian learning and science. Cambuscan, king of Tartary, whilst celebrating with great splendour his birth-day in the palace of Sarra, is suddenly interrupted by a very marvellous incident; the minstrels cease to play, and the guests, awe-struck and alarmed, gaze with silent astonishment on the strange spectacle before them.

> While that the king sate thus in his noblay,
> Herkining his minstrelis ther thingis play,
> Before him at his bord deliciously:
> In at the halle dore, ful sodeinly,
> There came a knight upon a stede of brass;
> And in his honde a brode mirrour of glass:
> Upon his thombe he had of gold a ring,
> And by his side a nakid sword hanging,
> And up he rideth to the hie bord:
> In all the hall ne was there spoke a word,
> For marveile of this knight him to behold *.

* A similar story is told, says Warton, of a Count de Macon, who, while revelling in his hall with many knights, is suddenly alarmed by the entrance of a gigantic figure of a black man, mounted on a black steed. This terrible stranger, without receiving any obstruction from guards or gates, rides directly forward to the high table, and with an imperious tone orders the count to follow him.

The stede of brass, the mirrour, the ring and the sword, were presents to Cambuscan and his children from the king of Araby and Inde, and were possessed of all the properties which magic, chemistry, optics, and astrology, could confer upon them. The *stede*, the wondrous work of necromantic art, for

> He that it wrought couth many a gin,
> He waited many a constellation
> Ere he had don this operation,

transported his rider in twenty-four hours, upon touching certain springs, to the most distant parts of the globe. At the command of his master he flew with the swiftness of an eagle, or instantly stood still, firm as the adamantine rock; vanished in a moment at his bidding, or as suddenly reappeared. The *mirrour* had the property of faithfully reflecting all the future misfortunes which might possibly occur to Cambuscan or his kingdom; and no treason or conspiracy, however secret and subtile, could be agitated, but what was immediately exhibited to the king through the medium of this invaluable glass. The *ring*, which was presented to Canace, the fair daughter of Cambuscan, enabled her, whilst she retained it in her purse or wore it on her thumb, to comprehend the language of every bird and the virtues of every plant; whilst the *naked*

sword was so tempered, that no armour, whatever might be its strength and thickness, could resist its stroke, and no wound inflicted by it could be healed, unless it were permitted to touch the injured part with the edge of the same weapon.

These wonderful gifts, and the purposes which they are intended to accomplish, are altogether of oriental invention, and are of frequent recurrence in the Arabian and Persian romances and tales. Nor did Chaucer, who excels in the higher and romantic strain of poetry, as much as in the comic department of the Muse, confine himself to the Squier's Tale, in adopting the machinery and fables of the East; various other parts of his Canterbury Tales, especially the FRANKELEIN'S TALE, and several of his earlier productions, exhibit much of this wild but splendid imagery.

Though our venerable bard was confessedly the poet of Nature in a much higher degree than the authors of the Fabliaux, or than the chivalrie poets of Italy, who figured during the two succeeding centuries, he was yet partial to the gorgeous wonders and mysterious science of the orientals; and his story of Cambuscan, as the offspring of acknowledged genius, must have rendered them still more popular and attractive.

It is, however, to the Italian poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that we owe the

establishment of the romantic style; a style compounded from the materials of chivalry, gothic fable, and Arabian fiction. This style, says an elegant writer, " has its appropriate and genuine recommendations. It is lofty and enthusiastic, and genial and cherishing to the powers of imagination. Perhaps every man of a truly poetical mind will be the better for having passed a short period in this school; and it may further safely be affirmed, that every man of a truly poetical mind, who was reduced to make his choice between the school of coarse burlesque and extravagant humour, such as that of Hudibras for example, and the school of extravagant heroism and chivalry, such as that of Tasso, would decide for the latter. The first chills and contracts, as it were, the vessels and alleys of the heart, and leaves us with a painful feeling of self-degradation. The second expands and elevates the soul, and fills the mind of the reader with generous pride, and complacence in the powers he feels, and a warm and virtuous ardour to employ them for the advantage of others *."

In the polished compositions of the bards of Italy, the fictions of the East acquired a classical reputation, and were propagated through Europe with increased rapidity, and with all the

* Godwin's Life of Chaucer, 8vo. edition, vol. iv. p. 193.

advantages of the most beautiful versification. LUIGI LE PULCI, a native of Florence, led the way about the middle of the fifteenth century, by the publication of his *Morgante Morgiore*, a poem which combined the comic with the serious and romantic style. He was speedily followed by MATTEO MARIA BOIARDO, whose *Orlando Inamorato* forms the first genuine specimen of the epic romance. Of this poem, the subject is the love of Orlando for the fair Angelica; the scene, the siege of Paris by the Saracens; and its machinery the wonders of magicians and necromancers. The popularity which attended the labours of Boiardo was very great, and deservedly so, if we consider the vivacity of his imagery and the fertility of his invention.

His fame has been eclipsed, however, by the still more fascinating talents of LUDOVICO ARIOSTO, whose great production, the *Orlando Furioso*, made its appearance in 1516. This truly wonderful performance, which may be considered as a continuation of the poem of Boiardo, is a series of tales and adventures, and displays an imagination of the most rich and plastic kind. It is built entirely on the manners of chivalry, and here we find all the marvels of oriental fiction and Arabian science, an accumulation, indeed, of the tales and traditions of prior centuries, but

mingled with, and improved by, a warmth and exuberance of invention, peculiarly and exclusively the property of the poet, whose variety of materials and profusion of poetic beauties, whose strains of magic and of pathos, of playful humour and sublimity, have acquired for their possessor the appropriate title of the Bard of Fancy.

> From Necromancy's hand, in happiest hour
> She caught the rod of visionary power;
> And as aloft the magic wand she rais'd,
> A peerless bard with new effulgence blaz'd,
> Born every law of system to disown,
> And rule by Fancy's boundless power alone:
> High in mid air, between the moon and earth,
> The Bard of pathos now, and now of mirth,
> Pois'd with his lyre between a griffin's wings,
> Her sportive darling, ARIOSTO, sings*.

The incorporation of nearly all the prodigies of Arabian fable and science, with a poem of such exquisite merit and unparalleled popularity, whose diction and versification have rendered it, in point of style, the first model of the Italian language, must have had a prodigious effect in recommending to succeeding poets of every European nation, and to writers of fictitious narrative, the splendid miracles of chivalry and oriental machinery.

To the seductive and irresistible charms of this

* Hayley's Essay on Epic Poetry, Epistle 3.

example, is it owing that TASSO, though constructing the plan of his immortal epic on the rules of classical criticism, was led to interweave so many of the specious wonders and sublime fancies, the *magnanima mensogna*, of gothic and oriental enchantment, with the more subdued imagery of Greece and Rome.

The first complete edition of the *Gierusalemme Liberata* appeared at Ferrara, in the year 1581; and though, allowing for the rules to which the poet was subjected, it abounds as much as possible with the magic and machinery of the gotho-arabic romance,

> With forests and enchantments drear;

yet being more sparing in the use of supernatural agency than its illustrious precursor, the Orlando Furioso, it was on this account less highly esteemed than it ought to have been by the people of Italy: a decision widely different from that which, in the subsequent century, the French critics passed upon this admirable poem, who affirmed its chief fault to be that of having imbibed too much of the spirit and manner of Ariosto *.

In England, toward the close of the sixteenth century, SPENSER, a genuine disciple of the Ita-

* Vide Boileau, and Voltaire, Essai sur la Poesie Epique.

lian school, published his *Fairy Queen*. Chivalry had, at this time, nearly ceased to exist, as a system affecting the habits and manners of mankind; and the poet thought it necessary, in order to give an air of importance to his fairy fictions, to envelope them in a veil of moral allegory. The attempt was injudicious and unfortunate; allegory, when extended through so long a poem, must inevitably become dark and tedious; and it has contributed, in fact, more than any other circumstance, to obscure the lustre of an imagination which, when placed in a favourable light, is brilliant beyond competition. The sweet and pensive cast of fancy, indeed, which pervades this singular poem, its rich store of gothic and oriental imagery and incident, and its inexhaustible fertility in picturesque description, will ever charm the lovers of the higher poetry; and had its author adhered to the literal sense, and merely trusted to the fascination which still waited upon these wondrous tales, he would have been perused at the present day with as much avidity as his contemporary Tasso.

Though, with the reign of Elizabeth, chivalry, the feudal system, and its gothic manners, may be said to have expired, a taste for oriental literature, both upon the continent and in this island, still survived. More particularly may the latter

half of the seventeenth century be regarded as singularly rich in efforts to recommend the fancy and imagery of the East. One of our greatest poets, MILTON, has, in various parts of his picturesque and sublime compositions, shewn a great partiality for fiction of this kind, mixed, as he found it in his favourite authors, with all the romantic usages of gothic and chivalric life. "I may tell you," says he, "whither my younger feet wandered: I betook me among those LOFTY FABLES AND ROMANCES, which recount in SOLEMN CANTOS the deeds of knighthood *;" and we have seen how much he was delighted with the Arabian story of Cambuscan in the Canterbury Tales.

It is, however, to the travellers and translators of this period, and particularly to those of France, that we are indebted for an intimacy with the manners and literature of the East, more accurate and extensive than had hitherto been obtained. The travels of CHARDIN into Persia and the East Indies, were productive of a fund of the most valuable and curious information; and, in 1697, the *Bibliotheque Orientale* of HERBELOT added a multitude of particulars relative to the learning, customs, and religion of the orientals, before unknown to Europe. The erudition of

* Prose Works, vol. i. ii.

Herbelot, indeed, was equally universal and profound; and his Dictionary includes, as it were, a library of Persian, Arabian, and Turkish books.

The taste which these productions had the merit of imparting, soon led to an attempt to naturalize some of the most instructive and amusing efforts of Oriental genius. M. Petis de la Croix, Professor of Arabic, gave a version of *The Thousand and One Days Persian Tales*, and Anthony Galland of *The Thousand and One Nights Arabian Tales*, and of the *Fables of Pilpay and Locman*. These oriental fictions and apologues, which paint in glowing yet faithful colours the people and costume of eastern countries, were eagerly read and admired, and were very soon rendered familiar to the English reader by translations from the French.

It was a little anterior to the appearance of these tales in his native language that Addison commenced the Spectator. In this work and the Guardian he has shewn a very decided partiality for oriental imagery and fable, and has not only seized every opportunity of introducing the eastern apologue, but has given us three most exquisite imitations of the oriental style and manner. The example, presented as it was in a book more popular than any other that English literature has afforded, operated most effectually

in diffusing a taste for these productions through the island; and many of his successors in periodical composition, particularly Doctors Johnson and Hawkesworth, have very vigorously pursued the path which he had the merit of first opening.

If Addison has been taxed with not sufficiently indulging the powers of imagination in his poetical effusions, it may justly be said, that he has amply atoned for the deficiency in his prose compositions. In his three oriental tales, the *Vision of Mirza* *, *Shalum and Hilpa* †, and *Alnaraschin, king of Persia* ‡, the imagery and incidents are such as to display an imagination equally fertile and rich, whilst the costume and consequences, incident to the traditionary manners and longevity of the Antediluvians are, in the delightful tale of Shalum the Chinese, preserved with a consistency and propriety productive of the most pleasing emotion and surprise.

That our author was intimately acquainted with the writings of Chardin, Herbelot, M. Petis de la Croix, and Galland, is evident from the beautiful apologues dispersed through the Spectator and Guardian. These, which are seven in number, he has acknowledged as derived either

* Spectator, N° 159. † Ditto, N° 584, 585.
‡ Guardian, N° 167.

from the French orientalist, or from the Arabian, Persian, or Turkish Tales. Chardin and Galland he has expressly mentioned in Numbers 289 and 535 of the Spectator; and he has introduced two or three of them with a declaration of his attachment to the wild and interesting simplicity which they exhibit *.

The mode in which he has rendered these little narratives subservient to the purest and most instructive morality, is worthy of all praise. The value of time, is finely illustrated by the story of the Sultan of Egypt and the Mahometan Doctor †; the uncertainty and vicissitudes of life, by that of the Dervise of Tartary ‡; the reward of humility, by the Persian Fable of a Drop of Water §; the best mode of giving advice, by the Turkish tale of the Sultan Mahmoud and his Visier ||; the folly of indulging visionary schemes, by the Arabian apologue of Alnaschar ¶; how great should be the impartiality of justice, by the narrative of the Sultan and the Poor Man **, and the merit of well-timed complaisance, by the little wild Arabian tale, as Addison terms it, of Schacabac and the Barmecide ††.

* See the Spectator, N° 512, 535, and Guardian, N° 162.
† Spectator, N° 94.
‡ Ditto, N° 289.
§ Ditto, N° 293.
|| Ditto, N° 512.
¶ Ditto, N° 535.
** Guardian, N° 99.
†† Ditto, N° 162.

" Fables," very justly observes our author, " were the first pieces of wit that made their appearance in the world, and have been still highly valued, not only in times of the greatest simplicity, but among the most polite ages of mankind. Jotham's Fable of the Trees * is the oldest that is extant, and as beautiful as any which have been made since that time †." After the fables of the Hebrew Scriptures, the oldest collection that we possess, and which, without doubt, gave birth to the Grecian Æsop, is the Heetopades of Veeshnoo-Sarma. It is remarkable, that to these Indian fables of very remote antiquity many of the Arabian and Persian fabulists, though perhaps ignorant of the original source, are indebted, through the medium of successive versions and imitations, for no inconsiderable number of their tales; and of the apologues which Addison has selected, one of the most pleasing, the story of Alnaschar in the Arabian Nights, is to be found in the venerable volume of the Sanskreet Brahman.

" In the city of Devee-kotta," he relates, " there was a Brahman, whose name was Deva-Sarma. One lucky evening he found a curious dish, which he took with him into a potter's warehouse full of earthen-ware, and throwing

* Judges, ix. 8—15. † Spectator, N° 183.

himself upon a bed which happened to be there, it being night, he began to express his thoughts upon the occasion in this manner:—If I dispose of this dish, I shall get ten kapardakas * for it; and with that sum I may purchase many pots and pans, the sale of which will increase my capital so much that I shall be able to lay in a large stock of cloth and the like; which having disposed of at a great advance, I shall have accumulated a fortune of a lack † of money. With this I will marry four wives; and of these I will amuse myself with her, who may prove the handsomest. This will create jealousy; so when the rival wives shall be quarrelling, then will I, overwhelmed with anger, hurl my stick at them, thus! Saying which, he flung his walking stick out of his hand with such force, that he not only brake his curious dish, but destroyed many of the pots and pans in the shop; the master of which hearing the noise, came in, and discovering the cause, disgraced the Brahman, and turned him out of doors ‡."

The style which Addison has adopted in his oriental tales, and in his translation of the apologues, is precisely such as corresponds to the best ages of Arabian literature. Simplicity and

* Ten cowries. † One hundred thousand rupees.
‡ Wilkins's Heetopades of Veeshnoo Sarma, p. 247.

freedom from inflation we have seen, on the authority of Professor Carlyle, to have been characteristic of the literary productions of the most flourishing periods of the Khaliphat; "their best writers," he remarks, "both of poetry and prose, expressed themselves in a language as chaste and simple as that of Prior or of Addison *." In this respect the example of Addison has not been sufficiently attended to, the oriental narratives of the Rambler, Adventurer, and Tales of the Genii, though rich in fancy, abounding too much with lofty epithet and tumid metaphor. The sweetness and simplicity of our author's diction, add, more than is usually imagined, to the effect and poignancy of these interesting fictions. The dialogue of the *Barmecide*, for instance, of *Sultan Mahmoud* and the *Dervise*, owes much of its archness and humour to the elegant plainness of the language employed; and in the *Vision of Mirza* no reader can be insensible to the ease, amenity, and grace of style which clothe and heighten the imagery of that exquisite composition.

Another department of fiction, in which Addison has exhibited great powers of fancy and invention, is the *Allegorical*. This, which is totally

* Carlyle's Specimens of Arabian Poetry, Preface, p. 5.

independent of oriental imagery, he has conducted with most singular felicity; and to him may be justly ascribed the introduction into our literature of that species of it which is built upon the classic model. "I have revived," he observes, "several antiquated ways of writing, which, though very instructive and entertaining, had been laid aside and forgotten for some ages. I shall, in this place, only mention those allegories wherein virtues, vices, and human passions are introduced as real actors. Though this kind of composition was practised by the finest authors among the ancients, our countryman Spenser is the last writer of note who has applied himself to it with success *."

Allegory, whether in poetry or prose, has in this country usually been constructed upon two models, the *Grecian* and the *Gothic;* the former occasionally exemplified in the writings of Homer and Æschylus, and more fully and frequently in the precepts of Socrates and Plato, of Xenophon and Cebes; the latter in the elaborate and protracted effusions of William de Lorris, Chaucer, and Spenser. Addison has, with much judgment, chosen for his guide the more correct and legitimate example of Plato and Cebes; and we

* Guardian, N° 152.

possess no allegories more happily conceived than those which, upon the plan of these authors, are dispersed through his periodical writings.

The opinion that he entertained of what was requisite toward the successful execution of this species of fable, he has himself given us in the Guardian. "That an allegory," he remarks, "may be both delightful and instructive, in the first place, the fable of it ought to be perfect, and, if possible, to be filled with surprising turns and incidents. In the next, there ought to be useful morals and reflections couched under it, which still receive a greater value from being new and uncommon; as also from their appearing difficult to have been thrown into emblematical types and shadows *."

These rules, to which he has faithfully adhered, have been productive of an excellence so consummate in this mode of composition, that we may, without hazard, consider the allegories of our author as nearly perfect models. Of these we possess twelve †; six in the Tatler, and six in the Spectator and Guardian. The first, however, which is on the *Origin of Love* ‡, is merely

* Guardian, N° 152.

† The vision of Mirza I have already enumerated under the head of Oriental Apologues.

‡ Tatler, N° 90.

a translation from Plato, but answers the purpose not only of placing before the reader a specimen of the manner of the Grecian philosopher, but of shewing how admirably the English allegorist has emulated, and perhaps even excelled, his prototype. The *Vision of Justice* *, which occurs next, presents the genius of Addison in full lustre; the invention, imagery, and humour of this piece, are alike excellent, and the style is as beautiful as the materials. Nothing can be more happily conceived and expressed than the night scene, introductive of this vision. "The heaven above me," says the author, "appeared in all its glories, and presented me with such an hemisphere of stars, as made the most agreeable prospect imaginable to one who delights in the study of nature. It happened to be a freezing night, which had purified the whole body of air into such a bright transparent æther, as made every constellation visible; and at the same time gave such a particular glowing to the stars, that I thought it the richest sky I had ever seen. I could not behold a scene so wonderfully adorned and lighted up, if I may be allowed that expression, without suitable meditations on the author of such illustrious and amazing objects; for on these occasions, philosophy suggests motives to

* Tatler, Nos. 100 and 102.

religion, and religion adds pleasure to philosophy." The descent of the goddess too, is another picture whose conception and execution cannot be too much admired. "When she had descended," he observes, "so low as to be seen and heard by mortals, to make the pomp of her appearance more supportable, she threw darkness and clouds about her, that tempered the light into a thousand beautiful shades and colours, and multiplied that lustre, which was before too strong and dazzling, into a variety of milder glories."

The *Vision of Love*, and the *Vision of Ambition and Avarice**, are carried on with great propriety and force of imagery; and the address to poverty, which concludes the latter, conveys a strain of morality so pure, so just, and at the same time so exquisitely drawn up, that I am induced to believe the insertion of it in my pages, to be a homage due to the cause of virtue and content.

"Oh Poverty!" said I, "my first petition to thee is, that thou wouldest never appear to me hereafter; but if thou wilt not grant me this, that then thou wouldest not bear a form more terrible than that in which thou appearest to me at present. Let not thy threats and menaces

* Tatler, N° 120, and 123.

betray me to any thing that is ungrateful or unjust. Let me not shut my ears to the cries of the needy. Let me not forget the person that has deserved well of me. Let me not, for any fear of thee, desert my friend, my principles, or my honour. If Wealth is to visit me, and to come with her usual attendants, Vanity and Avarice, do thou, O Poverty! hasten to my rescue, but bring along with thee the two sisters, in whose company thou art always cheerful, Liberty and Innocence."

Two more allegorical pieces by Addison are included in the Tatler; *Jupiter and the Destinies**, and the *Vision of Liberty*†; the former founded on a hint from Homer; the latter occasioned by the perusal of the Tablature of Cebes. The attributes of the goddess, of whom our author was a fervent but rational worshipper, are painted with characteristic strength; and the valley in which he has placed her abode gives rise to one of those descriptions which exhibit in so pre-eminent a light his taste for picturesque beauty.

The Spectator, though not, considering its extension, so abundant in effusions of this kind as the Tatler, possesses, independent of the oriental

* Tatler, N° 146. † Tatler, N° 161.

allegory of Mirza, five productions of this class; the allegory of *Luxury and Avarice* *, the *Vision of Maraton*†, the *Picture Gallery* ‡, the *Balance* §, and the *Mountain of Miseries* ||.

Of these, the *Balance* and the *Mountain of Miseries* are built upon passages of Homer and Plato; but the outline so beautifully filled up, and the imagery and incidents so replete with imagination, blended with the finest strokes of humour, as to charm and interest the most fastidious mind. It is, however, to the *Vision of Maraton*, that we must give the palm when considering the present series. Than this, and the oriental Vision of Mirza, nothing, I believe, more lovely and engaging, can be found in allegorical composition. The description of the Genius, and the prospect of human life in the one, and the meeting of Maraton and Yaratilda in the other, are pictures whose sweet and simple colouring, whose pathos and morality, will continue to delight and instruct as long as taste and feeling shall exist.

In the Guardian, our author's allegorical vein, which ran with so much depth and richness

* Spectator, N° 55.

† Spectator, N° 56.

‡ Ditto, N° 83.

§ Ditto, N° 463.

|| Ditto, N° 558, and 559.

through his former papers, appears nearly exhausted; the *Two Sexes** being the only production of this kind, as flowing from his pen, that I can recollect in the work; it is, however, worthy of his talents, and exhibits no small portion of his accustomed ingenuity and fertility of fancy.

* Guardian, N° 152.

PART III.

ESSAY VI.

ON THE MORAL TENDENCY OF THE PERIODICAL WRITINGS OF ADDISON.

THE great object which Addison ever steadily held in view, and to which his style, his criticism, his humour and imagination are alike subservient, was the increase of religious, moral, and social virtue. Perhaps to the writings of no individual, of any age or nation, if we except the result of inspiration, have morality and rational piety been more indebted than to those which form the periodical labours of our author.

That he was enabled to effect so much improvement, and to acquire a kind of moral dominion over his countrymen, must be ascribed, in a great measure, to that suavity of disposition and goodness of heart so visible throughout all his compositions, and which give to his reproof and censure, his precepts and admonitions, the

air of parental affection and monitory kindness.

The frequent failure of those who have attempted to correct the follies and vices of mankind, has been owing to harshness of temper and personality of reproach. It is probable, indeed, that no man was ever benefited or reformed by invective or exposure; though the welfare of society and the atrocity of crime may occasionally demand the utmost publicity of punishment.

To attack the vice but spare the individual has been the constant and salutary aim of the Spectator. "If I attack the vicious," says Addison, "I shall only set upon them in a body; and will not be provoked by the worst usage I can receive from others, to make an example of any particular criminal.—It is not Lais or Silenus, but the harlot and the drunkard, whom I shall endeavour to expose; and shall consider the crime as it appears in a species, not as it is circumstanced in an individual*."

Upon this principle are all the moral and critical essays of our author conducted, whether they assume the severer features of preceptive wisdom, or beam with the smiles of gaiety and humour. He has consequently reprobated in

* Spectator, vol. i. N° 16.

strong terms that spirit of defamation and revenge, of recrimination and abuse, which sullies and destroys all the beneficial effect of satire, and converts the man who has recourse to such weapons into little better than an assassin *.

With equal consistency and propriety he exposes that false zeal which, whether in the cause of religion or politics, hesitates not to employ the basest means for the supposed sanctity or importance of the end in view. The two papers that he has written on these subjects †, exhibit his knowledge of mankind, his good sense and purity of principle, in a full and very striking light. Without a certain species of enthusiasm or zeal, indeed, it is probable nothing great or good can be effected in society; but when this passes beyond due bounds, owing either to vicious motives or a mistaken sense of virtue, it is productive of great and incalculable mischief. "I love to see a man zealous in a good matter," says our amiable author, "and especially when his zeal shows itself for advancing morality, and promoting the happiness of mankind. But when I find the instruments he works with are racks and gibbets, gallies and dungeons; when he imprisons men's

* See Spectator, vol. i. N° 23, on Defamation, and vol. v. N° 355, on Lampoons.

† Ibid. vol. iii. N° 185, and vol. vii. N° 507.

persons, confiscates their estates, ruins their families, and burns the body to save the soul, I cannot stick to pronounce of such a one, that (whatever he may think of his faith and religion) his faith is vain, and his religion unprofitable *."

Like Steele, Addison was attentive to that great modulator of the public opinion and manners, the Theatre; and in N° 446 of the Spectator, he has very justly chastised it for the grossness and obscenity which, at that period, formed its chief defects, and became so notorious as to warrant, in a great degree, the assertion of the Spectator, that cuckoldom formed the basis of nearly all its productions. "If an alderman," says Addison, "appears upon the stage, you may be sure it is in order to be cuckolded. An husband that is a little grave or elderly, generally meets with the same fate. Knights and baronets, country squires, and justices of the quorum, come up to town for no other purpose."

On education and the domestic virtues, and on the duties incumbent on father, husband, wife, and child, the precepts of our author are numerous, just, and cogent, and delivered in that sweet insinuating style and manner, which have rendered him beyond comparison the most useful moralist this country ever possessed. The imagery

* Spectator, N° 185.

by which he indicates the effect and force of education is singularly happy and appropriate; the hint is taken from Aristotle, who affirms that in a block of marble the statue which the sculptor ultimately produces is merely concealed, and that the effect of his art is only to remove the surrounding matter which hides the beauteous figure from the view. "What sculpture is to a block of marble," says Addison, "education is to a human soul. We see it sometimes only begun to be chipped; sometimes rough-hewn, and but just sketched into an human figure; sometimes we see the man appearing distinctly in all his limbs and features, sometimes we find the figure wrought up to a great elegancy; but seldom meet with any to which the hand of a Phidias or Praxiteles could not give several nice touches and finishings*."

The relations, also, which subsist in general society, and to the due observance of which the state owes all its importance and prosperity, have attracted much of his attention; and the obligations of the minister, the citizen, the master, and the servant, are laid down with great strength and precision. No man performed the duties of a public station with more industry and integrity than Addison himself; we have seen that he

* Spectator, N° 215.

never would receive more than his accustomed fee; and he is known to have sought every opportunity of assisting and forwarding the interests of those whose merit and impoverished circumstances more particularly entitled them to his notice. In short, his admirable paper in the Spectator on the *Duties of Office* *, may be considered as a faithful comment on his own practice; those "possessed with honest minds," he observes, "will consider poverty as a recommendation in the person who applies himself to them, and make the justice of his cause the most powerful solicitor in his behalf. A man of this temper, when he is in a post of business, becomes a blessing to the public. He patronises the orphan and the widow, assists the friendless, and guides the ignorant. He does not reject the person's pretensions who does not know how to explain them, or refuse doing a good office for a man because he cannot pay the fee of it. In short, though he regulates himself in all his proceedings by justice and equity, he finds a thousand occasions for all the good-natured offices of generosity and compassion." And again, speaking of the minister who suffers himself to be corrupted by pecuniary temptation, "such an one," he proceeds, "is the man who, upon any pretence whatsoever, re-

* Spectator, N°469.

ceives more than what is the stated and unquestioned fee of his office. Gratifications, tokens of thankfulness, dispatch-money, and the like specious terms, are the pretences under which corruption very frequently shelters itself. An honest man will, however, look on all these methods as unjustifiable, and will enjoy himself better in a moderate fortune that is gained with honour and reputation, than in an overgrown estate that is cankered with the acquisitions of rapine and exaction."

The discrimination with which he has pointed out the good or bad tendency of passions and appetites which are vicious only in excess, has been of essential service to morality. In no path of life is human nature more likely to stray; and to guard against the inordinate pursuit of power, of riches, and honour, when opportunity offers for their accumulation, requires a firmness of principle, a controul of feeling and desire, which nothing but the most correct views of reason and religion can produce. His *Essays on the Love of Fame** may be selected as specimens of the acuteness with which he has developed the bearings and tendency of a passion so ambiguous in its operation, and so effective, according to the principle on which it is founded, of great good

* Spectator, vol. iv. Nos. 255, 256, 257.

or great evil. If we consider indeed by whom, and on whom, fame is usually bestowed, we can entertain no very high opinion of the worth or intellect of the man whose life is absorbed in its attainment. "If it be from the common people," remarks the judicious Bacon, it is commonly false and naught: and rather followeth vaine persons, than virtuous: for the common people understand not many excellent vertues: the lowest vertues draw praise from them; the middle vertues worke in them astonishment, or admiration; but of the highest vertues, they have no sense, or perceiving at all.—Certainly, *Fame* is like a river that beareth up things light and swolne, and drownes things weighty and solid: but if persons of quality (ability) and judgement concurre, then it is (as the scripture saith) *Nomen bonum instar unguenti fragrantis.* It filleth all round about, and will not easily away*."

The sweetness and placidity of Addison's disposition, happily led him to expatiate on topics intimately connected with, and productive of, the temper and frame of mind of which he himself exhibited so delightful an example. Hence his essays on *Contentment*, on *Cheerfulness*, and on *Hope*, are some of the most interesting and pleasing of his productions.

* Bacon's Essays—On Praise, p. 304, 4to edition of 1632.

He well knew that the best ingredients in the cup of human life were regulated desires and subdued expectations; and that he would be little liable to disappointment, and most able to bear up under affliction, who looked forward not to this, but to a future life for what is usually called *happiness*. "The utmost we can hope for in this world," he observes, "is contentment; if we aim at any thing higher, we shall meet with nothing but grief and disappointment. A man should direct all his studies and endeavours at making himself easy now and happy hereafter *: a truth which cannot be too strongly or frequently impressed upon the mind; and to which, in addition to what I have already said upon the same subject in my observations on Steele, I am now willing to add the authority and experience of Addison;

> For, trust me, one protecting shed,
> And nightly peace, and daily bread,
> Is all that life can give.
>
> LANGHORNE.

Another very consolatory resource under adversity, and which might often reconcile us to apparent evils, has been very properly brought forward by our author as a powerful motive to contentment. "Possibly," says he, "what we now

* Spectator, N° 163.

look upon as the greatest misfortune, is not really such in itself. For my own part, I question not but our souls in a separate state will look back on their lives in quite another view, than what they had of them in the body; and that what they now consider as misfortunes and disappointments, will very often appear to have been escapes and blessings*."

The paper whence the extracts on contentment have been taken is introductory to the affecting story of Theodosius and Constantia. This interesting narrative, which Addison has told with the most touching simplicity and pathos, places, in a very instructive point of view, the value and consolations of religion in reconciling the heart to the endurance of misfortunes irreparable in this state of existence.

This pathetic tale gave birth in the year 1763 to the "Letters supposed to have passed between Theodosius and Constantia," by Dr. Langhorne, and which have been so deservedly admired, observes his son, for their purity of style as well as of doctrine†. It is probable the doctor was influenced in the choice of this subject for his imaginary correspondence by his long and much-

* Spectator, N° 163.

† Memoirs of Dr. Langhorne by his Son, prefixed to his Poetical Works, page 13.

regretted separation from Miss Anne Cracroft, to whom he was ardently attached, and whom he at length married in the year 1767. The connection, which commenced in 1759, and which was broken off on the part of the lady from prudential motives, threw an air of tender melancholy over the doctor's life and early compositions; and there is reason to suppose, from a little poem written in the year 1760, and entitled *Theodosius to Constantia*, that the probability of an approaching separation had rendered him more than ordinarily alive to the fate of these ill-starred lovers. The following beautiful lines, it is not unlikely paint his own peculiar feelings:

Let raptur'd fancy on that moment dwell,
When thy dear vows in trembling accents fell;
When love acknowledg'd wak'd the tender sigh,
Swell'd thy full breast, and fill'd thy melting eye—
Yet shall the scene to ravish'd memory rise;
Constantia present yet shall meet these eyes;
On her fair arm her beauteous head reclin'd,
Her locks flung careless to the sportful wind.
While love and fear contending in her face,
Flush every rose, and heighten every grace.
O, never, while of life and hope possest,
May this dear image quit my faithful breast!
The painful hours of absence to beguile,
May thus Constantia look, Constantia smile *.

* Mrs. Langhorne died in child-bed in May 1768; and an elegy on her death, entitled *Constantia*, was written by Mr. Edmund Cartwright.

The *Essays on Cheerfulness* * present us with a most pleasing view of the author's habitual temper of mind, and are written with great perspicuity of argument, and in a strain of the most persuasive eloquence. The definitions of mirth and cheerfulness with which the first essay opens are uncommonly just and beautiful. "Mirth," says he, "is short and transient, cheerfulness fixed and permanent.—Mirth is like a flash of lightning, that breaks through a gloom of clouds, and glitters for a moment; cheerfulness keeps up a kind of day-light in the mind, and fills it with a steady and perpetual serenity." He considers cheerfulness in three points of view, as it regards ourselves, or those we converse with, or the Author of our being; and affirms that nothing but guilt or infidelity ought reasonably to deprive us of its blessings. He details its salutary effects both upon the health of the body and mind, delivers observations on the goodness of the Deity in rendering creation in all its parts subservient to the promotion of this desirable state, and concludes by recommending a taste for natural history, and by inculcating a religious sense of obligation to the Creator of all that is good and beautiful. "The cheerfulness of heart," he observes, "which springs up in us from the survey of nature's

* Spectator, Nos. 381, 387, 393.

works, is an admirable preparation for gratitude. The mind has gone a great way towards praise and thanksgiving, that is filled with such secret gladness. A grateful reflection on the Supreme Cause who produces it, sanctifies it in the soul, and gives it its proper value. Such an habitual disposition of mind consecrates every field and wood, turns an ordinary walk into a morning or evening sacrifice, and will improve those transient gleams of joy which naturally brighten up and refresh the soul on such occasions, into an inviolable and perpetual state of bliss and happiness."

The influence of hope in supplying the soul with motives to action, and in sweetening the cares and mitigating the evils of life, is the subject of N° 471 of the Spectator; in conducting which Addison has displayed his usual felicity of arrangement and suavity of style, whilst the moral and religious uses of the passion are dwelt upon in a manner alike pleasing and impressive. Hope, without which our existence here would be insupportable, and to whose suggestions we adhere with unabated fondness, he has illustrated by the ancient apologue of Pandora's Casket; upon opening which, though all the calamities incident to human life immediately sprang from its cavity, Hope remained to soothe and heal the

wounds that her companions were about to inflict. This very striking mythological fable has been thrown into most exquisite poetry by the genius of Sayers. Pandora is represented on her passage from heaven to earth, and, tempted by curiosity, in the act of opening the casket with which Jupiter had entrusted her—chagrined at discovering it apparently empty, she exclaims:

What! empty! empty!—yet methought a wind
As of a thousand rushing wings blew swift
Athwart my face—ah me! what griesly forms
Float in the air—see, see, they horrid smile,
And mocking point at me—speak, speak, who are ye?
[*A voice from the air.*

Thanks to her who gave us birth,
Eager sailing to the earth,
We haste to act the deeds of woe,
And prey on all that breathes below.

PANDORA.

Ah me! who are ye?—wretched, wretched woman!
[*The voice continues.*

Bloody Strife, and gnawing Care,
Pride, and Hatred, and Despair
Hover o'er thee in the air:
We haste to act the deeds of woe,
And prey on all that breathes below.

PANDORA.

What have I done?—hush, hush, a softer sound!
[*Another voice from the air.*

Hear thou luckless maiden, hear,
Cease thy sorrow, cease thy fear;
Though yon grim troop on mortal shore
Haste the tide of grief to pour,
Hope shall join the gloomy throng,
Hope shall breathe her soothing song,
And bending o'er the wounded heart
Gently steal the poison'd dart:
Hope shall bid the tempest cease,
And whisper future hours of peace *.

The plan which Addison has adopted in this paper has been followed by Mr. Campbell, in his elegant and truly sublime poem on the "Pleasures of Hope." The essayist and the poet alike commence with the moral and physical effects of hope, and alike terminate with its best result, the hope of happiness hereafter.

"Religious hope," remarks Addison, "has this advantage above any other kind of hope, that it is able to revive the dying man, and to fill his mind not only with secret comfort and refreshment, but sometimes with rapture and transport. He triumphs in his agonies, whilst the soul springs forward with delight to the great object which she has always had in view, and leaves the body with an expectation of being reunited to her in a glorious and joyful resurrection."

* Sayer's Poems, 2d edition, 8vo. p. 164.

How admirably has the Scotish poet illustrated these truths in the following nervous and emphatic lines:

Unfading Hope! when life's last embers burn,
When soul to soul, and dust to dust return!
Heav'n to thy charge resigns the awful hour!
Oh! then, thy kingdom comes! Immortal Power!
What, though each spark of earth-born rapture fly,
The quivering lip, pale cheek, and closing eye!
Bright to the soul thy seraph hands convey
The morning dream of life's eternal day—
Oh! deep enchanting prelude to repose,
The dawn of bliss, the twilight of our woes!
Yet half I hear the parting spirit sigh,
It is a dread and awful thing to die!

Daughter of Faith, awake, arise, illume
The dread unknown, the chaos of the tomb;
Melt, and dispel, ye spectre-doubts, that roll
Cimmerian darkness on the parting soul!
Fly, like the moon-ey'd herald of dismay,
Chas'd on his night-steed by the star of day!
The strife is o'er—the pangs of Nature close,
And life's last rapture triumphs o'er her woes.
Hark! as the spirit eyes, with eagle gaze,
The noon of Heav'n undazzled by the blaze,
On heav'nly winds that waft her to the sky,
Float the sweet tones of star-born melody;
Wild as that hallow'd anthem sent to hail
Bethlehem's shepherds in the lonely vale,
When Jordan hush'd his waves, and midnight still
Watch'd on the holy tow'rs of Sion hill.

Eternal Hope! when yonder spheres sublime
Peal'd their first notes to sound the march of Time!

Thy joyous youth began—but not to fade.—
When all the sister planets have decay'd;
When wrapt in fire the realms of ether glow,
And Heav'n's last thunder shakes the world below;
Thou, undismay'd, shalt o'er the ruin smile,
And light thy torch at Nature's funeral pile * !

On the passions and vices which torment the human breast, and render life a scene of sorrow, of misery and contention, Addison has written several very just and useful papers. Jealousy, envy, and revenge—melancholy, calumny, and ingratitude, have been described by him with much discrimination, their causes and consequences ascertained, and the remedies best calculated for their removal pointed out with philosophical precision. The symptoms of jealousy, in particular, are painted with great strength and accuracy, and finely illustrated by the story of Herod and Mariamne †.

The papers on good Intentions ‡, and on charitable Institutions §, are worthy of the benevolence and philanthropy of our author. In the latter, he expatiates on the necessity of a new institution in this country for foundlings, and which twenty-six years after the production of

* Pleasures of Hope, part ii. p. 67, 68, 69, 70, and 84.
† Spectator, vol. iii. N° 170 and 171.
‡ Ibid. N° 213. § Guardian, vol. ii. N° 105.

this number was carried into execution by Captain Thomas Coram. "I shall mention a piece of charity," says he, "which has not been yet exerted among us, and which deserves our attention the more, because it is practised by most of the nations about us. I mean a provision for foundlings, or for those children who, through want of such a provision, are exposed to the barbarity of cruel and unnatural parents. One does not know how to speak on such a subject without horror; but what multitudes of infants have been made away by those who brought them into the world, and were afterwards either ashamed or unable to provide for them."

Coram was a naval officer of uncommon worth, and of whose character, charity and compassion were the leading features. His profession compelling him to reside in that part of the metropolis which is the common residence of seafaring people, and being under the necessity of coming early to the city and returning late, he had frequent opportunities of seeing infants exposed through the indigence or cruelty of their parents. Scenes such as these made a strong impression on the mind of Coram, and induced him to seek an immediate remedy for the evil. He accordingly projected a plan for a Foundling Hospital, and, after seventeen years of unwearied

exertion, at length saw his efforts crowned with success by a Royal Charter, dated 1739 *. This good, this amiable man, died so very poor, that for several years anterior to his decease, he was supported by a subscription pension of a hundred pounds a-year, obtained for him through the solicitation of Dr. Brocklesby and Sir Sampson Gideon. He was buried, at his own desire, in the vault of the chapel of the Foundling Hospital, where the following inscription will record for distant posterity his memory and his virtues:

" Captain *Thomas Coram*,
whose name will never want a Monument
so long as this Hospital shall subsist, was born about
the year 1668; a Man eminent in that most eminent
Virtue, the Love of Mankind;
little attentive to his private fortune, and refusing
many Opportunities of increasing it, his Time and
Thoughts were continually employed in endeavours
to promote the public Happiness,
both in this Kingdom and elsewhere, particularly
in the Colonies of North America; and his Endeavours
were many Times crowned with the desired Success.
His unwearied Solicitations, for above Seventeen
Years together,
(which would have baffled the Patience and Industry of
any Man less zealous in doing Good)
and his Application to Persons of Distinction of both
Sexes, obtained at length the Charter of
the Incorporation

* Vide Biographia Brit. vol. iv. p. 269.

(bearing date the 17th of October 1739)
FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND EDUCATION
OF EXPOSED AND DESERTED YOUNG CHILDREN,
by which many Thousands of Lives may be preserved
to the Public, and employed in a frugal and honest
Course of Industry. He died the 29th of March,
1751, in the 84th Year of his Age, poor in
worldly Estate, rich in good Works; and was buried,
at his own Desire, in the Vault underneath
this Chapel
(the first here deposited)
at the East End thereof; many of the Governors
and other Gentlemen attending the Funeral, to do
Honour to his Memory.
Reader, thy Actions will shew, whether thou art
sincere in the Praises thou may'st bestow on him; and
if thou hast Virtue enough to commend his
Virtues, forget not to add also the
Imitation of them."

The piety of Addison was founded on a clear and rational view of the attributes of the Deity, and of the doctrines of christianity; and in the Spectator, more especially, he has seized every opportunity of supporting and illustrating the great and momentous truths of natural and revealed religion. His Essays on the Supreme Being *, on the Omnipresence of the Deity †, and on the Immortality of the Soul ‡, exhibit the

* Spectator, vol. vii. N° 531.
† Ibid. vol. iii. N° 565.
‡ Ibid. vol. ii. N° 111.

power and goodness of the Creator in a manner at once sublime and philosophic. I consider indeed the paper on Omnipresence and Omniscience as one of the most perfect, impressive, and instructive pieces of composition that ever flowed from the pen of an uninspired moralist. The opening is peculiarly soothing and sweet, and presents us with a night scene of uncommon majesty and beauty.

"I was yesterday," says the author, "about sun-set, walking in the open fields, until the night insensibly fell upon me. I at first amused myself with all the richness and variety of colours which appeared in the western parts of heaven; in proportion as they faded away and went out, several stars and planets appeared one after another, until the whole firmament was in a glow. The blueness of the ether was exceedingly heightened and enlivened by the season of the year, and by the rays of all those luminaries that passed through it. The galaxy appeared in its most beautiful white. To complete the scene, the full moon rose at length in that clouded majesty which Milton takes notice of, and opened to the eye a new picture of nature, which was more finely shaded, and disposed among softer lights, than that which the sun had before discovered to us."

To this exquisite passage immediately succeed the following awful reflections:

"As I was surveying the moon walking in her brightness, and taking her progress among the constellations, a thought rose in me, which I believe very often perplexes and disturbs men of serious and contemplative natures. David himself fell into it in that reflection, 'When I consider the heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou regardest him!' In the same manner, when I considered that infinite host of stars, or, to speak more philosophically, of suns, which were then shining upon me, with those innumerable sets of planets or worlds, which were moving round their respective suns; when I still enlarged the idea, and supposed another heaven of suns and worlds rising still above this which we discovered, and these still enlightened by a superior firmament of luminaries, which are planted at so great a distance, that they may appear to the inhabitants of the former as the stars do to us; in short, while I pursued this thought, I could not but reflect on that little insignificant figure which I myself bore amidst the immensity of God's works."

Could our author have lived to witness the im-

provements upon the telescope, and the consequent discoveries of Dr. Herschel, he would have considered the survey of the heavens he has taken in this paper, however extensive and extraordinary it might appear at the commencement of the eighteenth century, as far beneath the truth, and extremely limited and confined. "The visible system of nature," says Herschel, "which we call *the universe*, consisting of all the celestial bodies, and many more that can be seen by the naked eye, is only a group of stars, or suns with their planets, constituting one of those patches called a nebula; and this is, perhaps, not one ten thousandth part of the universe." He then goes on to prove, that the sun is situated in the great stratum called the milky way; and after pointing out the method by which the sun's place in this siderial stratum may be ascertained, he proceeds to take a view of the heavens from our own retired station in one of the planets, commencing his observations by contemplating a star and its combinations with the naked eye.

"The stars of the first magnitude," he observes, "being in all probability the nearest, will furnish us with a step to begin the scale. Setting off, therefore, with the distance of Sirius or Arcturus, for instance, as unity, we shall at present suppose, that those of the second magnitude are at double, those of the third at treble the dis-

tance, &c. Taking it for granted, then, that a star of the seventh magnitude (the smallest visible to the naked eye) is about seven times as far as one of the first, it follows, that an observer, who is inclosed in a globular cluster of stars, and not far from the centre, will never be able, by his naked eye, to see to the end of it; for since, according to the foregoing estimations, he can only extend his view to about seven times the distance of Sirius, it cannot be expected that his eyes should reach the borders of a cluster, which has, perhaps, no less than 50 stars in depth every where around him. The whole universe, therefore, to an observer, confined to unassisted vision, will be comprized in a set of constellations richly ornamented with scattered stars of all sizes. Or, if the united brightness of a neighbouring cluster of stars should, in a remarkably clear night, reach his sight, it will put on the appearance of a small, faint, whitish nebulous cloud, not to be perceived without the greatest attention. Let us suppose him placed in a much extended stratum, or branching cluster of millions of stars: here the heavens will not only be richly scattered over with brilliant constellations, but a shining zone or milky way will be perceived to surround the whole sphere of the heavens, owing to the combined light of the stars that are too remote to be seen; our observer's sight will be

so confined, that he will imagine this single collection of stars, though he does not perceive the thousandth part of them, to be the whole contents of the heavens. Allowing him now the use of a common telescope, he begins to suspect that all the milkiness of the bright path, which surrounds the sphere, may be owing to stars: he perceives a few clusters of them in various parts of the heavens, and finds also that there is a kind of nebulous patches; but still his views are not extended to reach so far as to the end of the stratum in which he is situated; so that he looks upon these patches as belonging to that system which, to him, seems to comprehend every celestial object. He now increases his power of vision, and, applying himself to a closer observation, finds that the milky way is indeed no other than a collection of very small stars: he perceives that those objects, which had been called nebulæ, are evidently nothing but clusters of stars; their number increases upon him; and whilst he resolves one nebula into stars, he discovers ten new ones that he cannot resolve. He then forms the idea of immense strata of fixed stars, of clusters of stars, and of nebulæ, till going on with such interesting observations, he soon finds that all these appearances arise from the confined situation in which we are placed. *Confined* it may be justly called, though contained in

no smaller a space than what appeared before to be the whole region of fixed stars, but which now has assumed the shape of a crookedly branching nebula: not one of the least, but probably very far from being the most considerable, of those numberless clusters that enter into the construction of the heavens. Dr. Herschel confirms these ideas by a series of observations, and thinks it will be found upon the whole, that this view, with all its consequential appearances, as seen by an eye inclosed in one of the nebulæ, is no other than a drawing from nature, wherein the features of the original have been closely copied; and Dr. Herschel hopes the resemblance will not be called a bad one, when it shall be considered how very limited must be the pencil of an inhabitant of so small and retired a spot of an indefinite system, in attempting the picture of so unbounded an extent.

"In the most crowded parts of the milky way, he has had a field of view of 588 stars, and these continued for many minutes; so that in one quarter of an hour's time, not less than 116,000 stars have passed through the field of his telescope: he endeavours to shew, that the powers of his telescope are such, that it will not only reach the stars at 497 times the distance of Sirius, so as to distinguish them, but that it also shews the united lustre of the accumulated stars

that compose a milky nebulosity at a far greater distance. From these considerations, it is highly probable, that as his 20 feet telescope does not shew such a nebulosity in the milky way, it goes already far beyond its extent; and therefore a more powerful instrument would remove all doubt, by exposing a milky nebulosity beyond the stratum, which could then no longer be mistaken for the dark ground of the heavens.

"To the foregoing arguments, we may add the following, drawn from analogy. Dr. Herschel says, that among the great number of *nebulæ*, which he has already seen, amounting to more than 900, there are many, in all probability, equally extensive with that which we inhabit; and yet they are all separated from each other by very considerable intervals. Some indeed there are, that seem to be double and treble; and though with most of them it may be, that they are at a very great distance from each other, yet he does not mean to say that there are no such conjunctions; though there may be also some thinly scattered solitary stars, not yet drawn into systems; their number cannot be very considerable: a conjecture that is abundantly confirmed, in situations where the nebulæ are near enough to have their stars visible; for they are all insulated, and generally to be seen upon a very clear and pure ground, without any star

near them, that might be supposed to belong to them: and though they may be often seen in beds of stars, yet from the size of these stars, we may be certain that they are much nearer to us than those nebulæ, and belong undoubtedly to our own system.

"Dr. Herschel thinks the nebula that we inhabit has fewer marks of profound antiquity upon it than the rest; having previously supposed that the condensation of clusters of stars is to be ascribed to a gradual approach; the number of ages that must have past before some of the clusters could be so far condensed as they are at present, makes him naturally ascribe a certain air of youth and vigour to many very regularly scattered regions of our siderial system. There are many places where he asserts, that there is reason to believe, that the stars, if we may judge from appearances, are now drawing towards various secondary centres, and will, in time, separate into different clusters, so as to occasion many sub-divisions. Our system, after numbers of ages, may be divided so, as to give rise to a stratum of two or three hundred nebulæ.

"Though the words *condensation* and *cluster* often occur in the foregoing extract, we are by no means to infer that any of the celestial bodies, in our nebula, are nearer to one another than we are to Sirius, whose distance is supposed to be

not less than 38 millions of miles. The whole extent of the nebula being, in some places, near 500 times this distance, must be such, that the light of a star placed at its extreme boundary, supposing it to fly with the velocity of 12 millions of miles every minute, must have taken near 3000 years before it could reach us.

"These immense spaces, these numerous hosts of systematic universes, are probably connected the one with the other. Like so many immense circuses, by the mutual contact of their circumambient spheres, they press each other: these aereal atmospheres being also connected and interwoven together by an infinity of insertions, constitute a celestial sphere, which is again linked with others, till by an infinity of orbs they obtain a form, which is the origin and pattern of all forms, in which all the variegated siderial revolutions harmoniously concur to one and the same end: that of mutually strengthening and establishing each other, and forming a celestial union *."

The apprehensions of nullity and insignificance, which are so apt to depress an individual, when contrasting his existence with that of worlds so numerous and illimitable, are obviated by Addison, in the concluding part of his admirable paper, with great skill and address, and form a

* Vide Adams's Lectures, vol. iv. p. 221.

clear and rational view of the attributes of omnipresence and omniscience.

" If we consider him in his omnipresence," he remarks, " his being passes through, actuates, and supports the whole frame of nature. His creation, and every part of it, is full of him. There is nothing he has made that is either so distant, so little, or so inconsiderable, which he does not essentially inhabit. His substance is within the substance of every being, whether material or immaterial, and as intimately present to it as that being is to itself. It would be an imperfection in him, were he able to remove out of one place into another, or to withdraw himself from any thing he has created, or from any part of that space which is diffused and spread abroad to infinity. In short, to speak of him in the language of the old philosopher, he is a being whose centre is every where, and his circumference no where.

" In the second place, he is omniscient as well as omnipresent. His omniscience indeed necessarily and naturally flows from his omnipresence; he cannot but be conscious of every motion that arises in the whole material world, which he thus essentially pervades, and of every thought that is stirring in the intellectual world, to every part of which he is thus intimately united.—He cannot but regard every thing that has being, especially such of his creatures who

fear they are not regarded by him. He is privy to all their thoughts, and to that anxiety of heart in particular, which is apt to trouble them on this occasion: for, as it is impossible he should overlook any of his creatures, so we may be confident that he regards, with an eye of mercy, those who endeavour to recommend themselves to his notice, and in an unfeigned humility of heart think themselves unworthy that he should be mindful of them."

The further consideration of the Deity, and his attributes, a favourite subject with our author, is prosecuted in Nos. 571, 580, 590 and 628, and with great richness of illustration and perspicuity of method.

A devotion, alike distant from enthusiasm or superstition, but warm, exalted, and sublime, appears to have existed from an early period in the bosom of Addison, and to have once induced him, as we have seen, to cherish the idea of entering into holy orders. It is probable that many of his religious speculations in the Spectator, and which have contributed, perhaps more than many professional efforts, owing to their form and mode of introduction, to familiarize the great truths of piety and christianity, were written long anterior to the commencement of his periodical labours, and whilst the duties of an ecclesiastical life were still in view. To this tempo-

rary designation, therefore, we are indebted not only for a system of ethics, but for a code of religious precepts truly pure and evangelic, and free from all those controversial and metaphysical subtleties which have but too often, in the writings and discourses of our divines, usurped the place of sound sense and genuine christianity. Of this character are the Essays on Devotion *, on Prayer †, on Morality ‡, on Religious Faith §, on Temporal and Eternal Happiness ‖, &c. &c. &c. pieces which have essentially contributed to the happiness and salvation of thousands and tens of thousands.

"No greater felicity," says the moral Johnson, "can genius attain, than that of having purified intellectual pleasure, separated mirth from indecency, and wit from licentiousness; of having taught a succession of writers to bring elegance and gaiety to the aid of goodness; and if I may use expressions yet more awful, of having 'turned many to righteousness' ¶."

Of the *literary* character of Addison, the preceding essays have attempted to delineate the leading features, and will, it is probable, impress upon the mind of the reader a very high idea of

* Spectator, vol. iii. N° 201 and 207.
† Ditto, vol. v. N° 391.
‡ Ditto, vol. vi. N° 459.
§ Ditto, vol. vi. N° 465.
‖ Ditto, vol. viii. N° 575.
¶ Lives, vol. ii. p. 112.

its excellence and utility. It may be necessary, however, ere we conclude this portion of our labours, to enumerate, in a more compressed form, the various obligations which learning, wisdom, and virtue have to acknowledge in the writings of this great and good man.

To Addison, in the first place, may we ascribe the formation of a style truly classical and pure, whose simplicity and grace have not yet been surpassed, and which, presenting a model of unprecedented elegance, laid the foundation for a general and increasing attention to the beauty and harmony of composition.

His critical powers were admirably adapted to awaken and inform the public mind; to teach the general principles by which excellence may be attained, and, above all, to infuse a relish for the noblest productions of taste and genius.

In humour, no man in this country, save Shakspeare, has excelled him; he possessed the faculty of an almost intuitive discrimination of what was ludicrous and characteristic in each individual, and, at the same time, the most happy facility in so tinting and grouping his paintings, that, whilst he never overstepped the modesty of nature, the result was alike rich in comic effect, in warmth of colouring, and in originality of design.

Though his poetry, it must be confessed, is not remarkable for the energies of fancy, the tales,

visions, and allegories dispersed through his periodical writings, make abundant recompence for the defect, and very amply prove, that in the conception and execution of these exquisite pieces, no talent of the genuine bard, except that of versification, lay dormant or unemployed.

It is, however, the appropriate, the transcendant praise of Addison, that he steadily and uniformly, and in a manner peculiarly his own, exerted these great qualities in teaching and disseminating a love for morality and religion. He it was, who, following the example of the divine Socrates, first stripped philosophy in this island of her scholastic garb, and bade her, clothed in the robes of elegant simplicity, allure and charm the multitude. He saw his countrymen become better as they became wiser; he saw them, through his instructions, feel and own the beauty of holiness and virtue; and for this, we may affirm, posterity, however distant or refined, shall revere and bless his memory.

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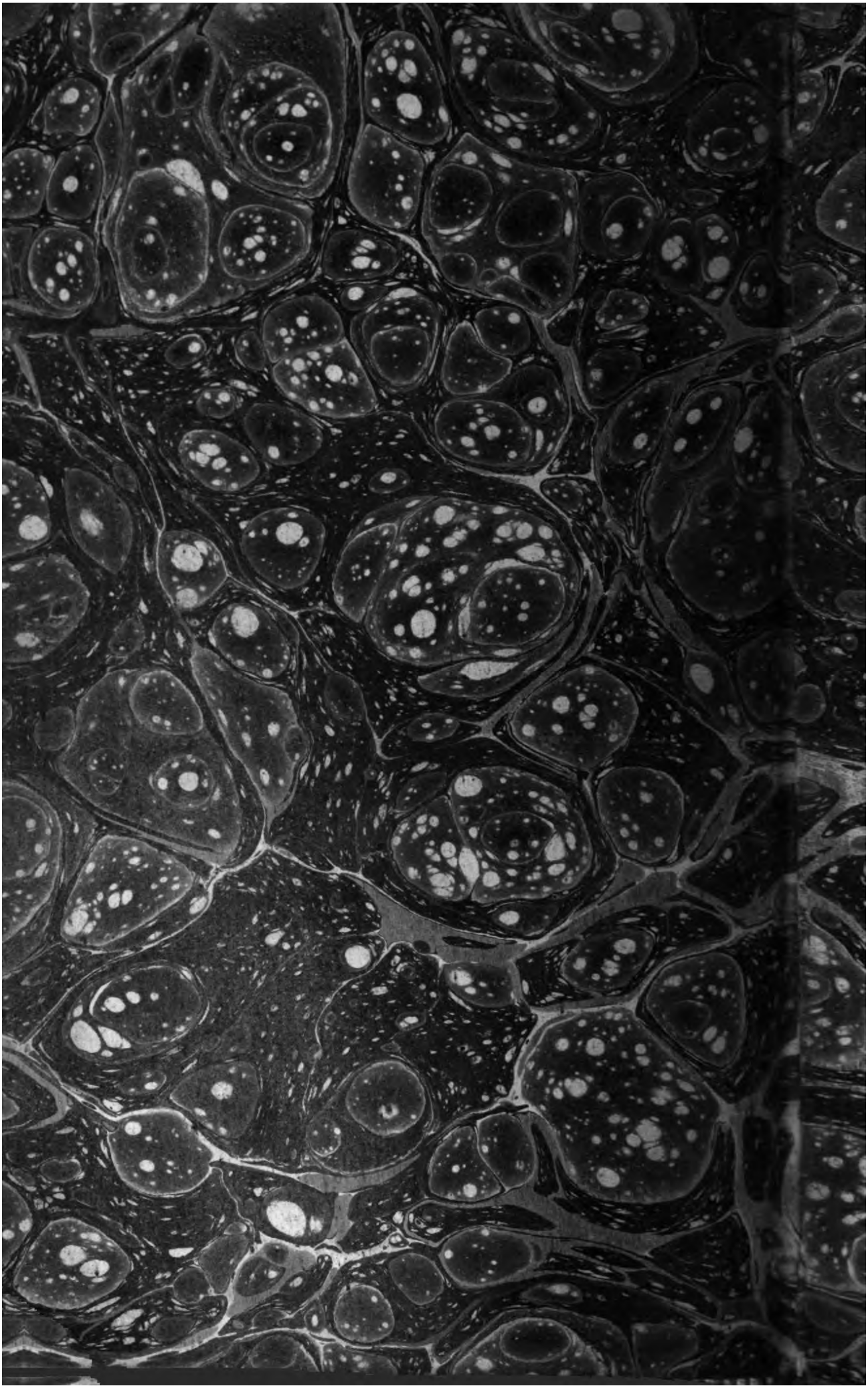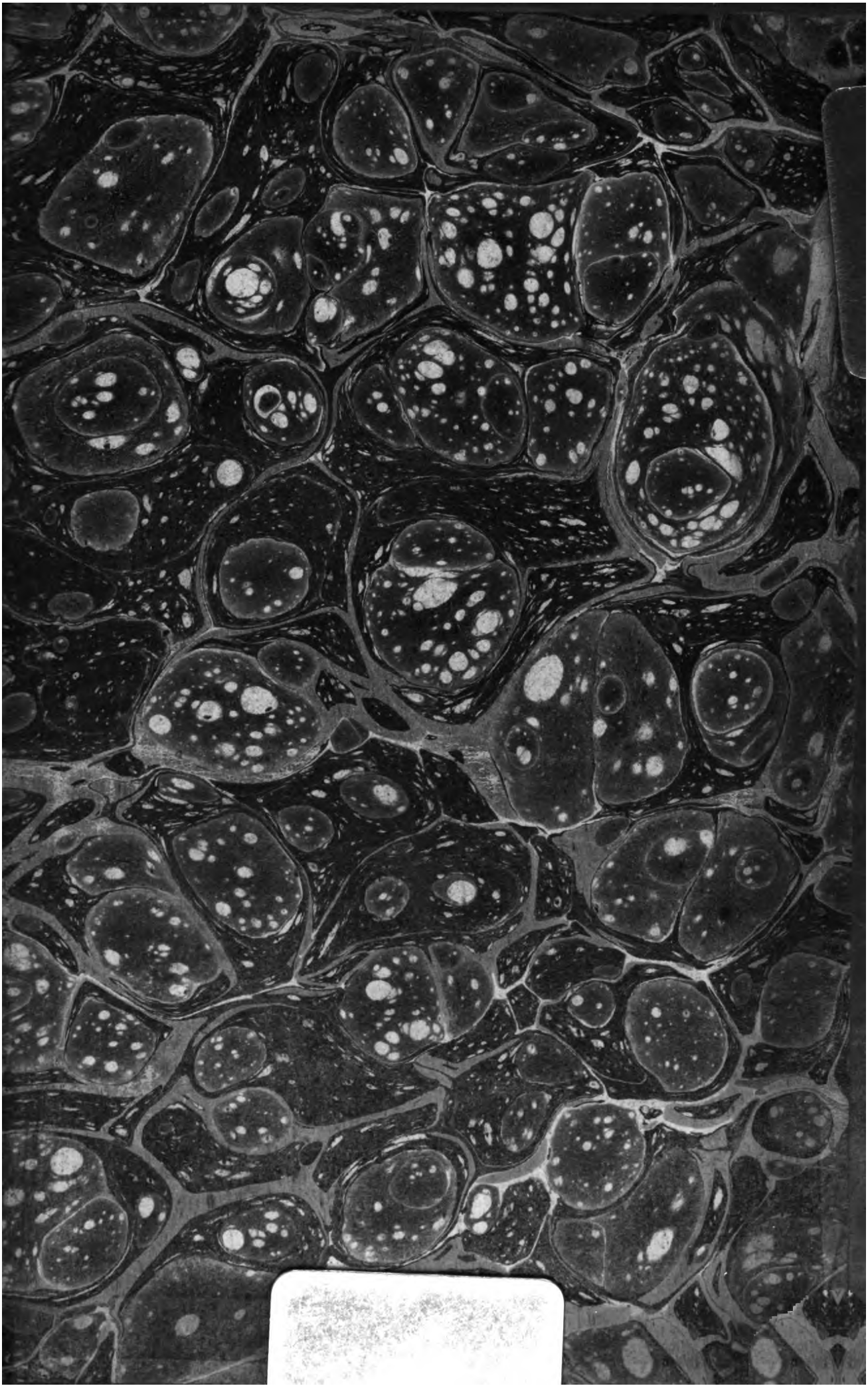
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