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*Robt Shasto Esq. Benwell.*





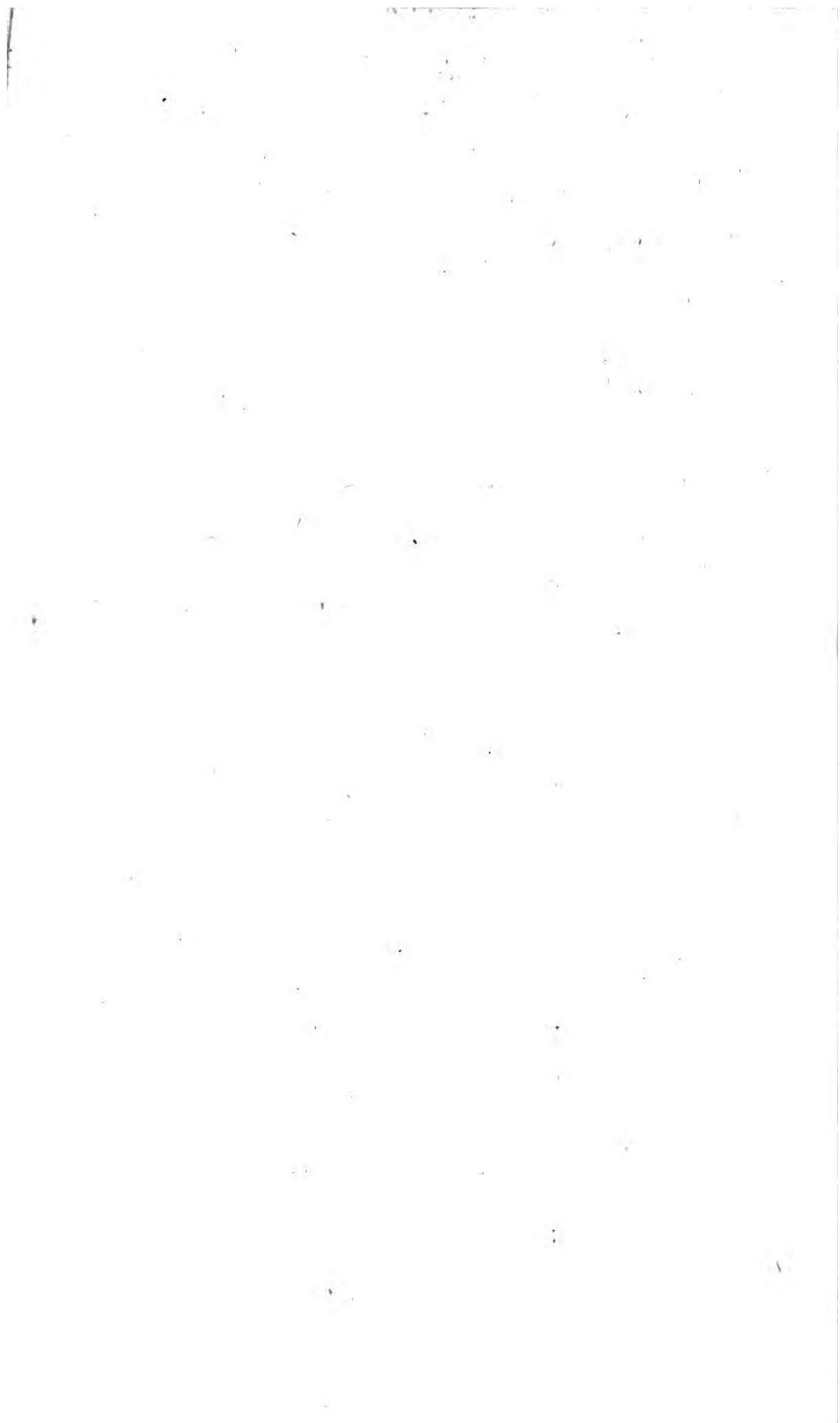


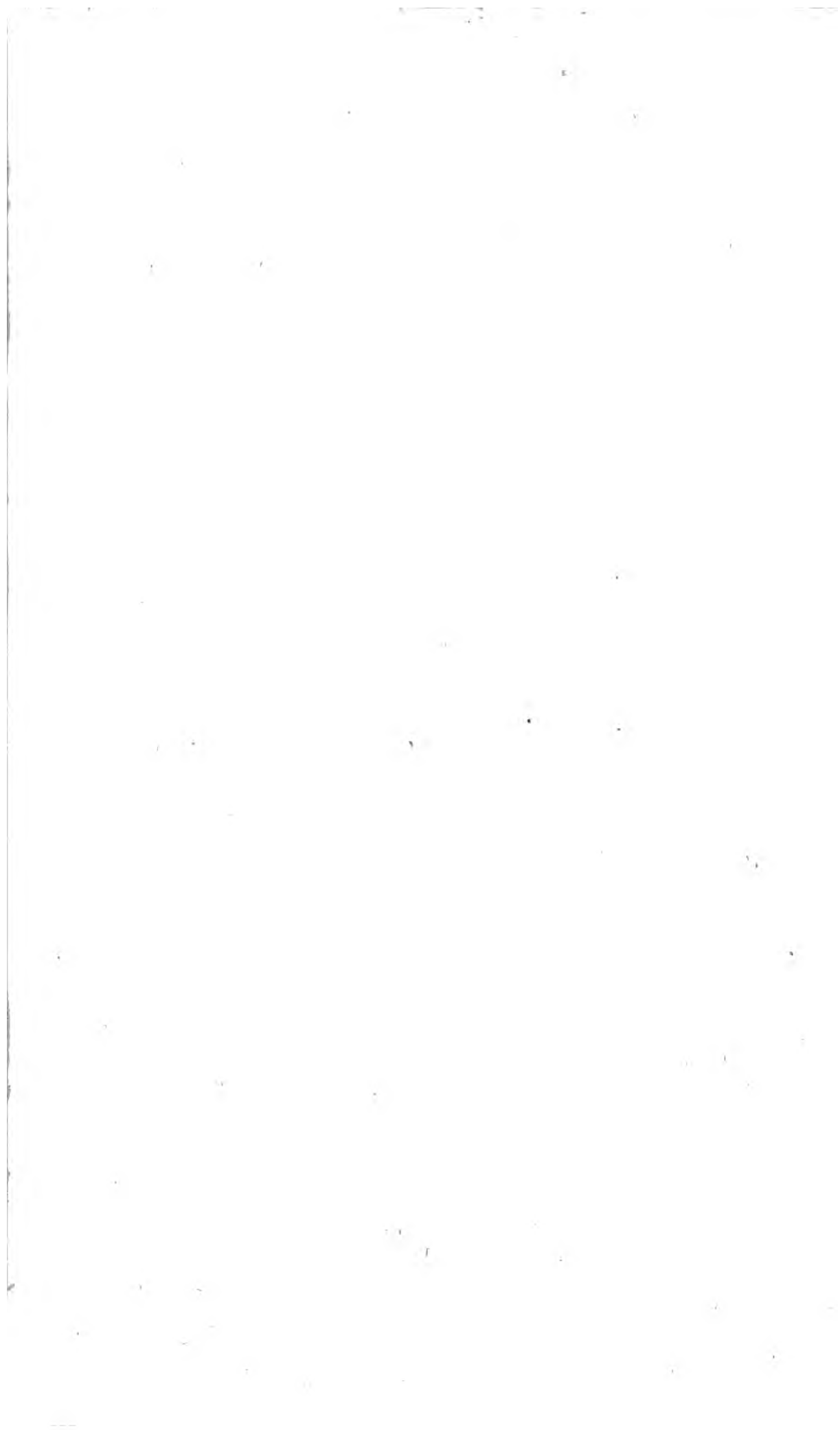
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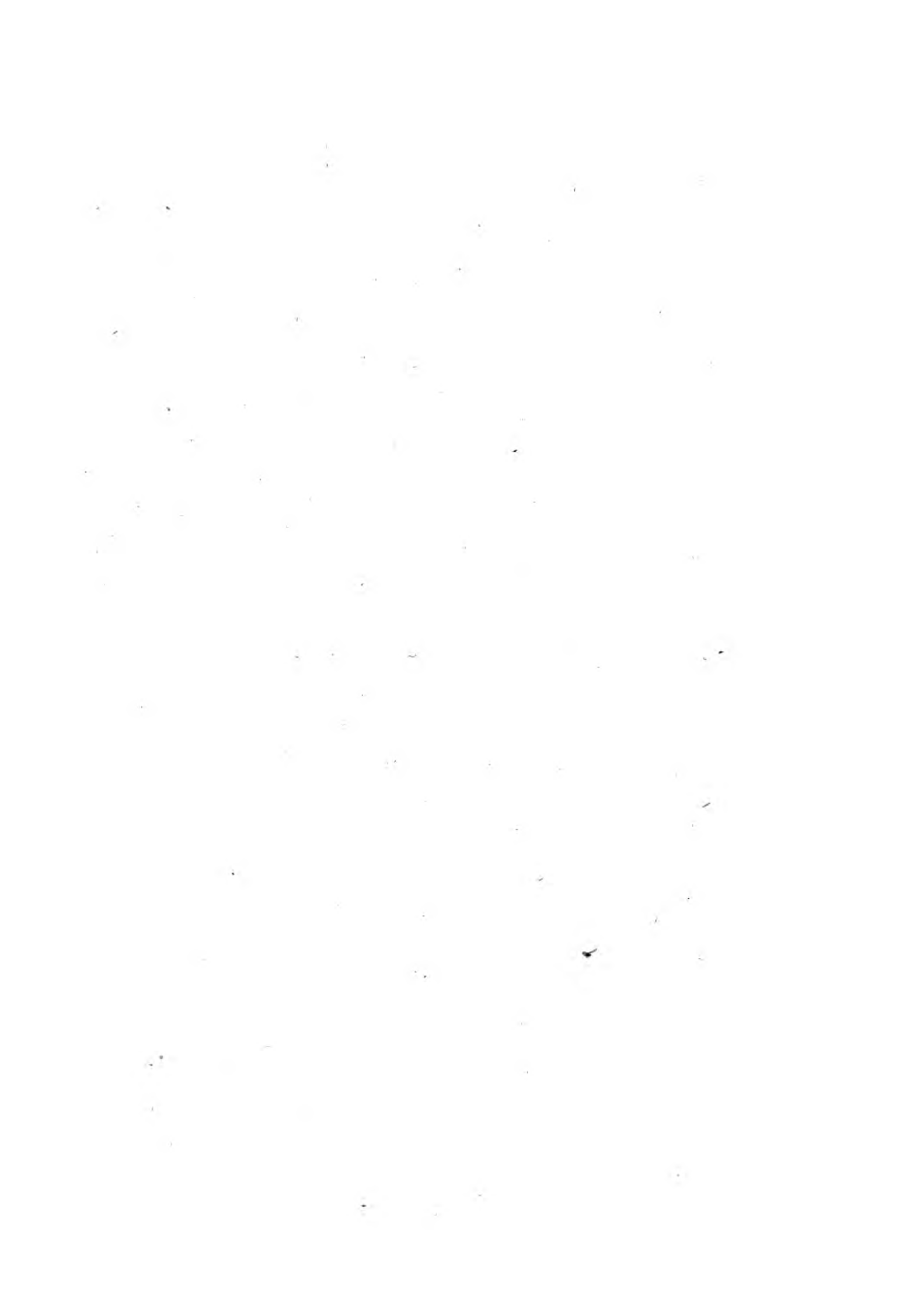
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E L E M E N T S  
O F  
C R I T I C I S M.

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M D C C L X I I.





E L E M E N T S  
O F  
C R I T I C I S M.

C H A P. X.

Congruity and Propriety.

**M**AN is distinguished from the brute creation, not more remarkably by the superiority of his rational faculties, than by the greater delicacy of his perceptions and feelings. With respect to the gross pleasures of sense, man probably has little superiority over other animals. Some obscure perception of beauty may also fall to their share. But they are probably not acquainted with the more delicate conceptions of regularity, order, uniformity, or congruity.

Such refined conceptions, being connected with morality and religion, are reserved to dignify the chief of the terrestrial creation. Upon this account, no discipline is more suitable to man, or more *congruous* to the dignity of his nature, than that by which his taste is refined, to distinguish in every subject, what is regular, what is orderly, what is suitable, and what is fit and proper\*.

No discerning person can be at a loss about the meaning of the terms *congruity* and *propriety*, when applied to dress, behaviour, or language; that a decent garb, for example, is proper for a judge, modest behaviour for a young woman, and a lofty

\* Nec vero illa parva vis naturæ est rationisque, quod unum hoc animal sentit quid sit ordo, quid sit quod deceat in factis dictisque, qui modus. Itaque eorum ipsorum, quæ aspectu sentiuntur, nullum aliud animal, pulchritudinem, venustatem, convenientiam partium, sentit. Quam similitudinem natura ratioque ab oculis ad animum transferens, multo etiam magis pulchritudinem, constantiam, ordinem, in consiliis factisque conservandum putat, cavetque ne quid indecorè effeminateve faciat; tum in omnibus et opinionibus et factis ne quid libidinosè aut faciat aut cogitet. Quibus ex rebus conflatum et efficitur id, quod quærimus, honestum. *Cicero de officiis, l. I.*

style for an epic poem. In the following examples every one is sensible of an unsuitableness or incongruity: a little woman sunk in an overgrown farthingale, a coat richly embroidered covering coarse and dirty linen, a mean subject in an elevated style, or an elevated subject in a mean style, a first minister darning his wife's stocking, or a reverend prelate in lawn sleeves dancing a hornpipe.

But it is not sufficient that these terms be understood in practice; the critical art requires, that their meaning be traced to its foundation in human nature. The relations that connect objects together, have been examined in more than one view. Their influence in directing the train of our perceptions, is handled in the first chapter; and in the second, their influence in generating passion. Here they must be handled in a new view; for they are clearly the occasion of congruity and propriety. We are so framed by nature, as to require a certain suitableness or correspondence among things connected by any relation. This suitableness or correspondence is termed *congruity*

style

or

or *propriety*; and the want of it, *incongruity* or *impropriety*. Among the many principles that compose the nature of man, a sense of congruity or propriety is one. Destitute of this sense, we could have no notion of congruity or propriety: the terms to us would be unintelligible\*.

As this sense is displayed upon relations, it is reasonable beforehand to expect, that

\* From many things that pass current in the world without being generally condemned, one at first view would imagine, that the sense of congruity or propriety hath scarce any foundation in nature; and that it is rather an artificial refinement of those who affect to distinguish themselves by a certain delicacy of taste and behaviour. The fulsome panegyrics bestowed upon the great and opulent, in epistles dedicatory and other such compositions, lead naturally to that thought. Did there prevail in the world, it will be said, or did nature suggest, a taste of what is suitable, decent, or proper, would any good writer deal in such compositions, or any man of sense receive them without disgust? Can it be supposed, that Lewis XIV. of France was endued by nature with any sense of propriety, when, in a dramatic performance purposely composed for his entertainment, he suffered himself, publicly and in his presence, to be styled the greatest king ever the earth produced? These it is true are strong facts; but luckily they do not prove the sense of propriety to be artificial. They only prove, that the sense of propriety is at times overpowered by pride and vanity; which is no singular case, for this sometimes is the fate even of the sense of justice.

WE



we should be so formed, as to require among connected objects a degree of congruity proportioned to the degree of the relation. And upon examination we find this to hold in fact. Where the relation is strong and intimate as betwixt a cause and its effect, a body and its members, we require that the things be suited to each other in the strictest manner. On the other hand, where the relation is slight, or accidental, as among things jumbled together in the same place, we demand little or no congruity. The strictest propriety is required in behaviour and manner of living; because a man is connected with these by the relation of cause and effect. The situation of a great house ought to be lofty; for the relation betwixt an edifice and the ground it stands upon, is of the most intimate kind. Its relation to neighbouring hills, rivers, plains, being that of propinquity only, demands but a small share of congruity. Among members of the same club, the congruity ought to be considerable, as well as among things placed for show in the same niche. Among passengers in a stage-coach, we require ve-

ry

ry little congruity; and less still at a public spectacle.

Congruity is so nearly allied to beauty, as commonly to be held a species of it. And yet they differ so essentially, as never to coincide. Beauty, like colour, is placed upon a single subject; congruity upon a plurality. Further, a thing beautiful in itself, may, with relation to other things, produce the strongest sense of incongruity.

Congruity and propriety are commonly reckoned synonymous terms; and hitherto in opening the subject they are used indifferently. But they are distinguishable; and the precise meaning of each must be ascertained. Congruity is the genus, of which propriety is a species. For we call nothing propriety, but that congruity or suitableness which ought to subsist betwixt sensible beings and their thoughts, words, and actions.

In order to give a full view of this subject, I shall trace it through some of the most considerable relations. The relation of a part to the whole, being extremely intimate, demands the utmost degree of congruity. For that reason, the slightest deviation

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tion is disgusting. Every one must be sensible of a gross incongruity in the *Lutrin*, a burlesque poem, being closed with a serious and warm panegyric on Lamoignon, one of the King's judges :

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Amphora cœpit  
Institui ; currente rota, cur urceus exit ?

No relation affords more examples of congruity and incongruity, than that betwixt a subject and its ornaments. A literary performance intended merely for amusement, is susceptible of much ornament, as well as a music-room or a play-house. In gaiety, the mind hath a peculiar relish for show and decoration. The most gorgeous apparel, however unsuitable to an actor in a regular tragedy, disgusts not at an opera. The truth is, an opera, in its present form, is a mighty fine thing ; but as it deviates from nature in its capital circumstances, we look not for any thing natural in those which are accessory. On the other hand, a serious and important subject, admits not much or-

nament\* : nor a subject that of itself is extremely beautiful. And a subject that fills the mind with its loftiness and grandeur, appears best in a dress altogether plain.

To a person of a mean appearance, gorgeous apparel is unsuitable: which, beside the incongruity, has a bad effect; for by contrast it shows the meanness of appearance in the strongest light. Sweetness of look and manner, requires simplicity of dress joined with the greatest elegance. A stately and majestic air requires sumptuous apparel, which ought not to be gaudy, or crowded with little ornaments. A woman of consummate beauty can bear to be highly adorned, and yet shows best in a plain dress:

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For loveliness  
Needs not the foreign aid of ornament,  
But is when unadorn'd, adorn'd the most.

*Thomson's Autumn, 208.*

\* Contrary to this rule, the introduction to the third volume of the *Characteristics*, is a continued chain of metaphors. These in such profusion are too florid for the subject; and have beside the bad effect of removing our attention from the principal subject, to fix it upon splendid trifles.

In

In judging of the propriety of ornament, we must attend, not only to the nature of the subject that is to be adorned, but also to the circumstances in which it is placed. The ornaments that are proper for a ball, will appear not altogether so decent at public worship; and the same person ought to dress differently for a marriage-feast and for a burial.

Nothing is more intimately related to a man, than his sentiments, words, and actions; and therefore we require here the strictest conformity. When we find what we thus require, we have a lively sense of propriety: when we find the contrary, our sense of impropriety is not less lively. Hence the universal distaste of affectation, which consists in making a shew of greater delicacy and refinement than is suited either to the character or circumstances of the person. Nothing hath a worse effect in a story than impropriety of manners. In Corneille's tragedy of *Cinna*, Æmilia, a favourite of Augustus, receives daily marks of his affection, and is loaded with benefits; yet all the while is laying plots to assassinate her be-

B 2                      nefactor,

benefactor, directed by no other motive but to avenge her father's death\*. Revenge against a benefactor founded solely upon filial piety, will never suggest unlawful means; because it can never exceed the bounds of justice. And yet the crime here attempted, murder under trust reposed, is what even a miscreant will scarce attempt against his bitterest enemy.

What is said may be thought sufficient to explain the qualities of congruity and propriety. But the subject is not exhausted. On the contrary, the prospect enlarges upon us, when we take under view the effects these qualities produce in the mind. Congruity and propriety, where-ever perceived, appear agreeable; and every agreeable object produceth in the mind a pleasant emotion. Incongruity and impropriety, on the other hand, are disagreeable; and consequently produce painful emotions. An emotion of this kind sometimes vanisheth without any consequence; but more frequently is the occasion of other emotions.

\* See act 1. sc. 2.

When



When any slight incongruity is perceived in an accidental combination of persons or things, as of passengers in a stage-coach or of individuals dining at an ordinary, the emotion of incongruity, after a momentary existence, vanisheth without producing any effect. But this is not the case of propriety and impropriety. Voluntary acts, whether words or deeds, are imputed to the author: when proper, we reward him with our esteem: when improper, we punish him with our contempt. Let us suppose, for example, an heroic action suitable to the character of the author, which raises in him and in every spectator the pleasant emotion of propriety. This emotion generates in the author both self-esteem and joy; the former when he considers his relation to the action, and the latter when he considers the good opinion that others will entertain of him. The same emotion of propriety, produceth in the spectators, esteem for the author of the action: and when they think of themselves, it also produceth, by means of contrast, an emotion of humility. To discover the effects of an unsuitable action,

we



we must invert each of these circumstances. The painful emotion of impropriety, generates in the author of the action both humility and shame; the former when he considers his relation to the action, and the latter when he considers what others will think of him. The same emotion of impropriety, produceth in the spectators, contempt for the author of the action; and it also produceth, by means of contrast when they think of themselves, an emotion of self-esteem. Here then are many different emotions, derived from the same action considered in different views by different persons; a machine provided with many springs, and not a little complicated. Propriety of action, it would seem, is a chief favourite of nature, or of the author of nature, when such care and solicitude is bestowed upon it. It is not left to our own choice; but, like justice, is required at our hands; and, like justice, enforced by natural rewards and punishments. A man cannot, with impunity, do any thing unbecoming or improper. He suffers the chastisement of contempt inflicted by others, and of shame inflicted by himself. An apparatus

paratus so complicated and so singular, ought to rouse our attention. Nature doth nothing in vain; and we may conclude with great certainty, that this curious branch of the human constitution is intended for some valuable purpose. To the discovery of this purpose I shall with ardor apply my thoughts, after discoursing a little more at large upon the punishment, for I may now call it so, that Nature hath provided for indecent or unbecoming behaviour. This, at any rate, is necessary, in order to give a full view of the subject; and who knows whether it may not, over and above, open some track that will lead us to what we are in quest of?

A gross impropriety is punished with contempt and indignation, which are vented against the offender by every external expression that can gratify these passions. And even the slightest impropriety raises some degree of contempt. But there are improprieties, generally of the flighter kind, that provoke laughter; of which we have examples without end in the blunders and absurdities of our own species. Such  
improprieties

improprieties receive a different punishment, as will appear by what follows. The emotions of contempt and of laughter occasioned by an impropriety of this kind, uniting intimately in the mind of the spectator, are expressed externally by a peculiar sort of laugh, termed *a laugh of derision or scorn* \*. An impropriety that thus moves not only contempt but laughter, is distinguished by the epithet of *ridiculous*; and a laugh of derision or scorn is the punishment provided for it by nature. Nor ought it to escape observation, that we are so fond of inflicting this punishment, as sometimes to exert it even against creatures of an inferior species; witness a Turkeycock swelling with pride, and strutting with displayed feathers. This object appears ridiculous, and in a gay mood is apt to provoke a laugh of derision.

We must not expect that the improprieties to which these different punishments are adapted, can be separated by any precise boundaries. Of improprieties, from the

\* See chap. 7.

slightest to the most gross, from the most risible to the most serious, a scale may be formed ascending by degrees almost imperceptible. Hence it is, that in viewing some unbecoming actions, too risible for anger and too serious for derision, the spectator feels a sort of mixt emotion partaking both of derision and of anger. This accounts for an expression, common with respect to the impropriety of some actions, That we know not whether to laugh or be angry.

It cannot fail to be observed, that in the case of a risible impropriety, which is always slight, the contempt we have for the offender is extremely faint, though derision, its gratification, is extremely pleasant. This disproportion betwixt a passion and its gratification, seems not conformable to the analogy of nature. In looking about for a solution, I reflect upon what is laid down above, that an improper action, not only moves our contempt for the author, but also, by means of contrast, swells the good opinion we have of ourselves. This contributes, more than any other article, to the pleasure we feel in ridiculing the follies and

absurdities of others. And accordingly, it is well known, that they who put the greatest value upon themselves, are the most prone to laugh at others. Pride is a vivid passion, as all are which have self for their object. It is extremely pleasant in itself, and not less so in its gratification. This passion singly would be sufficient to account for the pleasure of ridicule, without borrowing any aid from contempt. Hence appears the reason of a noted observation, That we are the most disposed to ridicule the blunders and absurdities of others, when we are in high spirits; for in high spirits, self-conceit displays itself with more than ordinary vigor.

Having with wary steps traced an intricate road, not without danger of wandering; what remains to complete our journey, is to account for the final cause of congruity and propriety, which make so great a figure in the human constitution. One final cause, regarding congruity, is pretty obvious. The sense of congruity, as one of the principles of the fine arts, contributes in a remarkable degree to our entertainment.

This

This is the final cause assigned above for our sense of proportion \*, and need not be enlarged upon here. Congruity indeed with respect to quantity, coincides with proportion. When the parts of a building are nicely adjusted to each other, it may be said indifferently, that it is agreeable by the congruity of its parts, or by the proportion of its parts. But propriety, which regards voluntary agents only, can never in any instance be the same with proportion. A very long nose is disproportioned, but cannot be termed *improper*. In some instances, it is true, impropriety coincides with disproportion in the same subject, but never in the same respect. I give for an example a very little man buckled to a long toledo. Considering the man and the sword with respect to size, we perceive a disproportion. Considering the sword as the choice of the man, we perceive an impropriety.

The sense of impropriety with respect to mistakes, blunders, and absurdities, is happily contrived for the good of mankind.

\* See chap. 3.



In the spectators it is productive of mirth and laughter, excellent recreation in an interval from business. The benefit is still more extensive. It is not agreeable to be the subject of ridicule; and to punish with ridicule the man who is guilty of an absurdity, tends to put him more upon his guard in time coming. Thus even the most innocent blunder is not committed with impunity; because, were errors licensed where they do no hurt, inattention would grow into a habit, and be the occasion of much hurt.

The final cause of propriety as to moral duties, is of all the most illustrious. To have a just notion of it, the two sorts of moral duties must be kept in view, *viz.* those that respect others, and those that respect ourselves. Fidelity, gratitude, and the forbearing injury, are examples of the first sort; temperance, modesty, firmness of mind, are examples of the other. The former are made duties by means of the moral sense; the latter, by means of the sense of propriety. Here is a final cause of the sense of propriety, that must rouse our attention.

It

It is undoubtedly the interest of every man, to regulate his behaviour suitably to the dignity of his nature, and to the station allotted him by Providence. Such rational conduct contributes in every respect to happiness: it contributes to health and plenty: it gains the esteem of others: and, which is of all the greatest blessing, it gains a justly-founded self-esteem. But in a matter so essential to our well-being, even self-interest is not relied on. The sense of propriety superadds the powerful authority of duty to the motive of interest. The God of nature, in all things essential to our happiness, hath observed one uniform method. To keep us steady in our conduct, he hath fortified us with natural principles and feelings. These prevent many aberrations, which would daily happen were we totally surrendered to so fallible a guide as is human reason. The sense of propriety cannot justly be considered in another light, than as the natural law that regulates our conduct with respect to ourselves; as the sense of justice is the natural law that regulates our conduct with respect to others. I call the sense of  
propriety



propriety a law, because it really is so, not less than the sense of justice. If by law be meant a rule of conduct that we are conscious ought to be obeyed, this definition, which I conceive to be strictly accurate, is applicable undoubtedly to both. The sense of propriety includes this consciousness; for to say an action is proper, is, in other words, to say, that it *ought* to be performed; and to say it is improper, is, in other words, to say, that it *ought* to be forborn. It is this very consciousness of *ought* and *should* included in the moral sense, that makes justice a law to us. This consciousness of duty, when applied to propriety, is perhaps not so vigorous or strong as when applied to justice: but the difference is in degree only, not in kind: and we ought, without hesitation or reluctance, to submit equally to the government of both.

But I have more to urge upon this head. It must, in the next place, be observed, that to the sense of propriety as well as of justice are annexed the sanctions of rewards and punishments; which evidently prove the one to be a law as well as the other. The  
 satisfaction

satisfaction a man hath in doing his duty, joined with the esteem and good-will of others, is the reward that belongs to both equally. The punishments also, though not the same, are nearly allied; and differ in degree more than in quality. Disobedience to the law of justice, is punished with remorse; disobedience to the law of propriety, with shame, which is remorse in a lower degree. Every transgression of the law of justice raises indignation in the beholder; and so doth every flagrant transgression of the law of propriety. Slighter improprieties receive a milder punishment: they are always rebuked with some degree of contempt, and frequently with derision. In general, it is true, that the rewards and punishments annexed to the sense of propriety are slighter in degree than those annexed to the sense of justice. And that this is wisely ordered, will appear from considering, that to the well-being of society, duty to others is still more essential than duty to ourselves; for society could not subsist a moment, were individuals not protected from the headstrong and turbulent passions of their neighbours.

Reflecting

Reflecting coolly and carefully upon the subject under consideration, the constitution of man, admirable in all its parts, appears here in a fine light. The final cause now unfolded of the sense of propriety, must, to every discerning eye, appear delightful; and yet hitherto we have given but a partial view of it. The sense of propriety reaches another illustrious end; which is, to co-operate with the sense of justice in enforcing the performance of social duties. In fact, the sanctions visibly contrived to compel a man to be just to himself, are equally serviceable to compel him to be just to others. This will be evident from a single reflection, That an action, by being unjust, ceases not to be improper. An action never appears more eminently improper, than when it is unjust. It is obviously becoming and suitable to human nature, that each man do his duty to others; and accordingly every transgression of duty with respect to others, is at the same time a transgression of duty with respect to self. This is an undisguised truth without exaggeration; and it opens a new and delightful view in the moral landscape.

scape. The prospect is greatly enriched, by the multiplication of agreeable objects. It appears now, that nothing is overlooked, nothing left undone, that can possibly contribute to the enforcing social duty. For to all the functions that belong to it singly, are superadded the functions of self-duty. A familiar example shall suffice for illustration. An act of ingratitude considered in itself, is to the author disagreeable as well as to every spectator: considered by the author with relation to himself, it raises self-contempt: considered by him with relation to the world, it makes him ashamed. Again, considered by others, it raises their contempt and indignation against the author. These feelings are all of them occasioned by the impropriety of the action. When the action is considered as unjust, it occasions another set of feelings. In the author it produces remorse, and a dread of merited punishment; and in others, the benefactor chiefly, indignation and hatred directed upon the ungrateful person. Thus shame and remorse united in the ungrateful



person, and indignation united with hatred in the hearts of others, are the punishments provided by nature for injustice. Stupid and insensible must he be in extreme, who, in a contrivance so exquisite, perceives not the hand of the Sovereign Architect.

C H A P,

## C H A P. XI.

## Of Dignity and Meanness.

**T**HESE terms are applied to man in point of character, sentiment, and behaviour. We say, for example, of one man, that he hath a natural dignity in his air and manner; of another, that he makes a mean figure. There is a dignity in every action and sentiment of some persons: the actions and sentiments of others are mean and vulgar. With respect to the fine arts, some performances are said to be manly and suitable to the dignity of human nature: others are termed low, mean, trivial. Such expressions are common, though they have not always a precise meaning. With respect to the art of criticism, it must be a real acquisition to ascertain what these terms truly import; which possibly may enable us to rank every performance in the fine arts according to its dignity.

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Inquiring

Inquiring first to what subjects the terms *dignity* and *meanness* are appropriated, we soon discover, that they are not applicable to any thing inanimate. The most magnificent palace ever built, may be lofty, may be grand, but it has no relation to dignity. The most diminutive shrub may be little, but it is not mean. These terms must belong to sensitive beings, probably to man only; which will be evident when we advance in the inquiry.

Of all objects, human actions produce in a spectator the greatest variety of feelings. They are in themselves grand or little; with respect to the author, they are proper or improper: with respect to those affected by them, just or unjust. And I must now add, that they are also distinguished by dignity and meanness. It may possibly be thought, that with respect to human actions, dignity coincides with grandeur, and meanness with littleness. But the difference will be evident upon reflecting, that we never attribute dignity to any action but what is virtuous, nor meanness to any but what in some degree is faulty. But an ac-  
tion

tion may be grand without being virtuous, or little without being faulty. Every action of dignity creates respect and esteem for the author; and a mean action draws upon him contempt. A man is always admired for a grand action, but frequently is neither loved nor esteemed for it: neither is a man always contemned for a low or little action.

As it appears to me, dignity and meanness are founded on a natural principle not hitherto mentioned. Man is endued with a sense of the worth and excellence of his nature. He deems it to be more perfect than that of the other beings around him; and he feels that the perfection of his nature consists in virtue, particularly in virtue of the highest rank. To express this sense, the term *dignity* is appropriated. Further, to behave with dignity, and to refrain from all mean actions, is felt to be, not a virtue only, but a duty: it is a duty every man owes to himself. By acting in this manner, he attracts love and esteem. By acting meanly or below himself, he is disapproved and contemned.

According



According to the description here given of dignity and meanness, they will be found to be a species of propriety and impropriety. Many actions may be proper or improper, to which dignity or meanness cannot be applied. To eat when one is hungry is proper, but there is no dignity in this action. Revenge fairly taken, if against law, is improper, but it is not mean. But every action of dignity is also proper, and every mean action is also improper.

This sense of the dignity of human nature, reaches even our pleasures and amusements. If they enlarge the mind by raising grand or elevated emotions, or if they humanize the mind by exercising our sympathy, they are approved as suited to our nature: if they contract the mind by fixing it on trivial objects, they are contemned as low and mean. Hence in general, every occupation, whether of use or amusement, that corresponds to the dignity of man, obtains the epithet of *manly*; and every occupation below his nature, obtains the epithet of *childish*.

To those who study human nature, there  
is

is a point which has always appeared intricate. How comes it that generosity and courage are more valued and bestow more dignity, than good-nature, or even justice, though the latter contribute more than the former, to private as well as to public happiness? This question bluntly proposed, might puzzle a cunning philosopher; but by means of the foregoing observations will easily be solved. Human virtues, like other objects, obtain a rank in our estimation, not from their utility, which is a subject of reflection, but from the direct impression they make on us. Justice and good-nature are a sort of negative virtues, that make no figure unless when they are transgressed. Courage and generosity producing elevated emotions, enliven greatly the sense of a man's dignity, both in himself and in others; and for that reason, courage and generosity are in higher regard than the other virtues mentioned. We describe them as grand and elevated, as of greater dignity, and more praise-worthy.

This leads us to examine more directly emotions and passions with respect to the  
 present

present subject. And it will not be difficult to form a scale of them, beginning at the meanest, and ascending gradually to those of the highest rank and dignity. Pleasure felt as at the organ of sense, named *corporeal pleasure*, is perceived to be low; and when indulged to excess, beyond what nature demands, is perceived also to be mean. Persons therefore of any delicacy, dissemble the pleasure they have in eating and drinking. The pleasures of the eye and ear, which have no organic feeling\*, are free from any sense of meanness; and for that reason are indulged without any shame. They even arise to a certain degree of dignity, when their objects are grand or elevated. The same is the case of the sympathetic passions. They raise the character considerably, when their objects are of importance. A virtuous person behaving with fortitude and dignity under the most cruel misfortunes, makes a capital figure; and the sympathizing spectator feels in himself the same dignity. Sympathetic distress at

\* See the Introduction.

the same time never is mean: on the contrary, it is agreeable to the nature of a social being, and has the general approbation. The rank that love possesses in this scale, depends in a great measure on its object. It possesses a low place when founded on external properties merely; and is mean when bestowed upon a person of a rank much inferior without any extraordinary qualification. But when founded on the more elevated internal properties, it assumes a considerable degree of dignity. The same is the case of friendship. When gratitude is warm, it animates the mind; but it scarce rises to dignity. Joy bestows dignity when it proceeds from an elevated cause.

So far as I can gather from induction, dignity is not a property of any disagreeable passion. One is slight another severe, one depresses the mind another rouses and animates it; but there is no elevation, far less dignity, in any of them. Revenge, in particular, though it inflame and swell the mind, is not accompanied with dignity, not even with elevation. It is not however felt

as mean or groveling, unless when it takes indirect measures for its gratification. Shame and remorse, though they sink the spirits, are not mean. Pride, a disagreeable passion, bestows no dignity in the eye of a spectator. Vanity always appears mean; and extremely so where founded, as commonly happens, on trivial qualifications.

I proceed to the pleasures of the understanding, which possess a high rank in point of dignity. Of this every one will be sensible, when he considers the important truths that have been laid open by science; such as general theorems, and the general laws that govern the material and moral worlds. The pleasures of the understanding are suited to man as a rational and contemplative being; and they tend not a little to ennoble his nature. Even to the Deity he stretches his contemplations, which, in the discovery of infinite power wisdom and benevolence, afford delight of the most exalted kind. Hence it appears, that the fine arts studied as a rational science, afford entertainment of great dignity; superior far to what they afford as a subject of taste merely.

But



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But contemplation, though in itself valuable, is chiefly respected as subservient to action; for man is intended to be more an active than a contemplative being. He accordingly shows more dignity in action than in contemplation. Generosity, magnanimity, heroism, raise his character to the highest pitch. These best express the dignity of his nature, and advance him nearer to divinity than any other of his attributes.

By every production that shows art and contrivance, our curiosity is excited upon two points; first how it was made, and next to what end. Of the two, the latter is the more important inquiry, because the means are ever subordinate to the end; and in fact our curiosity is always more inflamed by the final than by the efficient cause. This preference is no where more visible, than in contemplating the works of nature. If in the efficient cause, wisdom and power be displayed, wisdom is not less conspicuous in the final cause; and from it only can we infer benevolence, which of all the divine attributes is to man the most

E 2                    important.

important. Having endeavoured to assign the efficient cause of dignity and meanness, and to unfold the principle on which they are founded, we proceed to explain the final cause of the dignity or meanness bestowed upon the several particulars above mentioned, beginning with corporeal pleasures. These, so far as useful, are like justice fenced with sufficient sanctions to prevent their being neglected. Hunger and thirst are painful sensations; and we are incited to animal love by a vigorous propensity. Were they dignified over and above with a place in a high class, they would infallibly overturn the balance of the mind, by outweighing the social affections. This is a satisfactory final cause for refusing to corporeal pleasures any degree of dignity. And the final cause is not less evident of their meanness, when they are indulged to excess. The more refined pleasures of external sense, conveyed by the eye and the ear from natural objects and from the fine arts, deserve a high place in our esteem, because of their singular and extensive utility. In some cases they arise to a considerable dignity,

nity. The very lowest pleasures of the kind, are never esteemed mean or groveling. The pleasure arising from wit, humour, ridicule, or from what is simply ludicrous, is useful, by relaxing the mind after the fatigue of more manly occupation. But the mind, when it surrenders itself to pleasure of this kind, loses its vigor, and sinks gradually into sloth. The place this pleasure occupies in point of dignity, is adjusted to these views. To make it useful as a relaxation, it is not branded with meanness. To prevent its usurpation, it is removed from this place but a single degree. No man values himself upon this pleasure, even during the gratification; and if more time have been given to it than is requisite for relaxation, a man looks back with some degree of shame.

In point of dignity, the social passions rise above the selfish, and much above the pleasures of the eye and ear. Man is by his nature a social being; and to qualify him for society, it is wisely contrived, that he should value himself more for being social than selfish.

The

The excellency of man is chiefly discernible in the great improvements he is susceptible of in society. These, by perseverance, may be carried on progressively to higher and higher degrees of perfection, above any assignable limits; and, even abstracting from revelation, there is great probability, that the progress begun in this life will be completed in some future state. Now, as all valuable improvements proceed from the exercise of our rational faculties, the author of our nature, in order to excite us to a due use of these faculties, hath assigned a high rank to the pleasures of the understanding. Their utility, with respect to this life as well as a future, intitles them to this rank.

But as action is the end of all our improvements, virtuous actions justly possess the highest of all the ranks. These, I find, are by nature distributed into different classes, and the first in point of dignity assigned to actions which appear not the first in point of use. Generosity, for example, in the sense of mankind, is more respected than justice, though the latter is undoubtedly more essential to society. And magnanimity,

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ty, heroism, undaunted courage, rise still higher in our esteem. One would readily think, that the moral virtues should be esteemed according to their importance. Nature has here deviated from her ordinary path, and great wisdom is shown in the deviation. The efficient cause is explained above; and the final cause is explained in the *Essays of morality and natural religion* \*.

\* Part 1. essay 2. chap. 4.

C H A P.



## C H A P. XII.

## R I D I C U L E.

**T**HIS subject has puzzled and vexed all the critics. Aristotle gives a definition of ridicule, obscure and imperfect\*. Cicero handles it at great length †; but without giving any satisfaction. He wanders in the dark, and misses the distinction betwixt risible and ridiculous. Quintilian is sensible of this distinction ‡; but has not attempted to explain it. Luckily this subject lies no longer in obscurity. A risible object produceth an emotion of laughter merely ||. A ridiculous object is improper as well as risible; and produceth a mixt emotion, which is vented by a laugh of derision or scorn\*\*.

\* Poet. cap. 5.

† L. 2. De oratore.

‡ Ideoque anceps ejus rei ratio est, quod a derisu non procul abest risus. *Lib. 6. cap. 3. § 1.*

|| See chap. 7.

\*\* See chap. 10.

Having

Having therefore happily unravelled the abstruse and knotty part, I proceed to what may be thought further necessary upon this subject.

Burlesque is one great engine of ridicule. But it is not confined to that subject; for it is clearly distinguishable into burlesque that excites laughter merely, and burlesque that provokes derision or ridicule. A grave subject in which there is no impropriety, may be brought down by a certain colouring so as to be risible. This is the case of *Virgil Travestie* \*. And it is the case of the *Secchia Rapita* †. The authors laugh first at every turn, in order to make their readers laugh. The *Lutrin* is a burlesque poem of the other sort. The author Boileau, lays hold of a low and trifling incident to expose the luxury, indolence, and contentious spirit of a set of monks. He turns the subject into ridicule by dressing it in the heroic style, and affecting to consider it as of the utmost dignity and importance; and though ridicule is the poet's aim, he himself carries

\* Scarron.

† Taffoni.

all along a grave face, and never once betrays a smile. The opposition betwixt the subject and the manner of handling it, is what produces the ridicule. In a composition of this kind, no image professedly ludicrous ought to have quarter; because such images destroy the contrast.

Though the burlesque that aims at ridicule, produces its effect by elevating the style far above the subject, yet it has limits beyond which the elevation ought not to be carried. The poet, consulting the imagination of his readers, ought to confine himself to such images as are lively and readily apprehended. A strained elevation, soaring above an ordinary reach of fancy, makes not a pleasant impression. The mind fatigued with being always upon the stretch, is soon disgusted; and if it perseveres, becomes thoughtless and indifferent. Further, a fiction gives no pleasure, unless where painted in so lively colours as to produce some perception of reality; which never can be done effectually where the images are formed with labour or difficulty. For these reasons, I cannot avoid condemning the *Batrachomachia*

*machia* said to be the composition of Homer. It is beyond the power of imagination, to form a clear and lively image of frogs and mice acting with the dignity of the highest of our species: nor can we form a conception of the reality of such an action, in any manner so distinct as to interest our affections even in the slightest degree.

The *Rape of the Lock* is of a character clearly distinguishable from those now mentioned. It is not properly a burlesque performance, but what may rather be termed *an heroi-comical poem*. It treats a gay and familiar subject, with pleasantry and with a moderate degree of dignity. The author puts not on a mask like Boileau, nor professes to make us laugh like Tassoni. The *Rape of the Lock* is a genteel and gay species of writing, less strained than the others mentioned; and is pleasant or ludicrous without having ridicule for its chief aim; giving way however to ridicule where it arises naturally from a particular character, such as that of Sir Plume. Addison's *Spectator* upon the exercise of the fan \* is ex-

\* N<sup>o</sup> 102.

tremely gay and ludicrous, resembling in its subject the *Rape of the Lock*.

Humour belongs to the present chapter, because it is undoubtedly connected with ridicule. Congreve defines humour to be “ a singular and unavoidable manner of doing or saying any thing, peculiar and natural to one man only, by which his speech and actions are distinguished from those of other men.” Were this definition just, a majestic and commanding air, which is a singular property, is humour ; as also that natural flow of eloquence and correct elocution which is a rare talent. Nothing just or proper is denominated humour ; nor any singularity of character, words, or actions, that is valued or respected. When we attend to the character of an humorist, we find that the peculiarity of this character lessens the man in our esteem : we find that this character arises from circumstances both risible and improper, and therefore in some measure ridiculous.

Humour in writing is very different from humour in character. When an author insists upon ludicrous subjects with a profess-  
ed



ed purpose to make his readers laugh, he may be styled *a ludicrous writer*; but is scarce intitled to be styled *a writer of humour*. This quality belongs to an author, who, affecting to be grave and serious, paints his objects in such colours as to provoke mirth and laughter. A writer that is really an humorist in character, does this without design. If not, he must affect the character in order to succeed. Swift and Fontaine were humorists in character, and their writings are full of humour. Addison was not an humorist in character; and yet in his prose writings a most delicate and refined humour prevails. Arbuthnot exceeds them all in drollery and humorous painting; which shows a great genius, because, if I am not misinformed, he had nothing of this peculiarity in his character.

There remains to show, by examples, the manner of treating subjects so as to give them a ridiculous appearance.

Il ne dit jamais, je vous donne, mais, je vous prete le bon jour.

*Moliere.*

*Orleans.*

*Orleans.* I know him to be valiant.

*Constable.* I was told that by one that knows him better than you.

*Orleans.* What's he?

*Constable.* Marry, he told me so himself; and he said, he car'd not who knew it.

*Henry V. Skakepear.*

He never broke any man's head but his own, and that was against a post when he was drunk.

*Ibid.*

*Millament.* Sententious Mirabell! pr'ythee don't look with that violent and inflexible wise face, like Solomon at the dividing of the child in an old tapestry hanging.

*Way of the world.*

A true critic in the perusal of a book, is like a dog at a feast, whose thoughts and stomach are wholly set upon what the guests fling away, and consequently is apt to snarl most when there are the fewest bones.

*Tale of a Tub.*

In the following instances the ridicule is made to appear from the behaviour of the persons introduced.

*Mascarille.*

*Mascarille.* Te souvient-il, vicomte, de cette demi-lune, que nous emportâmes sur les ennemis au siege d'Arras ?

*Jodelet.* Que veux tu dire avec ta demi-lune ? c' étoit bien une lune toute entiere.

*Moliere les Precieuses Ridicules, sc. 11.*

*Slender.* I came yonder at Eaton to marry Mrs Anne Page ; and she's a great lubberly boy.

*Page.* Upon my life then you took the wrong.

*Slender.* What need you tell me that ? I think so, when I took a boy for a girl : if I had been marry'd to him, for all he was in woman's apparel, I would not have had him.

*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

*Valentine.* Your blessing, Sir,

*Sir Sampson.* You've had it already, Sir : I think I sent it you to-day in a bill for four thousand pound ; a great deal of money, Brother Foresight.

*Foresight.* Ay indeed, Sir Sampson, a great deal of money for a young man ; I wonder what can he do with it.

*Love for Love, act 2. sc. 7.*

*Millamant.* I nauseate walking ; 'tis a country-diversion ; I lothe the country, and every thing that relates to it.

*Sir*

*Sir Wilful.* Indeed! hah! look ye, look ye, you do? nay, 'tis like you may—— here are choice of pastimes here in town, as plays and the like; that must be confess'd indeed.

*Millamant.* Ah l'etourdie! I hate the town too.

*Sir Wilful.* Dear heart, that's much —— hah! that you should hate 'em both! hah! 'tis like you may; there are some can't relish the town, and others can't away with the country—— 'tis like you may be one of those, Cousine.

*Way of the world, act 4. sc. 4.*

*Lord Froth.* I assure you, Sir Paul, I laugh at no body's jest but my own, or a lady's: I assure you, Sir Paul.

*Briisk.* How? how, my Lord? what, affront my wit! Let me perish, do I never say any thing worthy to be laugh'd at?

*Lord Froth.* O foy, don't misapprehend me, I don't say so, for I often smile at your conceptions. But there is nothing more unbecoming a man of quality, than to laugh; 'tis such a vulgar expression of the passion! every body can laugh. Then especially to laugh at the jest of an inferior person, or when any body else of the same quality does not laugh with one; ridiculous! To be pleas'd with what pleases the crowd! Now, when I laugh I always laugh alone.

*Double Dealer, act 1. sc. 4.*

So

So sharp-sighted is pride in blemishes, and so willing to be gratified, that it will take up with the very slightest improprieties; such as a blunder by a foreigner in speaking our language, especially if the blunder can bear a sense that reflects upon the speaker :

*Quickly.* The young man is an honest man.

*Caius.* What shall de honest man do in my closet? dere is no honest man dat shall come in my closet.

*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Love-speeches are finely ridiculed in the following passage,

Quoth he, My faith as adamantine,  
As chains of destiny, I'll maintain;  
True as Apollo ever spoke,  
Or oracle from heart of oak;  
And if you'll give my flame but vent,  
Now in close hugger-mugger pent,  
And shine upon me but benignly,  
With that one, and that other pig's-eye,  
The sun and day shall sooner part,  
Than love, or you, shake off my heart;  
The sun that shall no more dispense  
His own, but your bright influence :



I'll carve your name on barks of trees,  
 With true love knots, and flourishes;  
 That shall infuse eternal spring,  
 And everlasting flourishing:  
 Drink ev'ry letter on't in stum,  
 And make it brisk champaign become.  
 Where-e'er you tread, your foot shall set  
 The primrose and the violet;  
 All spices, perfumes, and sweet powders,  
 Shall borrow from your breath their odours;  
 Nature her charter shall renew  
 And take all lives of things from you;  
 The world depend upon your eye,  
 And when you frown upon it, die.  
 Only our loves shall still survive,  
 New worlds and natures to outlive;  
 And, like to herald's moons, remain  
 All crescents, without change or wane.

*Hudibras, part 2. canto 1.*

Irony turns things into ridicule in a peculiar manner. It consists in laughing at a man under disguise, by appearing to praise or speak well of him. Swift affords us many illustrious examples of this species of ridicule. Take the following example,  
 " By these methods, in a few weeks,  
 " there starts up many a writer, capable  
 " of managing the profoundest and most  
 " universal

“ universal subjects. For what though his  
 “ head be empty, provided his common-  
 “ place book be full? And if you will bate  
 “ him but the circumstances of method,  
 “ and style, and grammar, and invention;  
 “ allow him but the common privileges of  
 “ transcribing from others, and digressing  
 “ from himself, as often as he shall see oc-  
 “ casion; he will desire no more ingre-  
 “ dients towards fitting up a treatise that  
 “ shall make a very comely figure on a  
 “ bookseller’s shelf, there to be preserved  
 “ neat and clean, for a long eternity, ad-  
 “ orned with the heraldry of its title, fairly  
 “ inscribed on a label; never to be thumbed  
 “ or greased by students, nor bound to e-  
 “ verlasting chains of darkness in a libra-  
 “ ry; but when the fullness of time is  
 “ come, shall happily undergo the trial of  
 “ purgatory, in order to ascend the sky\*.”

The following passage from Arbuthnot is  
 not less ironical. “ If the Reverend clergy  
 “ showed more concern than others, I  
 “ charitably impute it to their great charge  
 “ of souls; and what confirmed me in this

\* Tale of a Tub, sect. 7.

“ opinion was, that the degrees of apprehension and terror could be distinguished to be greater or less, according to their ranks and degrees in the church\*.”

A parody must be distinguished from every species of ridicule. It enlivens a gay subject by imitating some important incident that is serious. It is ludicrous, and may be risible. But ridicule is not a necessary ingredient. Take the following examples, the first of which refers to an expression of Moses.

The skilful nymph reviews her force with care :  
Let spades be trumps ! she said, and trumps they  
were.

*Rape of the Lock, canto iii. 45.*

The next is an imitation of Achilles's oath in Homer.

But by this lock, this sacred lock, I swear,  
(Which never more shall join its parted hair,

\* A true and faithful narrative of what passed in London during the general consternation of all ranks and degrees of mankind.

Which

Which never more its honours shall renew,  
Clip'd from the lovely head where late it grew),  
That while my nostrils draw the vital air,  
This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear.  
He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph spread  
The long-contended honours of her head.

*Ibid. canto iv. 133.*

The following imitates the history of Agamemnon's sceptre in Homer.

Now meet thy fate, incens'd Belinda cry'd,  
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side,  
(The same, his ancient personage to deck,  
Her great-great-grandfire wore about his neck,  
In three seal-rings; which after, melted down,  
Form'd a vast buckle for his widow's gown:  
Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,  
'The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;  
Then in a bodkin grac'd her mother's hairs,  
Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears.)

*Ibid. canto v. 87.*

Ridicule, as observed above, is no necessary ingredient in a parody. But I did not intend to say, that there is any opposition betwixt them. A parody, no doubt, may be successfully employed to promote ridicule;

cule; witness the following example, in which the goddess of Dullness is addressed upon the subject of modern education.

Thou gav'st that ripeness, which so soon began,  
 And ceas'd so soon, he ne'er was boy nor man;  
 Through school and college, thy kind cloud o'er-  
     cast,  
 Safe and unseen the young Æneas past \*;  
 Thence bursting glorious, all at once let down,  
 Stunn'd with his giddy larum half the town.

*Dunciad, b. iv. 287.*

The interposition of the gods in the manner of Homer and Virgil, ought to be confined to ludicrous subjects, which are much enlivened by such interposition handled in the form of a parody; witness the cave of Spleen, *Rape of the Lock, canto 4.*; the goddess of Discord; *Lutrin, canto 1.*; and the goddess of Indolence, *canto 2.*

Those who have a talent for ridicule, which is seldom united with a taste for delicate and refined beauties, are quick-sighted in improprieties; and these they eagerly

\* Æn. l. 1. *At Venus obscuro, &c.*



lay hold of, in order to gratify their favourite propensity. The persons galled have no other refuge but to maintain, that ridicule ought not to be applied to grave subjects. It is yielded, on the other hand, that subjects really grave and important, are by no means fit for ridicule: but then it is urged, that ridicule is the only proper test for discovering whether a subject be really grave, or be made so artificially by custom and fashion. This dispute has produced a celebrated question, Whether ridicule be or be not a test of truth? I give this question a place here, because it tends to illustrate the nature of ridicule.

The question stated in accurate terms is, Whether the sense of ridicule be the proper test for distinguishing ridiculous objects from those that are not so? To answer this question with precision, I must premise, that ridicule is not a subject of reasoning, but of sense or taste\*. This being taken for granted, I proceed thus. No person doubts that our sense of beauty is the true test of what

\* See chap. 10. compared with chap. 7.

is beautiful, and our sense of grandeur, of what is great or sublime. Is it more doubtful whether our sense of ridicule be the true test of what is ridiculous? It is not only the true test, but indeed the only test. For this is a subject that comes not, more than beauty or grandeur, under the province of reason. If any subject, by the influence of fashion or custom, have acquired a degree of veneration or esteem to which naturally it is not intitled, what are the proper means for wiping off the artificial colouring, and displaying the subject in its true light? Reasoning, as observed, cannot be applied. And therefore the only means is to judge by taste. The test of ridicule which separates it from its artificial connections, exposes it naked with all its native improprieties.

But it is urged, that the gravest and most serious matters may be set in a ridiculous light. Hardly so; for where an object is neither risible nor improper, it lies not open in any quarter to an attack from ridicule. But supposing the fact, I foresee not any harmful consequence. By the same sort of reasoning, a talent for wit ought to be condemned, because it may be employed to  
burlesque

burlesque a great or lofty subject. Such irregular use made of a talent for wit or ridicule, cannot long impose upon mankind. It cannot stand the test of correct and delicate taste; and truth will at last prevail even with the vulgar. To condemn a talent for ridicule because it may be perverted to wrong purposes, is not a little ridiculous. Could one forbear to smile, if a talent for reasoning were condemned because it also may be perverted? And yet the conclusion in the latter case, would be not less just than in the former; perhaps more just, for no talent is so often perverted as that of reason.

We had best leave Nature to her own operations. The most valuable talents may be abused, and so may that of ridicule. Let us bring it under proper culture if we can, without endeavouring to pull it up by the root. Were we destitute of this test of truth, I know not what might be the consequences: I see not what rule would be left us to prevent splendid trifles passing for matters of importance, show and form for substance, and superstition or enthusiasm for pure religion.

## C H A P. XIII.

## W I T.

**W**IT is a quality of certain thoughts and expressions. The term is never applied to an action or a passion, and as little to an external object.

However difficult it may be in every particular instance to distinguish a witty thought or expression from one that is not so, yet in general it may be laid down, that the term *wit* is appropriated to such thoughts and expressions as are ludicrous, and also occasion some degree of surprize by their singularity. Wit also in a figurative sense expresses that talent which some men have of inventing ludicrous thoughts or expressions. We say commonly, *a witty man*, or *a man of wit*.

Wit in its proper sense, as suggested above, is distinguishable into two kinds; wit in the thought, and wit in the words or expression. Again, wit in the thought is of

two

two kinds; ludicrous images, and ludicrous combinations of things that have little or no natural relation.

Ludicrous images that occasion surprise by their singularity, as having little or no foundation in nature, are fabricated by the imagination. And the imagination is well qualified for the office; being of all our faculties the most active, and the least under restraint. Take the following example.

*Sbylock.* You knew (none so well, none so well as you) of my daughter's flight.

*Salino.* That's certain; I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.

*Merchant of Venice, act 3. sc. 1.*

The image here is undoubtedly witty. It is ludicrous: and it must occasion surprise; for having no natural foundation, it is altogether unexpected.

The other branch of wit in the thought, is that only which is taken notice of by Addison, following Locke, who defines it "to  
" lie in the assemblage of ideas; and put-  
" ting those together with quickness and  
" variety, wherein can be found any refem-



“ blance or congruity, thereby to make up  
 “ pleasant pictures and agreeable visions in  
 “ the fancy \*.” It may be defined more  
 curtly, and perhaps more accurately, “ A  
 “ junction of things by distant and fanciful  
 “ relations, which surprize because they are  
 “ unexpected †.” The following is a pro-  
 per example.

We grant although he had much wit,  
 H<sup>o</sup> was very shie of using it,  
 As being loth to wear it out;  
 And therefore bore it not about,  
 Unless on holidays, or so,  
 As men their best apparel do.

*Hudibras, canto 1.*

Wit is of all the most elegant recreation.  
 The image enters the mind with gaiety, and  
 gives a sudden flash which is extremely plea-  
 sant. Wit thereby gently elevates with-  
 out straining, raises mirth without dissolute-  
 ness, and relaxes while it entertains.

Wit in the expression, commonly called  
*a play of words*, being a bastard sort of wit,

\* B. 2. ch. 11. § 2.

† See chap. 1.

is reserved for the last place. I proceed to examples of wit in the thought. And first of ludicrous images.

Falstaff, speaking of his taking Sir John Colevile of the Dale:

Here he is, and here I yield him; and I beseech your Grace, let it be book'd with the rest of this day's deeds; or, by the Lord, I will have it in a particular ballad else, with mine own picture on the top of it, Colevile kissing my foot: to the which course if I be inforc'd, if you do not all shew like gilt twopences to me; and I, in the clear sky of fame, o'er-shine you as much as the full moon doth the cinders of the element, which shew like pins' heads to her; believe not the word of the Noble. Therefore let me have right, and let desert mount.

*Second part, Henry IV. act 4. sc. 6.*

I knew, when seven justices could not take up a quarrel, but when the parties were met themselves, one of them thought but of an *if*; as, if you said so, then I said so; and they shook hands, and swore brothers. Your *if* is the only peace-maker; much virtue is in *if*.

*Shakespear.*

For

For there is not through all nature, another so callous and insensible a member as the world's posteriors, whether you apply to it the toe or the birch.

*Preface to a Tale of a tub.*

The war hath introduced abundance of polysyllables, which will never be able to live many more campaigns. Speculations, operations, preliminaries, ambassadors, palifadoes, communication, circumvallation, battalions, as numerous as they are, if they attack us too frequently in our coffeehouses, we shall certainly put them to flight, and cut off the rear.

*Tatler, N<sup>o</sup> 230.*

Speaking of Discord, "She never went abroad, but she brought home such a bundle of monstrous lies, as would have amazed any mortal, but such as knew her; of a whale that had swallowed a fleet of ships; of the lions being let out of the tower to destroy the Protestant religion; of the Pope's being seen in a brandy-shop at Wapping," &c.

*History of John Bull, part 1. ch. 16.*

The other branch of wit in the thought, *viz.* ludicrous combinations and oppositions, may be traced through various ramifications.

tions. And, first, fanciful causes assigned that have no natural relation to the effects produced.

*Lancaster.* Fare you well, Falstaff; I, in my condition,

Shall better speak of you than you deserve. [*Exit.*

*Falstaff.* I would you had but the wit; 'twere better than your dukedom. Good faith, this same young sober-blooded boy doth not love me; nor a man cannot make him laugh; but that's no marvel, he drinks no wine. There's never any of these demure boys come to any proof; for thin drink doth so over-cool their blood, and making many fish-meals, that they fall into a kind of male green-sickness; and then, when they marry, they get wenches. They are generally fools and cowards; which some of us should be too, but for inflammation. A good sherris-sack hath a twofold operation in it; it ascends me into the brain; dries me there all the foolish, dull, and crudy vapours which environ it; makes it apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes; which deliver'd o'er to the voice, the tongue, which is the birth, becomes excellent wit. The second property of your excellent sherris, is, the warming of the blood; which before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale; which is the badge of pusillanimity

fillanimity and cowardice: but the sherris warms it, and makes it course from the inwards, to the parts extreme; it illuminateth the face, which, as a beacon, gives warning to all the rest of this little kingdom, man, to arm; and then the vital commoners and inland petty spirits muster me all to their captain, the heart; who, great, and puff'd up with this retinue, doth any deed of courage: and this valour comes of sherris. So that skill in the weapon is nothing without sack, for that sets it a-work; and learning a mere hoard of gold kept by a devil, till sack commences it, and sets it in act and use. Hereof comes it, that Prince Harry is valiant; for the cold blood he did naturally inherit of his father, he hath, like lean, steril, and bare land, manured, husbanded, and till'd, with excellent endeavour of drinking good and good store of fertil sherris, that he is become very hot and valiant. If I had a thousand sons, the first human principle I would teach them, should be to forswear thin potations, and to addict themselves to sack.

*Second part of Henry IV. act. 4. sc. 7.*

The trenchant blade, toledo trusty,  
 For want of fighting was grown rusty,  
 And ate into itself, for lack  
 Of some body to hew and hack.

The



The peaceful scabbard where it dwelt,  
 The rancor of its edge had felt:  
 For of the lower end two handful,  
 It had devoured, 'twas so manful;  
 And so much scorn'd to lurk in case,  
 As if it durst not shew its face.

*Hudibras, canto 1.*

Speaking of physicians,

Le bon de cette profession est, qu'il y a parmi les  
 morts une honnêteté, une discrétion la plus  
 grande du monde; jamais on n'en voit se plaindre  
 du médecin qui l'a tué.

*Le médecin malgré lui.*

Admirez les bontez, admirez les tendresses,  
 De ces vieux esclaves du fort.  
 Ils ne font jamais las d'acquérir des richesses,  
 Pour ceux qui souhaitent leur mort.

*Belinda.* Lard, he has so pester'd me with flames  
 and stuff—I think I shan't endure the sight of a  
 fire this twelvemonth.

*Old Bachelor, act 2. sc. 8.*

To account for effects by such fantastical  
 causes, being highly ludicrous, is quite im-

proper in any serious composition. Therefore the following passage from Cowley, in his poem on the death of Sir Henry Wooton, is in a bad taste.

He did the utmost bounds of Knowledge find,  
 He found them not so large as was his mind.  
 But, like the brave Pellæan youth, did moan,  
 Because that Art had no more worlds than one,  
 And when he saw that he through all had past,  
 He dy'd, lest he should idle grow at last.

Fanciful reasoning,

*Falstaff.* Imbowell'd!—if thou imbowel me to day, I'll give you leave to powder me, and eat me to-morrow! 'Sblood, 'twas time to counterfeit, or that hot termagant Scot had paid me scot and lot too. Counterfeit? I lie, I am no counterfeit; to die is to be a counterfeit; for he is but the counterfeit of a man, who hath not the life of a man: but to counterfeit dying, when a man thereby liveth, is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life, indeed.

*First Part Henry IV. act 1. sc. 10.*

*Clown.* And the more pity that great folk should  
 have

have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian.

*Hamlet, Act 5. sc. 1.*

*Pedro.* Will you have me, Lady?

*Beatrice.* No, my Lord, unless I might have another for working days. Your Grace is too costly to wear every day.

*Much ado about nothing, act 2. sc. 5.*

*Jessica.* I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a Christian.

*Launcelot.* Truly the more to blame he; we were Christians enough before, e'en as many as could well live by one another: this making of Christians will raise the price of hogs; if we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not have a rasher on the coals for money.

*Merchant of Venice, act 3. sc. 6.*

In western clime there is a town,  
To those that dwell therein well known;  
Therefore there needs no more be said here,  
We unto them refer our reader:  
For brevity is very good,  
When w' are, or are not understood.

*Hudibras, canto 1.*

But Hudibras gave him a twitch,  
 As quick as lightning, in the breech,  
 Just in the place where honour's lodg'd,  
 As wise philosophers have judg'd;  
 Because a kick in that part, more  
 Hurts honour, than deep wounds before.

*Ibid. canto 3.*

Ludicrous junction of small things with  
 great, as of equal importance.

This day black omens threat the brightest fair  
 That e'er deserv'd a watchful spirit's care;  
 Some dire disaster, or by force, or flight;  
 But what, or where, the fates have wrapt in night:  
 Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law;  
 Or some frail china jar receive a flaw;  
 Or stain her honour, or her new brocade;  
 Forget her pray'rs, or miss a masquerade;  
 Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball;  
 Or whether Heav'n has doom'd that Shock must  
 fall.

*Rape of the Lock, canto ii. 101.*

One speaks the glory of the British Queen,  
 And one describes a charming Indian screen.

*Ibid. canto iii. 13.*

Then

Then flash'd the living lightning from her eyes,  
 And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.  
 Not louder shrieks to pitying heav'n are cast,  
 When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe their last;  
 Or when rich china vessels fall'n from high,  
 In glitt'ring dust, and painted fragments lie!

*Ibid. canto iii. 155.*

Not youthful kings in battle seiz'd alive,  
 Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,  
 Not ardent lovers robb'd of all their blifs,  
 Not ancient ladies when refus'd a kifs,  
 Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,  
 Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinn'd awry,  
 E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,  
 As thou, sad virgin! for thy ravish'd hair.

*Ibid. canto iv. 3.*

Joining things that in appearance are opposite. As for example, where Sir Roger de Coverley, in the Spectator, speaking of his widow, "That he would have given  
 " her a coal-pit to have kept her in clean  
 " linen; and that her finger should have  
 " sparkled with one hundred of his richest  
 " acres."

Premises that promise much and perform nothing. Cicero upon this article says,  
 " Sed



“ Sed scitis esse notissimum ridiculi genus,  
 “ cum aliud expectamus, aliud dicitur : hic  
 “ nobismetipsis noster error risum mo-  
 “ vet \*.”

*Beatrice.* ——— With a good leg and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world, if he could get her good-will.

*Much ado about nothing, act 2. sc. 1.*

*Beatrice.* I have a good eye, uncle, I can see a church by day-light.

*ibid.*

Le medecin que l'on m'indique  
 Sait le Latin, le Grec, l'Hebreu,  
 Les belles lettres, la physique,  
 La chimie et la botanique.  
 Chacun lui donne son aveu :  
 Il auroit aussi ma pratique ;  
 Mais je veux vivre encore un peu.

Again,

Vingt fois le jour le bon Grégoire  
 A soin de fermer son armoire.

\* De oratore, l. 2. cap. 63.

De quoi pensez vous qu'il a peur ?  
Belle demande! Qu'un voleur  
Trouvant une facile proie,  
Ne lui ravisse tout son bien.  
Non; Gregoire a peur qu'on ne voie  
Que dan son armoire il n'a rien.

Again,

L'athsmatique Damon a cru que l'air des champs  
Repareroit en lui le ravage des ans,  
Il s'est fait, a grands fraix, transporter en Bre-  
tagne.

Or voiez ce qu'a fait l'air natal qu'il a pris!

Damon feroit mort à Paris :

Damon est mort à la campagne.

Having discussed wit in the thought, we proceed to what is verbal only, commonly called *a play of words*. This sort of wit depends for the most part upon chusing words that have different significations. By this artifice, hocus-pocus tricks are played in language; and thoughts plain and simple take on a very different appearance. Play is necessary for man, in order to refresh him after labour; and accordingly man loves play. He even relisheth a play of words;

words; and it is happy for us, that words can be employed, not only for useful purposes, but also for our amusement. This amusement accordingly, though humble and low, is relished by some at all times, and by all at some times, in order to unbend the mind.

It is remarkable, that this low species of wit, has, at one time or other, made a figure in most civilized nations, and has gradually gone into disrepute. So soon as a language is formed into a system, and the meaning of words are ascertained with tolerable accuracy, opportunity is afforded for expressions, which, by the double meaning of some words, give a familiar thought the appearance of being new. And the penetration of the reader or hearer, is gratified in detecting the true sense disguised under the double meaning. That this sort of wit was in England deemed a reputable amusement, during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. is vouched by the works of Shakespear, and even by the writings of grave divines. But it cannot have any any long endurance: for as language ripens, and the meaning of  
words

words is more and more ascertained, words held to be synonymous diminish daily; and when those that remain have been more than once employed, the pleasure vanisheth with the novelty.

I proceed to examples, which, as in the former case, shall be distributed into different classes.

A seeming resemblance from the double meaning of a word.

Beneath this stone my wife doth lie :  
She's now at rest, and so am I.

A seeming contrast from the same cause, termed a *verbal antithesis*, which hath no despicable effect in ludicrous subjects.

Whilst Iris his cosmetic wash would try  
To make her bloom revive, and lovers die.  
Some ask for charms, and others philters chuse,  
To gain Corinna, and their quartans lose,  
*Dispensary, canto 2.*

And how frail nymphs, oft by abortion, aim  
To lose a substance, to preserve a name.  
*Ibid. canto 3.*

Other seeming connections from the same  
cause.

Will you employ your conqu'ring sword,  
To break a fiddle and your word.

*Hudibras, canto 2.*

To whom the knight with comely grace  
Put off his hat to put his case.

*Hudibras, Part 3. canto 3.*

Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom  
Of foreign tyrants, and of nymphs at home;  
Here thou, great Anna! whom three realms obey,  
Does sometimes counsel take — and sometimes tea.

*Rape of the Lock, canto 3. l. 5.*

O'er their quietus where fat judges dose,  
And lull their cough and conscience to repose.

*Dispensary, canto 1.*

Speaking of Prince Eugene. "This General is  
"a great taker of snuff as well as of towns."

*Pope, Key to the Lock.*

Exul mentisque domusque.

*Metamorphoses, lib. ix. 409.*

A seeming inconsistency from the same  
cause.

Hic quiescit qui nunquam quievit.

Again,

Quel âge a cette Iris, dont on fait tant de bruit ?  
Me demandoit Cliton n'aguere.  
Il faut, dis-je, vous satisfaire,  
Elle a vingt ans le jour, et cinquante ans la nuit.

Again,

So like the chances are of love and war,  
That they alone in this distinguish'd are ;  
In love the victors from the vanguish'd fly,  
They fly that wound, and they pursue that die.

*Waller.*

What new-found witchcraft was in thee,  
With thine own cold to kindle me ?  
Strange art ; like him that should devise  
To make a burning-glass of ice.

*Cowley.*

Wit of this kind is unsuitable in a serious  
poem ; witness the following line in Pope's

K 2

Elegy



Elegy to the memory of an unfortunate lady :

Cold is that breast which warm'd the world before.

This sort of writing is finely burlesqued by Swift :

Her hands, the softest ever felt,  
Though cold would burn, though dry would melt.  
*Strephon and Cbloë.*

Taking a word in a different sense from what is meant, comes under wit, because it occasions some slight degree of surprize.

*Beatrice.* I may sit in a corner, and cry *Heigh ho!* for a husband.

*Pedro.* Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

*Beatrice.* I would rather have one of your father's getting : hath your Grace ne'er a brother like you? Your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

*Much ado about nothing, act 2. sc. 5.*

*Falstaff.* My honest lads, I will tell you what I am about.

*Pistol.* Two yards and more.

*Falstaff.* No quips now, Pistol : indeed, I am  
in

in the waste two yards about; but I am now about  
no waste; I am about thrift.

*Merry wives of Windsor, act 1. sc. 7.*

*Lo. Sands.* ——— By your leave, sweet ladies,  
If I chance to talk a little wild, forgive me :  
I had it from my father.

*Anne Bullen.* Was he mad, Sir ?

*Sands.* O, very mad, exceeding mad, in love  
too;

But he would bite none ———

*K. Henry VIII.*

An assertion that bears a double mean-  
ing, one right, one wrong; but so connect-  
ed with other matters as to direct us to the  
wrong meaning. This species of bastard  
wit is distinguished from all others by the  
name *pun*. For example,

*Paris.* ——— Sweet Helen, I must woo you,  
To help unarm our Hector : his stubborn buckles,  
With these your white enchanting fingers touch'd,  
Shall more obey, than to the edge of steel,  
Or force of Greekish sinews : you shall do more  
Than all the island kings, disarm great Hector.

*Troilus and Cressida, act 3. sc. 2.*

The

The pun is in the close. The word *disarm* has a double meaning. It signifies to take off a man's armour, and also to subdue him in fight. We are directed to the latter sense by the context. But with regard to Helen the word holds only true in the former sense. I go on with other examples.

Esse nihil dicis quicquid petis, improbe Cinna:  
Si nil, Cinna, petis, nil tibi, Cinna, nego.

*Martial, l. 3. epigr. 61.*

Jocondus geminum imposuit tibi, Sequana, pontem;  
Hunc tu jure potes dicere pontificem.

*Sanazarius.*

N. B. *Jocondus was a monk.*

*Chief Justice.* Well! the truth is, Sir John, you live in great infamy.

*Falstaff.* He that buckles him in my belt, cannot live in less.

*Chief Justice.* Your means are very slender, and your waste is great.

*Falstaff.* I would it were otherwise: I would my means were greater, and my waste slenderer.

*Second part, Henry IV. act 1. sc. 5.*

*Celia.* I pray you bear with me, I can go no further.

*Clown.*

*Clown.* For my part, I had rather bear with you than bear you: yet I should bear no cross if I did bear you; for I think you have no money in your purse.

*As you like it, act 2. sc. 4.*

He that imposes an oath makes it,  
Not he that for convenience takes it;  
Then how can any man be said,  
To break an oath he never made?

*Hudibras, part 2. canto 2.*

The seventh satire of the first book of Horace, is purposely contrived to introduce at the close a most execrable pun. Talking of some infamous wretch whose name was *Rex Rupilius*.

Perſius exclamat, Per magnos, Brute, deos te  
Oro, qui reges confueris tollere, cur non  
Hunc regem jugulas? Operum hoc, mihi crede,  
tuorum est.

Though playing with words is a mark of a mind at ease, and disposed for any sort of amusement, we must not thence conclude that playing with words is always ludicrous. Words are so intimately connected with  
thought,

thought, that if the subject be really grave, it will not appear ludicrous even in this fantastic dress. I am, however, far from recommending it in any serious performance. On the contrary, the discordance betwixt the thought and expression must be disagreeable ; witness the following specimen.

He hath abandoned his physicians, Madam, under whose practices he hath persecuted time with hope : and finds no other advantage in the process, but only the losing of hope by time.

*All's well that ends well, act 1. sc. 1.*

*K. Henry.* O my poor kingdom, sick with civil blows !

When that my care could not with-hold thy riots,  
What wilt thou do when riot is thy care ?

*Second part, K. Henry IV.*

A smart repartee may be considered as a species of wit. A certain petulant Greek, objecting to Anacharsis that he was a Scythian : True, says Anacharsis, my country disgraces me, but you disgrace your country.

C H A P.

## C H A P. XIV.

## Custom and Habit.

**I**Nquiring into the nature of man as a sensitive being, and finding him affected in a high degree with novelty, would any one conjecture that he is equally affected with custom? Yet these frequently take place, not only in the same person, but even with relation to the same subject: when new, it is enchanting; familiarity renders it indifferent; and custom, after a longer familiarity, makes it again desirable. Human nature, diversified with many and various springs of action, is wonderfully, and, indulging the expression, intricately constructed.

Custom hath such influence upon many of our feelings, by warping and varying them, that we must attend to its operations if we would be acquainted with human na-



ture. This subject, in itself obscure, has been much neglected; and to give a complete analysis of it will be no easy task. I pretend only to touch it cursorily; hoping, however, that what is here laid down, will dispose more diligent inquirers to attempt further discoveries.

*Custom* respects the action, *habit* the actor. By custom we mean, a frequent reiteration of the same act; and by habit, the effect that custom has on the mind or body. This effect may be either active, witness the dexterity produced by custom in performing certain exercises; or passive, as when, by custom, a peculiar connection is formed betwixt a man and some agreeable object, which acquires thereby a greater power to raise emotions in him than it hath naturally. Active habits come not under the present undertaking; and therefore I confine myself to those that are passive.

This subject is thorny and intricate. Some pleasures are fortified by custom; and yet custom begets familiarity, and consequently indifference

indifference\*. In many instances, satiety and disgust are the consequences of reiteration. Again, though custom blunts the edge of distress and of pain; yet the want of any thing to which we have long been accustomed, is a sort of torture. A clue to guide us through all the intricacies of this labyrinth, would be an acceptable present.

Whatever be the cause, it is an established fact, that we are much influenced by custom. It hath an effect upon our pleasures, upon our actions, and even upon our thoughts and sentiments. Habit makes no figure during the vivacity of youth; in middle age it gains ground; and in old age it governs without control. In that period of life, generally speaking, we eat at a certain hour, take exercise at a certain hour, go to rest at a certain hour, all by the direction of habit. Nay a particular seat, table, bed, comes to be essential. And a habit in

\* If all the year were playing holidays,  
To sport would be as tedious as to work:  
But when they feldom come, they wish'd-for come,  
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.

*First part, Henry IV. act 1. sc. 3*

any of these, cannot be contradicted without uneasiness.

Any slight or moderate pleasure frequently reiterated for a long time, forms a connection betwixt us and the thing that causes the pleasure. This connection, termed *habit*, has the effect to raise our desire or appetite for that thing when it returns not as usual. During the course of enjoyment, the pleasure grows insensibly stronger till a habit be established; at which time the pleasure is at its height. It continues not however stationary. The same customary reiteration which carried it to its height, brings it down again by insensible degrees, even lower than it was at first. But of this circumstance afterward. What at present we have in view, is to prove by experiments, that those things which at first are but moderately agreeable, are the aptest to become habitual. Spirituous liquors, at first scarce agreeable, readily produce an habitual appetite; and custom prevails so far, as even to make us fond of things originally disagreeable, such as coffee, *assa-fœtida*, and tobacco.

tobacco. This is pleasantly illustrated by Congreve :

*Fainall.* For a passionate lover, methinks you are a man somewhat too discerning in the failings of your mistress.

*Mirabell.* And for a discerning man, somewhat too passionate a lover ; for I like her with all her faults ; nay like her for her faults. Her follies are so natural, or so artful, that they become her ; and those affectations which in another woman would be odious, serve but to make her more agreeable. I'll tell thee, Fainall, she once us'd me with that insolence, that in revenge I took her to pieces, sifted her, and separated her failings ; I study'd 'em, and got 'em by rote. The catalogue was so large, that I was not without hopes, one day or other, to hate her heartily : to which end I so us'd myself to think of 'em, that at length, contrary to my design and expectation, they gave me every hour less and less disturbance ; till in a few days it became habitual to me, to remember 'em without being displeas'd. They are now grown as familiar to me as my own frailties ; and in all probability, in a little time longer, I shall like 'em as well.

*The way of the world, act 1. sc. 3.*

A walk upon the quarterdeck, though intolerably confined, becomes however so agreeable by custom, that a sailor in his walk on shore, confines himself commonly within the same bounds. I knew a man who had relinquished the sea for a country-life. In the corner of his garden he reared an artificial mount with a level summit, resembling most accurately a quarterdeck, not only in shape but in size; and this was his choice walk. Play or gaming, at first barely amusing by the occupation it affords, becomes in time extremely agreeable; and is frequently prosecuted with avidity, as if it were the chief business of life. The same observation is applicable to the pleasures of the internal senses, those of knowledge and virtue in particular. Children have scarce any sense of these pleasures; and men very little, who are in the state of nature without culture. Our taste for virtue and knowledge improves slowly; but is capable of growing stronger than any other appetite in human nature.

To introduce a habit, frequency of acts is not alone sufficient: length of time is also

so necessary. The quickest succession of acts in a short time, is not sufficient; nor a slow succession in the longest time. The effect must be produced by a moderate soft action, and a long series of easy touches removed from each other by short intervals. Nor are these sufficient, without regularity in the time, place, and other circumstances of the action. The more uniform any operation is, the sooner it becomes habitual; and this holds equally in a passive habit. Variety in any remarkable degree, prevents the effect. Thus any particular food will scarce ever become habitual, where the manner of dressing is varied. The circumstances then requisite to augment any pleasure and at the long run to form a habit, are weak uniform acts, reiterated during a long course of time without any considerable interruption. Every agreeable cause which operates in this manner, will grow habitual.

*Affection* and *aversion*, as distinguished from passion on the one hand, and on the other from original disposition, are in reality habits respecting particular objects, acquired in the manner above set forth. The  
pleasure



pleasure of social intercourse with any person, must originally be faint, and frequently reiterated, in order to establish the habit of affection. Affection thus generated, whether it be friendship or love, seldom swells into any tumultuous or vigorous passion; but is however the strongest cement that can bind together two individuals of the human species. In like manner, a slight degree of disgust often reiterated with any degree of regularity, grows into the habit of aversion, which generally subsists for life.

Those objects of taste that are the most agreeable, are so far from having a tendency to become habitual, that too great indulgence fails not to produce satiety and disgust. No man contracts a habit of taking sugar, honey, or sweet-meats, as he doth of tobacco:

*Dulcia non ferimus: succo renovamur amaro.*

*Ovid. art. Amand. l. 3.*

Insipido è quel dolce, che condito

Non è di qualche amaro, e tosto satia.

*Aminta di Tasso.*

These

These violent delights have violent ends,  
 And in their triumph die. The sweetest honey  
 Is loathsome in its own deliciousness,  
 And in the taste confounds the appetite;  
 Therefore love mod'rately, long love doth so :  
 Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.

*Romeo and Juliet, act 2. sc. 6.*

The same holds in the causes of all violent pleasures : these causes are not naturally susceptible of habit. Great passions suddenly raised are incompatible with a habit of any sort. In particular they never produce affection or aversion. A man who at first sight falls violently in love, has a strong desire of enjoyment, but no affection for the woman \*. A man who is surpris'd  
 with

\* Violent love without affection is finely exemplified in the following story. When Constantinople was taken by the Turks, Irene, a young Greek of an illustrious family, fell into the hands of Mahomet II. who was at that time in the prime of youth and glory. Irene's charms conquered the savage heart of Mahomet. He abandoned himself to his new mistress; and shut himself up with her, denying access even to his ministers. His passion seemed to increase with time. In the most important expeditions, frequently would he abandon the army, and fly to his Irene. War was at a stand, for victory

with an unexpected favour, burns for an opportunity to exert his gratitude, without having any affection for his benefactor. Neither does desire of vengeance for an atrocious injury involve averfion.

It is perhaps not eafy to fay why moderate pleasures gather ftrength by custom. But two caufes concur to prevent this effect

was no longer the monarch's favourite paffion. The foldiers, accuftomed to booty, began to murmur, and the infection fpread even among the commanders. The Bafha Mustapha, confulting the fidelity he owed his mafter, was the firft who durft acquaint him of the difcourfes held publicly to the prejudice of his glory.

The Sultan, after a gloomy filence, formed his refolution. He ordered Mustapha to affemble the troops next morning; and then retired with precipitation to Irene's apartment. Never before did that princefs appear fo charming: never before did the prince beftow fo many tender careffes. To give a new luftre to her beauty, he exhorted her women next morning to beftow all their art and care on her drefs. He took her by the hand, led her into the middle of the army, and pulling off her vail, demanded at the Bafhas with a fierce look, whether they had ever beheld fo accomplished a beauty? After an awful pause, Mahomet with one hand laying hold of the young Greek by her beautiful locks, and with the other pulling out his fimitar, fevered the head from the body at one ftroke. Then turning to his grandees, with eyes wild and furious, "This fword," fays he, "when it is my will, knows to cut the bands of love."

in the more intense pleasures. These, by an original law in our nature, increase quickly to their full growth, and decay with no less precipitation \*; and custom is too slow in its operation to overcome this law. Another cause is not less powerful. The mind is exhausted with pleasure as well as with pain. Exquisite pleasure is extremely fatiguing; occasioning, as a naturalist would say, great expence of animal spirits †. And therefore, of such the mind cannot bear so frequent gratification as to superinduce a habit. If the thing which raises the pleasure return before the mind have recovered its tone and relish, disgust ensues instead of pleasure.

A habit never fails to admonish us of the wonted time of gratification, by raising a pain for want of the object, and a desire to have it. The pain of want is always first felt; the desire naturally follows; and upon

\* See chap. 2. part 3.

† Lady Easy, upon her husband's reformation, expresses to her friend the following sentiment. "Be satisfy'd; Sir Charles has made me happy, even to a pain of joy."

presenting the object, both vanish instantaneously. Thus a man accustomed to tobacco, feels, at the end of the usual interval, a confused pain of want, which in its first appearance points at nothing in particular, though it soon settles upon its accustomed object. The same may be observed in persons addicted to drinking, who are often in an uneasy restless state before they think of their bottle. In pleasures indulged regularly and at equal intervals, the appetite, remarkably obsequious to custom, returns regularly with the usual time of gratification; and a sight of the object in the interim, has scarce any power to move it. This pain of want arising from habit, seems directly opposite to that of satiety. Singular it must appear, that frequency of gratification should produce effects so opposite as are the pains of excess and of want.

The appetites that respect the preservation and propagation of our species, are attended with a pain of want similar to that occasioned by habit. Hunger and thirst are uneasy sensations of want, which always precede the desire of eating or drinking;

ing: and a pain for want of carnal enjoyment precedes the desire of a proper object. The pain being thus felt independent of an object, cannot be cured but by gratification. An ordinary passion, in which desire precedes the pain of want, is in a different condition. It is never felt but while the object is in view; and therefore by removing the object out of thought, it vanisheth with its desire and pain of want\*.

These natural appetites above mentioned, differ from habit in the following particular; They have an undetermined direction toward all objects of gratification in general; whereas an habitual appetite is directed upon a particular object. The attachment we have by habit to a particular woman, differs widely from the natural passion which comprehends the whole sex; and the habitual relish for a particular dish, is far from being the same with a vague appetite for food. Notwithstanding this difference, it is still remarkable, that nature hath enforced the gratification of certain natural

\* See chap. 2. part 3.



appetites essential to the species, by a pain of the same sort with that which habit produceth.

The pain of habit is less under our power, than any other pain for want of gratification. Hunger and thirst are more easily endured, especially at first, than an unusual intermission of any habitual pleasure. We often hear persons declaring, they would forego sleep or food, rather than snuff or any other habitual trifle. We must not however conclude, that the gratification of an habitual appetite affords the same delight with the gratification of one that is natural. Far from it: the pain of want only is greater.

The slow and reiterated acts that produce a habit, strengthen the mind to enjoy the habitual pleasure in greater quantity and more frequency than originally; and by this means a habit of intemperate gratification is often formed. After unbounded acts of intemperance, the habitual relish is soon restored, and the pain for want of enjoyment returns with fresh vigor.

The causes of the pleasant emotions hitherto in view, are either an individual, such

as a companion, a certain dwelling-place, certain amusements, &c.; or a particular species, such as coffee, mutton, or any particular food. But habit is not confined to these. A constant train of trifling diversions, may form such a habit in the mind, as that it cannot be easy a moment without amusement. Variety in the objects prevents a habit as to any one in particular; but as the train is uniform with respect to amusement in general, the habit is formed accordingly; and this sort of habit may be denominated *a generic habit*, in opposition to the former, which may be called *a specific habit*. A habit of a town-life, of country-sports, of solitude, of reading, or of business, where sufficiently varied, are instances of generic habits. It ought to be remarked, that every specific habit hath a mixture of the generic. The habit of one particular sort of food, makes the taste agreeable; and we are fond of this taste where-ever found. A man deprived of an habitual object, takes up with what most resembles it: deprived of tobacco, any bitter herb will do, rather than want. The habit of drinking punch,  
makes

makes wine a good resource. A man accustomed to the sweet society and comforts of matrimony, being unhappily deprived of his beloved object, inclines the sooner to a second choice. In general, the quality which the most affects us in an habitual object, produceth, when we are deprived of it, a strong appetite for that quality in any other object.

The reasons are assigned above, why the causes of intense pleasure become not readily habitual. But now I must observe, that these reasons conclude only against specific habits. With regard to any particular object that is the cause of a weak pleasure, a habit is formed by frequency and uniformity of reiteration, which in the case of an intense pleasure cannot obtain without satiety and disgust. But it is remarkable, that satiety and disgust have no effect, except as to that thing which occasions them. A surfeit of honey produceth not a loathing of sugar; and intemperance with one woman, produceth no disrelish of the same pleasure with others. Hence it is easy to account for a generic habit in any strong pleasure.

The

The disgust of intemperance, is confined to the object by which it is produced. The delight we had in the gratification of the appetite, inflames the imagination, and makes us, with avidity, search for the same gratification in whatever other object it can be found. And thus frequency and uniformity in gratifying the same passion upon different objects, produceth at the long run a habit. In this manner, a man acquires an habitual delight in high and poignant fauces, rich dress, fine equipage, crowds of company, and in whatever is commonly termed *pleasure*. There concurs at the same time to introduce this habit, a peculiarity observed above, that reiteration of acts enlarges the capacity of the mind, to admit a more plentiful gratification than originally, with regard to frequency as well as quantity.

Hence it appears, that though a specific habit can only take place in the case of a moderate pleasure, yet that a generic habit may be formed with respect to every sort of pleasure, moderate or immoderate, that can be gratified by a variety of objects indifferently. The only difference is, that any par-

particular object which causes a weak pleasure, runs naturally into a specific habit; whereas a particular object that causes an intense pleasure, is altogether incapable of such a habit. In a word, it is but in singular cases that a moderate pleasure produces a generic habit: an intense pleasure, on the other hand, cannot produce any other habit.

The appetites that respect the preservation and propagation of the species, are formed into habit in a peculiar manner. The time as well as measure of their gratification, are much under the power of custom; which, by introducing a change upon the body, occasions a proportional change in the appetites. Thus, if the body be gradually formed to a certain quantity of food at regular times, the appetite is regulated accordingly; and the appetite is again changed when a different habit of body is introduced by a different practice. Here it would seem, that the change is not made upon the mind, which is commonly the case in passive habits, but only upon the body.

When rich food is brought down by ingredients of a plainer taste, the composition

is

is susceptible of a specific habit. Thus the sweet taste of sugar, rendered less poignant in a mixture, may, in course of time, produce a specific habit for such mixture. As moderate pleasures, by becoming more intense, tend to generic habits; so intense pleasures, by becoming more moderate, tend to specific habits.

The beauty of the human figure, by a special recommendation of nature, appears to us supreme, amid the great variety of beautiful forms bestowed upon animals. The various degrees in which individuals enjoy this property, render it an object sometimes of a moderate sometimes of an intense passion. The moderate passion, admitting frequent reiteration without diminution, and occupying the mind without exhausting it, becomes gradually stronger till it settle in a habit. So true this is, that instances are not wanting, of an ugly face, at first disagreeable, afterward rendered indifferent by familiarity, and at the long run agreeable. On the other hand, consummate beauty, at the very first view, fills the mind so as to admit no increase. En-



joyment in this case lessens the pleasure\* ; and if often repeated, ends commonly in satiety and disgust. Constant experience shows, that the emotions created by great beauty become weaker by familiarity. The impressions made successively by such an object, strong at first and lessening by degrees, constitute a series opposite to that of the weak and increasing emotions, which grow into a specific habit. But the mind, when accustomed to beauty, contracts a relish for it in general, though often repelled from particular objects by the pain of satiety. Thus a generic habit is formed, of which inconstancy in love is the necessary consequence. For a generic habit, comprehending every beautiful object, is an invincible obstruction to a specific habit, which is confined to one.

But a matter which is of great importance to the youth of both sexes, deserves more than a cursory view. Though the pleasant emotion of beauty differs widely from the corporeal appetite, yet both may

\* See chap. 2. part 3.

concur upon the same object. When this is the case, they inflame the imagination; and produce a very strong complex passion\*, which is incapable of increase, because the mind as to pleasure is limited rather more than as to pain. Enjoyment in this case must be exquisite, and therefore more apt to produce satiety than in any other case whatever. This is a never-failing effect, where consummate beauty on the one side, meets with a warm imagination and great sensibility on the other. What I am here explaining, is the naked truth without exaggeration. They must be insensible upon whom this doctrine makes no impression; and it deserves well to be pondered by the young and the amorous, who in forming a society which is not dissolvable, are too often blindly impelled by the animal pleasure merely, inflamed by beauty. It may indeed happen after this pleasure is gone, and go it must with a swift pace, that a new connection is formed upon more dignified and more lasting principles. But

\* See chap. 2. part 4.

this

this is a dangerous experiment. For even supposing good sense, good temper, and internal merit of every sort, which is a very favourable supposition, yet a new connection upon these qualifications is rarely formed. It generally or rather always happens, that such qualifications, the only solid foundation of an indissoluble connection, are rendered altogether invisible by satiety of enjoyment creating disgust.

One effect of custom, different from any that have been explained, must not be omitted, because it makes a great figure in human nature. Custom augments moderate pleasures, and diminishes those that are intense. It has a different effect with respect to pain; for it blunts the edge of every sort of pain and distress great and small. Uninterrupted misery therefore is attended with one good effect. If its torments be incessant, custom hardens us to bear them.

It is extremely curious, to remark the gradual changes that are made in forming habits. Moderate pleasures are augmented gradually by reiteration till they become  
habitual;

habitual; and then are at their height. But they are not long stationary; for from that point they gradually decay till they vanish altogether. The pain occasioned by the want of gratification, runs a very different course. This pain increases uniformly; and at last becomes extreme, when the pleasure of gratification is reduced to nothing.

—————It so falls out

That what we have we prize not to the worth,  
Whiles we enjoy it; but being lack'd and lost,  
Why then we rack the value; then we find  
The virtue that possession would not shew us  
Whilst it was ours.

*Much ado about nothing, act 4. sc. 2.*

The effect of custom with relation to a specific habit, is displayed through all its varieties in the use of tobacco. The taste of this plant is at first extremely unpleasant. Our disgust lessens gradually till it vanish altogether; at which period the plant is neither agreeable nor disagreeable. Continuing the use, we begin to relish it; and our relish increases by use till it come to its utmost extent. From this state it gradually decays, while the habit becomes stronger  
and

and stronger, and consequently the pain of want. The result is, that when the habit has acquired its greatest vigor, the pleasure of gratification is gone. And hence it is, that we often smoke and take snuff habitually, without so much as being conscious of the operation. We must except gratification after the pain of want; because gratification in that case is at the height when the habit is strongest. It is of the same kind with the joy one feels upon being delivered from the rack, the cause of which is explained above\*. This pleasure however is but occasionally the effect of habit; and however exquisite, is guarded against as much as possible, by preventing want.

With regard to the pain of want, I can discover no difference betwixt a generic and specific habit: the pain is the same in both. But these habits differ widely with respect to the positive pleasure. I have had occasion to observe, that the pleasure of a specific habit decays gradually till it become imperceptible. Not so the pleasure of a ge-

\* Chap. 2, part 1, sect. 2.

neric habit. So far as I can discover, this pleasure suffers little or no decay after it comes to its height. The variety of gratification preserves it entire. However it may be with other generic habits, the observation I am certain holds with respect to the pleasures of virtue and of knowledge. The pleasure of doing good has such an unbounded scope, and may be so variously gratified, that it can never decay. Science is equally unbounded; and our appetite for knowledge has an ample range of gratification, where discoveries are recommended by novelty, by variety, by utility, or by all of them.

Here is a large field of facts and experiments, and several phenomena unfolded, the causes of which have been occasionally suggested. The efficient cause of the power of custom over man, a fundamental point in the present chapter, has unhappily evaded my keenest search; and now I am reduced to hold it an original branch of the human constitution, though I have no better reason for my opinion, than that I cannot resolve it into any other principle. But with respect



to the final cause, a point of still greater importance, I promise myself more success. It cannot indeed have escaped any thinking person, that the power of custom is a happy contrivance for our good. Exquisite pleasure produceth satiety: moderate pleasure becomes stronger by custom. Business is our province, and pleasure our relaxation only. Hence, satiety is necessary to check exquisite pleasures, which otherwise would ingross the mind, and unqualify us for business. On the other hand, habitual increase of moderate pleasure, and even conversion of pain into pleasure, are admirably contrived for disappointing the malice of Fortune, and for reconciling us to whatever course of life may be our lot:

How use doth breed a habit in a man!  
 This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods,  
 I better brook than flourishing peopled towns.  
 Here I can sit alone, unseen of any,  
 And to the nightingale's complaining notes  
 Tune my distresses, and record my woes.

*Two Gentlemen of Verona, act 5. sc. 4.*

The foregoing distinction betwixt intense  
 and

and moderate, holds in pleasure only, not in pain, every degree of which is softened by time and custom. Custom is a catholicon for pain and distress of every sort; and of this regulation the final cause is so evident as to require no illustration.

Another final cause of custom will be highly relished by every person of humanity; and yet has in a great measure been overlooked. Custom hath a greater influence than any other known principle, to put the rich and poor upon a level. Weak pleasures, which fall to the share of the latter, become fortunately stronger by custom; while voluptuous pleasures, the lot of the former, are continually losing ground by satiety. Men of fortune, who possess palaces, sumptuous gardens, rich fields, enjoy them less than passengers do. The goods of Fortune are not unequally distributed: the opulent possess what others enjoy.

And indeed, if it be the effect of habit to produce the pain of want in a high degree while there is little pleasure in enjoyment, a voluptuous life is of all the least to be envied. Those who are accustomed

to high feeding, easy vehicles, rich furniture, a crowd of valets, much deference and flattery, enjoy but a small share of happiness, while they are exposed to manifold distresses. To such a man, inflaved by ease and luxury, even the petty inconveniencies of a rough road, bad weather, or homely fare on a journey, are serious evils. He loses his tone of mind, becomes peevish, and would wreak his resentment even upon the common accidents of life. Better far to use the goods of Fortune with moderation. A man who by temperance and activity has acquired a hardy constitution, is, on the one hand, guarded against external accidents, and is, on the other, provided with great variety of enjoyment ever at command.

I shall close this chapter with the discussion of a question more delicate than abstruse, *viz.* What authority custom ought to have over our taste in the fine arts? It is proper to be premised, that we cheerfully abandon to its authority every thing that nature leaves to our choice, and where the preference we bestow has no foundation other than whim or fancy. There appears  
no

no original difference betwixt the right and the left hand: custom however has established a difference, so as to make it awkward and disagreeable to use the left where the right is commonly used. The various colours, though they affect us differently, are all of them agreeable in their purity. But custom has regulated this matter in another manner: a black skin upon a human creature, is to us disagreeable; and a white skin probably not less so to a negro. Thus things originally indifferent, become agreeable or disagreeable by the force of custom. Nor ought this to be surprising after the discovery made above, that the original agreeableness or disagreeableness of an object, is, by the influence of custom, often converted into the opposite quality.

Concerning now those matters of taste where there is naturally a preference of one thing before another; it is certain, in the first place, that our faint and more delicate feelings are readily susceptible of a bias from custom; and therefore that it is no proof of a defective taste, to find these in some measure under the government of custom.

Dress,

Dress, and the modes of external behaviour, are justly regulated by custom in every country. The deep red or vermilion with which the ladies in France cover their cheeks, appears to them beautiful in spite of nature; and strangers cannot altogether be justified in condemning this practice, considering the lawful authority of custom, or of the *fashion*, as it is called. It is told of the people who inhabit the skirts of the Alps facing the north, that the swelling they universally have in the neck is to them agreeable. So far has custom power to change the nature of things, and to make an object originally disagreeable take on an opposite appearance.

But as to the emotions of propriety and impropriety, and in general as to all emotions involving the sense of right or wrong, custom has little authority, and ought to have none at all. Emotions of this kind, being qualified with the consciousness of duty, take naturally place of every other feeling; and it argues a shameful weakness or degeneracy of mind, to find them in any case so far subdued as to submit to custom.

These

These few hints may enable us to judge in some measure of foreign manners, whether exhibited by foreign writers or our own. A comparison betwixt the ancients and the moderns, was some time ago a favourite subject. Those who declared for the former, thought it a sufficient justification of ancient manners, that they were supported by the authority of custom. Their antagonists, on the other hand, refusing submission to custom as a standard of taste, condemned ancient manners in several instances as irrational. In this controversy, an appeal being made to different principles, without the slightest attempt on either side to establish a common standard, the dispute could have no end. The hints above given tend to establish a standard, for judging how far the lawful authority of custom may be extended, and within what limits it ought to be confined. For the sake of illustration, we shall apply this standard in a few instances.

Human sacrifices, the cruellest effect of blind and groveling superstition, wore gradually out of use by the prevalence of reason



son and humanity. In the days of Sophocles and Euripides, the traces of this savage practice were still recent; and the Athenians, through the prevalence of custom, could without disgust suffer human sacrifices to be represented in their theatre. The Iphigenia of Euripides is a proof of this fact. But a human sacrifice, being altogether inconsistent with modern manners, as producing horror instead of pity, cannot with any propriety be introduced upon a modern stage. I must therefore condemn the Iphigenia of Racine, which, instead of the tender and sympathetic passions, substitutes disgust and horror. But this is not all. Another objection occurs against every fable that deviates so remarkably from improved notions and sentiments. If it should even command our belief, by the authority of genuine history, its fictitious and unnatural appearance, however, would prevent its taking such hold of the mind as to produce a perception of reality\*. A human sacrifice is so unnatural, and to us so improbable,

\* See chap. 2. part 1. sect. 6.

that

that few will be affected with the representation of it more than with a fairy tale. The objection first mentioned strikes also against the *Pbedra* of this author. The queen's passion for her stepson, being unnatural and beyond all bounds, creates aversion and horror rather than compassion. The author in his preface observes, that the queen's passion, however unnatural, was the effect of destiny and the wrath of the gods; and he puts the same excuse in her own mouth. But what is the wrath of a heathen god to us Christians? We acknowledge no destiny in passion; and if love be unnatural, it never can be relished. A supposition, like what our author lays hold of, may possibly cover slight improprieties; but it will never engage our sympathy for what appears to us frantic or extravagant.

Neither can I relish the catastrophe of this tragedy. A man of taste may peruse, without disgust, a Grecian performance describing a sea-monster sent by Neptune to destroy Hippolytus. He considers, that such a story might agree with the religious creed of Greece; and, entering into ancient opi-

nions, may be pleased with the story, as what probably had a strong effect upon a Grecian audience. But he cannot have the same indulgence for such a representation upon a modern stage; for no story which carries a violent air of fiction, can ever move us in any considerable degree.

In the *Cœphores* of Eschylus\*, Orestes is made to say, that he was commanded by Apollo to avenge his father's murder; and yet if he obeyed, that he was to be delivered to the furies, or be struck with some horrible malady. The tragedy accordingly concludes with a chorus, deploring the fate of Orestes, obliged to take vengeance against a mother, and involved thereby in a crime against his will. It is impossible for any man at present to accommodate his mind to opinions so irrational and absurd, which must disgust him in perusing even a Grecian story. Among the Greeks again, grossly superstitious, it was a common opinion, that the report of a man's death was a presage of his death; and Orestes, in

\* Act 2.

the first act of *Electra*, spreading a report of his own death, in order to blind his mother and her adulterer, is even in this case affected with the presage. Such imbecility can never find grace with a modern audience. It may indeed produce some degree of compassion for a people afflicted to such a degree with absurd terrors, similar to what is felt in perusing a description of the Hottentotes: but manners of this kind will not interest our affections, nor excite any degree of social concern.

## External Signs of Emotions and Passions.

SO intimately connected are the soul and body, that there is not a single agitation in the former, but what produceth a visible effect upon the latter. There is, at the same time, a wonderful uniformity in this operation; each class of emotions being invariably attended with an external appearance peculiar to itself\*. These external appearances or signs, may not improperly be considered as a natural language, expressing to all beholders the several emotions and passions as they arise in the heart. We perceive display'd externally, hope, fear, joy, grief: we can read the character of a man in his face; and

\* *Omnis enim motus animi, suum quemdam à natura habet vultum et sonum et gestum. Cicero, l. 3. De oratore.*

beauty,

beauty, which makes so strong an impression, is known to result, not so much from regular features and a fine complexion, as from good nature, good sense, sprightliness, sweetness, or other mental quality, expressed some way upon the countenance. Though perfect skill in this language be rare, yet so much knowledge of it is diffused through mankind, as to be sufficient for the ordinary events of life. But by what means we come to understand this language, is a point of some intricacy. It cannot be by sight merely; for upon the most attentive inspection of the human visage, all that can be discerned are figure, colour, and motion; and yet these, singly or combined, never can represent a passion or a sentiment. The external sign is indeed visible. But to understand its meaning, we must be able to connect it with the passion that causes it; an operation far beyond the reach of eye-sight. Where then is the instructor to be found, that can unvail this secret connection? If we apply to experience, it is yielded, that from long and diligent observation, we may gather in some  
measure



measure in what manner those we are acquainted with express their passions externally. But with respect to strangers, of whom we have no experience, we are left in the dark. And yet we are not puzzled about the meaning of these external expressions in a stranger, more than in a bosom-companion\*. Further, had we no other means but experience for understanding the external signs of passion, we could not expect any uniformity or any degree of skill in the bulk of individuals. But matters are ordered so differently, that the external expressions of passion form a language understood by all, by the young as well as the old, by the ignorant as well as the learned. I talk of the plain and legible characters of this language; for undoubtedly we are much indebted to experience in deciphering the dark and more delicate expressions. Where then shall we apply for a solution of this intricate problem, which seems to penetrate deep into human nature? In my

\* See this explained, *Essays on morality and natural religion*, part 2. essay 5.

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mind it will be convenient to suspend the inquiry, till we be better acquainted with the nature of external signs and with their operations. These articles therefore shall be premised.

The external signs of passion are of two kinds, voluntary and involuntary. The voluntary signs are also of two kinds: some are arbitrary and some natural. Words are arbitrary signs, excepting a few simple sounds expressive of certain internal emotions; and these sounds, being the same in all languages, must be the work of nature. But though words are arbitrary, the manner of employing them is not altogether so; for each passion has by nature peculiar expressions and tones suited to it. Thus the unpremeditated tones of admiration, are the same in all men; as also of compassion, resentment, and despair. Dramatic writers ought to be well acquainted with this natural manner of expressing passion. The chief talent of a fine writer, is a ready command of the expressions that nature dictates to every man when any vivid emotion struggles for utterance; and the chief talent

lent of a fine reader, is a ready command of the tones suited to these expressions.

The other kind of voluntary signs, comprehends certain attitudes and gestures that naturally accompany certain emotions with a surprising uniformity. Thus excessive joy is expressed by leaping, dancing, or some elevation of the body; and excessive grief by sinking or depressing it. Thus prostration and kneeling have been employ'd by all nations and in all ages to signify profound veneration. Another circumstance, still more than uniformity, demonstrates these gestures to be natural, *viz.* their remarkable conformity or resemblance to the passions that produce them\*. Joy, which produceth a chearful elevation of mind, is expressed by an elevation of body. Pride, magnanimity, courage, and the whole tribe of elevating passions, are expressed by external gestures that are the same as to the circumstance of elevation, however distinguishable in other respects. Hence it comes, that an erect posture is a sign or expression of dignity:

\* See chap. 2. part 6.

Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,  
Godlike erect, with native honour clad,  
In naked majesty, seem'd lords of all.

*Paradise Lost, book 4.*

Grief, on the other hand, as well as respect, which depresses the mind, cannot for that reason be expressed more significantly than by a similar depression of the body. Hence, *to be cast down*, is a common phrase, signifying to be grieved or dispirited.

One would not imagine, who has not given peculiar attention, that the body is susceptible of such a variety of attitude and motion, as readily to accompany every different emotion with a corresponding gesture. Humility, for example, is expressed naturally by hanging the head; arrogance, by its elevation; and langour or despondence, by reclining it to one side. The expressions of the hands are manifold. By different attitudes and motions, the hands express desire, hope, fear: they assist us in promising, in inviting, in keeping one at a distance: they are made instruments of threatening, of supplication, of praise, and of

horror: they are employ'd in approving, in refusing, in questioning; in showing our joy, our sorrow, our doubts, our regret, our admiration. These gestures, so obedient to passion, are extremely difficult to be imitated in a calm state. The ancients, sensible of the advantage as well as difficulty of having these expressions at command, bestowed much time and care, in collecting them from observation, and in digesting them into a practical art, which was taught in their schools as an important branch of education.

The foregoing signs, though in a strict sense voluntary, cannot however be restrained but with the utmost difficulty when they are prompted by passion. Of this we scarce need a stronger proof, than the gestures of a keen player at bowls. Observe only how he wreaths his body, in order to restore a stray bowl to the right track. It is one article of good breeding, to suppress, as much as possible, these external signs of passion, that we may not in company appear too warm or too interested. The same observation holds in speech. A  
passion,

passion, it is true, when in extreme, is silent\*; but when less violent, it must be vented in words, which have a peculiar force, not to be equalled in a sedate composition. The ease and trust we have in a confident, encourages us no doubt to talk of ourselves and of our feelings. But the cause is more general; for it operates when we are alone as well as in company. Passion is the cause; for in many instances it is no slight gratification to vent a passion externally by words as well as by gestures. Some passions, when at a certain height, impel us so strongly to vent them in words, that we speak with an audible voice even where there is none to listen. It is this circumstance in passion, that justifies soliloquies; and it is this circumstance that proves them to be natural †. The mind  
sometimes

\* See chap. 17.

† Though a soliloquy in the perturbation of passion is undoubtedly natural, and indeed not unfrequent in real life; yet Congreve, who himself has penned several good soliloquies, yields, with more candor than knowledge, that they are unnatural; and he only pretends to justify them from necessity.



sometimes favours this impulse of passion, by bestowing a temporary sensibility upon any object at hand, in order to make it a confident. Thus in the *Winter's Tale*\*, Antigonus addressess himself to an infant whom he was ordered to expose:

Come, poor babe,  
I have heard, but not believ'd, the spirits of the  
dead  
May walk again: if such thing be, thy mother  
Appear'd to me last night; for ne'er was dream  
So like a waking.

This he does in his dedication of the *Double Dealer*, in the following words. "When a man in soliloquy reasons with himself, and *pro's* and *con's*, and weighs all his designs; we ought not to imagine, that this man either talks to us, or to himself; he is only thinking, and thinking (frequently) such matter as were inexcuseable folly in him to speak. But because we are concealed spectators of the plot in agitation, and the poet finds it necessary to let us know the whole mystery of his contrivance, he is willing to inform us of this person's thoughts; and to that end is forced to make use of the expedient of speech, no other better way being yet invented for the communication of thought."

\* Act 3, sc. 6.

The involuntary signs, which are all of them natural, are either peculiar to one passion or common to many. Every violent passion hath an external expression peculiar to itself, not excepting pleasant passions: witness admiration and mirth. The pleasant emotions that are less vivid, have one common expression; from which we may gather the strength of the emotion, but scarce the kind: we perceive a chearful or contented look; and we can make no more of it. Painful passions, being all of them violent, are distinguishable from each other by their external expressions. Thus fear, shame, anger, anxiety, dejection, despair, have each of them peculiar expressions; which are apprehended without the least confusion. Some of these passions produce violent effects upon the body, such as trembling, starting, and swooning. But these effects, depending in a good measure upon singularity of constitution, are not uniform in all men.

The involuntary signs, such of them as are display'd upon the countenance, are of two kinds. Some make their appearance  
occasionally

occasionally with the emotions that produce them, and vanish with the emotions: others are formed gradually by some violent passion often recurring; and, becoming permanent signs of this prevailing passion, serve to denote the disposition or temper. The face of an infant indicates no particular disposition, because it cannot be marked with any character to which time is necessary. And even the temporary signs are extremely awkward, being the first rude essays of Nature to discover internal feelings. Thus the shrieking of a new-born infant, without tears or sobbings, is plainly an attempt to weep. Some of the temporary signs, as smiling and frowning, cannot be observed for some months after birth. The permanent signs, formed in youth while the body is soft and flexible, are preserved entire by the firmness and solidity which the body acquires; and are never obliterated even by a change of temper. Permanent signs are not produced after a certain age when the fibres become rigid; some violent cases excepted, such as reiterated fits of the gout or stone through a course of time.

time. But these signs are not so obstinate as what are produced in youth; for when the cause is removed, they gradually wear away, and at last vanish.

The natural signs of emotions, voluntary and involuntary, being nearly the same in all men, form an universal language, which no distance of place, no difference of tribe, no diversity of tongue, can darken or render doubtful. Education, though of mighty influence, hath not power to vary or sophisticate, far less to destroy, their signification. This is a wise appointment of Providence. For if these signs were, like words, arbitrary and variable, it would be an intricate science to decipher the actions and motives of our own species, which would prove a great or rather invincible obstruction to the formation of societies. But as matters are ordered, the external appearances of joy, grief, anger, fear, shame, and of the other passions, forming an universal language, open a direct avenue to the heart. As the arbitrary signs vary in every country, there could be no communication of thoughts among different nations, were it not for the  
natural

natural signs in which all agree. Words are sufficient for the communication of science, and of all mental conceptions: but the discovering passions instantly as they arise, being essential to our well-being and often necessary for self-preservation, the author of our nature, attentive to our wants, hath provided a passage to the heart, which never can be obstructed while our external senses remain entire.

In an inquiry concerning the external signs of passion, actions ought not altogether to be overlooked: for though singly they afford no clear light, they are upon the whole the best interpreters of the heart\*. By ob-

\* The actions here chiefly in view, are what a passion suggests in order to its gratification. Beside these, actions are occasionally exerted to give some vent to a passion, without proposing an ultimate gratification. Such occasional action is characteristical of the passion in a high degree; and for that reason, when happily invented, has a wonderful good effect in poetry:

*Hamlet.* Oh most pernicious woman!  
 Oh villain, villain, smiling damned villain!  
 My tables—meet it is I set it down,  
 That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;  
 At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark. [Writing.  
 So, uncle, there you are.

*Hamlet, act 1. sc. 8.*

serving

serving a man's conduct for a course of time, we discover unerringly the various passions that move him to action, what he loves and what he hates. In our younger years, every single action is a mark not at all ambiguous of the temper; for in childhood there is little or no disguise. The subject becomes more intricate in advanced age; but even there, dissimulation is seldom carried on for any length of time. And thus the conduct of life is the most perfect expression of the internal disposition. It merits not indeed the title of an universal language; because it is not thoroughly understood but by those who either have a penetrating genius or extensive observation. It is a language, however, which every one can decipher in some measure; and which, joined with the other external signs, affords sufficient means for the direction of our conduct with regard to others. If we commit any mistake when such light is afforded, it never can be the effect of unavoidable ignorance, but of rashness or inadvertence.

In reflecting upon the various expressions of our emotions, voluntary and involuntary,



we must recognise the anxious care of Nature to discover men to each other. Strong emotions, as above hinted, beget an impatience to express them externally by speech and other voluntary signs, which cannot be suppressed without a painful effort. Thus a sudden fit of passion is a common excuse for indecent behaviour or harsh words. As to the involuntary signs, these are altogether unavoidable. No volition or effort can prevent the shaking of the limbs or a pale visage, when one is agitated with a violent fit of terror. The blood flies to the face upon a sudden emotion of shame, in spite of all opposition:

Vergogna, che'n altrui stampo natura,  
 Non si puo' rinegar: che se tu'tenti  
 Di cacciarla dal cor, fugge nel volto.

*Pastor Fido, act 2. sc. 5.*

Emotions indeed properly so called, which are quiescent, produce no remarkable signs externally; nor is it necessary that the more deliberate passions should, because the operation of such passions is neither sudden nor violent. These however remain not altogether

gether in the dark. Being more frequent than violent passion, the bulk of our actions are directed by them. Actions therefore display, with sufficient evidence, the more deliberate passions, and complete the admirable system of external signs, by which we become skilful in human nature.

Next in order comes an article of great importance, which is, to examine the effects produced upon a spectator by external signs of passion. None of these signs are beheld with indifference: they are productive of various emotions tending all of them to ends wise and good. This curious article makes a capital branch of human nature. It is peculiarly useful to writers who deal in the pathetic; and with respect to history-painters, it is altogether indispensable.

When we enter upon this article, we gather from experience, that each passion, or class of passions, hath its peculiar signs; and that these invariably make certain impressions on a spectator. The external signs of joy, for example, produce a chearful emotion, the external signs of grief produce pity, and the external signs of rage produce a

fort of terror even in those who are not aimed at.

Secondly, it is natural to think, that pleasant passions should express themselves externally by signs that appear agreeable, and painful passions by signs that appear disagreeable. This conjecture, which Nature suggests, is confirmed by experience. Pride seems to be an exception; its external signs being disagreeable, though it be commonly reckoned a pleasant passion. But pride is not an exception; for in reality it is a mixed passion, partly pleasant partly painful. When a proud man confines his thoughts to himself, and to his own dignity or importance, the passion is pleasant, and its external signs agreeable: but as pride chiefly consists in undervaluing or contemning others, it is so far painful, and its external signs disagreeable.

Thirdly, it is laid down above, that an agreeable object produceth always a pleasant emotion, and a disagreeable object one that is painful\*. According to this law, the

\* See chap. 2. part 7.

external

external signs of a pleasant passion, being agreeable, must produce in the spectator a pleasant emotion; and the external signs of a painful passion, being disagreeable, must produce in him a painful emotion.

Fourthly, in the present chapter it is observed, that pleasant passions are, for the most part, expressed externally in one uniform manner; and that only the painful passions are distinguishable from each other by their external expressions. In the emotions accordingly raised by external signs of pleasant passions, there is little variety. They are pleasant or cheerful, and we have not words to reach a more particular description. But the external signs of painful passions produce in the spectator emotions of different kinds: the emotions, for example, raised by external signs of grief, of remorse, of anger, of envy, of malice, are clearly distinguishable from each other.

Fifthly, emotions raised by the external signs of painful passions, are some of them *attractive*, some *repulsive*. Every painful  
passion

passion that is also disagreeable \*, raises by its external signs a repulsive emotion, repelling the spectator from the object. Thus the emotions raised by external signs of envy and rage, are repulsive. But this is not the case of painful passions that are agreeable. Their external signs, it is true, are disagreeable, and raise in the spectator a painful emotion. But this painful emotion is not repulsive. On the contrary, it is attractive; and produceth in the spectator good-will to the man who is moved by the passion, and a desire to relieve or comfort him. This cannot be better exemplified than by distress painted on the countenance, which instantaneously inspires the spectator with pity, and impels him to afford relief. The cause of this difference among the painful emotions raised by external signs of passion, may be readily gathered from what is laid down chapter Emotions and passions, part 7.

It is now time to look back to the question proposed in the beginning, How we come to understand external signs, so as

\* See passions explained as agreeable or disagreeable, chap. 2. part 2.

readily

readily to ascribe each sign to its proper passion? We have seen that this branch of knowledge, cannot be derived originally from sight, nor from experience. Is it then implanted in us by nature? The following considerations will help us to answer this question in the affirmative. In the first place, the external signs of passion must be natural; for they are invariably the same in every country, and among the different tribes of men. Pride, for example, is always expressed by an erect posture, reverence by prostration, and sorrow by a dejected look. Secondly, we are not even indebted to experience for the knowledge that these expressions are natural and universal. We are so framed as to have an innate conviction of the fact. Let a man change his habitation to the other side of the globe; he will, from the accustomed signs, infer the passion of fear among his new neighbours, with as little hesitation as he did at home. And upon second thoughts, the question may be answered without any preliminaries. If the branch of knowledge we have been inquiring about be  
not



not derived from sight nor from experience, there is no remaining source from whence it can be derived but from nature.

We may then venture to pronounce, with some degree of confidence, that man is provided by nature with a sense or faculty which lays open to him every passion by means of its external expressions. And I imagine that we cannot entertain any reasonable doubt of this fact, when we reflect, that even infants are not ignorant of the meaning of external signs. An infant is remarkably affected with the passions of its nurse expressed on her countenance: a smile cheers it, and a frown makes it afraid. Fear thus generated in the infant, must, like every other passion, have an object. What is the object of this passion? Surely not the frown considered abstractly, for a child never abstracts. The nurse who frowns is evidently the object. Fear, at the same time, cannot arise but from apprehending danger. But what danger can a child apprehend, if it be not sensible that the person who frowns is angry? We must therefore admit, that a child can read anger  
in

in its nurse's face; and it must be sensible of this intuitively, for it has no other means of knowledge. I have no occasion to affirm, that these particulars are clearly apprehended by the child. To produce clear and distinct perceptions, reflection and experience are requisite. But that even an infant, when afraid, must have some notion of its being in danger, is extremely evident.

That we should be conscious intuitively of a passion from its external expressions, is conformable to the analogy of nature. The knowledge of this language is of too great importance to be left upon experience. To rest it upon a foundation so uncertain and precarious, would prove a great obstacle to the formation of societies. Wisely therefore is it ordered, and agreeably to the system of Providence, that we should have Nature for our instructor.

Manifold and admirable are the purposes to which the external signs of passion are made subservient by the author of our nature. What are occasionally mentioned

above, make but a part. Several final causes remain to be unfolded; and to this task I apply myself with alacrity. In the first place, the signs of internal agitation that are displayed externally to every spectator, tend to fix the signification of many terms. The only effectual means to ascertain the meaning of any doubtful word, is an appeal to the thing it represents. Hence the ambiguity of words expressive of things that are not objects of external sense; for in that case an appeal is denied. Passion, strictly speaking, is not an object of external sense: but its external signs are; and by means of these signs, passions may be appealed to, with tolerable accuracy. Thus the words that denote our passions, next to those that denote external objects, have the most distinct meaning. Words signifying internal action and the more delicate feelings, are less distinct. This defect with respect to internal action, is what chiefly occasions the intricacy of logic. The terms of that science are far from being sufficiently ascertained, even after the care and labour

bour bestowed by an eminent writer\* : to whom however the world is greatly indebted, for removing a mountain of rubbish, and moulding the subject into a rational and correct form. The same defect is remarkable in criticism, which has for its object the more delicate feelings. The terms that denote these feelings, are not more distinct than those of logic. To reduce this science of criticism to any regular form, has never once been attempted. However rich the ore may be, no critical chymist has been found to give us a regular analysis of its constituent parts, and to distinguish each by its own name.

In the second place, society among individuals is greatly promoted by this universal language. The distance and reserve that strangers naturally discover, show its utility. Looks and gestures give direct access to the heart ; and lead us to select with tolerable accuracy the persons who may be trusted. It is surprising how quickly, and

\* Locke.

for the most part how correctly, we judge of character from external appearances.

Thirdly, after social intercourse is commenced, these external signs contribute above all other means to the strictest union, by diffusing through a whole assembly the feelings of each individual. Language no doubt is the most comprehensive vehicle for communicating emotions: but in expedition, as well as in the power of conviction, it falls short of the signs under consideration; the involuntary signs especially, which are incapable of deceit. Where the countenance, the tones, the gestures, the actions, join with the words, in communicating emotions, these united have a force irresistible. Thus all the agreeable emotions of the human heart, with all the social and virtuous affections, are, by means of these external signs, not only perceived but felt. By this admirable contrivance, social intercourse becomes that lively and animating amusement, without which life would at best be insipid. One joyful countenance spreads cheerfulness instantaneously through a multitude of spectators.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, dissocial passions being hurtful by prompting violence and mischief, are noted by the most conspicuous external signs, in order to put us upon our guard. Thus anger and revenge, especially when suddenly provoked, display themselves on the countenance in legible characters\*. The external signs again of every passion that threatens danger, raise in us the passion of fear. Nor is this passion occasioned by consciousness of danger, though it may be infla-

\* Rough and blunt manners, are allied to anger by an internal feeling, as well as by external expressions resembling in a faint degree those of anger. Therefore such manners are easily heightened into anger; and savages for that reason are prone to anger. Thus rough and blunt manners are unhappy in two respects. They are first readily converted into anger: and next, the change being imperceptible, because of the similitude of external signs, the person against whom the anger is directed is not put upon his guard. It is for these reasons a great object in society, to correct such manners, and to bring on a habit of sweetness and calmness. This temper has two opposite good effects. First it is not easily provoked to wrath. Next the interval being great betwixt it and real anger, a person of this temper who receives an affront, has many changes to go through before his anger be inflamed. These changes have each of them their external sign, and the offending party is put upon his guard, to retire, or to endeavour a reconciliation.

med



med by such consciousness. It is an instinctive passion, which operating without reason or reflection, moves us by a sudden impulse to avoid the impending danger\*.

In the fifth place, these external signs are made subservient in a curious manner to the cause of virtue. The external signs of a painful passion that is virtuous or innocent, and consequently agreeable, produce indeed a painful emotion. But this emotion is attractive, and connects the spectator with the person who suffers. Disagreeable passions only, are productive of repulsive emotions involving the spectator's aversion, and frequently his indignation. This artful contrivance makes us cling to the virtuous and abhor the wicked.

Sixthly, of all the external signs of passion, those of affliction or distress are the most illustrious with respect to a final cause; and deservedly merit a place of distinction. They are illustrious by the singularity of their contrivance; and they are still more illustrious by the sympathy they inspire, a passion to

\* See chap. 2. part 1. sect. 5.]

which

which human society is indebted for its greatest blessing, that of securing relief in all cases of distress. A subject so interesting, ought to be examined with leisure and attention. The conformity of the nature of man to his external circumstances, is in every particular wonderful. His nature makes him prone to society; and his situation makes it necessary for him. In a solitary state he is the most helpless of beings; destitute of support, and in his manifold distresses destitute of relief. Mutual support, the shining attribute of society, being essential to the well-being of man, is not left upon reason, but is enforced even instinctively by the passion of sympathy. Here sympathy makes a capital figure; and contributes, more than any other means, to make life easy and comfortable. But however essential sympathy be to comfortable existence, one thinking of it beforehand, would find difficulty in conjecturing how it could be raised by external signs of distress. For considering the analogy of nature, if these signs be agreeable, they must give birth to a pleasant emotion leading every beholder to be pleased

pleased with human misfortunes. If they be disagreeable, as they undoubtedly are, ought not the painful emotion they produce to repel the spectator from them, in order to be relieved from pain? Such would be the conjecture, in thinking of this matter beforehand; and such would be the effect, were man purely a selfish being. But the benevolence of our nature gives a very different direction to the painful passion of sympathy, and to the desire involved in it. Far from flying from distress, we fly to it in order to afford relief; and our sympathy cannot be otherwise gratified than by giving all the succour in our power\*. Thus external signs of distress, though disagreeable, are attractive; and the sympathy they inspire us with is a powerful cause, impelling us to afford relief even to a stranger as if he were our friend or blood-relation.

This branch of human nature concerning the external signs of passion, is so finely adjusted to answer its end, that those who understand it the best will admire it the

\* See chap. 2. part 7.

most.

most. These external signs, being all of them resolvable into colour, figure, and motion, should not naturally make any deep impression on a spectator. And supposing them qualified for making deep impressions, we have seen above, that the effects they produce are not what would be expected. We cannot therefore account otherwise for the operation of these external signs, than by ascribing it to the original constitution of human nature. To improve the social state, by making us instinctively rejoice with the glad of heart, weep with the mourner, and shun those who threaten danger, is a contrivance illustrious for its wisdom as well as benevolence. With respect to the external signs of distress in particular, to judge of the excellency of their contrivance, we need only reflect upon several other means seemingly more natural, that would not have answered the end proposed. I am attracted by this amusing speculation, and will not ask pardon for indulging in it. We shall in the first place reverse the truth, by putting the case that the external signs of joy were disagreeable, and the external signs of distress

agreeable. This is no whimsical supposition; for these external signs, so far as can be gathered from their nature, seem indifferent to the production of pleasure or pain. Admitting then the supposition, the question is, How would our sympathy operate? There is no occasion to deliberate for an answer. Sympathy, upon that supposition, would be not less destructive, than according to the real case it is beneficial. We should be incited, to cross the happiness of others if its external signs were disagreeable to us, and to augment their distress if its external signs were agreeable. I make a second supposition, That the external signs of distress were indifferent to us, and productive neither of pleasure nor pain. This would annihilate the strongest branch of sympathy, that which is raised by means of sight. And it is evident, that reflective sympathy, felt by those only who have more than an ordinary share of sensibility, would be far from being sufficient to fulfil the ends of the social state. I shall approach nearer truth in a third supposition, That the external signs of distress being disagreeable, were  
productive

productive of a painful repulsive emotion. Sympathy upon this supposition would not be annihilated ; but it would be rendered useless. For it would be gratified by flying from or avoiding the object, instead of clinging to it, and affording relief. The condition of man would in reality be worse than if sympathy were totally eradicated ; because sympathy would only serve to plague those who feel it, without producing any good to the afflicted.

Loath to quit so interesting a subject, I add a reflection, with which I shall conclude. The external signs of passion are a strong indication, that man, by his very constitution, is framed to be open and sincere. A child, in all things obedient to the impulses of nature, hides none of its emotions : the savage and clown, who have no guide other than pure nature, expose their hearts to view by giving way to all the natural signs : and even when men learn to dissemble their sentiments, and when behaviour degenerates into art, there still remain checks, which keep dissimulation within bounds, and prevent a great part of its mischievous effects.



The total suppression of the voluntary signs during any vivid passion, begets the utmost uneasiness, which cannot be endured for any considerable time. This operation becomes indeed less painful by habit : but luckily the involuntary signs, cannot by any effort be suppressed or even dissembled. An absolute hypocrisy, by which the character is concealed and a fictitious one assumed, is made impracticable ; and nature has thereby prevented much harm to society. We may pronounce therefore, that nature, herself sincere and candid, intends that mankind should preserve the same character, by cultivating simplicity and truth, and banishing every sort of dissimulation that tends to mischief.

## C H A P. XVI.

## S E N T I M E N T S.

**E**VERY thought suggested by a passion or emotion, is termed *a sentiment* \*.

The knowledge of the sentiments peculiar to each passion considered abstractly, will not alone enable an artist to make a just representation of nature. He ought, over and above, to be acquainted with the various appearances of the same passion in different persons. Passions, it is certain, receive a tincture from every peculiarity of character; and for that reason, it rarely happens that any two persons vent their passions precisely in the same manner. Hence the following rule concerning dramatic and epic compositions, That a passion be adjusted to the character, the sentiments to the passion, and the language to the sentiments.

\* See Appendix.

If

If nature be not faithfully copied in each of these, a defect in execution is perceived. There may appear some resemblance; but the picture upon the whole will be insipid, through want of grace and delicacy. A painter, in order to represent the various attitudes of the body, ought to be intimately acquainted with muscular motion: not less intimately acquainted with emotions and characters ought a writer to be, in order to represent the various attitudes of the mind. A general notion of the passions, in their grosser differences of strong and weak, elevated and humble, severe and gay, is far from being sufficient. Pictures formed so superficially, have little resemblance, and no expression. And yet it will appear by and by, that in many instances our reputed masters are deficient even in this superficial knowledge.

In handling the present subject, it would be endless to trace even the ordinary passions through their nicer and more minute differences. Mine shall be an humbler task; which is, to select from the best writers instances of faulty sentiments, after pa-  
ving

ving the way by some general observations.

To talk in the language of music, each passion hath a certain tone, to which every sentiment proceeding from it ought to be tuned with the greatest accuracy. This is no easy work, especially where such harmony is to be supported during the course of a long theatrical representation. In order to reach such delicacy of execution, it is necessary that a writer assume the precise character and passion of the personage represented. This requires an uncommon genius. But it is the only difficulty; for the writer, who, forgetting himself, can thus personate another, so as to feel truly and distinctly the various agitations of the passion, need be in no pain about the sentiments: these will flow without the least study, or even preconception; and will frequently be as delightfully new to himself as afterward to his reader. But if a lively picture even of a single emotion require an effort of genius; how much greater must the effort be, to compose a passionate dialogue, in which there are as many different tones of passion as there are speakers? With what ductility

ductility of feeling ought a writer to be endowed who aims at perfection in such a work; when, to execute it correctly, it is necessary to assume different and even opposite characters and passions, in the quickest succession? And yet this work, difficult as it is, yields to that of composing a dialogue in genteel comedy devoid of passion; where the sentiments must be tuned to the nicer and more delicate tones of different characters. That the latter is the more difficult task, appears from considering, that a character is greatly more complex than a passion, and that passions are more distinguishable from each other than characters are. Many writers accordingly who have no genius for characters, make a shift to represent, tolerably well, an ordinary passion in its plain movements. But of all works of this kind, what is truly the most difficult, is a characteristical dialogue upon any philosophical subject. To interweave characters with reasoning, by adapting to the peculiar character of each speaker a peculiarity not only of thought but of expression, requires the perfection of genius, taste, and judgement.

How

How hard dialogue-writing is, will be evident, even without reasoning, from the imperfect compositions of this kind found without number in all languages. The art of mimicking any singularity in voice or gesture, is a rare talent, though directed by sight and hearing, the acutest and most lively of our external senses : how much more rare must the talent be of imitating characters and internal emotions, tracing all their different tints, and representing them in a lively manner by natural sentiments properly expressed? The truth is, such execution is too delicate for an ordinary genius ; and for that reason, the bulk of writers, instead of expressing a passion like one who is under its power, content themselves with describing it like a spectator. To awake passion by an internal effort merely, without any external cause, requires great sensibility ; and yet this operation is necessary not less to the writer than to the actor ; because none but they who actually feel a passion, can represent it to the life. The writer's part is much more complicated : he must join compo-



tion with action ; and, in the quickest succession, be able to adopt every different character introduced in his work. But a very humble flight of imagination, may serve to convert a writer into a spectator, so as to figure, in some obscure manner, an action as passing in his sight and hearing. In this figured situation, he is led naturally to describe as a spectator, and at second hand to entertain his readers with his own observations, with cool description and florid declamation ; instead of making them eye-witnesses, as it were, to a real event, and to every movement of genuine passion \*. Thus, in the bulk of plays, a

\* In the *Æneid*, the hero is made to describe himself in the following words: *Sum pius Æneas, fama super aethera notus.* Virgil could never have been guilty of an impropriety so gross, had he assumed the personage of his hero, instead of uttering the sentiments of a spectator. Nor would Xenophon have made the following speech for Cyrus the younger, to his Grecian auxiliaries, whom he was leading against his brother Artaxerxes. “ I have chosen you, O Greeks ! my auxiliaries, “ not to enlarge my army, for I have *Barbarians* without “ number ; but because you surpass all the *Barbarians* in va- “ lour and military discipline.” This sentiment is Xenophon’s ; for surely Cyrus did not reckon his countrymen *Barbarians*.

tiresome

tiresome monotony prevails, a pompous declamatory style, without entering into different characters or passions.

This descriptive manner of expressing passion, has a very unhappy effect. Our sympathy is not raised by description: we must be lulled first into a dream of reality; and every thing must appear as actually present and passing in our sight\*. Unhappy is the player of genius who acts a capital part in what may be termed a *descriptive tragedy*. After he has assumed the very passion that is to be represented, how must he be cramped in his action, when he is forced to utter, not the sentiments of the passion he feels, but a cold description in the language of a by-stander? It is this imperfection, I am persuaded, in the bulk of our plays, that confines our stage almost entirely to Shakespear, his many irregularities notwithstanding. In our latest English tragedies, we sometimes find sentiments tolerably well adapted to a plain passion. But it would be fruitless labour, to

\* See chap. 2. part 1. sect 6.

search in any of them for a sentiment expressive of character ; and, upon that very account, all our modern performances of the dramatic kind, are intolerably inspid.

Looking back upon the foregoing observation, I am uncertain whether it will be sufficiently apprehended ; for, upon this complicated subject, I find some difficulty to express myself with perspicuity. I despair not however to place this matter in the clearest light, by adding example to precept. In the front shall be set one or two examples of sentiments that appear the legitimate offspring of passion ; and to them shall be opposed a few others that are descriptive only, and illegitimate. In making this comparison, I shall borrow my instances from Shakespear and Corneille, who for genius in dramatic composition stand uppermost in the rolls of fame.

Shakespear shall furnish the first instance, being of sentiments dictated by a violent and perturbed passion.

*Lear.* ~~—~~ Filial ingratitude!

Is it not, as if this mouth should tear this hand

For

For lifting food to't? — But I'll punish home,  
 No, I will weep no more. — In such a night,  
 To shut me out! — Pour on, I will endure,  
 In such a night as this! O Regan, Gonerill,  
 Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all —  
 O, that way madness lies; let me shun that;  
 No more of that. —

*Kent.* Good, my Lord, enter here.

*Lear.* Pr'ythee, go in thy thyself, seek thine  
 own ease,

This tempest will not give me leave to ponder  
 On things would hurt me more — but I'll go in;  
 In, boy, go first. You houseless poverty —  
 Nay, get thee in; I'll pray, and then I'll sleep —  
 Poor naked wretches, wherefo'er you are,  
 That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm!  
 How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,  
 Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you  
 From seasons such as these? — O I have ta'en  
 Too little care of this! take physic, Pomp;  
 Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,  
 That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,  
 And show the heavens more just.

*King Lear. act 3. sc. 5.*

To illustrate the foregoing doctrine, one  
 other instance of the same kind may suffice,  
 expressing

expressing sentiments arising from remorse  
and despair.

*Othello.* Lo! I have a weapon:  
A better never did itself sustain  
Upon a soldier's thigh. I've seen the day,  
That with this little arm, and this good sword,  
I've made my way through more impediments  
Than twenty times your stop. But, oh vain  
boast!

Who can controul his fate? 'tis not so now.  
Be not afraid, though you do see me weapon'd;  
Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,  
The very sea-mark of my outmost fail.  
Do you go back dismay'd? 'tis a lost fear.  
Man but a rush against Othello's breast,  
And he retires. Where should Othello go?  
Now—— how dost thou look now? Oh ill-starr'd  
wench!

Pale as thy smoke! when we shall meet at compt,  
This look of thine will hurl my soul from heav'n,  
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl,  
Ev'n like thy chastity. O curfed slave!  
Whip me, ye devils,  
From the possession of this heav'nly sight;  
Blow me about in winds, roast me in sulphur,  
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire——

Oh,

Oh, Desdemona! Desdemona! dead! dead! oh,  
oh!

*Othello, act 5. sc. 9.*

The sentiments here display'd flow so naturally from the passions represented, and are such genuine expressions of these passions, that it is not possible to conceive any imitation more perfect.

With regard to the French author, truth obliges me to acknowledge, that he describes in the style of a spectator, instead of expressing passion like one who feels it; and also that he is thereby betray'd into the other faults above mentioned, a tiresome monotony, and a pompous declamatory style \*. It is scarce necessary to produce

\* This criticism reaches the French dramatic writers in general, with very few exceptions. Their tragedies are mostly, if not totally, descriptive. Corneille led the way; and later writers following his track, have accustomed the French ear to a style, formal, pompous, declamatory, which suits not with any passion. Hence it becomes an easy task to burlesk a French tragedy: it is not more difficult than to burlesk a stiff solemn fop. The facility of the operation has in Paris introduced a singular amusement, which is, to burlesk the  
the



duce particular instances; for he never varies from this tone. I shall however take two passages at a venture, in order to be confronted the more successful tragedies in a sort of farce, called a *parody*. La Motte, who himself appears to have been forely galled by some of these burlesk compositions, acknowledges, that no more is necessary to give them a run, than barely to vary the *dramatis personæ*, and in place of kings and heroes, queens and princesses, to substitute tinkers and tailors, milkmaids and seamstresses. The declamatory style, so different from the genuine expression of passion, passes in some measure unobserved, when great personages are the speakers. But in the mouths of the vulgar, the impropriety, with regard to the speaker as well as to the passion represented, is so remarkable as to become ridiculous. A tragedy, where every passion is made to speak in its natural tone, is not liable to be thus burlesked. The same passion is by all men expressed nearly in the same manner: and therefore the genuine expressions of passion cannot be ridiculous in the mouth of any man, provided only he be of such a character as to be susceptible of the passion.

It is a well-known fact, that to an English ear the French actors appear to pronounce with too great rapidity; a complaint much insisted on by Cibber in particular, who had frequently heard the famous Baron upon the French stage. This may in some measure be attributed to our want of facility in the French language; as foreigners generally imagine, that every language is pronounced too quick by natives. But that it is not the sole cause, will be probable from a fact directly opposite, that the French are not a little disgusted with the languidness, as they term it, of the English pronunciation. I

conjecture

confronted with those transcribed above. In the tragedy of *Cinna*, Æmilia, after the conspiracy was discovered, having nothing in view but racks and death to herself and her lover, receives a pardon from Augustus, attended with the brightest circumstances of magnanimity and tenderness. This is a happy situation for representing the passions of surprise and gratitude in their different stages. These passions, raised at once to the utmost pitch, are at first too big for utterance; and Æmilia's feelings must, for some moments, have been expressed by violent gestures only. So soon as there is a vent for words, the

conjecture this difference of taste may be derived from what is observed above. The pronunciation of the genuine language of passion is necessarily directed by the nature of the passion, and by the slowness or celerity of its progress. In particular, plaintive passions, which are the most frequent in tragedy, having a slow motion, dictate a slow pronunciation. In declamation again, which is not the genuine language of any passion, the speaker warms gradually; and as he warms, he naturally accelerates his pronunciation. But as the French have formed their tone of pronunciation upon Corneille's declamatory tragedies, and the English upon the more natural language of Shakespear, it is not surprising that custom should produce such difference of taste in the two nations.

first expressions are naturally broken and interrupted. At last we ought to expect a tide of intermingled sentiments, occasioned by the fluctuation of the mind betwixt the two passions. Æmilia is made to behave in a very different manner. With extreme coolness she describes her own situation, as if she were merely a spectator; or rather the poet takes the task off her hands.

Et je me rends, Seigneur, à ces hautes bontés,  
 Je recouvre la vûe auprès de leurs clartés,  
 Je connois mon forfait qui me sembloit justice,  
 Et ce que n'avoit pû la terreur du supplice,  
 Je sens naître en mon ame un repentir puissant;  
 Et mon cœur en secret me dit, qu'il y consent.  
 Le ciel a résolu votre grandeur suprême,  
 Et pour preuve, Seigneur, je n'en veux que moi-  
 même ;  
 J'ose avec vanité me donner cet éclat,  
 Puisqu'il change mon cœur, qu'il veut changer  
 l'état.

Ma haine va mourir que j'ai crue immortelle,  
 Elle est morte, et ce cœur devient sujet fidèle,  
 Et prenant désormais cette haine en horreur,  
 L'ardeur de vous servir succede à sa fureur.

*Act 5. sc. 3.*

In

In the tragedy of *Sertorius*, the Queen, surpris'd with the news that her lover was assassinated, instead of venting any passion, degenerates into a cool spectator, even so much as to instruct the by-standers how a queen ought to behave on such an occasion.

*Viriate.* Il m'en fait voir ensemble, et l'auteur,  
et la cause.

Par cet assassinat c'est de moi qu'on dispose,  
C'est mon trône, c'est moi qu'on pretend conquerir,  
Et c'est mon juste choix qui seul l'a fait perir.  
Madame, après sa perte, et parmi ces alarmes,  
N'attendez point de moi de soupirs, ni de larmes;  
Ce sont amusemens que dédaigne aisement  
Le prompt et noble orgueil d'un vif ressentiment.  
Qui pleure, l'affoiblit, qui soupire, l'exhale,  
Il faut plus de fierté dans une ame royale;  
Et ma douleur soumise aux soins de le venger, &c.

*Act 5. sc. 3.*

So much in general upon the genuine sentiments of passion. I proceed now to particular observations. And, first, Passions are seldom uniform for any considerable time: they generally fluctuate, swelling and subsiding by turns, often in a quick

succession \*. This fluctuation, in the case of a real passion, will be expressed externally by proper sentiments ; and ought to be imitated in writing and acting. Accordingly, a climax shows never better than in expressing a swelling passion. The following passages shall suffice for an illustration.

*Oroonoko.* ————— Can you raise the dead ?  
Pursue and overtake the wings of time ?  
And bring about again, the hours, the days,  
The years, that made me happy ?

*Oroonoko, act 2. sc. 2.*

*Almeria.* ————— How hast thou charm'd  
The wildness of the waves and rocks to this ?  
That thus relenting they have giv'n thee back  
To earth, to light and life, to love and me ?

*Mourning Bride, act 1. sc. 7.*

I would not be the villain that thou think'st  
For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp,  
And the rich earth to boot.

*Macbeth, act 4. sc. 4.*

\* See chap. 2. part 3.

The

The following passage expresses finely the progress of conviction.

Let me not stir, nor breathe, lest I dissolve  
That tender, lovely form, of painted air,  
So like Almeria. Ha! it sinks, it falls;  
I'll catch it ere it goes, and grasp her shade.  
'Tis life! 'tis warm! 'tis she! 'tis she herself!  
It is Almeria! 'tis, it is my wife!

*Mourning Bride, act 2. sc. 6.*

In the progress of thought, our resolutions become more vigorous as well as our passions.

If ever I do yield or give consent,  
By any action, word, or thought, to wed  
Another Lord; may then just Heav'n show'r  
down, &c.

*Mourning Bride, act 1. sc. 1.*

And this leads to a second observation, That the different stages of a passion, and its different directions, from its birth to its extinction, ought to be carefully represented in the sentiments, which otherwise will often be misplaced. Resentment, for example, when provoked by an atrocious injury, discharges itself first upon the  
author.



author. Sentiments therefore of revenge take place of all others, and must in some measure be exhausted before the person injured think of pitying himself, or of grieving for his present distress. In the *Cid* of Corneille, Don Diegue having been affronted in a cruel manner, expresses scarce any sentiment of revenge, but is totally occupied in contemplating the low situation to which he was reduced by the affront.

O rage ! ô desespoir ! ô vieillesse ennemie !  
 N'ai-je donc tant vécu que pour cette infamie ?  
 Et ne suis-je blanchi dans les travaux guerriers,  
 Que pour voir en une jour fletrir tant de lauriers ?  
 Mon bras, qu'avec respect toute l'Espagne admire,  
 Mon bras, qui tant de fois a sauvé cet empire,  
 Tant de fois affermi le trône de son roi,  
 Trahit donc ma querelle, et ne fait rien pour moi !  
 O cruel souvenir de ma gloire passée !  
 Oeuvre de tant de jours en un jour effacée !  
 Nouvelle dignité fatale à mon bonheur !  
 Precipice élevé d'ou tombe mon honneur !  
 Faut-il de votre éclat voir triompher le Comte,  
 Et mourir sans vengeance, ou vivre dans la honte ?  
 Comte, fois de mon Prince à present gouverneur,  
 Ce haut rang n'admet point un homme sans honneur ;  
 Et ton jaloux orgueil par cet affront insigne,  
 Malgré le choix du Roi, m'en a sù rendre indigne.  
 Et

Et toi, de mes exploits glorieux instrument,  
Mais d'un corps tout de glace inutile ornement,  
Fer jadis tant à craindre, et qui dans cette offense  
M'as servi de parade, et non pas de defense,  
Va, quitte désormais le dernier des humains,  
Passe pour me vanger en de meilleures mains.

*Le Cid, act 1. sc. 4.*

These sentiments are certainly not what occur to the mind in the first movements of the passion. In the same manner as in resentment, the first movements of grief are always directed upon its object. Yet with relation to the sudden and severe distemper that seized Alexander bathing in the river Cydnus, Quintus Curtius describes the first emotions of the army as directed upon themselves, lamenting that they were left without a leader far from home, and had scarce any hopes of returning in safety. Their King's distress, which must naturally have been their first concern, occupies them but in the second place according to that author. In the *Aminta* of Tasso, Sylvia, upon a report of her lover's death, which she believed certain, instead of bemoaning the loss of a beloved object, turns her thoughts

thoughts upon herself, and wonders her heart does not break.

Ohime, ben son di fasso,  
Poi che questa novella non m' uccide.

Act 4. sc. 2.

In the tragedy of *Jane Shore*, Alicia, in the full purpose of destroying her rival, has the following reflection :

Oh Jealousy ! thou bane of pleasing friendship,  
Thou worst invader of our tender bosoms ;  
How does thy rancour poison all our softness,  
And turn our gentle natures into bitterness ?  
See where she comes ! Once my heart's dearest  
    blessing,

Now my chang'd eyes are blasted with her beauty,  
Loathe that known face, and sicken to behold her.

Act 3. sc. 1.

These are the reflections of a cool spectator. A passion while it has the ascendant, and is freely indulged, suggests not to the man who feels it any sentiment to its own prejudice. Reflections like the foregoing, occur not to him readily till the passion have spent its vigor.

A

A person sometimes is agitated at once by different passions. The mind in this case vibrating like a pendulum, vents itself in sentiments which partake of the same vibration. This I give as a third observation:

*Queen.* 'Would I had never trod this English earth,  
Or felt the flatteries that grow upon it!  
Ye've angels faces, but Heav'n knows your hearts.  
What shall become of me now! wretched lady!  
I am the most unhappy woman living.  
Alas! poor wenches, where are now your fortunes?

[*To her women.*

Shipwreck'd upon a kingdom, where no pity,  
No friends, no hope! no kindred weep for me!  
Almost, no grave allow'd me.

*Henry VIII. act 3. sc. 1.*

*Othello.* Oh devil, devil!

If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,  
Each drop she falls, would prove a crocodile.  
Out of my sight.

*Desdemona.* I will not stay t' offend you. [*going.*

*Lodovico.* Truly, an obedient lady:

I do beseech your Lordship, call her back.

*Oth.* Mistress —

*Des.* My Lord.

VOL. II.

Y

*Oth.*

*Oth.* What would you with her, Sir? A  
*Lord.* Who, I, my Lord?  
*Oth.* Ay; you did wish that I would make her  
 turn: Sir, she can turn and turn, and yet go on;  
 And turn again And she can weep, Sir, weep;  
 And she's obedient: as you say, obedient;  
 Very obedient — proceed you in your tears —  
 Concerning this, Sir, — oh well-painted passion! —  
 I am commanded home — get you away,  
 I'll fend for you anon — Sir, I obey the mandate,  
 And will return to Venice. — Hence, avaunt!

[Exit Desdemona.

*Othello, act 4. sc. 6.*

*Æmilia.* Oh! my good Lord, I would speak a  
 word with you.

*Othello.* Yes, 'tis Æmilia — by and by — she's  
 dead.

'Tis like, she comes to speak of Cassio's death;  
 The noise was high. — Ha, no more moving?  
 Still as the grave. Shall she come in? were't  
 good?

I think she stirs again — No — what's the best?  
 If she come in, she'll, sure, speak to my wife;  
 My wife! my wife! What wife? I have no wife.  
 Oh insupportable! oh heavy hour!

*Othello, act 5. sc. 7.*

A fourth observation is, that nature, which gave us passions, and made them extremely beneficial when moderate, intended undoubtedly that they should be subjected to the government of reason and conscience \*. It is therefore against the order of nature, that passion in any case should take the lead in contradiction to reason and conscience. Such a state of mind is a sort of anarchy, which every one is ashamed of, and endeavours to hide or dissemble. Even love, however laudable, is attended with a conscious shame when it becomes immoderate : it is covered from the world, and disclosed only to the beloved object :

Et que l'amour souvent de remors combattu  
Paroisse une foiblesse, et non une vertu.

*Boileau, L'art poet. chant. 3. l. 101.*

O, they love least that let men know their love.

*Two Gentlemen of Verona, act 1. sc. 3.*

Hence a capital rule in the representation of strong passions, that their genuine sentiments

\* See chap. 2. part 7.



ought to be hid or dissembled as much as possible. And this holds in an especial manner with respect to criminal passions. One never counsels the commission of a crime in plain terms. Guilt must not appear in its native colours, even in thought: the proposal must be made by hints, and by representing the action in some favourable light. Of the propriety of sentiment upon such an occasion, Shakespear, in the *Tempest*, has given us a beautiful example. The subject is a proposal made by the usurping Duke of Milan to Sebastian, to murder his brother the King of Naples.

*Antonio.* ————— What might  
Worthy Sebastian — O, what might — no more.  
And yet, methinks, I see it in thy face,  
What thou should'st be: th'occasion speaks thee,  
and  
My strong imagination sees a crown  
Dropping upon thy head.

*Act 2. sc. 1.*

There cannot be a finer picture of this sort, than that of King John solliciting Hubert to murder the young Prince Arthur.

*K. John.*

*K. John.* Come hither, Hubert. O my gentle  
Hubert,

We owe thee much; within this wall of flesh,

There is a soul counts thee her creditor,

And with advantage means to pay thy love.

And, my good friend, thy voluntary oath

Lives in this bosom, dearly cherished.

Give me thy hand, I had a thing to say —

But I will fit it with some better time.

By Heaven, Hubert, I'm almost agham'd

To say what good respect I have of thee.

*Hubert.* I am much bounden to your Majesty.

*K. John.* Good friend, thou hast no cause to  
say so yet —

But thou shalt have — and creep time ne'er so slow,

Yet it shall come for me to do thee good.

I had a thing to say — but, let it go :

The sun is in the heav'n, and the proud day,

Attended with the pleasures of the world,

Is all too wanton, and too full of gawds,

To give me audience. If the midnight-bell

Did with his iron tongue and brazen mouth

Sound one into the drowsy race of night ;

If this same were a church-yard where we stand,

And thou possessed with a thousand wrongs ;

Or if that surly spirit Melancholy

Had bak'd thy blood and made it heavy-thick,

Which else runs tickling up and down the veins,

Making

Making that idiot Laughter keep men's eyes,  
 And strain their cheeks to idle merriment,  
 (A passion hateful to my purposes);  
 Or if that thou could'st see me without eyes,  
 Hear me without thine ears, and make reply  
 Without a tongue, using conceit alone,  
 Without eyes, ears, and harmful sounds of words;  
 Then, in despite of broad-ey'd watchful day,  
 I would into thy bosom pour my thoughts.  
 But ah, I will not — Yet I love thee well;  
 And, by my troth, I think thou lov'st me well.

*Hubert* So well, that what you bid me under-  
 take,

Though that my death were adjunct to my act,  
 By Heav'n, I'd do't

*K. John.* Do not I know, thou would'st?  
 Good Hubert, Hubert. Hubert. throw thine eye  
 On yon young boy. I'll tell thee what, my friend;  
 He is a very serpent in my way.

And, wherefoe'er this foot of mine doth tread,  
 He lies before me. Dost thou understand me?  
 Thou art his keeper.

*King John, act 3. sc. 5.*

As things are best illustrated by their  
 contraries, I proceed to collect from classi-  
 cal authors, sentiments that appear faulty.  
 The first class shall consist of sentiments that  
 accord

accord not with the passion; or, in other words, sentiments that the passion represented does not naturally suggest. In the second class, shall be ranged sentiments that may belong to an ordinary passion, but unfitable to it as tinged by a singular character. Thoughts that properly are not sentiments, but rather descriptions, make a third. Sentiments that belong to the passion represented, but are faulty as being introduced too early or too late, make a fourth. Vicious sentiments exposed in their native dress, instead of being concealed or disguised, make a fifth. And in the last class, shall be collected sentiments suited to no character or passion, and therefore unnatural.

The first class contains faulty sentiments of various kinds, which I shall endeavour to distinguish from each other. And first sentiments that are faulty by being above the tone of the passion.

*Othello.* ————— O my soul's joy!  
If after every tempest come such calms,  
May the winds blow till they have waken'd death:  
And

And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas  
 Olympus high, and duck again as low  
 As hell's from heaven!      *Othello, act 2. sc. 6.*

This sentiment is too strong to be suggested by so slight a joy as that of meeting after a storm at sea.

*Philaster.* Place me, some god, upon a pyramid  
 Higher than hills of earth, and lend a voice  
 Loud as your thunder to me, that from thence  
 I may discourse to all the under-world  
 The worth that dwells in him.

*Philaster of Beaumont and Fletcher, act 4.*

Secondly, Sentiments below the tone of the passion. Ptolemy, by putting Pompey to death, having incurred the displeasure of Cæsar, was in the utmost dread of being dethroned. In this agitating situation, Corneille makes him utter a speech full of cool reflection, that is in no degree expressive of the passion.

Ah! si je t'avois crû, je n'aurois pas de maître,  
 Je ferois dans le trône où le Ciel m'a fait naître;  
 Mais c'est une imprudence assez commune aux rois,  
 D'écouter trop d'avis, et se tromper au choix.

Le

Le Destin les aveugle au bord du précipice,  
 Ou si quelque lumière en leur ame se glisse,  
 Cette fausse clarté dont il les eblouit,  
 Le plonge dans une gouffre, et puis s'évanouit.

*La mort de Pompée, act 4. sc. 1.*

In *Les Freres ennemies* of Racine, the second act is opened with a love-scene. Hemon talks to his mistress of the torments of absence, of the lustre of her eyes, that he ought to die no where but at her feet, and that one moment of absence was a thousand years. Antigone on her part acts the coquette, and pretends she must be gone to wait on her mother and brother, and cannot stay to listen to his courtship. This is odious French gallantry, below the dignity of the passion of love. It would scarce be excusable in painting modern French manners; and is insufferable where the ancients are brought upon the stage. The manners painted in the *Alexandre* of the same author are not more just. French gallantry prevails there throughout.

Third. Sentiments that agree not with the tone of the passion; as where a pleasant sen-



timent is grafted upon a painful passion, or the contrary. In the following instances the sentiments are too gay for a serious passion.

No happier task these faded eyes pursue;  
To read and weep is all they now can do.

*Eloisa to Abelard, l. 47.*

Again,

Heav'n first taught letters for some wretch's aid,  
Some banish'd lover, or some captive maid;  
They live, they speak, they breathe what love in-  
spires,

Warm from the soul, and faithful to its fires;  
The virgin's wish without her fears impart,  
Excuse the blush, and pour out all the heart;  
Speed the soft intercourse from soul to soul,  
And waft a sigh from Indus to the pole.

*Eloisa to Abelard, l. 51.*

These thoughts are pretty; they suit Pope  
extremely, but not Eloisa.

Satan, enraged by a threatening of the  
angel Gabriel, answers thus:

Then when I am thy captive talk of chains,  
Proud liminary cherub; but ere then

Far

Far heavier load thyself expect to feel  
 From my prevailing arm, though Heaven's King  
 Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy compeers,  
 Us'd to the yoke, draw't his triumphant wheels  
 In progress through the road of heav'n star-pav'd.

*Paradise Lost, book 4.*

The concluding epithet forms a grand and delightful image, which cannot be the genuine offspring of rage.

Fourth. Sentiments too artificial for a serious passion. I give for the first example a speech of Piercy expiring :

O, Harry, thou hast robb'd me of my growth :  
 I better brook the loss of brittle life,  
 Than those proud titles thou hast won of me ;  
 They wound my thoughts, worse than thy sword  
 my flesh.

But thought's the slave of life, and life time's fool ;  
 And time, that takes survey of all the world,  
 Must have a stop.

*First part, Henry IV. act 5. sc. 9.*

Livy inserts the following passage in a plaintive oration of the Locrenses accusing Pleminius the Roman legate of oppression.

167

Z 2

“ In

“ In hoc legato vestro, nec hominis quic-  
 “ quam est, Patres Conscripti, præter figu-  
 “ ram et speciem ; neque Romani civis,  
 “ præter habitum vestitumque, et sonum  
 “ linguæ Latinæ. Pectus et bellua imma-  
 “ nis, quales fretum, quondam, quo ab  
 “ Sicilia dividimur, ad perniciem navigan-  
 “ tium circumfedissemus, fabulæ ferunt \*.”

Congreve shows a fine taste in the sentiments of the *Mourning Bride*. But in the following passage the picture is too artful to be suggested by severe grief :

*Almeria.* O no! Time gives increase to my aff-  
 flictions.

The circling hours, that gather all the woes  
 Which are diffus'd through the revolving year,  
 Come heavy-laden with th' oppressing weight  
 To me ; with me, successively, they leave  
 The sighs, the tears, the groans, the restless cares,  
 And all the damps of grief, that did retard their  
 flight,

They shake their downy wings, and scatter all  
 The dire collected dews on my poor head ;  
 Then fly with joy and swiftness from me.

*Act* 1. *sc.* 1.

\* Titus Livius, l. 29. § 17.

In

In the same play, Almeria seeing a dead body, which she took to be Alphonso's, expresses sentiments strained and artificial, which nature suggests not to any person upon such an occasion :

Had they, or hearts, or eyes, that did this deed?  
 Could eyes endure to guide such cruel hands?  
 Are not my eyes guilty alike with theirs,  
 That thus can gaze, and yet not turn to stone?  
 —I do not weep! The springs of tears are dry'd,  
 And of a sudden I am calm, as if  
 All things were well; and yet my husband's murder'd!  
 Yes, yes, I know to mourn! I'll sluice this heart,  
 The source of wo, and let the torrent loose.

*Act 5. sc. 11.*

*Lady Trueman.* How could you be so cruel to defer giving me that joy which you knew I must receive from your presence? You have robb'd my life of some hours of happiness that ought to have been in it.

*Drummer, act 5.*

Pope's Elegy to the memory of an unfortunate lady, expresses delicately the most tender concern and sorrow for the deplorable  
 fate

fate of a person of worth. A poem of this kind, deeply serious and pathetic, rejects all fiction with disdain. We therefore can give no quarter to the following passage, which is eminently discordant with the subject. It is not the language of the heart, but of the imagination indulging its flights at ease. It would be a still more severe censure, if it should be ascribed to imitation, copying indiscreetly what has been said by others.

What though no weeping loves thy ashes grace,  
 Nor polish'd marble emulate thy face?  
 What though no sacred earth allow thee room,  
 Nor hallow'd dirge be mutter'd o'er thy tomb?  
 Yet shall thy grave with rising flow'rs be dress'd,  
 And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast:  
 There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,  
 There the first roses of the year shall blow;  
 While angels with their silver wings o'ershade  
 The ground, now sacred by thy reliques made.

Fifth. Fanciful or finical sentiments, sentiments that degenerate into point or conceit, however they may amuse in an idle hour, can never be the offspring of any serious or important passion. In the *Jerusalem*  
 of

of Tasso, Tancred, after a single combat, spent with fatigue and loss of blood, falls into a swoon. In this situation, understood to be dead, he is discovered by Erminia, who was in love with him to distraction. A more happy situation cannot be imagined, to raise grief in an instant to its highest pitch; and yet, in venting her sorrow, she descends most abominably to antithesis and conceit, even of the lowest kind.

E in lui versò d' inefficabil vena  
 Lacrime, e voce di sospiri mista.  
 In che misero punto hor qui me mena  
 Fortuna? a che veduta amara e trista?  
 Dopo gran tempo i' ti ritrovo à pena  
 Tancredi, e ti riveggio, e non son vista,  
 Vista non son da te, benche presente  
 E trovando ti perdo eternamente.

*Cant. 19. st. 105.*

Armida's lamentation respecting her lover Rinaldo\*, is in the same vitious taste.

*Queen.* Give me no help in lamentation,  
 I am not barren to bring forth complaints:

\* Canto 20. Stan. 124. 125. & 126.



All springs reduce their currents to mine eyes,  
 That I, being govern'd by the wat'ry moon,  
 May send forth plenteous tears to drown the world;  
 Ah, for my husband, for my dear Lord Edward.

*King Richard III. act 2. sc. 2.*

*Jane Shore.* Let me be branded for the public  
 scorn,

Turn'd forth, and driven to wander like a vaga-  
 bond,

Be friendless and forsaken; seek my bread  
 Upon the barren wild, and desolate waste,  
 Feed on my sighs, and drink my falling tears;  
 Ere I consent to teach my lips injustice,  
 Or wrong the orphan who has none to save him.

*Jane Shore, act 4.*

Give me your drops, ye soft-descending rains,  
 Give me your streams, ye never-ceasing springs,  
 That my sad eyes may still supply my duty,  
 And feed an everlasting flood of sorrow.

*Jane Shore, act 5.*

*Jane Shore* utters her last breath in a witty  
 conceit.

Then all is well, and I shall sleep in peace —  
 'Tis very dark, and I have lost you now —

*Was*

*II. 10 V.*

Was there not something I would have bequeath'd  
you?

But I have nothing left me to bestow,  
Nothing but one sad sigh. Oh mercy, Heav'n!

[Dies.

Act 5.

Gilford to Lady Jane Gray, when both  
were condemned to die :

Thou stand'st unmov'd ;  
Calm temper sits upon thy beauteous brow ;  
Thy eyes that flow'd so fast for Edward's loss,  
Gaze unconcern'd upon the ruin round thee,  
As if thou hadst resolv'd to brave thy fate,  
And triumph in the midst of desolation.  
Ha ! see, it swells, the liquid crystal rises,  
It starts in spight of thee — but I will catch it,  
Nor let the earth be wet with dew so rich.

*Lady Jane Gray, act 4. near the end.*

The concluding sentiment is altogether fi-  
nical, unsuitable to the importance of the  
occasion, and even to the dignity of the pas-  
sion of love.

Corneille, in his *Examen of the Cid*\*, an-

\* Page 316.

Answering an objection, that his sentiments are sometimes too much refined for persons in deep distress, observes, that if poets did not indulge sentiments more ingenious or refined than are prompted by passion, their performances would often be low ; and extreme grief would never suggest but exclamations merely. This is in plain language to assert, That forced thoughts are more relished than such as are natural, and therefore ought to be preferred.

The second class is of sentiments that may belong to an ordinary passion, but are not perfectly concordant with it, as tinged by a singular character. In the last act of that excellent comedy, *The Careless Husband*, Lady Easy, upon Sir Charles's reformation, is made to express more violent and turbulent sentiments of joy, than are consistent with the mildness of her character.

*Lady Easy.* O the soft treasure ! O the dear reward of long-desiring love—— Thus ! thus to have you mine, is something more than happiness, 'tis double life, and madness of abounding joy.

If

If the sentiments of a passion ought to be suited to a peculiar character, it is still more necessary that sentiments devoid of passion be suited to the character. In the 5th act of the *Drummer*, Addison makes his gardener act even below the character of an ignorant credulous rustic: he gives him the behaviour of a gaping idiot.

The following instances are descriptions rather than sentiments, which compose a third class.

Of this descriptive manner of painting the passions, there is in the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, act 5. an illustrious instance, viz. the speech of Theseus, upon hearing of his son's dismal exit. In Racine's tragedy of *Esther*, the Queen hearing of the decree issued against her people, instead of expressing sentiments suitable to the occasion, turns her attention upon herself, and describes with accuracy her own situation.

Juste Ciel? Tout mon sang dans mes veines se  
glace.

Act 1. sc. 3.

Again, The fourth class is of sentiments

*Aman.* C'en est fait. Mon orgueil est forcé de  
plier,

L'inexorable Aman est réduit à prier.  
*Esther, act 3. sc. 5.*

*Athalie.* Quel prodige nouveau me trouble et  
m'embarrasse ?

La douceur de sa voix, son enfance, sa grace,  
Font insensiblement à mon inimitié  
Succéder — Je serois sensible à la pitié ?

*Athalie, act 2. sc. 7.*

*Titus.* O de ma passion fureur desespérée !

*Brutus of Voltaire, act 3. sc. 6.*

What other are the foregoing instances than  
describing the passion another feels ?

An example is given above of remorse  
and despair expressed by genuine and natu-  
ral sentiments. In the fourth book of *Pa-  
radise Lost*, Satan is made to express his re-  
morse and despair in sentiments, which  
though beautiful, are not altogether natu-  
ral. They are rather the sentiments of  
a spectator, than of a person who actually  
is tormented with these passions.

The

The fourth class is of sentiments introduced too early or too late.

Some examples mentioned above belong to this class. Add the following from *Venice preserv'd*, act 5. at the close of the scene betwixt Belvidera and her father Priuli. The account given by Belvidera of the danger she was in, and of her husband's threatening to murder her, ought naturally to have alarmed her relenting father, and to have made him express the most perturbed sentiments. Instead of which he dissolves into tenderness and love for his daughter, as if he had already delivered her from danger, and as if there were a perfect tranquillity.

Canst thou forgive me all my follies past?

I'll henceforth be indeed a father; never,

Never more thus expose, but cherish thee,

Dear as the vital warmth that feeds my life,

Dear as these eyes that weep in fondness o'er

thee;

Peace to thy heart.

Immoral sentiments exposed in their native



tive colours, instead of being concealed or disguised, compose the fifth class.

The Lady Macbeth projecting the death of the King, has the following soliloquy:

————— The raven himself's not hoarse  
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan  
Under my battlements. Come all you spirits  
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,  
And fill me from the crown to th' toe, top-full  
Of direct cruelty; make thick my blood,  
Stop up th' access and passage to remorse  
That no compunctious visitings of nature  
Shake my fell purpose.

*Macbeth, act 1. sc. 7.*

This speech is not natural. Murder under trust was never perpetrated even by the most hardened miscreant without compunction. And that the lady here must have been in horrible agitation appears, from her invoking the infernal spirits to fill her with cruelty, and to stop up all avenues to remorse. But in this state of mind, it is a never-failing device of self-deceit, to draw the thickest veil over the wicked action, and to extenuate it by all circumstances that imagination

gination can suggest. And if the crime cannot bear disguise, the next attempt is, to thrust it out of mind altogether, and to rush on to action without thought. This last was the husband's method.

Strange things I have in head, that will to hand ;  
Which must be acted, ere they must be scann'd.

*Act 3. sc. 5.*

The lady follows neither of these courses, but in a deliberate manner endeavours to fortify her heart in the commission of an execrable crime, without even attempting a disguise. This I think is not natural. I hope there is no such wretch to be found, as is here represented. In the *Pompey* of Corneille \*, Photine counsels a wicked action in the plainest terms without disguise.

Seigneur, n'attirez point le tonnerre en ces lieux,  
Rangez-vous du parti des destins et des dieux,  
Et sans les accuser d'injustice, ou d'outrage,  
Puis qu'ils font les heureux, adorez leur ouvrage ;

*\* Act 1. sc. 1.*

Quels

Quels que soient leurs decrets, déclarez-vous pour  
eux,

Et pour leur obéir, perdez le malheureux.  
Pressé de toutes parts des colères celestes,  
Il en vient dessus vous faire fondre les restes;  
Et sa tête qu'à peine il a pû dérober,  
Tout prête de choir, cherche avec qui tomber.  
Sa retraite chez vous en effet n'est qu'un crime ;  
Elle marque sa haine, et non pas son estime ;  
Il ne vient que vous perdre en venant prendre port,  
Et vous pouvez douter s'il est digne de mort !  
Il devoit mieux remplir nos vœux et notre attente,  
Faire voir sur ses nef's la victoire flotante ;  
Il n'eût ici trouvé que joye et que festins,  
Mais puisqu'il est vaincu, qu'il s'en prenne aux  
destins.

J'en veux à sa disgrâce et non à sa personne,  
J'exécute à regret ce que le ciel ordonne,  
Et du même poignard, pour César destiné,  
Je perce en soupirant son cœur infortuné.  
Vous ne pouvez enfin qu'aux dépens de sa tête  
Mettre à l'abri la vôtre, et parer la tempête.  
Laissez nommer sa mort un injuste attentat,  
La justice n'est pas une vertu d'état.  
Le choix des actions, ou mauvaises, ou bonnes,  
Ne fait qu'anéantir la force des couronnes ;  
Le droit des rois consiste à ne rien épargner ;  
La timide équité détruit l'art de regner,

Quand

Quand on craint d'être injuste on a toujours à  
craindre,

Et qui veut tout pouvoir doit oser tout enfreindre,  
Fuir comme un deshonneur la vertu qui le pert,  
Et voler sans scrupule au crime qui lui sert.

In the tragedy of *Esther* \*, Haman acknowledges, without disguise, his cruelty, insolence, and pride. And there is another example of the same kind in the *Agamemnon* of Seneca †. In the tragedy of *Athalie* ‡, Mathan, in cool blood, relates to his friend many black crimes he had been guilty of to satisfy his ambition.

In Congreve's *Double-dealer*, Maskwell, instead of disguising or colouring his crimes, values himself upon them in a soliloquy :

Cynthia, let thy beauty gild my crimes; and whatsoever I commit of treachery or deceit, shall be imputed to me as a merit.—Treachery! what treachery? Love cancels all the bonds of friendship, and sets men right upon their first foundations.

Act 2. sc. 8.

\* Act 2. sc. 1.

† Beginning of act 2.

‡ Act 3. sc. 3. at the close.

In French plays, love, instead of being hid or disguised, is treated as a serious concern, and of greater importance than fortune, family, or dignity. I suspect the reason to be, that in the capital of France, love, by the easiness of intercourse, has dwindled down from a real passion to be a connection that is regulated entirely by the mode or fashion\*. This may in some measure excuse their writers, but will never make their plays be relished among foreigners.

*Maxime.* Quoi, trahir, mon ami!

*Euphorbe.* ———— L'amour rend tout permis,  
Un véritable amant ne connoît point d'amis.

*Cinna, act 3. sc. 1.*

*Cesar.* Reine, tout est paisible, et la ville calmée,

Qu'un trouble assez léger avoit trop alarmée,

\* A certain author says humourously, " Les mots mêmes d'amour et d'amant sont bannis de l'intime société des deux sexes, et relegués avec ceux de *chaine* et de *flame* dans les Romans qu'on ne lit plus." And where nature is once banished, a fair field is open to every fantastic imitation, even the most extravagant.

N'a plus à redouter le divorce intestin  
Du soldat insolent, et du peuple mutin.  
Mais, ô Dieux ! ce moment que je vous ai quittée,  
D'un trouble bien plus grand à mon ame agitée,  
Et ces soins importuns qui m'arrachoient de vous  
Contre ma grandeur même allumoient mon courroux.  
Je lui voulois du mal de m' être si contraire,  
De rendre ma presence ailleurs si nécessaire.  
Mais je lui pardonnois au simple souvenir  
Du bonheur qu'a ma flâme elle fait obtenir.  
C'est elle dont je tiens cette haute espérance,  
Qui flate mes desirs d'une illustre apparence,  
Et fait croire à Cesar qu'il peut former de vœux,  
Qu'il n'est pas tout-à-fait indigne de vos feux,  
Et qu'il peut en pretendre une juste conquête,  
N'ayant plus que les Dieux au dessus de sa tête,  
Oui, Reine, si quelqu'un dans ce vaste univers  
Pouvoit porter plus haut la gloire de vos fers ;  
S'il étoit quelque trône où vous puissiez paroître  
Plus dignement assise en captivant son maître,  
J'irois, j'irois à lui, moins pour le lui ravir,  
Que pour lui disputer le droit de vous servir ;  
Et je n'aspirerois au bonheur de vous plaire,  
Qu'après avoir mis bas un si grand adversaire.  
C'étoit pour acquerir un droit si précieux,  
Que combattoit par tout mon bras ambitieux,  
Et dans Pharfale même il a tiré l'épée  
Plus pour le conserver, que pour vaincre Pompée.



Je l'ai vaincu, Princesse, et le Dieu de combats  
 M'y favorisoit moins que vos divins appas.  
 Ils conduisoient ma main, ils enfloient mon courage,  
 Cette pleine victoire est leur dernier ouvrage,  
 C'est l'effet des ardeurs qu'ils daignoient m'inspi-  
 rer ;

Et vos beaux yeux enfin m'ayant fait soupirer,  
 Pour faire que votre ame avec gloire y réponde,  
 M'ont rendu le premier, et de Rome, et du monde;  
 C'est ce glorieux titre, à présent effectif,  
 Que je viens ennoblir par celui de captif ;  
 Heureux, si mon esprit gagne tant sur le vôtre,  
 Qu'il en estime l'un, et me permette l'autre.

*Pompée, act 4. sc. 3.*

The last class comprehends sentiments that are unnatural, as being suited to no character nor passion. These may be subdivided into three branches: first, sentiments unsuitable to the constitution of man and the laws of his nature; second, inconsistent sentiments; third, sentiments that are pure rant and extravagance.

When the fable is of human affairs, every event, every incident, and every circumstance, ought to be natural, otherwise the imitation is imperfect. But an imperfect  
 imitation

imitation is a venial fault, compared with that of running cross to nature. In the *Hippolytus* of Euripides\*, Hippolytus, wishing for another self in his own situation; How much (says he) should I be touched with his misfortune! as if it were natural to grieve more for the misfortunes of another than for one's own.

*O/myn.* Yet I behold her — yet — and now no more!

Turn your lights inward, Eyes, and view my thought,

So shall you still behold her — 'twill not be.

O impotence of sight! mechanic sense

Which to exterior objects ow'th thy faculty,

Not seeing of election, but necessity.

Thus do our eyes, as do all common mirrors,

Successively reflect succeeding images.

Nor what they would, but must; a star or toad;

Just as the hand of Chance administers!

*Mourning Bride, act 2. sc. 8.*

No man, in his senses, ever thought of applying his eyes to discover what passes in his mind; far less of blaming his eyes for not

\* Act 4. sc. 5.

seeing a thought or idea. In Moliere's *L'Avare* \*, Harpagon being robbed of his money, seizes himself by the arm, mistaking it for that of the robber. And again he expresses himself as follows :

Je veux aller querir la justice, et faire donner la question à toute ma maison ; à servantes, à valets, à fils, à fille, et à moi aussi.

This is so absurd as scarce to provoke a smile if it be not at the author.

Of the second branch the following are examples.

————— Now bid me run  
And I will strive with things impossible,  
Yea get the better of them.

*Julius Cæsar, act 2. sc. 3.*

Vos mains seules ont droit de vaincre un invincible.  
*Le Cid, act 5. sc. last.*

Que son nom soit beni. Que son nom soit chanté.  
Que l'on celebre ses ouvrages  
Au de la de l'éternité.

*Esther, act 5. sc. last.*

\* Act 4. sc. 7.

Me miserable! which way shall I fly  
 Infinite wrath and infinite despair?  
 Which way I fly is hell: myself am hell:  
 And in the *lowest* deep, a *lower* deep  
 Still threat'ning to devour me, opens wide;  
 To which, the hell I suffer seems a heav'n.

*Paradise Lost, book 4.*

Of the third branch, take the following  
 samples.

Lucan, talking of Pompey's sepulchre,

————— Romanum nomen, et omne  
 Imperium Magno est tumuli modus. Obrue saxa  
 Crimine plena deum. Si tota est Herculis Oete,  
 Et juga tota vacant Bromio Nyseia; quare  
 Unus in Egypto Magno lapis? Omnia Lagi  
 Rura tenere potest, si nullo cespite nomen  
 Hæferit. Erremus populi, cinerumque tuorum,  
 Magne, metu nullas Nili calcemus arenas.

*L. 8. l. 798.*

Thus in Rowe's translation:

Where there are seas, or air, or earth, or skies,  
 Where-e'er Rome's empire stretches, Pompey  
 lies.

Far

Far be the vile memorial then convey'd!  
 Nor let this stone the partial gods upbraid.  
 Shall Hercules all Oeta's heights demand,  
 And Nyfa's hill for Bacchus only stand;  
 While one poor pebble is the warrior's doom  
 That fought the cause of liberty and Rome?  
 If fate decrees he must in Egypt lie,  
 Let the whole fertile realm his grave supply,  
 Yield the wide country to his awful shade,  
 Nor let us dare on any part to tread,  
 Fearful we violate the mighty dead.

The following passages are pure rant.  
 Coriolanus speaking to his mother,  
 What is this?  
 Your knees to me? to your corrected son?  
 Then let the pebbles on the hungry beach  
 Fillop the stars: then let the mutinous winds  
 Strike the proud cedars 'gainst the fiery sun:  
 Murd'ring impossibility, to make  
 What cannot be, flight work.

*Coriolanus, act 5. sc. 3.*

*Cæsar.* ——— Danger knows full well,  
 That Cæsar is more dangerous than he.  
 We were two lions litter'd in one day,  
 And I the elder and more terrible.

*Julius Cæsar, act 2. sc. 4.*

*Almabide.*

*Almabide.* This day ———  
I gave my faith to him, he his to me.

*Almanzor.* Good Heav'n, thy book of fate be-  
fore me lay

But to tear out the journal of this day.

Or if the order of the world below,

Will not the gap of one whole day allow,

Give me that minute when she made that vow. }

That minute ev'n the happy from their blifs might  
give,

And those who live in grief a shorter time would  
live.

So small a link if broke, th'eternal chain

Would like divided waters join again.

*Conquest of Granada, act 3.*

*Almanzor.* ——— I'll hold it fast  
As life; and when life's gone, I'll hold this last.

And if thou tak'st it after I am slain,

I'll send my ghost to fetch it back again.

*Conquest of Granada, part 2. act 3.*

*Lyndiraxa.* A crown is come, and will not fate  
allow.

And yet I feel something like death is near.

My guards, my guards ———

Let not that ugly skeleton appear.

Sure Destiny mistakes; this death's not mine;

She doats, and meant to cut another line.



Tell her I am a queen — but 'tis too late;  
 Dying, I charge rebellion on my fate;  
 Bow down, ye slaves —  
 Bow quickly down and your submission show;  
 I'm pleas'd to taste an empire ere I go. [Dies.  
*Conquest of Granada, part 2. act 5.*

*Ventidius.* But you, ere love misled your wan-  
 d'ring eyes,  
 Were, sure, the chief and best of human race,  
 Fram'd in the very pride and boast of nature,  
 So perfect, that the gods who form'd you wonder'd  
 At their own skill, and cry'd, A lucky hit  
 Has mended our design.

*Dryden, All for Love, act 1.*

Not to talk of the impiety of this sentiment,  
 it is ludicrous instead of being lofty.

The famous Epitaph on Raphael is not  
 less absurd than any of the foregoing pas-  
 sages :

Raphael, timuit, quo sospite, vinci  
 Rerum magna parens, et moriente mori.

Imitated by Pope in his Epitaph on Sir God-  
 frey Kneller :

Living,

Living, great Nature fear'd he might outvie  
Her works; and dying, fears herself may die.

Such is the force of imitation; for Pope  
of himself would never have been guilty of  
a thought so extravagant.

## Language of Passion.

**A**MONG the particulars that compose the social part of our nature, a propensity to communicate our opinions, our emotions, and every thing that affects us, is remarkable. Bad fortune and injustice affect every one greatly; and of these we are so prone to complain, that if we have no friend or acquaintance to take part in our sufferings, we sometimes utter our complaints aloud even where there are none to listen.

But this propensity, though natural, operates not in every state of mind. A man immoderately grieved, seeks to afflict himself; and self-affliction is the gratification of the passion. Immoderate grief is therefore mute; because complaining is struggling for relief:

It is the wretch's comfort still to have

Some

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Some small reserve of near and inward wo,  
Some unsuspected hoard of inward grief,  
Which they unseen may wail, and weep, and  
mourn,  
And glutton-like alone devour.

*Mourning Bride, act 1. sc. 1.*

When grief subsides, it then and no sooner  
finds a tongue. We complain, because  
complaining is an effort to disburden the  
mind of its distress\*.

Surprise and terror are silent passions for  
a different reason: they agitate the mind  
so violently, as for a time to suspend the ex-  
ercise of its faculties, and in particular that  
of speech.

Love and revenge, when immoderate,  
are

\* This observation is finely illustrated by a story which Herodotus records, *book 3*. Cambyfes when he conquered Egypt, took Psammenitus the King prisoner: and to try his constancy, ordered his daughter to be dressed in the habit of a slave, and to be employ'd in bringing water from the river. His son also was led to execution with a halter about his neck. The Egyptians vented their sorrow in tears and lamentations. Psammenitus only, with a down-cast eye, remained silent. Afterward meeting one of his companions, a man advanced in years, who being plundered of all, was begging alms, he  
wept

are not more loquacious than immoderate grief. But when these passions become moderate, they set the tongue free, and, like moderate grief, become loquacious. Moderate love, when unsuccessful, is vented in complaints; when successful, is full of joy expressed both in words and gestures.

As no passion hath any long uninterrupted existence\* nor beats always with an equal pulse, the language suggested by passion is also unequal and interrupted. And even during an uninterrupted fit of passion, we only express in words the more capital sentiments. In familiar conversation, one who vents every single thought is justly branded with

wept bitterly, calling him by his name. Cambyfes was struck with wonder, and sent a messenger with the following question, "Pfammenitus, thy master Cambyfes is desirous to know, why, after thou hadst seen thy daughter so ignominiously treated, and thy son led to execution, without exclamation or weeping, thou shouldst be so highly concerned for a poor man no way related to thee?" Pfammenitus returned the following answer: "Son of Cyrus, the calamities of my family are too great to leave me the power of weeping: but the misfortunes of a companion, reduced in his old age to want of bread, is a fit subject for lamentation."

\* See chap. 2. part 3.

the character of *loquacity*. Sensible persons express no thoughts but what make some figure. In the same manner, we are only disposed to express the strongest impulses of passion, especially when it returns with impetuosity after some interruption.

I already have had occasion to observe \*, that the sentiments ought to be tuned to the passion, and the language to both. Elevated sentiments require elevated language: tender sentiments ought to be clothed in words that are soft and flowing: when the mind is depressed with any passion, the sentiments must be expressed in words that are humble, not low. Words have an intimate connection with the ideas they represent; and the representation must be imperfect, if the words correspond not precisely to the ideas. An elevated tone of language to express a plain or humble sentiment, has a bad effect by a discordant mixture of feeling. There is not less discord when elevated sentiments are dressed in low words:

\* Chap. 16.



Verfibus exponi tragicis res comica non vult.  
 Indignatur item privatis ac prope Socco  
 Dignis carminibus narrari cœna Thyestæ.

*Horace, Ars poet. l. 89.*

This however excludes not figurative expression, which, within moderate bounds, communicates to the sentiment an agreeable elevation. We are sensible of an effect directly opposite, where figurative expression is indulged beyond a just measure. The opposition betwixt the expression and the sentiment, makes the discord appear greater than it is in reality \*,

At the same time, all passions admit not equally of figures. Pleasant emotions, which elevate or swell the mind, vent themselves in strong epithets and figurative expression. Humbling and dispiriting passions, on the contrary, affect to speak plain:

Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri  
 Telephus et Peleus: cum pauper et exul uterque;  
 Projicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba,  
 Si curat cor spectantis tetigisse querela.

*Horace, Ars poet. 95.*

\* See this explained more particularly in chap. 8.

Figurative

Figurative expression is the work of an enlivened imagination, and for that reason cannot be the language of anguish or distress. A scene of this kind is painted by Otway in colours finely adapted to the subject. There is scarce a figure in it, except a short and natural simile with which the speech is introduced.

Belvidera talking to her father of her husband :

Think you saw what pass'd at our last parting;  
 Think you beheld him like a raging lion,  
 Pacing the earth, and tearing up his steps,  
 Fate in his eyes, and roaring with the pain  
 Of burning fury; think you saw his one hand  
 Fix'd on my throat, while the extended other  
 Grasp'd a keen threat'ning dagger; oh, 'twas thus  
 We last embrac'd, when, trembling with revenge,  
 He dragg'd me to the ground, and at my bosom  
 Presented horrid death; cry'd out, My friends,  
 Where are my friends? swore, wept, rag'd, threa-  
 ten'd, lov'd;

For he yet lov'd, and that dear love preserv'd me  
 To this last trial of a father's pity.

I fear not death, but cannot bear a thought  
 That that dear hand should do th'unfriendly office;  
 If I was ever then your care, now hear me;

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Fly to the senate, save the promis'd lives  
Of his dear friends, ere mine be made the sacrifice.  
*Venice preserv'd, act 5.*

To preserve this resemblance betwixt words and their meaning, the sentiments of active and hurrying passions ought to be dressed in words where syllables prevail that are pronounced short or fast; for these make an impression of hurry and precipitation. Emotions, on the other hand, that rest upon their objects, are best expressed by words where syllables prevail that are pronounced long or slow. A person affected with melancholy has a languid and slow train of perceptions. The expression best suited to this state of mind, is where words not only of long but of many syllables abound in the composition. For that reason, nothing can be finer than the following passage:

In those deep solitudes, and awful cells,  
Where heav'nly-pensive Contemplation dwells,  
And ever-musing Melancholy reigns.  
*Pope, Eloisa to Abelard.*

To preserve the same resemblance, another  
circumstance

circumstance is requisite, that the language conformable to the emotion, be rough or smooth, broken or uniform. Calm and sweet emotions are best expressed by words that glide softly; surprise, fear, and other turbulent passions, require an expression both rough and broken.

It cannot have escaped any diligent inquirer into nature, that in the hurry of passion, one generally expresses that thing first which is most at heart. This is beautifully done in the following passage.

Me, me; adsum qui feci: in me convertite ferrum,  
O Rutuli, mea fraus omnis.

*Æneid* ix. 427.

Passion has often the effect of redoubling words, the better to make them express the strong conception of the mind. This is finely represented in the following examples:

—————Thou sun, said I, fair light!  
And thou enlighten'd earth, so fresh and gay!  
Ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains!  
And ye that live, and move, fair creatures! tell  
D d 2 Tell,

Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here.—

*Paradise Lost, b. viii. 273.*

Both have sinn'd! but thou  
Against God only; I, 'gainst God and thee:  
And to the place of judgement will return.

There with my cries importune Heav'n; that all  
The sentence, from thy head remov'd, may light  
On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe;  
Me! Me! only just object of his ire.

*Paradise Lost, book x. 930.*

Shakespear is superior to all other writers in delineating passion. It is difficult to say in what part he most excels, whether in moulding every passion to peculiarity of character, in discovering the sentiments that proceed from various tones of passion, or in expressing properly every different sentiment. He imposes not upon his reader, general declamation and the false coin of unmeaning words, which the bulk of writers deal in. His sentiments are adjusted, with the greatest propriety, to the peculiar character and circumstances of the speaker; and the propriety is not less perfect betwixt his sentiments and his diction. That this is no exaggeration,

aggreration, will be evident to every one of taste, upon comparing Shakespear with other writers, in similar passages. If upon any occasion he fall below himself, it is in those scenes where passion enters not. By endeavouring in this case to raise his dialogue above the style of ordinary conversation, he sometimes deviates into intricate thought and obscure expression \*. Sometimes, to

\* Of this take the following specimen :

They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase  
Soil our addition ; and, indeed, it takes  
From our atchievements, though perform'd at height,  
The pith and marrow of our attribute.  
So, oft it chances in particular men,  
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,  
As, in their birth, (wherein they are not guilty,  
Since Nature cannot chuse his origin),  
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion  
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason ;  
Or by some habit, that too much o'er-leavens  
The form of plausive manners ; that these men  
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
(Being Nature's livery, or Fortune's scar),  
Their virtues else, be they as pure as grace,  
As infinite as man may undergo,  
Shall in the general censure take corruption  
From that particular fault.

*Hamlet, act 1. sc. 7.*

throw



throw his language out of the familiar, he employs rhyme. But may it not in some measure excuse Shakespear, I shall not say his works, that he had no pattern, in his own or in any living language, of dialogue fitted for the theatre? At the same time, it ought not to escape observation, that the stream clears in its progress, and that in his later plays he has attained the purity and perfection of dialogue; an observation that, with greater certainty than tradition, will direct us to arrange his plays in the order of time. This ought to be considered by those who magnify every blemish that is discovered in the finest genius for the drama ever the world enjoy'd. They ought also for their own sake to consider, that it is easier to discover his blemishes, which lie generally at the surface, than his beauties, of which none can have a thorough relish but those who dive deep into human nature. One thing must be evident to the meanest capacity, that where-ever passion is to be display'd, Nature shows itself strong in him, and

and is conspicuous by the most delicate propriety of sentiment and expression \*.

I return to my subject from a digression I cannot repent of. That perfect harmony which ought to subsist among all the constituent parts of a dialogue, is a beauty, not less rare than conspicuous. As to expression in particular, were I to give instances, where, in one or other of the respects above mentioned, it corresponds not precisely to the characters, passions, and sentiments, I might from different authors collect volumes. Following therefore the method laid down in the chapter of sentiments, I shall confine my citations to the grosser errors, which every writer ought to avoid.

\* The critics seem not perfectly to comprehend the genius of Shakespear. His plays are defective in the mechanical part, which is less the work of genius than of experience; and is not otherwise brought to perfection than by diligently observing the errors of former compositions. Shakespear excels all the ancients and moderns, in knowledge of human nature, and in unfolding even the most obscure and refined emotions. This is a rare faculty, and of the greatest importance in a dramatic author; and it is this faculty which makes him surpass all other writers in the comic as well as tragic vein.

And,

And, first, of passion expressed in words flowing in an equal course without interruption.

In the chapter above cited, Corneille is censured for the impropriety of his sentiments ; and here, for the sake of truth, I am obliged to attack him a second time. Were I to give instances from that author of the fault under consideration, I might copy whole tragedies ; for he is not less faulty in this particular, than in passing upon us his own thoughts as a spectator, instead of the genuine sentiments of passion. Nor would a comparison betwixt him and Shakespear upon the present point, redound more to his honour, than the former upon the sentiments. Racine here is less incorrect than Corneille, though many degrees inferior to the English author. From Racine I shall gather a few instances. The first shall be the description of the sea-monster in his *Phædra*, given by Theramene the companion of Hippolytus, and an eye-witness to the disaster. Theramene is represented in terrible agitation, which appears from the following passage,

fo

so boldly figurative as not to be excused but by violent perturbation of mind.

Le ciel avec horreur voit ce monstre sauvage,  
La terre s'en émeut, l'air en est infecté,  
Le flot, qui l'apporta, recule épouvanté.

Yet Theramene gives a long pompous connected description of this event, dwelling upon every minute circumstance, as if he had been only a cool spectator.

A peine nous fortions des portes de Trézene, &c.

*Act 5. sc. 6.*

The last speech of Atalide, in the tragedy of *Bajazet*, of the same author, is a continued discourse, and but a faint representation of the violent passion which forc'd her to put an end to her own life.

Enfin, c'en est donc fait, &c.

*Act 5. sc. last.*

Though works, not authors, are the professed subject of this critical undertaking, I am tempted by the present speculation, to transgress once again the limits

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prescribed, and to venture a cursory reflection upon this justly-celebrated author, That he is always sensible, generally correct, never falls low, maintains a moderate degree of dignity without reaching the sublime, paints delicately the tender passions, but is a stranger to the true language of enthusiastic or fervid passion.

If in general the language of violent passion ought to be broken and interrupted, soliloquies ought to be so in a peculiar manner. Language is intended by nature for society; and a man when alone, though he always clothes his thoughts in words, seldom gives his words utterance unless when prompted by some strong emotion; and even then by starts and intervals only\*. Shakespear's soliloquies may be justly established as a model; for it is not easy to conceive any model more perfect. Of his many incomparable soliloquies, I confine myself to the two following, being different in their manner.

\* Soliloquies accounted for chap. 15.

*Hamlet.*

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*Hamlet.* Oh, that this too too solid flesh would  
melt,

Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!  
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd  
His cannon 'gainst self-slaughter? O God! O  
God!

How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable  
Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,  
That grows to seed: things rank and gross in na-  
ture

Possess it merely. That it should come to this!  
But two months dead, nay not so much; not two —  
So excellent a king, that was, to this,  
Hyperion to a satyr: so loving to my mother,  
That he permitted not the winds of heav'n  
Visit her face too roughly. Heav'n and earth!  
Must I remember,— why, she would hang on  
him,

As if increase of appetite had grown  
By what it fed on; yet, within a month——  
Let me not think—— Frailty, thy name is *Wo-*  
*man!*

A little month, or ere those shoes were old,  
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,  
Like Niobe, all tears—— why she, ev'n she ——  
(O Heav'n! a beast that wants discourse of reason



Would have mourn'd longer——) married with  
mine uncle,  
My father's brother ; but no more like my father  
Than I to Hercules—— Within a month——  
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
Had left the flushing in her gauled eyes,  
She married—— Oh, most wicked speed, to post  
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets !  
It is not, nor it cannot come to good.  
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

*Hamlet, act 1. sc. 3.*

*Ford.* Hum! ha! is this a vision? is this a dream? do I sleep? Mr Ford, awake; awake Mr Ford; there's a hole made in your best coat, Mr Ford! this 'tis to be married! this 'tis to have linen and buck baskets! Well, I will proclaim myself what I am; I will now take the leacher; he is at my house, he cannot 'scape me; 'tis impossible he should; he cannot creep into a half-penny-purse, nor into a pepper-box. But lest the devil that guides him should aid him, I will search impossible places; though what I am I cannot avoid, yet to be what I would not, shall not make me tame.

*Merry Wives of Windsor, act 3. sc. last.*

These soliloquies are accurate copies of nature. In a passionate soliloquy one begins  
with

with thinking aloud ; and the strongest feelings only, are expressed. As the speaker warms, he begins to imagine one listening, and gradually slides into a connected discourse.

How far distant are soliloquies generally from these models? They are indeed for the most part so unhappily executed, as to give disgust instead of pleasure. The first scene of *Iphigenia* in Tauris discovers that princess, in a soliloquy, gravely reporting to herself her own history. There is the same impropriety in the first scene of *Alcestes*, and in the other introductions of Euripides, almost without exception. Nothing can be more ridiculous. It puts one in mind of that ingenious device in Gothic paintings, of making every figure explain itself by a written label issuing from its mouth. The description a parasite, in the *Eunuch* of Terence \*, gives of himself in the form of a soliloquy, is lively ; but against all the rules of propriety ; for no man, in his ordinary state of mind, and upon a familiar

\* Act 2. sc. 2.

subject,

subject, ever thinks of talking aloud to himself. The same objection lies against a soliloquy in the *Adelphi* of the same author\*. The soliloquy which makes the third scene, act third, of his *Heicyra*, is insufferable; for there Pamphilus, soberly and circumstantially, relates to himself an adventure which had happened to him a moment before.

Corneille is not more happy in his soliloquies than in his dialogue. Take for a specimen the first scene of *Cinna*.

Racine also is extremely faulty in the same respect. His soliloquies, almost without exception, are regular harangues, a chain completed in every link, without interruption or interval. That of Antiochus in *Berenice* † resembles a regular pleading, where the parties *pro* and *con* display their arguments at full length. The following soliloquies are equally destitute of propriety: *Bajazet*, act 3. sc. 7. *Mitridate*, act 3. sc. 4. & act 4. sc. 5. *Iphigenia*, act 4. sc. 8.

Soliloquies upon lively or interesting sub-

\* Act 1. sc. 1.

† Act 1. sc. 2.

jects,

jects, but without any turbulence of passion, may be carried on in a continued chain of thought. If, for example, the nature and sprightliness of the subject prompt a man to speak his thoughts in the form of a dialogue, the expression must be carried on without break or interruption, as in a dialogue betwixt two persons. This justifies Falstaff's soliloquy upon honour :

What need I be so forward with Death, that calls not on me? Well, 'tis no matter, Honour pricks me on. But how if Honour prick me off, when I come on? how then? Can Honour set a leg? No: or an arm? No: or take away the grief of a wound? No: Honour hath no skill in surgery then? No. What is Honour? A word. — What is that word *honour*? Air; a trim reckoning.— Who hath it? He that dy'd a Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. Is it insensible then? Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? No: Why? Detraction will not suffer it. Therefore, I'll none of it; honour is a mere scutcheon; and so ends my catechism.

*First part Henry IV. act 5. sc. 2.*

And even without dialogue, a continued discourse may be justified, where the soliloquy

quy is upon an important subject that makes a strong impression, but without much agitation. For if it be at all excusable to think aloud, it is necessary that the language with the reasoning be carried on in a chain without a broken link. In this view that admirable soliloquy in *Hamlet* upon life and immortality, being a serene meditation upon the most interesting of all subjects, ought to escape censure. And the same consideration will justify the soliloquy that introduces the 5th act of Addison's *Cato*.

The next class of the grosser errors which all writers ought to avoid, shall be of language elevated above the tone of the sentiment; of which take the following instances.

*Zara.* Swift as occasion, I  
 Myself will fly; and earlier than the morn  
 Wake thee to freedom. Now 'tis late; and yet  
 Some news few minutes past arriv'd, which seem'd  
 To shake the temper of the King—— Who knows  
 What racking cares disease a monarch's bed?  
 Or love, that late at night still lights his lamp,  
 And strikes his rays through dusk, and folded lids,  
 Forbidding

Forbidding rest, may stretch his eyes awake,  
And force their balls abroad at this dead hour,  
I'll try.

*Mourning Bride, act 3. sc. 4.*

The language here is undoubtedly too pompous and laboured for describing so simple a circumstance as absence of sleep. In the following passage, the tone of the language, warm and plaintive, is well suited to the passion, which is recent grief. But every one will be sensible, that in the last couplet save one, the tone is changed, and the mind suddenly elevated to be let fall as suddenly in the last couplet.

Il déteste à jamais sa coupable victoire,  
Il renonce à la cour, aux humains, à la gloire;  
Et se fuyant lui-même, au milieu des deserts,  
Il va cacher sa peine au bout de l'univers;  
La, soit que le soleil rendît le jour au monde,  
Soit qu'il finît sa course au vaste sein de l'onde,  
Sa voix faisoit redire aux echos attendris,  
Le nom, le triste nom, de son malheureux fils.

*Henriade, chant. viii. 229.*

Language too artificial or too figurative  
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for the gravity, dignity, or importance, of the occasion, may be put in a third class.

Chimene demanding justice against Rodrigue who killed her father, instead of a plain and pathetic expostulation, makes a speech stuffed with the most artificial flowers of rhetoric :

Sire, mon pere est mort, mes yeux ont vû son sang  
Couler à gros bouillons de son généreux flanc ;  
Ce sang qui tant de fois garantit vos murailles,  
Ce sang qui tant de fois vous gagna des batailles,  
Ce sang qui, tout sorti fume encore de courroux  
De se voir répandu pour d'autres que pour vous,  
Qu'au milieu des hazards n'osoit verser la guerre,  
Rodrigue en votre cour vient d'en couvrir la terre.  
J'ai couru sur le lieu sans force, et sans couleur ;  
Je l'ai trouvé sans vie. Excusez ma douleur,  
Sire ; la voix me manque à ce récit funeste,  
Mes pleurs et mes soupirs vous diront mieux le  
reste.

And again :

Son flanc étoit ouvert, et, pour mieux m'emouvoir,  
Son sang sur la poussière écrivoit mon devoir ;  
Ou plutôt sa valeur en cet état réduite  
Me parloit par sa plaie, et hâtoit ma poursuite,  
Et

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Et pour se faire entendre au plus juste des Rois,  
Par cette triste bouche elle empruntoit ma voix.

Act 2. sc. 9.

Nothing can be contrived in language more averſe to the tone of the paſſion than this florid ſpeech. I ſhould imagine it more apt to provoke laughter than to inſpire concern or pity.

In a fourth claſs ſhall be given ſpecimens of language too light or airy for a ſevere paſſion.

The agony a mother muſt feel upon the ſavage murder of two hopeful ſons, rejects all imagery and figurative expreſſion, as diſcordant in the higheſt degree. Therefore the following paſſage is undoubtedly in a bad taſte :

*Queen.* Ah, my poor princes! ah, my tender babes,

My unblown flow'rs, new-appearing ſweets!

If yet your gentle ſouls fly in the air,

And be not fixt in doom perpetual,

Hover about me with your airy wings,

F f 2

And

And hear your mother's lamentation.

*Richard III. act 4. sc. 4.*

Again,

*K. Philip.* You are as fond of grief as of your child.

*Constance.* Grief fills the room up of my absent child,

Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,

Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,

Remembers me of all his gracious parts,

Stuffs out his vacant garment with his form ;

Then have I reason to be fond of grief.

*King John, act 3. sc. 6.*

A thought that turns upon the expression instead of the subject, commonly called a *play of words*, being low and childish, is unworthy of any composition, whether gay or serious, that pretends to the smallest share of dignity. Thoughts of this kind make a fifth class.

In the *Aminta* of Taffo \* the lover falls into a mere play of words, demanding how

\* Act 1. sc. 2.

he who had lost himself, could find a mistress. And for the same reason, the following passage in Corneille has been generally condemned :

*Chimene.* Mon pere est mort, Elvire, et la première épée  
Dont s'est armé Rodrigue à sa trame coupée.  
Pleurez, pleurez, mes yeux, et fondez-vous en  
eau,  
La moitié de ma vie a mis l'autre au tombeau,  
Et m'oblige à venger, après ce coup funeste,  
Celle que je n'ai plus, sur celle qui me reste.  
*Cid, act 3. sc. 3.*

To die is to be banish'd from myself :  
And Sylvia is myself ; banish'd from her,  
Is self from self ; a deadly banishment !  
*Two Gentlemen of Verona, act 3. sc. 3.*

*Countess.* I pray thee, Lady, have a better  
cheer ;  
If thou ingross'est all the griefs as thine,  
Thou robb'st me of a moiety.  
*All's well that ends well, act 3. sc. 3.*

*R. Henry.* O my poor kingdom, sick with civil  
blows !  
When that my care could not withhold thy riots,  
What

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What wilt thou do when riot is thy care?  
O, thou wilt be a wilderness again,  
Peopled with wolves, thy old inhabitants.

*Second part, Henry IV. act 4. sc. II.*

Cruda Amarilli, che col nome ancora  
D'amar, ah! lasso, amaramente infegni.

*Pastor Fido, act 1. sc. 2.*

Antony, speaking of Julius Cæsar :

O world! thou wast the forest of this hart;  
And this, indeed, O world, the heart of thee.  
How like a deer, stricken by many princes,  
Dost thou here lie!

*Julius Cæsar, act 3. sc. 3.*

Playing thus with the found of words,  
which is still worse than a pun, is the  
meanest of all conceits. But Shakespear,  
when he descends to a play of words, is  
not always in the wrong; for it is done  
sometimes to denote a peculiar character;  
as is the following passage.

*King Philip.* What say'st thou, boy? look in the  
lady's face.

*Lewis.* I do, my Lord, and in her eye I find  
A wonder, or a wond'rous miracle;  
The shadow of myself form'd in her eye;

Which

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Which being but the shadow of your son,  
Becomes a sun, and makes your son a shadow.  
I do protest, I never lov'd myself,  
Till now infix'd I beheld myself  
Drawn in the flatt'ring table of her eye.

*Faulconbridge.* Drawn in the flatt'ring table of  
her eye!

Hang'd in the frowning wrinkle of her brow!  
And quarter'd in her heart! he doth espy  
Himself Love's traitor: this is pity now,  
That hang'd, and drawn, and quarter'd, there  
should be,  
In such a love so vile a lout as he.

*King John, act. 2. sc. 5.*

A jingle of words is the lowest species  
of this low wit; which is scarce sufferable  
in any case, and least of all in an heroic  
poem. And yet Milton in some instances  
has descended to this puerility:

And brought into the world a world of wo.

—— Begirt th' almighty throne

Beseeching or besieging ——

Which tempted our attempt ——

At one flight bound high overleap'd all bound.

————— With a shout

Loud as from numbers without number.



One should think it unnecessary to enter a caveat against an expression that has no meaning, or no distinct meaning; and yet somewhat of this kind may be found even among good writers. These make a sixth class.

*Sebastian.* I beg no pity for this mould'ring clay.  
For if you give it burial, there it takes  
Possession of your earth:  
If burnt and scatter'd in the air; the winds  
That strow my dust, diffuse my royalty,  
And spread me o'er your clime; for where one a-  
tom

Of mine shall light, know there Sebastian reigns.

*Dryden, Don Sebastian King of Portugal, act 1.*

*Cleopatra.* Now, what news my Charmion?  
Will he be kind? and will he not forsake me?  
Am I to live or die? nay, do I live?  
Or am I dead? for when he gave his answer,  
Fate took the word, and then I liv'd or dy'd.

*Dryden, All for Love, act 2.*

If she be coy, and scorn my noble fire,  
If her chill heart I cannot move;  
Why, I'll enjoy the very love,  
And make a mistress of my own desire.

*Cowley, poem inscribed, The Request.*  
His

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His whole poem, inscribed, *My Picture*, is a jargon of the same kind :

————— 'Tis he, they cry, by whom  
Not men, but war itself is overcome.

*Indian Queen.*

Such empty expressions are finely ridiculed in the *Rehearsal* :

Was't not unjust to ravish hence her breath,  
And in life's stead to leave us nought but death?

*Act 4. sc. 1.*

## C H A P. XVIII.

## Beauty of Language.

**O**F all the fine arts, painting only and sculpture are in their nature imitative. A field laid out with taste, is not, properly speaking, a copy or imitation of nature, but nature itself embellished. Architecture deals in originals, and copies not from nature. Sound and motion may in some measure be imitated by music; but for the most part music, like architecture, deals in originals. Language has no archetype in nature, more than music or architecture; unless where, like music, it is imitative of sound or motion. In the description of particular sounds, language sometimes happily furnisheth words, which, beside their customary power of exciting ideas, resemble by their softness or harshness the sound described: and there are words, which, by the celerity or slowness of pronunciation, have some resemblance  
to

to the motion they signify. This imitative power of words goes one step farther. The loftiness of some words, makes them proper symbols of lofty ideas: a rough subject is imitated by harsh-sounding words; and words of many syllables pronounced slow and smooth, are naturally expressive of grief and melancholy. Words have a separate effect on the mind, abstracting from their signification and from their imitative power. They are more or less agreeable to the ear, by the roundness, sweetness, faintness, or roughness, of their tones.

These are beauties, but not of the first rank: They are relished by those only, who have more delicacy of sensation than belongs to the bulk of mankind. Language possesseth a beauty superior greatly in degree, of which we are eminently conscious when a thought is communicated in a strong and lively manner. This beauty of language, arising from its power of expressing thought, is apt to be confounded with the beauty of the thought expressed; which beauty, by a natural transition of feeling among things intimately connected, is con-

vey'd to the expression, and makes it appear more beautiful \*. But these beauties, if we wish to think accurately, must be carefully distinguished from each other. They are indeed so distinct, that we sometimes are conscious of the highest pleasure language can afford, when the subject expressed is disagreeable. A thing that is loathsome, or a scene of horror to make one's hair stand on end, may be described in the liveliest manner. In this case, the disagreeableness of the subject, doth not even obscure the agreeableness of the description. The causes of the original beauty of language considered as significant, which is a branch of the present subject, will be explained in their order. I shall only at present observe, that this beauty is the beauty of means fitted to an end, *viz.* the communication of thought. And hence it evidently appears, that of several expressions all conveying the same thought, the most beautiful, in the sense now mentioned, is that

\* See chap. 2. part 1. sect. 4.

which

which in the most perfect manner answers its end.

The several beauties of language above mentioned, being of different kinds and distinguishable from each other, ought to be handled separately. I shall begin with those beauties of language which arise from sound; after which will follow the beauties of language considered as significant. This order appears natural; for the sound of a word is attended to, before we consider its signification. In a third section come those singular beauties of language that are derived from a resemblance betwixt sound and signification. The beauties of verse I propose to handle in the last section. For though the foregoing beauties are found in verse as well as in prose; yet verse has many peculiar beauties, which for the sake of perspicuity must be brought under one view. And versification, at any rate, is a subject of so great importance, as to deserve a place by itself.

S E C T.



## S E C T. I.

*Beauty of language with respect to sound.*

**I** Propose to handle this subject in the following order, which appears the most natural. The sounds of the different letters come first. Next, these sounds as united in syllables. Third, syllables united in words. Fourth, words united in a period. And in the last place, periods united in a discourse.

With respect to the first article, every vowel is founded by a single expiration of air from the wind-pipe through the cavity of the mouth; and by varying this cavity, the different vowels are founded. The air in passing through cavities differing in size, produceth various sounds, some high or sharp, some low or flat. A small cavity occasions a high sound, a large cavity a low sound. The five vowels accordingly, pronounced with the same extension of the  
wind-

wind-pipe, but with different openings of the mouth, form a regular series of sounds, descending from high to low, in the following order, *i, e, a\**, *o, u*. Each of these sounds is agreeable to the ear. And if it be inquired which of them is the most agreeable, it is perhaps the safest side to hold, that there is no universal preference of any one before the rest. Probably those vowels which are farthest removed from the extremes, will generally be the most relished. This is all I have to remark upon the first article. For consonants being letters which of themselves have no sound, have no other power but to form articulate sounds in conjunction with vowels; and every such articulate sound being a syllable, consonants come naturally under the second article. To which therefore we proceed.

All consonants are pronounced with a less cavity than any of the vowels; and consequently they contribute to form a sound still more sharp than the sharpest vowel pronounced single. Hence it follows, that

\* Here the German *a* is understood.

every

every articulate found into which a consonant enters, must necessarily be double, though pronounced with one expiration of air, or with one breath as commonly expressed. The reason is, that though two sounds readily unite; yet where they differ in tone, both of them must be heard if neither of them be suppressed. For the same reason, every syllable must be composed of as many sounds as there are letters, supposing every letter to be distinctly pronounced.

We next inquire, how far articulate sounds into which consonants enter, are agreeable to the ear. With respect to this point, there is a noted observation, that all sounds of difficult pronunciation are to the ear harsh in proportion. Few tongues are so polished as entirely to have rejected sounds that are pronounced with difficulty; and such sounds must in some measure be disagreeable. But with respect to agreeable sounds, it appears, that a double sound is always more agreeable than a single sound. Every one who has an ear must be sensible, that the diphthongs *oi* or *ai* are more agreeable than any of these vowels pronounced singly.

And

And the same holds where a consonant enters into the double sound. The syllable *le* has a more agreeable sound than the vowel *e* or than any vowel. And in support of experience, a satisfactory argument may be drawn from the wisdom of Providence. Speech is bestowed upon man, to qualify him for society. The provision he hath of articulate sounds, is proportioned to the use he hath for them. But if sounds that are agreeable singly were not also agreeable in conjunction, the necessity of a painful selection would render language intricate and difficult to be attained in any perfection. And this selection, at the same time, would tend to abridge the number of useful sounds, so as perhaps not to leave sufficient for answering the different ends of language.

In this view, the harmony of pronunciation differs widely from that of music properly so called. In the latter are discovered many sounds singly agreeable, that in conjunction are extremely disagreeable; none but what are called *concordant sounds* having a good effect in conjunction. In the former, all sounds singly agreeable are in con-

junction concordant; and ought to be, in order to fulfil the purposes of language.

Having discussed syllables, we proceed to words; which make a third article. Monosyllables belong to the former head. Polysyllables open a different scene. In a cursory view, one will readily imagine, that the effect a word hath upon the ear, must depend entirely upon the agreeableness or disagreeableness of its component syllables. In part it doth; but not entirely; for we must also take under consideration the effect that a number of syllables composing a word have in succession. In the first place, syllables in immediate succession, pronounced, each of them, with the same or nearly the same aperture of the mouth, produce a weak and imperfect sound; witness the French words *détété* (detested), *dit-il* (says he), *patétique* (pathetic). On the other hand, a syllable of the greatest aperture succeeding one of the smallest, or the opposite, makes a succession, which, because of its remarkable disagreeableness, is distinguished by a proper name, viz. *hiatus*. The most agreeable succession, is, where the cavity

cavity is increased and diminished alternately by moderate intervals. Secondly, words consisting wholly of syllables pronounced slow or of syllables pronounced quick, commonly called *long* and *short syllables*, have little melody in them. Witness the words *petitioner, fruiterer, dizziness*. On the other hand, the intermixture of long and short syllables is remarkably agreeable; for example, *degree, repent, wonderful, altitude, rapidity, independent, impetuosity*. The cause will be explained afterward, in treating of versification.

Distinguishable from the beauties above mentioned, there is a beauty of some words which arises from their signification. When the emotion raised by the length or shortness, the roughness or smoothness, of the sound, resembles in any degree what is raised by the sense, we feel a very remarkable pleasure. But this subject belongs to the third section.

The foregoing observations afford a standard to every nation, for estimating, pretty accurately, the comparative merit of the words that enter into their own language.



And though at first view they may be thought equally useful for estimating the comparative merit of different languages; yet this holds not in fact, because no person can readily be found who is sufficiently qualified to apply the standard. What I mean is, that different nations judge differently of the harshness or smoothness of articulate sounds: a sound, harsh and disagreeable to an Italian, may be abundantly smooth to a northern ear. Where are we to find a judge to determine this controversy? and supposing a judge, upon what principle is his decision to be founded? The case here is precisely the same as in behaviour and manners. Plain-dealing and sincerity, liberty in words and actions, form the character of one people. Politeness, reserve, and a total disguise of every sentiment that can give offence, form the character of another people. To each the manners of the other are disagreeable. An effeminate mind cannot bear the least of that roughness and severity, which is generally esteemed manly when exerted upon proper occasions. Neither can an effeminate ear  
bear

bear the least harshness in words that are deemed nervous and sounding by those accustomed to a rougher tone of language. Must we then relinquish all thoughts of comparing languages in the point of roughness and smoothness, as a fruitless inquiry? Not altogether so; for we may proceed a certain length, though without hope of an ultimate decision. A language with difficulty pronounced even by natives, must yield the preference to a smoother language. Again, supposing two languages pronounced with equal facility by natives, the preference, in my judgement, ought to be in favour of the rougher language; provided it be also stored with a competent share of more mellow sounds. This will be evident from attending to the different effects that articulate sound hath upon the mind. A smooth gliding sound is agreeable, by smoothing the mind and lulling it to rest. A rough bold sound, on the contrary, animates the mind. The effort perceived in pronouncing, is communicated to the hearers: they feel in their own minds a similar effort, which

which rouses their attention and disposes them to action. I must add another consideration. The agreeableness of contrast in the rougher language, for which the great variety of sounds gives ample opportunity, must, even in an effeminate ear, prevail over the more uniform sounds of the smoother language\*. This appears to me all that can be safely determined upon the present point. With respect to the other circumstances that constitute the beauty of words, the standard above mentioned is infallible when apply'd to foreign languages as well as to our own. For every man, whatever be his mother-tongue, is equally capable to judge of the length or shortness of words, of the alternate opening and closing of the mouth in speaking, and of the relation which the sound bears to the sense. In these particulars, the judgement is susceptible of no prejudice from custom, at least of no invincible prejudice.

\* That the Italian tongue is rather too smooth, seems to appear from considering, that in versification vowels are frequently suppressed in order to produce a rougher and bolder tone.

That

That the English tongue, originally harsh, is at present much softened by dropping in the pronunciation many redundant consonants, is undoubtedly true. That it is not capable of being farther mellowed, without suffering in its force and energy, will scarce be thought by any one who possesses an ear. And yet such in Britain is the propensity for dispatch, that overlooking the majesty of words composed of many syllables aptly connected, the prevailing taste is, to shorten words, even at the expence of making them disagreeable to the ear and harsh in the pronunciation. But I have no occasion to insist upon this article, being prevented by an excellent writer, who possessed, if any man ever did, the true genius of the English tongue\*. I cannot however forbear urging one observation borrowed from that author. Several tenses of our verbs are formed by adding the final syllable *ed*, which, being a weak sound, has remarkably the worse ef-

\* See Swift's proposal for correcting the English tongue, in a letter to the Earl of Oxford.

fect by possessing the most conspicuous place in the word. Upon that account, the vowel is in common speech generally suppressed, and the consonant is added to the foregoing syllable. Hence the following rugged sounds, *drudg'd*, *disturb'd*, *rebuk'd*, *fledg'd*. It is still less excuseable to follow this practice in writing; for the hurry of speaking may excuse what is altogether improper in a composition of any value. The syllable *ed*, it is true, makes but a poor figure at the end of a word: but we ought to submit to that defect, rather than multiply the number of harsh words, which, after all that has been done, bear an overproportion in our tongue. The author above mentioned, by showing a good example, did all in his power to restore that syllable; and he well deserves to be imitated. Some exceptions however I would make. A word which signifies labour, or any thing harsh or rugged, ought not to be smooth. Therefore *forc'd*, with an apostrophe, is better than *forced*, without it. Another exception is, where the penult syllable ends with a vowel. In that case

the

the final syllable *ed* may be apostrophized without making the word harsh. Examples, *betray'd, carry'd, destroy'd, employ'd.*

The article next in order, is to consider the music of words as united in a period. And as the arrangement of words in succession so as to afford the greatest pleasure to the ear, depends on principles pretty remote from common view, it will be necessary to premise some general observations upon the effect that a number of objects have upon the mind when they are placed in an increasing or decreasing series. The effect of such a series will be very different, according as resemblance or contrast prevails. Where the members of a series vary by small differences, resemblance prevails; which, in ascending, makes us conceive the second object of no greater size than the first, the third of no greater size than the second, and so of the rest. This diminisheth in appearance the size of the whole. Again, when beginning at the largest object, we proceed gradually to the least, resemblance makes us imagine the second as large as the first, and the third as



large as the second; which in appearance magnifies every object of the series except the first. On the other hand, in a series varying by great differences, where contrast prevails, the effects are directly opposite. A large object succeeding a small one of the same kind, appears by the opposition larger than usual: and a small object, for the same reason, succeeding one that is large, appears less than usual\*. Hence a remarkable pleasure in viewing a series ascending by large intervals; directly opposite to what we feel when the intervals are small. Beginning at the smallest object of a series where contrast prevails, this object has the same effect upon the mind as if it stood single without making a part of the series. But this is not the case of the second object, which by means of contrast makes a much greater figure than when viewed singly and apart; and the same effect is perceived in ascending progressively, till we arrive at the last object. The direct contrary effect is produced in descending; for in this direc-

\* See the reason, chap. 8.

tion, every object, except the first, makes a less figure than when viewed separately and independent of the series. We may then lay down as a maxim, which will hold in the composition of language as well as of other subjects, That a strong impulse succeeding a weak, makes a double impression on the mind; and that a weak impulse succeeding a strong, makes scarce any impression.

After establishing this maxim, we can be at no loss about its application to the subject in hand. The following rule is laid down by Diomedes\*. “In verbis observandum est, ne a majoribus ad minora descendat oratio; melius enim dicitur, *Vir est optimus, quam, Vir optimus est.*” This rule is applicable not only to single words, but equally to entire members of a period, which, according to our author’s expression, ought not more than single words to proceed from the greater to the less, but from the less to the greater. In arranging the members of a period, no wri-

\* De structura perfectæ orationis, l. 2.

ter equals Cicero. The beauty of the following examples out of many, will not suffer me to slur them over by a reference.

Quicum quæstor fueram,  
 Quicum me fors consuetudoque majorum,  
 Quicum me Deorum hominumque judicium con-  
 junxerat.

Again:

Habet honorem quem petimus,  
 Habet spem quam præpositam nobis habemus,  
 Habet existimationem, multo sudore, labore, vi-  
 gilisque, collectam.

Again:

Eripite nos ex miseriis,  
 Eripite nos ex faucibus eorum,  
 Quorum crudelitas, nostro sanguine non potest  
 expleri.

*De oratore, l. 1. § 52.*

This order of words or members gradually increasing in length, may, so far as concerns the pleasure of sound singly, be denominated *a climax in sound*.

The

The last article is the music of periods as united in a discourse; which shall be dispatched in a very few words. By no other human means is it possible to present to the mind, such a number of objects and in so swift a succession, as by speaking or writing. And for that reason, variety ought more to be studied in these, than in any other sort of composition. Hence a rule regarding the arrangement of the members of different periods with relation to each other, That to avoid a tedious uniformity of sound and cadence, the arrangement, the cadence, and the length of these members, ought to be diversified as much as possible. And if the members of different periods be sufficiently diversified, the periods themselves will be equally so.

## S E C T. II.

*Beauty of language with respect to signifi-  
cation.*

**I**T is well said by a noted writer \*, “ That  
 “ by means of speech we can divert our  
 “ sorrows, mingle our mirth, impart our  
 “ secrets, communicate our counsels, and  
 “ make mutual compacts and agreements to  
 “ supply and assist each other.” Considering  
 speech as contributing thus to so many good  
 purposes, it follows, that the chusing words  
 which have an accurate meaning, and tend  
 to convey clear and distinct ideas, must be  
 one of its capital beauties. This cause of  
 beauty, is too extensive to be handled as a  
 branch of any other subject. To ascertain  
 with accuracy even the proper meaning of  
 words, not to talk of their figurative power,  
 would require a large volume; an useful  
 work indeed; but not to be attempted with-  
 out a large stock of time, study, and reflec-

\* Scot's Christian life.

tion.

tion. This branch therefore of the subject I must humbly decline. Nor do I propose to exhaust all the other beauties of language with respect to signification. The reader, in a work like the present, cannot fairly expect more than a slight sketch of those that make the greatest figure. This is a task which I attempt the more willingly, as it appears to be connected with some principles in human nature; and the rules I shall have occasion to lay down, will, if I judge aright, be agreeable illustrations of these principles. Every subject must be of importance that tends in any measure to unfold the human heart; for what other science is more worthy of human beings?

The present subject is so extensive, that, to prevent confusion, it must be divided into parts; and what follows suggests a division into two parts. In every period, two things are to be regarded, equally capital; first, the words of which the period is composed; next, the arrangement of these words. The former resemble the stones that compose a building; and the latter resembles the order in which these stones are placed.

Hence



Hence the beauty of language with respect to its meaning, may not improperly be distinguished into two kinds. The first consists in a right choice of words or materials for constructing the period; and the other consists in a due arrangement of these words or materials. I shall begin with rules that direct us to a right choice of words, and then proceed to rules that concern their arrangement.

And with respect to the former, communication of thought being the principal end of language, it is a rule, That perspicuity ought not to be sacrificed to any other beauty whatever. If it should be doubted whether perspicuity be a positive beauty, it cannot be doubted, that the want of it is the greatest defect. Nothing therefore in the structure of language ought more to be studied, than to prevent all obscurity in the expression; for to have no meaning, is but one degree worse than to express it so as not to be understood. Want of perspicuity from a wrong arrangement, belongs to the next branch. I shall give a few examples where the obscurity arises from a wrong choice of words;

words; and as this defect is so common in ordinary writers as to make examples from them unnecessary, I confine myself to the most celebrated authors.

Livy, speaking of a rout after a battle,  
 Multique in ruina majore quam fuga oppressi ob-  
 truncatique. *L. 4. § 46.*

Unde tibi reditum certo subtemine Parcæ  
 Rupere. *Horace, epod. xiii. 22.*

Qui per sæpe cava testudine flevit amorem,  
 Non elaboratum ad pedem. *Horace, epod. xiv. 11.*

Me fabulosæ Vulture in Appulo,  
 Altricis extra limen Apuliæ,  
 Ludo, fatigatumque somno,  
 Fronde nova puerum palumbes  
 Texere. *Horace, Carm. l. 3. ode 4.*

Puræ rivus aquæ, silvaque jugerum  
 Paucorum, et segetis certa fides meæ,  
 Fulgentem imperio fertilis Africæ  
 Fallit sorte beatior. *Horace, Carm. l. 3. ode 16.*

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Cum fas atque nefas exiguo *sine* libidinum  
Discernunt avidi.

*Horace, Carm. l. i. ode 18.*

Ac spem fronte serenat.

*Æneid iv. 477.*

There is want of neatness even in an ambiguity so slight as that is which arises from the construction merely; as where the period commences with a member which is conceived to be in the nominative case, and which afterward is found to be in the accusative. Example: "Some emotions more peculiarly connected with the fine arts, I propose to handle in separate chapters\*." Better thus: "Some emotions more peculiarly connected with the fine arts, are proposed to be handled in separate chapters."

The rule next in order, because next in importance, is, That the language ought to correspond to the subject. Grand or heroic actions or sentiments require elevated language: tender sentiments ought to be ex-

\* Elements of criticism, vol. I. p. 43.

pressed in words soft and flowing; and plain language devoid of ornament, is adapted to subjects grave and didactic. Language may be considered as the dress of thought; and where the one is not suited to the other, we are sensible of incongruity, in the same manner as where a judge is dressed like a fop, or a peasant like a man of quality. The intimate connection that words have with their meaning, requires that both be in the same tone. Or, to express the thing more plainly, the impression made by the words ought as nearly as possible to resemble the impression made by the thought. The similar emotions mix sweetly in the mind, and augment the pleasure\*. On the other hand, where the impressions made by the thought and the words are dissimilar, they are forc'd into a sort of unnatural union, which is disagreeable †.

In the preceding chapter, concerning the language of passion, I had occasion to give many examples of deviations from this

\* Chap. 2. part 4.

† Ibid.

rule with regard to the manner of expressing passions and their sentiments. But as the rule concerns the manner of expressing thoughts and ideas of all kinds, it has an extensive influence in directing us to the choice of proper materials. In that view it must be branched out into several particulars. And I must observe, in the first place, that to write with elegance, it is not sufficient to express barely the conjunction or disjunction of the members of the thought. It is a beauty to find a similar conjunction or disjunction in the words. This may be illustrated by a familiar example. When we have occasion to mention the intimate connection that the soul has with the body, the expression ought to be *the soul and body*; because the particle *the*, relative to both, makes a connection in the expression, which resembles in some degree the connection in the thought. But when the soul is distinguished from the body, it is better to say *the soul and the body*, because the disjunction in the words resembles the disjunction in the thought. In the following

ing

ing examples the connection in the thought is happily imitated in the expression.

Constituit agmen; et expedire tela animosque, equitibus jussis, &c.

*Livy, l. 38. § 25.*

Again:

Quum ex paucis quotidie aliqui eorum caderent aut vulnerarentur, et qui superarent, fessi et corporibus et animis essent, &c.

*Livy, l. 38. § 29.*

Post acer Mnestheus adducto constitit arcu,

Alta petens, pariterque oculos telumque terendit.

*Æneid, l. v. 507.*

The following passage of Tacitus appears to me not so happy. It approaches to wit by connecting in the foregoing manner things but slightly related, which is not altogether suitable to the dignity or gravity of history.

Germania omnis a Galliis, Rhætiisque, et Pannoniis, Rheno et Danubio fluminibus; a Sarmatis Dacisque, mutuo metu aut montibus separatur.

*De moribus Germanorum.*



I am more doubtful about this other instance :

—————The fiend look'd up, and knew  
His mounted scale aloft ; nor more, but fled  
Murm'ring, and with him fled the shades of night.  
*Paradise Lost, B. 4. at the end.*

I shall add some other examples where the opposition in the thought is imitated in the words ; an imitation that is distinguished by the name of *antithesis*.

Speaking of Coriolanus soliciting the people to be made consul :

With a proud heart he wore his humble weeds.  
*Coriolanus.*

Had you rather Cæsar were living, and die all slaves ; than that Cæsar were dead, to live all free men ?  
*Julius Cæsar.*

He hath cool'd my friends and heated mine enemies.  
*Shakespeare.*

Why, if two gods should play some *heav'nly* match,  
And on the wager lay two *earthly* women,  
And Portia one, there must be something else  
Pawn'd

Pawn'd with the other; for the poor rude world  
Hath not her fellow.

*Merchant of Venice, act 3. sc. 6.*

This rule may be extended to govern the construction of sentences or periods. A sentence or period in language ought to express one entire thought or mental proposition; and different thoughts ought to be separated in the expression by placing them in different sentences or periods. It is therefore offending against neatness, to crowd into one period entire thoughts which require more than one; for this is conjoining in language things that are separated in reality; and consequently rejecting that uniformity which ought to be preserved betwixt thought and expression. Of errors against this rule take the following examples.

*Cæsar, describing the Suevi:*

Atque in eam se consuetudinem adduxerunt, ut  
locis frigidissimis, neque vestitus, præter pelles,  
habeant quidquam, quarum, propter exiguitatem,  
magna

magna est corporis pars operta, et laventur in fluminibus. *Commentaria, l. 4. prin.*

Burnet, in the history of his own times, giving Lord Sunderland's character, says,

His own notions were always good; but he was a man of great expence.

I have seen a woman's face break out in heats, as she has been talking against a great lord, whom she had never seen in her life; and indeed never knew a party-woman that kept her beauty for a twelvemonth. *Spectator, No 57.*

Lord Bolingbroke, speaking of Strada:—

I single him out among the moderns, because he had the foolish presumption to censure Tacitus, and to write history himself: and your Lordship will forgive this short excursion in honour of a favourite author.

*Letters on history, vol. 1. let. 57.*

It seems to me, that in order to maintain the moral system of the world at a certain point, far below that of ideal perfection, (for we are made capable of conceiving what we are incapable of attaining),

taining), but however sufficient upon the whole to constitute a state easy and happy, or at the worst tolerable: I say, it seems to me, that the author of nature has thought fit to mingle from time to time, among the societies of men, a few, and but a few, of those on whom he is graciously pleased to bestow a larger proportion of the ethereal spirit than is given in the ordinary course of his providence to the sons of men.

*Bolingbroke, on the spirit of patriotism, let. 1.*

To crowd into a single member of a period, different subjects, is still worse than to crowd them into one period.

— Trojam, genitore Adamasto  
 Paupere (mansissetque utinam fortuna) profectus.  
*Æneid. iii. 614.*

Where two things are so connected as to require but a copulative, it is pleasant to find a resemblance in the members of the period, were it even so slight as where both begin with the same letter:

The peacock, in all his pride, does not display half the colour that appears in the garments of a

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British lady, when she is either dressed for a ball or a birth-day.

*Spectator*, N<sup>o</sup> 265.

Had not my dog of a steward run away as he did, without making up his accounts, I had still been immerfed in fin and fea coal.

*Ibid.* N<sup>o</sup>. 530.

My life's companion, and my bosom-friend,  
One faith, one fame, one fate shall both attend.

*Dryden, Translation of Æneid.*

There is obviously a sensible defect in neatness when uniformity is in this case totally neglected \* ; witness the following example, where the construction of two members connected by a copulative is unnecessarily varied.

For it is confidently reported, that two young gentlemen of real hopes, bright wit, and profound judgment, who upon a thorough examination of causes and effects, and by the mere force of natural abilities, without the least tincture of learning, have made a discovery that there was no God, and

\* See Gerard's French grammar, discourse 12.

*generously*

*generously communicating* their thoughts for the good of the public, were some time ago, by an unparalleled severity, and upon I know not what obsolete law, broke for blasphemy\*. [Better thus]: Having made a discovery that there was no God, and having generously communicated their thoughts for the good of the public, were some time ago, &c.

He had been guilty of a fault, for which his master would have put him to death, had he not found an opportunity to escape out of his hands, and *fled* into the deserts of Numidia.

*Guardian*, N<sup>o</sup> 139.

If all the ends of the revolution are already obtained, it is not only impertinent to argue for obtaining any of them, but *factious designs might be imputed*, and the name of incendiary be applied with some colour, perhaps, to any one who should persist in pressing this point.

*Dissertation upon parties, Dedication.*

It is even unpleasant to find a negative and affirmative proposition connected by a copulative.

\* An argument against abolishing Christianity, Swift.



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Nec excitatur classico miles truci,  
Nec horret iratum mare ;  
Forumque vitat, et superba civium  
Potentiorum limina.

*Horace, Epod. 2. l. 5.*

If it appear not plain, and prove untrue,  
Deadly divorce step between me and you.

*Shakespear.*

An artificial connection among the words, is undoubtedly a beauty when it represents any peculiar connection among the constituent parts of the thought ; but where there is no such connection, it is a positive deformity, because it makes a discordance betwixt the thought and expression. For the same reason, we ought also to avoid every artificial opposition of words where there is none in the thought. This last, termed *verbal antithesis*, is studied by writers of no taste ; and is relished by readers of the same stamp, because of a certain degree of liveliness in it. They do not consider how incongruous it is, in a grave composition, to cheat the reader, and to make him expect

pect a contrast in the thought, which upon examination is not found there.

A light wife doth make a heavy husband.

*Merchant of Venice.*

Here is a studied opposition in the words, not only without any opposition in the sense, but even where there is a very intimate connection, that of cause and effect; for it is the levity of the wife that vexes the husband.

---

Will maintain  
Upon his bad life to make all this good.  
*King Richard II. act 1. sc. 2.*

*Lucetta.* What, shall these papers lie like tell-tales here?

*Julia.* If thou respect them, best to take them up.

*Lucetta.* Nay, I was taken up for laying them down.

*Two Gentlemen of Verona, act 1. sc. 3.*

To conjoin by a copulative, members that signify things opposed in the thought, is an error too gross to be commonly practised.

fed. And yet writers are guilty of this fault in some degree, when they conjoin by a copulative things transacted at different periods of time. Hence a want of neatness in the following expression.

The nobility too, whom the King had no means of retaining by suitable offices and preferments, had been seized with the general discontent, and unwarily threw themselves into the scale, which began already too much to preponderate.

*History of G. Britain, vol. 1. p. 250.*

In periods of this kind, it appears more neat to express the past time by the participle passive, thus:

The nobility having been seized with the general discontent, unwarily threw themselves, &c. [or], The nobility who had been seized, &c. unwarily threw themselves, &c.

So much upon conjunction and disjunction in general. I proceed to apply the rule to comparisons in particular. Where a resemblance betwixt two objects is described, the writer ought to study a resemblance betwixt the two members that express these objects.

objects. For it makes the resemblance the more entire to find it extended even to the words. To illustrate this rule, I shall give various examples of deviations from it. I begin with the words that express the resemblance.

I have observed of late, the style of some great *ministers* very much to exceed that of any other *productions*.

*Letter to the Lord High Treasurer. Swift.*

This, instead of studying the resemblance of words in a period that expresses a comparison, is going out of one's road to avoid it. Instead of *productions* which resemble not ministers great or small, the proper word is *writers* or *authors*.

If men of eminence are exposed to censure on the one hand, they are as much liable to flattery on the other. If they receive reproaches which are not due to them, they likewise receive praises which they do not deserve. *Spectator.*

Here the subject plainly demands uniformity in expression instead of variety; and therefore

therefore it is submitted whether the period would not do better in the following manner:

If men of eminence be exposed to censure on the one hand, they are as much exposed to flattery on the other. If they receive reproaches which are not due, they likewise receive praises which are not due.

I cannot but fancy, however, that this imitation, which passes so currently with *other judgements*, must at some time or other have stuck a little with your *Lordship* \*. [Better thus:] I cannot but fancy, however, that this imitation, which passes so currently with others, must at some time or other have stuck a little with your Lordship.

A glutton or mere sensualist is as ridiculous as the other two characters.

*Shaftesbury, vol. 1. p. 129.*

They wisely prefer *the generous efforts of goodwill and affection*, to the reluctant compliances of *such as obey by force*.

*Remarks on the history of England. Letter 5.  
Bolingbroke.*

\* Letter concerning enthusiasm. Shaftesbury.

Titus Livius, concerning the people of Enna demanding the keys from the Roman garrison, makes the governor say,

Quas simul tradiderimus, Carthaginiensium ex-  
templo Enna erit, foediusque hic trucidabimur,  
quam Murgantiæ præsidium interfectum est.

L. 24. § 38.

Quintus Curtius, speaking of Porus mounted on an elephant, and leading his army to battle :

Magnitudini Pori adjicere videbatur bellua qua  
vehebatur, tantum inter cæteras eminens, quanto  
aliis ipse præstabat.

L. 8. cap. 14.

It is a still greater deviation from congruity, to affect not only variety in the words, but also in the construction. Describing Thermopylæ, Titus Livius says,

Id jugum, sicut Apennini dorso Italia dividitur,  
ita mediam Græciam deremit.

L. 36. § 15.



## Speaking of Shakespear:

There may remain a fuspicion that we over-rate the greatness of his genius; in the fame manner as bodies appear more gigantic on account of their being disproportioned and mishapen.

*History of G. Britain, vol. 1. p. 138.*

This is studying variety in a period where the beauty lies in uniformity. Better thus:

There may remain a fuspicion that we over-rate the greatness of his genius, in the fame manner as we over-rate the greatness of bodies which are disproportioned and mishapen.

Next as to the length of the members that signify the refembling objects. To produce a refemblance betwixt fuch members, they ought not only to be conſtructed in the fame manner, but as nearly as poſſible be equal in length. By neglecting this circumſtance, the following example is defective in neatneſs.

As the performance of all other religious duties will not avail in the fight of God, *without charity*, ſo neither will the diſcharge of all other miniſterial duties

duties avail in the sight of men *without a faithful discharge of this principal duty.*

*Dissertation upon parties, dedication.*

In the following passage all the errors are accumulated that a period expressing a resemblance can well admit :

Ministers are answerable for every thing done to the prejudice of the constitution, in the same proportion as the preservation of the constitution in its purity and vigour, or the perverting and weakening it, are of greater consequence to the nation, than any other instances of good or bad government.

*Dissertation upon parties, dedication.*

The same rule obtains in a comparison where things are opposed to each other. Objects contrasted, not less than what are similar, require a resemblance in the members of the period that express them. The reason is, that contrast has no effect upon the mind, except where the things compared have a resemblance in their capital parts\*. Therefore, in opposing two cir-

\* See chap. 8.

circumstances to each other, it remarkably heightens the contrast, to make as entire as possible the resemblance betwixt the other parts, and in particular betwixt the members expressing the two circumstances contrasted. As things are often best illustrated by their contraries, I shall also give examples of deviations from the rule in this case.

Addison says,

A friend exaggerates a man's virtues, an enemy inflames his crimes. *Spectator*, N<sup>o</sup> 399.

Would it not be neater to study uniformity instead of variety? as thus:

A friend exaggerates a man's virtues, an enemy his crimes.

For here the contrast is only betwixt a friend and an enemy; and betwixt all the other circumstances, including the members of the period, the resemblance ought to be preserved as entire as possible.

Speaking of a lady's head-dress:

About ten years ago it shot up to a very great height,

height, infomuch that the female part of our species were much taller than the men.

*Spectator, N<sup>o</sup> 98.*

It should be,

Than the male part.

The wise man is happy when he gains his own approbation; the fool when he recommends himself to the applause of those about him.

*Ibid. N<sup>o</sup> 73.*

Better :

The wise man is happy when he gains his own approbation; the fool when he gains that of others.

Sicut in frugibus pecudibusque, non tantum femina ad servandum indolem valent, quantum terræ proprietates coelique, sub quo aluntur, mutat.

*Livy, l. 38. § 17.*

Sallust, in his history of Catiline's conspiracy :

Per illa tempora quicumque rempublicam agitare, honestis nominibus, alii, sicuti populi jura defenderent, pars, quo senati auctoritas maxuma foret,

foret, bonum publicum simulantes, pro sua quisque potentia certabant. *Cap. 38.*

We proceed to a rule of a different kind. During the course of a period, the same scene ought to be continued without variation. The changing from person to person, from subject to subject, or from person to subject, within the bounds of a single period, distracts the mind, and affords no time for a solid impression. I illustrate this rule by giving examples of deviations from it.

*Honos alit artes, omnesque incenduntur ad studia gloriâ; jacentque ea semper quæ apud quosque improbantur.*

*Cicero, Tuscul. quest. l. 1.*

Speaking of the distemper contracted by Alexander bathing in the river Cydnus and of the cure offered by Philip the physician :

Inter hæc à Parmenione fidissimo purpuratorum, literas accipit, quibus ei denunciabat, ne salutem suam Philippo committeret.

*Quintus Curtius, l. 3. cap. 6.*

Hook,

Hook, in his Roman history, speaking of Eumenes, who had been beat down to the ground with a stone, says,

After a short time *he* came to himself; and the next day, *they* put him on board his ship, *which* conveyed him first to Corinth, and thence to the island of Ægina.

I give another example of a period which is unpleasant, even by a very slight deviation from the rule.

That sort of instruction which is acquired by inculcating an important moral truth, &c.

This expression includes two persons, one acquiring, and one inculcating; and the scene is changed without necessity. To avoid this blemish, the thought may be expressed thus :

That sort of instruction which is afforded by inculcating, &c.

The bad effect of this change of person is remarkable in the following passage.

The



The Britains, daily harassed by cruel inroads from the Picts, were forced to call in the Saxons for their defence, who consequently reduced the greatest part of the island to their own power, drove the Britains into the most remote and mountainous parts, and the rest of the country, in customs, religion, and language, became wholly Saxons.

*Letter to the Lord High Treasurer. Swift.*

The following example is a change from subject to persons.

*This prostitution of praise* is not only a deceit upon the gross of mankind, who take their notion of characters from the learned; but also the better sort must by this means lose some part at least of that desire of fame which is the incentive to generous actions, when they find it promiscuously bestowed on the meritorious and undeserving.

*Guardian, N° 4.*

Even so slight a change as to vary the construction in the same period, is unpleasant:

Annibal luce prima, Balearibus levique alia armatura præmissa, transgressus flumen, ut quosque traduxerat,

traduxerat, ita in acie locabat; Gallos Hispanos-  
que equites prope ripam lævo in cornu adversus  
Romanum equitatum; dextrum cornu Numidis  
equitibus datum.

*Tit. Liv. l. 22. §. 46.*

Speaking of Hannibal's elephants drove  
back by the enemy upon his own army:

Eo magis ruere in suos belluæ, tantoque majo-  
rem stragem edere quam inter hostes ediderant,  
quanto acrius pavor confternatam agit, quam infi-  
dentis magistri imperio regitur.

*Liv. l. 27. §. 14.*

This passage is also faulty in a different re-  
spect, that there is no resemblance betwixt  
the members of the expression, though they  
import a comparison.

The present head, which relates to the  
choice of materials, shall be closed with a  
rule concerning the use of copulatives.  
Longinus observes, that it animates a period  
to drop the copulatives; and he gives the  
following example from Xenophon.

Closing their shields together, they were push'd,  
they fought, they flew, they were slain.

*Treatise of the Sublime, cap. 16.*

The reason I take to be what follows. A continued sound, if not strong, tends to lay us asleep. An interrupted sound rouses and animates by its repeated impulses. Hence it is, that syllables collected into feet, being pronounced with a sensible interval betwixt each, make more lively impressions than can be made by a continued sound. A period, the members of which are connected by copulatives, produceth an effect upon the mind approaching to that of a continued sound: and therefore to suppress the copulatives must animate a description. To suppress the copulatives hath another good effect. The members of a period connected by the proper copulatives, glide smoothly and gently along; and are a proof of sedateness and leisure in the speaker. On the other hand, a man in the hurry of passion, neglecting copulatives and other particles, expresses the principal image only. Hence it is, that

hurry

hurry or quick action is best expressed without copulatives :

Veni, vidi, vici.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ite:  
Ferte cite flammæ, date vela, impellite remos.

*Æneid. iv. 593.*

Quis globus, O Cives, caligine volvitur atra ?

Ferte cite ferrum, date tela, scandite muros.

Hostis adest, eja. *Æneid. ix. 36.*

In this view Longinus \* justly compares copulatives in a period to strait tying, which in a race obstructs the freedom of motion.

It follows from the same premisses, that to multiply copulatives in the same period ought to be avoided. For if the laying aside copulatives give force and liveliness, a redundancy of them must render the period languid.

I appeal to the following instance, though there are not more than two copulatives.

Upon looking over the letters of my female correspondents, I find several from women complaining of jealous husbands; and at the same time protesting their own innocence, and desiring my advice upon this occasion. *Spectator, N<sup>o</sup> 170.*

\* Treatise of the sublime, cap. 16.

I except the case where the words are intended to express the coldness of the speaker; for there the redundancy of copulatives is a beauty.

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 plum-pudding, and custard."

*Tale of Tub, § 4.*

And the author shows great taste in varying the expression in the mouth of Peter, who is represented more animated.

"Bread," says he, "dear brothers, is the staff of life, in which bread is contained, *inclusivè*, the quintessence of beef, mutton, veal, venison, partridge, plum-pudding, and custard."

We proceed to the second kind of beauty, which consists in a due arrangement of the words or materials. This branch of the subject is not less nice than extensive; and

I despair to put it in a clear light, until a sketch be given of the general principles that govern the structure or composition of language.

Every thought, generally speaking, contains one capital object considered as acting or as suffering. This object is expressed by a substantive noun. Its action is expressed by an active verb; and the thing affected by the action is expressed by another substantive noun. Its suffering or passive state is expressed by a passive verb, and the thing which acts upon it, by a substantive noun. Beside these, which are the capital parts of a sentence or period, there are generally under-parts. Each of the substantives as well as the verb, may be qualified. Time, place, purpose, motive, means, instrument, and a thousand other circumstances, may be necessary to complete the thought. And in what manner these several parts are connected together in the expression, will appear from what follows.

In a complete thought or mental proposition, all the members and parts are mutually related, some slightly, some more intimately,



mately. In communicating such a thought, it is not sufficient that the component ideas be clearly expressed: it is also necessary, that all the relations contained in the thought be expressed according to their different degrees of intimacy. To annex a certain meaning to a certain sound or word, requires no art. The great nicety in all languages is, to express the various relations that connect together the parts of the thought. Could we suppose this branch of language to be still a secret, it would puzzle, I am apt to think, the greatest grammarian ever existed, to invent an expeditious method. And yet, by the guidance merely of nature, the rude and illiterate have been led to a method so perfect, that it appears not susceptible of any improvement. Without a clear conception of the manner of expressing relations, one at every turn must be at a loss about the beauties of language; and upon that subject therefore I find it necessary to say a few words.

Words that import a relation, must be distinguished from those that do not. Substantives commonly imply no relation, such

as

as *animal, man, tree, river*. Adjectives, verbs, and adverbs, imply a relation. The adjective *good* must be connected with some substantive, some being possessed of that quality. The verb *write* must be applied to some person who writes; and the adverbs *moderately, diligently*, have plainly a reference to some action which they modify. When in language a relative term is introduced, all that is necessary to complete the expression, is, to ascertain that thing to which the term relates. For answering this purpose, I observe in Greek and Latin two different methods. Adjectives are declined as well as substantives; and declension serves to ascertain the connection that is betwixt them. If the word that expresses the subject be, for example, in the nominative case, so also must the word be that expresses its quality. Example, *vir bonus*. Again, verbs are related, on the one hand, to the agent; and, on the other, to the subject upon which the action is exerted. A contrivance similar to that now mentioned, serves to express this double relation. The nominative case is appropriated to the agent, the accusative

fative to the passive subject; and the verb is put in the first second or third person, to correspond the more intimately with both. Examples: *Ego amo Tulliam; tu amas Semproniam; Brutus amat Portiam.* The other method is by juxtaposition, which is necessary with respect to words only that are not declined, adverbs for example, articles, prepositions, and conjunctions. In the English language there are few declensions; and therefore juxtaposition is our chief resource. Adjectives accompany their substantives\*; an adverb accompanies the word it qualifies; and the verb occupies the middle place betwixt the active and passive subjects to which it relates.

It must be obvious, that those terms which have nothing relative in their signification,

\* Taking advantage of a declension to separate an adjective from its substantive, as is commonly practised in Latin, though it detract not from perspicuity, is certainly less near than the English method of juxtaposition. Contiguity is more expressive of an intimate relation, than resemblance merely of the final syllables. Latin indeed has evidently the advantage when the adjective and substantive happen to be connected by contiguity as well as by the resemblance of the final syllables.

cannot be connected in so easy a manner. When two substantives happen to be connected, as cause and effect, as principal and accessory, or in any other manner, such connection cannot be expressed by contiguity solely; for words must often in a period be placed together which are not thus related. The relation betwixt substantives, therefore, cannot otherwise be expressed than by particles denoting the relation. Latin indeed and Greek, by their declensions, go a certain length to express such relations, without the aid of particles. The relation of property, for example, betwixt Cæsar and his horse is, expressed by putting the latter in the nominative case, the former in the genitive; *equus Cæsaris*. The like in English, *Cæsar's horse*. But in other instances, declensions not being used in the English language, relations of this kind are commonly expressed by prepositions.

This form of connecting by prepositions, is not confined to substantives. Qualities, attributes, manner of existing or acting, and all other circumstances, may in the same manner be connected with the substantives

to which they relate. This is done artificially by converting the circumstance into a substantive, in which condition it is qualified to be connected with the principal subject by a preposition, in the manner above described. For example, the adjective *wise* being converted into the substantive *wisdom*, gives opportunity for the expression "a man of wisdom," instead of the more simple expression, *a wise man*. This variety in the expression, enriches language. I observe beside, that the using a preposition in this case, is not always a matter of choice. It is indispensable with respect to every circumstance that cannot be expressed by a single adjective or adverb.

To pave the way for the rules of arrangement, one other preliminary must be discussed, which is, to explain the difference betwixt a natural style, and that where transposition or inversion prevails. There are, it is true, no precise boundaries betwixt these two; for they run into each other, like the shades of different colours. No person however is at a loss to distinguish them in their extremes; and it is necessary to make  
the

the distinction; because though some of the rules I shall have occasion to mention are common to both, yet each has rules peculiar to itself. In a natural style, relative words are by juxtaposition connected with those to which they relate, going before or after, according to the peculiar genius of the language. Again, a circumstance connected by a preposition, follows naturally the word with which it is connected. But this arrangement may be varied, when a different order is more beautiful. A circumstance may be placed before the word with which it is connected by a preposition; and may be interjected even betwixt a relative word and that to which it relates. When such liberties are frequently taken, the style becomes inverted or transposed.

But as the liberty of inversion is a capital point in handling the present subject, it will be necessary to examine it more narrowly, and in particular to trace the several degrees in which an inverted style recedes more and more from that which is natural. And first, as to the placing a circumstance before the word with which it is connected, I observe,



that it is the easiest of all inversion, even so easy as to be consistent with a style that is properly termed natural. Witness the following examples.

In the sincerity of my heart, I profess, &c.

By our own ill management, we are brought to so low an ebb of wealth and credit, that, &c.

On Thursday morning there was little or nothing transacted in Change-alley.

At St Bride's church in Fleetstreet, Mr Woolston, (who writ against the miracles of our Saviour), in the utmost terrors of conscience made a public recantation.

The interjecting a circumstance betwixt a relative word and that to which it relates, is more properly termed inversion; because, by a violent disjunction of words intimately connected, it recedes farther from a natural style. But this liberty has also degrees; for the disjunction is more violent in some cases than in others. This I must also explain: and to give a just notion of the difference, I must crave liberty of my reader to enter a  
little

little more into an abstract subject, than would otherwise be my choice.

In nature, though a substance cannot exist without its qualities, nor a quality without a substance; yet in our conception of these, a material difference may be remarked. I cannot conceive a quality but as belonging to some subject: it makes indeed a part of the idea which is formed of the subject. But the opposite holds not. Though I cannot form a conception of a subject devoid of all qualities, a partial conception may however be formed of it, laying aside or abstracting from any particular quality. I can, for example, form the idea of a fine Arabian horse without regard to his colour, or of a white horse without regard to his size. Such partial conception of a subject, is still more easy with respect to action or motion; which is an occasional attribute only, and has not the same permanency with colour or figure. I cannot form an idea of motion independent of a body; but there is nothing more easy than to form an idea of a body at rest. Hence it appears, that the degree of inversion depends greatly  
on

on the order in which the related words are placed. When a substantive occupies the first place, we cannot foresee what is to be said of it. The idea therefore which this word suggests, must subsist in the mind at least for a moment, independent of the relative words afterward introduced; and if it can so subsist, that moment may without difficulty be prolonged by interjecting a circumstance betwixt the substantive and its connections. Examples therefore of this kind, will scarce alone be sufficient to denominate a style inverted. The case is very different, where the word that occupies the first place, denotes a quality or an action; for as these cannot be conceived without a subject, they cannot without greater violence be separated from the subject that follows. And for that reason, every such separation by means of an interjected circumstance belongs to an inverted style.

To illustrate this doctrine examples being necessary, I shall begin with those where the word first introduced does not imply a relation.

no ———

— Nor

— Nor Eve to iterate  
Her former trespasses fear'd.

— Hunger and thirst at once,  
Powerful persuaders, quicken'd at the scent  
Of that alluring fruit, urg'd me so keen.

Moon, that now meet'st the orient sun, now flit  
With the fix'd stars, fix'd in their orb that flies,  
And ye five other wand'ring fires that move  
In mystic dance not without song, resound  
His praise.

In the following examples, where the word first introduced imports a relation, the disjunction will be found more violent,

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world, and all our wo,  
With loss of Eden, till one greater man  
Restore us, and regain the blestful seat,  
Sing heav'nly muse.

— Upon the firm opacous globe  
Of this round world, whose first convex divides  
The luminous inferior orbs, inclos'd  
From chaos and th' inroad of darkness old  
Satan alighted walks.

— On

————— On a sudden open fly,  
 With impetuous recoil and jarring found,  
 Th' infernal doors.

————— Wherein remain'd,  
 For what could else? to our almighty foe  
 Clear victory, to our part loss and rout.

————— Forth rush'd with whirlwind found  
 The chariot of paternal Deity.

Language would have no great power, were it confined to the natural order of ideas. A thousand beauties may be compass'd by inversion, that must be relinquish'd in a natural arrangement. I shall soon have an opportunity to make this evident. In the mean time, it ought not to escape observation, that the mind of man is happily so constituted as to relish inversion, though in one respect unnatural; and to relish it so much, as in many cases to admit a violent disjunction of words that by the sense are intimately connected. I scarce can say that inversion has any limits; though I may venture to pronounce, that the disjunction of articles, conjunctions, or prepositions,  
 from

from the words to which they belong, never has a good effect. The following example with relation to a preposition, is perhaps as tolerable as any of the kind.

He would neither separate *from*, nor act against them.

I give notice to the reader, that I am now ready to enter upon the rules of arrangement; beginning with a natural style, and proceeding gradually to what is the most inverted. And in the arrangement of a period, as well as in a right choice of words, the first and great object being perspicuity, it is above laid down as a rule, That perspicuity ought not to be sacrificed to any other beauty whatever. Ambiguities occasioned by a wrong arrangement are of two sorts; one where the arrangement leads to a wrong sense, and one where the sense is left doubtful. The first being the more culpable, shall take the lead, beginning with examples of words put in a wrong place.

How much the imagination of such a presence must exalt a genius, we may observe *merely* from



the influence which an ordinary presence has over men. *Characteristics, vol. 1. p. 7.*

This arrangement leads to a wrong sense : The adverb *merely* seems by its position to affect the preceding word ; whereas it is intended to affect the following words *an ordinary presence* ; and therefore the arrangement ought to be thus.

How much the imagination of such a presence must exalt a genius, we may observe from the influence which an ordinary presence merely has over men.

The time of the election of a poet-laureat being now at hand, it may be proper to give some account of the rites and ceremonies anciently used at that solemnity, and only discontinued through the neglect and degeneracy of later times.

*Guardian.*

The term *only* is intended to qualify the noun *degeneracy*, and not the participle *discontinued* ; and therefore the arrangement ought to be as follows.

— and

— and discontinued through the neglect and degeneracy only, of later times.

Sixtus the Fourth was, if I mistake not, a great collector of books at least.

*Letters on history, vol. 1. let. 6. Balingbroke.*

The expression here leads evidently to a wrong sense. The adverb *at least*, ought not to be connected with the substantive *books*, but with *collector*, thus :

Sixtus the Fourth was a great collector at least, of books.

#### Speaking of Lewis XIV.

If he was not the greatest king, he was the best actor of majesty at least, that ever filled a throne.

*Ibid. letter 7.*

Better thus :

If he was not the greatest king, he was at least the best actor of majesty, &c.

This arrangement removes the wrong sense occasioned by the juxtaposition of *majesty* and *at least*.

The following examples are of the wrong arrangement of members.

I have confined myself to those methods for the advancement of piety, which are in the power of a prince limited like ours by a strict execution of the laws.

*A project for the advancement of religion. Swift.*

The structure of this period leads to a meaning which is not the author's, *viz.* power limited by a strict execution of the laws. This wrong sense is removed by the following arrangement.

I have confined myself to those methods for the advancement of piety, which, by a strict execution of the laws, are in the power of a prince limited like ours.

This morning when one of Lady Lizard's daughters was looking over some hoods and ribands brought by her tirewoman, with great care and diligence, I employed no less in examining the box which contained them. *Guardian, N<sup>o</sup> 4.*

The wrong sense occasioned by this arrangement, may be easily prevented by varying it thus ;

This

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This morning when, with great care and diligence, one of Lady Lizard's daughters was looking over some hoods and ribands, &c.

A great stone that I happened to find after a long search by the sea-shore, served me for an anchor.

*Gulliver's Travels, part 1. chap. 8.*

One would think that the search was confined to the sea-shore; but as the meaning is, that the great stone was found by the sea-shore, the period ought to be arranged thus:

A great stone, that, after a long search, I happened to find by the sea-shore, served me for anchor.

Next of a wrong arrangement where the sense is left doubtful; beginning, as in the former sort, with examples of the wrong arrangement of words in a member.

These forms of conversation *by degrees* multiplied and grew troublesome.

*Spectator, N<sup>o</sup> 119.*

Here

Here it is left doubtful whether the modification *by degrees* relate to the preceding member or to what follows. It should be,

These forms of conversation multiplied by degrees.

Nor does this false modesty expose us *only* to such actions as are indiscreet, but very often to such as are highly criminal. *Spectator*, N<sup>o</sup> 458.

The ambiguity is removed by the following arrangement.

Nor does this false modesty expose us to such actions *only* as are indiscreet, &c.

The empire of Blefuscu is an island situated to the north-east side of Lilliput, from whence it is parted *only* by a channel of 800 yards wide.

*Gulliver's Travels*, part 1. chap. 5.

The ambiguity may be removed thus :

————— from whence it is parted by a channel of 800 yards wide only.

In the following examples the sense is left doubtful

doubtful by a wrong arrangement of members.

The minister who grows less by his elevation, like a little statue placed on a mighty pedestal, will always have his jealousy strong about him.

*Dissertation upon parties, dedication. Bolingbroke.*

Here, so far as can be gathered from the arrangement, it is doubtful, whether the object introduced by way of simile, relate to what goes before or to what follows. The ambiguity is removed by the following arrangement.

The minister who, like a little statue placed on a mighty pedestal, grows less by his elevation, will always, &c.

Since this is too much to ask of freemen, nay of slaves, if his expectation be not answered, shall he form a lasting division upon such transient motives?

*Ibid.*

Better thus :

Since this is too much to ask of freemen, nay of slaves, shall he, if his expectation be not answered, form, &c.

Speaking



Speaking of the superstitious practice of locking up the room where a person of distinction dies:

The knight, seeing his habitation reduced to so small a compass, and himself in a manner shut out of his own house, upon the death of his mother ordered all the apartments to be flung open, and exercised by his chaplain. *Spectator*, No. 110.

Better thus:

The knight, seeing his habitation reduced to so small a compass, and himself in a manner shut out of his own house, ordered, upon the death of his mother, all the apartments to be flung open."

Speaking of some indecencies in conversation:

As it is impossible for such an irrational way of conversation to last long among a people that make any profession of religion, or show of modesty, if the country-gentlemen get into it, they will certainly be left in the lurch. *Spectator*, No. 119.

The ambiguity vanishes in the following arrangement.

—— the country-gentlemen, if they get into it, will certainly be left in the lurch.

Speaking

Speaking of a discovery in natural philosophy, that colour is not a quality of matter:

As this is a truth which has been proved incontestably by many modern philosophers, and is indeed one of the finest speculations in that science, *if the English reader would see the notion explained at large*, he may find it in the eighth chapter of the second book of Mr Locke's essay on human understanding. *Spectator*, N<sup>o</sup> 413.

Better thus:

As this is a truth, &c. the English reader, if he would see the notion explained at large, may find it, &c.

A woman seldom asks advice before she has bought her wedding-cloaths. When she has made her own choice, *for form's sake* she sends a *conge d'elire* to her friends. *Ibid.* N<sup>o</sup> 475.

Better thus:

—— she sends for form's sake a *conge d'elire* to her friends.

And since it is necessary that there should be a perpetual intercourse of buying and selling, and

dealing upon credit, *where fraud is permitted or connived at, or hath no law to punish it*, the honest dealer is always undone, and the knave gets the advantage. *Gulliver's Travels, part 1, chap. 6.*

Better thus :

And since it is necessary that there should be a perpetual intercourse of buying and selling, and dealing upon credit, the honest dealer, where fraud is permitted or connived at, or hath no law to punish it, is always undone, and the knave gets the advantage.

From these examples, the following observation will readily occur, that a circumstance ought never to be placed betwixt two capital members of a period; for by such situation it must always be doubtful, so far as we gather from the arrangement, to which of the two members it belongs. Where it is interjected, as it ought to be, betwixt parts of the member to which it belongs, the ambiguity is removed, and the capital members are kept distinct, which is a great beauty in composition. In general, to preserve members distinct which signify things distinguished in the thought,

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the sure method is, to place first in the consequent member some word that cannot connect with what precedes it.

If by any one it shall be thought, that the objections here are too scrupulous, and that the defect of perspicuity is easily supplied by accurate punctuation; the answer is, That punctuation may remove an ambiguity, but will never produce that peculiar beauty which is felt when the sense comes out clearly and distinctly by means of a happy arrangement. Such influence has this beauty, that by a natural transition of feeling, it is communicated to the very sound of the words, so as in appearance to improve the music of the period. But as this curious subject comes in more properly afterward, it is sufficient at present to appeal to experience, that a period so arranged as to bring out the sense clear, seems always more musical than where the sense is left in any degree doubtful.

A rule deservedly occupying the second place, is, That words expressing things connected in the thought, ought to be placed as near together as possible. This rule is

Q q 2

derived

derived immediately from human nature, in which there is discovered a remarkable propensity to place together things that are in any manner connected \*. Where things are arranged according to their connections, we have a sense of order: otherwise we have a sense of disorder, as of things placed by chance. And we naturally place words in the same order in which we would place the things they signify. The bad effect of a violent separation of words or members thus intimately connected, will appear from the following examples.

For the English are naturally fanciful, and very often disposed, by that gloominess and melancholy of temper which is so frequent in our nation, to many wild notions and visions, to which others are not so liable.

*Spectator*, N<sup>o</sup> 419.

Here the verb or assertion is, by a pretty long circumstance, violently separated from the subject to which it refers. This makes a harsh arrangement; the less excusable that

\* See chap. I.

the fault is easily prevented by placing the circumstance before the verb or assertion, after the following manner :

For the English are naturally fanciful, and, by that gloominess and melancholy of temper which is so frequent in our nation, are often disposed to many wild notions, &c.

For as no mortal author, in the ordinary fate and vicissitude of things, knows to what use his works may, some time or other, be applied, &c.

*Spectator, N<sup>o</sup> 85.*

Better thus :

For as, in the ordinary fate and vicissitude of things, no mortal author knows to what use, some time or other, his works may be apply'd.

From whence we may date likewise the rivalship of the house of France, for we may reckon that of the Valois and that of Bourbon as one upon this occasion, and the house of Austria, that continues at this day, and has oft cost so much blood and so much treasure in the course of it.

*Letters on history, vol. 1. letter 6. Bolingbroke.*

It



It cannot be impertinent or ridiculous therefore in such a country, whatever it might be in the Abbot of St Real's, which was Savoy I think; or in Peru, under the Incas, where Garcilasso de la Vega says it was lawful for none but the nobility to study—for men of all degrees to instruct themselves in those affairs wherein they may be actors, or judges of those that act, or controllers of those that judge.

*Letters on history, vol. 1. letter 5. Bolingbroke.*

If Scipio, who was naturally given to women, for which anecdote we have, if I mistake not, the authority of Polybius, as well as some verses of Nevius preserved by Aulus Gellius, had been educated by Olympias at the court of Philip, it is improbable that he would have restored the beautiful Spaniard.

*Ibid. letter 3.*

If any one have a curiosity for more specimens of this kind, they will be found without number in the works of the same author.

A pronoun, which saves the naming a person or thing a second time, ought to be placed as near as possible to the name of that person or thing. This is a branch of  
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the foregoing rule; and with the reason there given, another concurs, *viz.* That if other ideas intervene, it is difficult to recal the person or thing by reference.

If I had leave to print the Latin letters transmitted to me from foreign parts, they would fill a volume, and be a full defence against all that Mr Partridge, or his accomplices of the Portugal inquisition, will be ever able to object; *who*, by the way, are the only enemies my predictions have ever met with at home or abroad.

Better thus :

— and be a full defence against all that can be objected by Mr Partridge, or his accomplices of the Portugal inquisition; *who*, by the way, are, &c.

There being a round million of creatures in human figure, throughout this kingdom, *whose* whole subsistence, &c.

*A modest proposal, &c. Swift.*

Better :

There being, throughout this kingdom, a round million of creatures in human figure, *whose* whole subsistence, &c.

Tom

Tom is a lively impudent clown, and has wit enough to have made him a pleasant companion, had *it* been polished and rectified by good manners.

*Guardian*, N<sup>o</sup> 162.

It is the custom of the Mahometans, if they see any printed or written paper upon the ground, to take it up, and lay it aside carefully, as not knowing but it may contain some piece of their Alcoran.

*Spectator*, N<sup>o</sup> 85.

The arrangement here leads to a wrong sense, as if the ground were taken up, not the paper. Better thus:

It is the custom of the Mahometans, if they see upon the ground any printed or written paper, to take it up, &c.

The following rule depends on the communication of emotions or feelings to related objects, a principle in human nature we have had more than one occasion to mention. We find this operation, even where the objects are not otherwise related than by the juxtaposition of the words that express them. Hence to elevate or depress an object, one method is, to join it in the arrangement

arrangement to another that is naturally high or low. Witness the following speech of Eumenes to the Roman senate.

Causam veniendi sibi Romam fuisse, præter cupiditatem visendi *deos hominesque*, quorum beneficio in ea fortuna esset, supra quam ne optare quidem auderet, etiam ut coram moneret senatum ut Persei conatus obviam iret. *Livy, l. 42. cap. 11.*

To join the Romans with the gods in the same enunciation, is an artful stroke of flattery, because it tacitly puts them on a level. On the other hand, when the purpose is to degrade or vilify an object, this is done successfully by ranking it with one that is really low :

I hope to have this entertainment in a readiness for the next winter ; and doubt not but it will please more than the opera or puppet-show.

*Spectator, N<sup>o</sup> 28.*

Manifold have been the judgments which Heaven from time to time, for the chastisement of a sinful people, has inflicted upon whole nations. For when the degeneracy becomes common, 'tis but

just the punishment should be general. Of this kind, in our own unfortunate country, was that destructive pestilence, whose mortality was so fatal as to sweep away, if Sir William Petty may be believed, five millions of Christian souls, besides women and Jews.

*God's revenge against punning. Arbutnot.*

Such also was that dreadful conflagration ensuing in this famous metropolis of London, which consumed, according to the computation of Sir Samuel Morland, 100,000 houses, not to mention churches and stables. *Ibid.*

But on condition it might pass into a law, I would gladly exempt both lawyers of all ages, subaltern and field officers, young heirs, dancing-masters, pickpockets, and players.

*An infallible scheme to pay the public debts. Swift.*

Circumstances in a period resemble small stones in a building employ'd to fill up vacancies among those of a larger size. In the arrangement of a period, such underparts crowded together make a poor figure; and never are graceful but when interspersed among the capital parts. I shall illustrate this rule by the following example.

It

SECT. II. BEAUTY OF LANGUAGE. 315

It is likewise urged, that there are, by computation, in this kingdom, above 10,000 parsons, whose revenues, added to those of my Lords the bishops, would suffice to maintain, &c.

*Argument against abolishing Christianity. Swift.*

Here two circumstances, *viz. by computation and in this kingdom*, are crowded together unnecessarily. They make a better appearance separated in the following manner.

It is likewise urged, that in this kingdom there are, by computation, above 10,000 parsons, &c.

If there be room for a choice, the sooner a circumstance be introduced, the better. Circumstances are proper for that coolness of mind, with which a period as well as a work is commenced. In the progress, the mind warms, and has a greater relish for matters of importance. When a circumstance is placed at the beginning or near the beginning of the period, the transition from it to the principal subject is agreeable: it is like ascending or mounting upward. On the other hand, to place it late in the period has a bad effect; for after being engaged in



the principal subject, one is with reluctance brought down to give attention to a circumstance. Hence evidently the preference of the following arrangement,

Whether in any country a choice altogether unexceptionable has been made, seems doubtful,

before this other,

Whether a choice altogether unexceptionable has in any country been made, &c.

For this reason the following period is exceptionable in point of arrangement:

I have considered formerly, with a good deal of attention, the subject upon which you command me to communicate my thoughts to you.

*Bolingbroke of the study of history, letter 1.*

which, with a slight alteration, may be improved thus:

I have formerly, with a good deal of attention, considered the subject, &c.

The bad effect of placing a circumstance  
last

last or late in a period, will appear from the following examples,

Let us endeavour to establish to ourselves an interest in him who holds the reins of the whole creation in his hand. *Spectator, N<sup>o</sup> 12.*

Better thus :

Let us endeavour to establish to ourselves an interest in him, who, in his hand, holds the reins of the whole creation,

Virgil, who has cast the whole system of Platonic philosophy, so far as it relates to the soul of man, into beautiful allegories, *in the sixth book of his Æneid*, gives us the punishment, &c.

*Spectator, N<sup>o</sup> 90.*

Better thus :

Virgil, who in the sixth book of his Æneid has cast, &c.

And Philip the Fourth was obliged at last to conclude a peace, on terms repugnant to his inclination, to that of his people, to the interest of Spain, and to that of all Europe, in the Pyrenean treaty.

*Letters on history, vol. 1, letter 6. Bolingbroke,*

Better

Better thus :

And at last, in the Pyrenean treaty, Philip the Fourth was obliged to conclude a peace, &c.

In arranging a period, it is of importance to determine in what part of it a word makes the greatest figure, whether in the beginning, during the currency, or at the close. The breaking silence rouses the attention to what is said ; and therefore deeper impression is made at the beginning than during the currency. The beginning, however, must yield to the close ; which being succeeded by a pause, affords time for a word to make its deepest impression. Hence the following rule, That to give the utmost force to a period, it ought if possible to be closed with that word which makes the greatest figure. The opportunity of a pause should not be thrown away upon accessories, but reserved for the principal object, in order that it may make a full impression. This is an additional reason against closing a period with a circumstance. There are however periods that admit not this structure ;  
and

and in that case, the capital word ought if possible to be placed in the front, which next to the close is the most advantageous for making an impression. Hence, in directing our discourse to any man, we ought to begin with his name; and one will be sensible of a degradation, when this rule is neglected, as it frequently is for the sake of verse. I give the following examples.

Integer vitæ, scelerisque purus,  
 Non eget Mauris jaculi, neque arcu,  
 Nec venenatis gravidâ sagittis,  
 Fusce, pharetrâ.

*Horat. Carm. l. 1. ode 22.*

Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, et n'ai point d'autre  
 crainte.

In these examples the name of the person addressed to makes a mean figure, being like a circumstance slipt into a corner. That this criticism is well founded, we need no other proof than Addison's translation of the last example.

O Abner! I fear my God, and I fear none but  
him.

*Guardian*, N<sup>o</sup> 117.

O father, what intends thy hand, the cry'd,  
Against thy only son? What fury, O son,  
Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart  
Against thy father's head?

*Paradise Lost*, book 2. l. 727.

Every one must be sensible of a dignity in the invocation at the beginning, which that in the middle is far from reaching. I mean not however to censure this expression. On the contrary it appears beautiful, by distinguishing the respect due to a father and to a son.

The substance of what is said in this and the foregoing section, upon the method of arranging the words of a period so as to make the strongest impression with respect to sound as well as signification, is comprehended in the following observation. That order of the words in a period will always be the most agreeable, where, without obscuring the sense, the most important images,

images, the most sonorous words, and the longest members, bring up the rear.

Hitherto of arranging single words, single members, and single circumstances. But the enumeration of many particulars in the same period is often necessary; and the question is, In what order they should be placed. It does not seem easy at first view to bring a subject apparently so loose under any general rules. But luckily reflecting upon what is said in the first chapter about order, we find rules laid down to our hand, so as to leave us no harder task than their application to the present question. And, first, with respect to the enumerating a number of particulars of equal rank, it is laid down in the place cited, that as there is no foundation for preferring any one before the rest, it is indifferent to the mind in what order they be viewed. And it is only necessary to be added here, that for the same reason, it is indifferent in what order they be named. 2dly, If a number of objects of the same kind, differing only in size, are to be ranged along a straight



line, the most agreeable order to the eye is that of an increasing series. In surveying a number of such objects, beginning at the least and proceeding to greater and greater, the mind swells gradually with the successive objects, and in its progress has a very sensible pleasure. Precisely for the same reason, the words expressive of such objects ought to be placed in the same order. The beauty of this figure, which may be termed a *climax in sense*, has escaped Lord Bolingbroke in the first member of the following period.

Let but one great, brave, disinterested, active man arise, and he will be received, followed, and almost adored.

The following arrangement has sensibly a better effect.

Let but one brave, great, active, disinterested man arise, &c.

Whether the same rule ought to be followed in enumerating men of different ranks, seems doubtful. On the one hand, a procession

cession of a number of persons, presenting the lowest class first, and rising upon the eye in succession till it terminate upon the highest, is undoubtedly the most agreeable order. On the other hand, in every list of names, it is customary to set the person of the greatest dignity at the top, and to descend gradually through his inferiors. Where the purpose is to honour the persons named according to their rank, the latter order ought to be followed; but every one who regards himself only, or his reader, will chuse the former order. 3dly, As the sense of order directs the eye to descend from the principal to its greatest accessory, and from the whole to its greatest part, and in the same order through all the parts and accessories till we arrive at the minutest; the same order ought to be followed in the enumeration of such particulars. I shall give on familiar example. Talking of the parts of a column, *viz.* the base, the shaft, the capital, these are capable of six different arrangements, and the question is, Which is the best? When one has in view the erection of a column, he will na-

turally be led to express the parts in the order above mentioned; which at the same time is agreeable by mounting upward. But considering the column as it stands without reference to its erection, the sense of order, as observed above, requires the chief part to be named first. For that reason we begin with the shaft; and the base comes next in order, that we may ascend from it to the capital. Lastly, In tracing the particulars of any natural operation, order requires that we follow the course of nature. Historical facts are related in the order of time. We begin at the founder of a family, and proceed from him to his descendents. But in describing a lofty oak, we begin with the trunk, and ascend to the branches.

When force and liveliness of expression are aimed at, the rule is, to suspend the thought as much as possible, and to bring it out full and entire at the close. This cannot be done but by inverting the natural arrangement, and by introducing a word or member before its time. By such inversion our curiosity is raised about what is  
to

to follow; and it is agreeable to have our curiosity gratified at the close of the period. Such arrangement produceth on the mind an effect similar to a stroke exerted upon the body by the whole collected force of the agent. On the other hand, where a period is so constructed as to admit more than one complete close in the sense, the curiosity of the reader is exhausted at the first close, and what follows appears languid or superfluous. His disappointment contributes also to this appearance, when he finds, that, contrary to his expectation, the period is not yet finished. Cicero, and after him Quintilian, recommend the verb to the last place. This method evidently tends to suspend the sense till the close of the period; for without the verb the sense cannot be complete. And when the verb happens to be the capital word, which is frequently the case, it ought at any rate to be put last, according to another rule, above laid down. I proceed as usual to illustrate this rule by examples. The following period is placed in its natural order.

Were

Were instruction an essential circumstance in epic poetry, I doubt whether a single instance could be given of this species of composition, in any language.

The period thus arranged admits a full close upon the word *composition*; after which it goes on languidly, and closes without force. This blemish will be avoided by the following arrangement.

Were instruction an essential circumstance in epic poetry, I doubt whether, in any language, a single instance could be given of this species of composition.

Some of our most eminent divines have made use of this Platonic notion, as far as it regards the subsistence of our passions after death, with great beauty and strength of reason.

*Spectator*, N<sup>o</sup> 90.

Better thus :

Some of our most eminent divines have, with great beauty and strength of reason, made use of this Platonic notion, &c.

Men of the best sense have been touched, more  
or

or less, with these groundless horrors and presages of futurity, upon surveying the most indifferent works of nature. *Spectator*, N<sup>o</sup> 505.

Better :

Upon surveying the most indifferent works of nature, men of the best sense, &c.

She soon informed him of the place he was in, which, notwithstanding all its horrors, appeared to him more sweet than the bower of Mahomet, in the company of his Balsora.

*Guardian*, N<sup>o</sup> 167.

Better :

She soon, &c. appeared to him, in the company of his Balsora, more sweet, &c.

The Emperor was so intent on the establishment of his absolute power in Hungary, that he exposed the Empire doubly to desolation and ruin for the sake of it.

*Letters on history*, vol. 1. let. 7. *Bolingbroke*.

Better :

———— that for the sake of it he exposed the Empire doubly to desolation and ruin.

None



None of the rules for the composition of periods are more liable to be abused, than those last mentioned: witness many Latin writers, among the moderns especially, whose style, by inversions too violent, is rendered harsh and obscure. Suspension of the thought till the close of the period, ought never to be preferred before perspicuity. Neither ought such suspension to be attempted in a long period; because in that case the mind is bewildered among a profusion of words. A traveller, while he is puzzled about the road, relishes not the finest prospects.

All the rich presents which Astyages had given him at parting, keeping only some Median horses, in order to propagate the breed of them in Persia, he distributed among his friends whom he left at the court of Ecbatana.

*Travels of Cyrus, book 1.*

The foregoing rules concern the arrangement of a single period. I shall add one rule more concerning the distribution of a discourse into different periods. A short period is lively and familiar. A long period,

riod, requiring more attention, makes an impression grave and solemn. In general, a writer ought to study a mixture of long and short periods, which prevents an irksome uniformity, and entertains the mind with variety of impressions. In particular, long periods ought to be avoided till the reader's attention be thoroughly engaged; and therefore a discourse, especially of the familiar kind, ought never to be introduced with a long period. For that reason, the commencement of a letter to a very young lady on her marriage is faulty.

Madam, The hurry and impertinence of receiving and paying visits on account of your marriage, being now over, you are beginning to enter into a course of life, where you will want much advice to divert you from falling into many errors, fopperies, and follies, to which your sex is subject.

*Swift.*

See a stronger example in the commencement of Cicero's oration, *Pro Archia poeta.*

Before we proceed farther, it may be proper to take a review of the rules laid

down in this and the preceding section, in order to make some general observations. The natural order of the words and members of a period, is undoubtedly the same with the natural order of the ideas that compose the thought. The tendency of many of the foregoing rules, is to substitute an artificial arrangement, in order to reach some beauty either of sound or meaning that cannot be reached in the natural order. But seldom it happens, that in the same period there is place for a plurality of these rules. If one beauty can be caught, another must be relinquished. The only question is, Which ought to be preferred? This is a question that cannot be resolved by any general rule. But practice, supported by a good taste, will in most instances make the choice easy. The component words and members of a period, are ascertained by the subject. If the natural order be not relished, a few trials will discover that artificial order which has the best effect. All that can be said in general is, that in making a choice, sound ought to yield to signification.

The

The transposing words and members out of their natural order, so remarkable in the learned languages, has been the subject of much speculation. It is agreed on all hands, that such transposition or inversion bestows upon a period a very sensible degree of force and elevation; and yet writers seem to be at a loss in what manner to account for this effect. Cerceau\* ascribes so much power to inversion, as to make it the characteristic of French verse, and the single circumstance which in that language distinguishes verse from prose. And yet he pretends not to say, that it hath any other power but to raise surprise; he must mean curiosity; which is done by suspending the thought during the period, and bringing it out entire at the close. This indeed is one power of inversion; but neither its sole power, nor even that which is the most remarkable, as is made plain above. But waving censure, which is not an agreeable task, I enter into the matter. And I begin with observing, that if a conformity betwixt words and their

\* *Reflections sur la poésie Française.*

meaning be agreeable, it must of course be agreeable to find the same order or arrangement in both. Hence the beauty of a plain or natural style, where the order of the words corresponds precisely to the order of the ideas. Nor is this the single beauty of a natural style: it is also agreeable upon account of its simplicity and perspicuity. This observation throws light upon the subject. For if a natural style be in itself agreeable, a transposed style cannot be so. And therefore, it cannot otherwise be agreeable, but as contributing to some positive beauty which is excluded in a natural style. To be confirmed in this opinion, we need but reflect upon some of the foregoing rules, which make it evident, that language, by means of inversion, is susceptible of many beauties that are totally excluded in a natural arrangement of words. From these premises it clearly follows, that inversion ought not to be indulged, unless in order to reach some beauty superior to that of a natural style. It may with great certainty be pronounced, that every inversion which is not governed by  
 this

this rule, will appear harsh and strained, and be disrelished by every one of taste. Hence the beauty of inversion when happily conducted; the beauty, not of an end, but of means, as furnishing opportunity for numberless ornaments that find no place in a natural style. Hence the force, the elevation, the harmony, the cadence, of some compositions. Hence the manifold beauties of the Greek and Roman tongues, of which living languages afford but faint imitations.

S E C T. III.

*Beauty of language from a resemblance betwixt sound and signification.*

THE resemblance betwixt the sound and signification of certain words, is a beauty, which has escaped no critical writer, and yet is not handled with accuracy by any of them. They have probably been erroneously of opinion, that a beauty so obvious in the feeling, requires no explanation



planation in the understanding. In order to supply this defect, I shall give examples of the various resemblances betwixt sound and signification; and at the same time shall endeavour to explain why such resemblances are beautiful. I begin with examples where the resemblance betwixt the sound and signification is the most entire; proceeding to others, where the resemblance is less and less so.

There being frequently a strong resemblance betwixt different sounds, it will not be surprising to find a natural sound imitated by one that is articulate. Thus the sound of a bow-string is imitated by the words that express it.

---

The string let fly,  
*Twang'd short and sharp*, like the shrill swallow's  
 cry.

*Odyssey* xxi. 449.

The sound of felling trees in a wood :

Loud sounds the ax, redoubling strokes on strokes;  
 On all sides round the forest hurls her oaks

Headlong.

SECT. III. BEAUTY OF LANGUAGE. 335

Headlong. Deep-echoing groan the thickets  
brown,

Then *rustling, crackling, crashing*, thunder down.

*Iliad*, xxiii. 144.

But when loud furies lash the founding shore  
The hoarse rough verse should like the torrent roar!

*Pope's Essay on Criticism*, 369.

No person can be at a loss about the cause of this beauty. It is obviously that of imitation.

That there is any other natural resemblance betwixt sound and signification, must not be taken for granted. There is evidently no resemblance betwixt sound and motion, nor betwixt sound and sentiment. In this matter, we are apt to be deceived by artful reading or pronouncing. The same passage may be pronounced in many different tones, elevated or humble, sweet or harsh, brisk or melancholy, so as to accord with the thought or sentiment. Such concord, depending on artful pronunciation, must be distinguished from that concord betwixt sound and sense, which is perceived in some expressions independent of artful pronunciation.

ciation. The latter is the poet's work: the former must be attributed to the reader. Another thing contributes still more to the deceit. In language, sound and sense are so intimately connected, as that the properties of the one are readily communicated to the other. An emotion of grandeur, of sweetness, of melancholy, or of compassion, though occasioned by the thought solely, is transferred upon the words, which by that means resemble in appearance the thought that is expressed by them\*. I have great reason to recommend these observations to my reader, considering how inaccurately the present subject is handled by critics. Not one of them distinguishes the natural resemblance of sound and signification, from the artificial resemblance now described. Witness Vida in particular, who in a very long passage has given very few examples, but what are of the latter kind †.

That there may be a resemblance betwixt natural and artificial sounds, is self-evident;

\* See chap. 2. part I. sect. 4.

† Poet. L. 3. l. 365.—454.

and

and that in fact there exist such resemblances successfully employ'd by writers of genius, is clear from the foregoing examples, and many others that might be given. But we may safely pronounce, that this natural resemblance can be carried no farther. The objects of the several senses, differ so widely from each other as to exclude any resemblance. Sound in particular, whether articulate or inarticulate, resembles not in any degree taste, smell, or motion; and as little can it resemble any internal sentiment, feeling, or emotion. But must we then agree, that nothing but natural sound can be imitated by that which is articulate? Taking imitation in its proper sense, as involving a resemblance betwixt two objects, the proposition must be admitted. And yet in many passages that are not descriptive of natural sound, every one must be sensible of a peculiar concord betwixt the sound of the words and their meaning. As there can be no doubt of the fact, what remains is, to inquire into its cause.

Resembling causes may produce effects that have no resemblance; and causes that

have no resemblance may produce resembling effects. A magnificent building, for example, resembles not in any degree an heroic action; and yet the emotions they produce, being concordant, bear a resemblance to each other. We are still more sensible of this resemblance, in a song where the music is properly adjusted to the sentiment. There is no resemblance betwixt thought and sound; but there is the strongest resemblance betwixt the emotion raised by music tender and pathetic, and that raised by the complaint of an unsuccessful lover. To apply these examples to the present subject, I observe, that the sound even of a single word makes, in some instances, an impression resembling that which is made by the thing it signifies; witness the word *running*, composed of two short syllables; and more remarkably the words *rapidity*, *impetuosity*, *precipitation*. Brutal manners produce in the spectator, an emotion not unlike what is produced by a harsh and rough sound. Hence the figurative expression, *rugged manners*; an expression peculiarly agreeable by the relation of the sound to the sense.

Again,

Again, the word *little*, being pronounced with a very small aperture of the mouth, has a weak and faint sound, which makes an impression resembling that made by any diminutive object. This resemblance of effects, is still more remarkable where a number of words are connected together in a period. Words pronounced in succession make often a strong impression; and when this impression happens to accord with that made by the sense, a peculiar pleasure arises. The thought or sentiment produces one pleasant emotion: the melody or tone of the words produces another. But the chief pleasure proceeds from having these two concordant emotions combined in perfect harmony, and carried on in the mind to a full close \*. Except in the single case where sound is described, all the examples given by critics of sense being imitated in sound, resolve into a resemblance of effects. Emotions raised by sound and signification may have a resemblance; but sound itself cannot have a resemblance to any thing but sound.

\* See chap. 2. part 4.



Proceeding now to particulars, and beginning with those cases where the emotions have the strongest resemblance, I observe, first, That in pronouncing a number of syllables in succession, an emotion is sometimes raised extremely similar to that raised by successive motion. This may be made evident even to those who are defective in taste, by the following fact, that the term *movement* in all languages is equally apply'd to both. In this manner, successive motion, such as walking, running, galloping, can be imitated by a succession of long or short syllables, or by a due mixture of both. For example, slow motion may be aptly imitated in a verse where long syllables prevail; especially when aided by a slow pronunciation :

*Illi inter sese magnâ vi brachia tollunt.*

*Georg. iv. 174.*

On the other hand, swift motion is imitated by a succession of short syllables :

*Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.*

Again :

Again :

Radit iter liquidum, celeres neque commovet alas.

Thirdly, a line composed of monosyllables, makes an impression, by the frequency of its pauses, similar to what is made by laborious interrupted motion :

With many a weary step, and many a groan,  
Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone.

*Odyssey*, xi. 736.

First march the heavy mules, securely slow ;  
O'er hills, o'er dales, o'er craggs, o'er rocks, they  
go.

*Iliad*, xxiii. 138.

Fourthly, the impression made by rough sounds in succession, resembles that made by rough or tumultuous motion. On the other hand, the impression of smooth sounds resembles that of gentle motion. The following is an example of both.

Two craggy rocks projecting to the main,  
The roaring wind's tempestuous rage restrain ;  
Within,

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Within, the waves in softer murmurs glide,  
And ships secure without their haulsers ride.

*Odyssey*, iii. 118.

Another example of the latter :

Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,  
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows.

*Essay on Crit.* 366.

Fifthly, prolonged motion is expressed in an Alexandrine line. The first example shall be of slow motion prolonged :

A needless Alexandrine ends the song ;  
That, like a wounded snake, drags its flow length  
along.

*Essay on Crit.* 356.

The next example is of forcible motion prolonged :

The waves behind impel the waves before,  
Wide-rolling, foaming high, and tumbling to the  
shore.

*Iliad*, xiii. 1004.

The last shall be of rapid motion prolonged :

Not

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Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,  
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the  
main.

*Essay on Crit.* 373.

Again, speaking of a rock torn from the  
brow of a mountain,

Still gath'ring force, it smokes, and, urg'd amain,  
Whirls, leaps, and thunders down, impetuous to  
the plain.

*Iliad*, xiii. 197.

Sixthly, a period consisting mostly of long syllables, that is, of syllables pronounced slow, produceth an emotion resembling faintly that which is produced by gravity and solemnity. Hence the beauty of the following verse.

Olli sedato respondit corde Latinus.

Seventhly, a slow succession of ideas is a circumstance that belongs equally to settled melancholy, and to a period composed of polysyllables pronounced slow. Hence, by similarity of emotions, the latter is imitative of the former ;

In

In those deep solitudes and awful cells,  
 Where heav'nly-pensive Contemplation dwells,  
 And ever-musing Melancholy reigns.

*Pope. Eloisa to Abelard.*

Eighthly, a long syllable made short, or a short syllable made long, raises, by the difficulty of pronouncing contrary to custom, a feeling similar to that of hard labour :

When Ajax strives some rock's *vast* weight to throw,  
 The line too labours, and the words move flow.

*Essay on Crit. 370.*

Ninthly, harsh or rough words pronounced with difficulty, excite a feeling resembling that which proceeds from the labour of thought to a dull writer :

Just writes to make his barrenness appear,  
 And strains from hard-bound brains eight lines a  
 year.

*Pope's epistle to Dr Arbuthnot, l. 181.*

I shall close with one other example, which of all makes the finest figure. In the first section mention is made of a climax in sound, and in the second of a climax in sense.

sense. It belongs to the present subject to observe, that when these coincide in the same passage, the concordance of sound and sense is delightful. The reader is conscious not only of pleasure from the two climaxes separately, but of an additional pleasure from their concordance, and from finding the sense so justly imitated by the sound. In this respect, no periods are more perfect than those borrowed from Cicero in the first section.

The concord betwixt sense and sound is not less agreeable in what may be termed an *anticlimax*, where the progress is from great to little; for this has the effect to make diminutive objects appear still more diminutive. Horace affords a striking example:

Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.

The arrangement here is singularly artful. The first place is occupied by the verb, which is the capital word by its sense as well as sound. The close is reserved for the word that is the meanest in sense as well as in sound. And it must not be overlooked,



that the resembling sounds of the two last syllables give a ludicrous air to the whole.

Reviewing the foregoing examples, it appears to me, contrary to expectation, that in passing from the strongest resemblances to those that are fainter, the pleasure rises gradually in proportion. Can this be accounted for? or shall I renounce my taste as capricious? When I renew the experiment again and again, I feel no wavering, but the greatest pleasure constantly from the faintest resemblances. And yet how can this be? for if the pleasure lie in imitation, must not the strongest resemblance afford the greatest pleasure? From this vexing dilemma, I am happily relieved, by reflecting on a doctrine established in the chapter of resemblance and contrast, that the pleasure of resemblance is the greatest, where it is least expected, and where the objects compared are in their capital circumstances widely different. Nor will this appear surprising, when we descend to familiar examples. It raiseth not wonder in the smallest degree, to find the most perfect resemblance betwixt two eggs of the same animal. It is  
more

more rare to find such resemblance betwixt two human faces; and upon that account such an appearance raises some degree of wonder. But this emotion rises to a still greater height, when we find in a pebble, an aggat, or any natural production, a perfect resemblance to a tree or other organised body. We cannot hesitate a moment, in applying these observations to the present subject. What occasion of wonder can it be to find one sound resembling another, where both are of the same kind? It is not so common to find a resemblance betwixt an articulate sound and one not articulate; and accordingly the imitation here affords some slight pleasure. But the pleasure swells greatly, when we employ sound to imitate things it resembles not otherwise than by the effects produced in the mind.

I have had occasion to observe, that to complete the resemblance betwixt sound and sense, artful pronunciation contributes not a little. Pronunciation therefore may be considered as a branch of the present subject; and with some observations upon it I shall conclude the section.

In order to give a just idea of pronunciation, it must be distinguished from finging. The latter is carried on by notes, requiring each of them a different aperture of the windpipe. The notes properly belonging to the former, are expressed by different apertures of the mouth, without varying the aperture of the windpipe. This however doth not hinder pronunciation to borrow from finging, as a man sometimes is naturally led to do, in expressing a vehement passion.

In reading, as in finging, there is a key-note. Above this note the voice is frequently elevated, to make the sound correspond to the elevation of the subject. But the mind in an elevated state, is disposed to action. Therefore in order to a rest, it must be brought down to the key-note. Hence the term *cadence*.

The only general rule that can be given for directing the pronunciation, is, To sound the words in such a manner as to imitate the things they represent, or of which they are the symbols. The ideas which make the greatest figure, ought to be expressed  
with

with a peculiar emphasis. In expressing an elevated subject, the voice ought to be raised above its ordinary pitch; and words signifying dejection of mind, ought to be pronounced in a low note. A succession of sounds gradually ascending from low to high notes, represents an ascending series of objects. An opposite succession of sounds, is fitted for objects or sentiments that descend gradually. In Dryden's ode of *Alexander's feast*, the line, *Faln, faln, faln, faln*, ought to be pronounced with a falling voice; and is pronounced in that manner, by every one of taste, without instruction. Another circumstance contributes to the resemblance betwixt sense and sound, which is slow or quick pronunciation. For though the length or shortness of the syllables with relation to each other, be in prose ascertained in some measure, and in verse always; yet taking a whole line or period together, it is arbitrary to pronounce it slow or fast. Hence it is, that a period expressing what is solemn or deliberate, ought to be pronounced slow; and ought to be pronounced quick, when it expresses

presses any thing brisk, lively, or impetuous.

The art of pronouncing with propriety and grace, being calculated to make the sound an echo to the sense, scarce admits of any other general rule than that above mentioned. This rule may indeed be branched out into many particular rules and observations: but these belong not properly to the present undertaking, because they cannot be explained in words. We have not words to signify the different degrees of high and low, loud and soft, fast and slow; and before these differences can be made the subject of regular instruction, notes must be invented resembling those employ'd in music. We have reason to believe, that in Greece every tragedy was accompanied with such notes, in order to ascertain the pronunciation. But the moderns hitherto have not thought of this refinement. Cicero indeed\*, without the help of notes, pretends to give rules for ascertaining the several tones of voice that are proper in ex-

\* De oratore, l. 3. cap. 58.

pressing

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pressing the several passions; and it must be acknowledged, that in this attempt he has exhausted the whole power of language. At the same time, every person of judgement must see, that these rules avail little in point of instruction. The very words he employs, are scarce intelligible, except to those who beforehand are acquainted with the subject.

To vary the scene a little, I propose to close with a slight comparison betwixt singing and pronouncing. In this comparison the five following circumstances relative to articulate sound, must be kept in view. 1st, It is harsh or smooth. 2d, A sound or syllable, is long or short. 3d, It is pronounced high or low. 4th, It is pronounced loud or soft. And, lastly, a number of words in succession constituting a period or member of a period, are pronounced slow or quick. Of these five, the first depending on the component letters, and the second being ascertained by custom, admit not any variety in pronouncing. The three last are arbitrary, depending on the will of the person who pronounces;  
and



and it is chiefly in the artful management of these, that just pronunciation consists. With respect to the first circumstance, music has evidently the advantage; for all its notes are agreeable to the ear, which is not always the case of articulate sound. With respect to the second, long and short syllables variously combined, produce a great variety of feet; yet far inferior to the variety which is found in the multiplied combinations of musical notes. With respect to high and low notes, pronunciation is still more inferior to singing. For it is observed by Dionysius of Halicarnassus\*, that in pronouncing, *i. e.* without altering the aperture of the windpipe, the voice is confined within three notes and a half. Singing has a much greater compass. With respect to the two last circumstances, pronunciation equals singing.

In this discourse, I have mentioned none of the beauties of language, but what arise

\* De structura orationis, sect. 2.

from

from words taken in their proper sense. Those beauties that depend on the metaphorical and figurative power of words, are reserved to be treated in chap. 20.

S E C T. IV.

*V E R S I F I C A T I O N.*

**T**HE music of verse, though handled by every grammarian, merits more attention than has been given it. The subject is intimately connected with human nature; and to explain it thoroughly, several nice and delicate feelings must be employ'd. Entering upon this subject, it occurs as a preliminary point, By what mark is verse distinguished from prose? The discussion of this point is necessary, were it for no other purpose but to ascertain the nature and limits of our subject. To produce this distinguishing mark, is a task not perhaps so easy as may at first be apprehended. Verse of every sort, has, it is true, rules for

its construction. It is composed of feet, the number and variety of which are ascertained. Prose, though also composed of feet, is more loose and scarce subjected to any rules. But many are ignorant of these rules: Are such left without means to make the distinction? And even with respect to the learned, must they apply the rule before they can with certainty pronounce whether the composition be prose or verse? This will hardly be maintained; and therefore, instead of rules, the ear must be appealed to as the proper judge. But what gain we by being thus referred to another standard? It still recurs, by what mark does the ear distinguish verse from prose? The proper and satisfactory answer is, That these make different impressions, which are readily distinguishable by every one who hath an ear. This advances us one step in our inquiry.

Taking it then for granted, that verse makes upon the ear a different impression from that of prose; nothing remains but to explain this difference, and to assign its cause. To these ends, I must call to my  
aid

aid an observation made above in treating of the sound of words, that they are more agreeable to the ear when composed of long and short syllables than when all the syllables are of the same sort. A continued sound in the same tone, makes an impression that comes not up to any idea we have of music. The same note successively renewed by intervals, is more agreeable; but still makes not a musical impression. To produce this impression, variety is necessary as well as number. The successive sounds or syllables, must be some of them long, some of them short; and if also high and low, the music is the more perfect. Now if this impression can be made by single words, much more by a plurality in an orderly succession. The musical impression made by a period consisting of long and short syllables arranged in a certain order, is what the Greeks call *rhythmus*, the Latins, *numerus*, and we *modulation* or *measure*. Cicero justly observes, that in one continued sound there is no modulation: "Numerus in continuatione nullus est." But in what follows he is wide of the truth,

if by *numerus* he means modulation or musical measure. “ *Distinctio, et æqualium*  
 “ *et sæpe variorum intervallorum percussio,*  
 “ *numerum conficit; quem in cadentibus*  
 “ *guttis, quod intervallis distinguuntur,*  
 “ *notare possumus.*” Falling drops, whether with equal or unequal intervals, are certainly not musical. We begin then only to be sensible of a musical expression, when the notes are varied. And this also was probably the opinion of the author cited, though his expression be a little unguarded\*.

It will probably occur, that modulation, so far as connected with long and short syllables combined in a sentence, may be found in prose as well as in verse; considering especially, that in both, particular words are accented or pronounced in a

\* From this passage, however, we discover the etymology of the Latin term for musical expression. Every one being sensible that there is no music in a continued sound; the first inquiries were probably carried no farther, than that to produce a musical expression, a number of sounds is necessary; and musical expression obtained the name of *numerus*, before it was clearly ascertained, that variety is necessary as well as number.

higher

higher tone than ordinary; and therefore that the difference betwixt them cannot consist in modulation merely. The observation is just; and it follows, that the distinction betwixt prose and verse, since it depends not on modulation merely, must arise from the difference of the modulation. This is precisely the case, though the difference cannot with any accuracy be explained in words. Verse is more musical than prose; and of the former, the modulation is more perfect than of the latter. The difference betwixt verse and prose, resembles the difference in music properly so called betwixt the song and the recitative. And the resemblance is not the less complete, that these differences, like the shades of colours, approximate sometimes so nearly as scarce to be discernible. A recitative in its movement approaches sometimes to the liveliness of a song; which on the other hand degenerates sometimes toward a plain recitative. Nothing is more distinguishable from prose, than the bulk of Virgil's hexameters. Many of those composed



posed by Horace, are very little removed from prose. Sapphic verse has a very sensible modulation. That on the other hand of an Iambic, is extremely faint\*.

This more perfect modulation of articulate sounds, is what distinguisheth verse from prose. Verse is subjected to certain inflexible laws. The number and variety of the component syllables are ascertained, and in some measure the order of succession. Such restraint makes it a matter of difficulty to compose in verse; a difficulty that is not to be surmounted but by a singular genius. Useful lessons of every sort convey'd to us in verse, are agreeable by the union of music with instruction. But are we for that reason to reject knowledge offered in a plainer dress? This would be ridiculous; for knowledge may be acquired without music, and music is entertaining independent of knowledge. Many there are, not less will-

\* Music, properly so called, is analysed into melody and harmony. A succession of sounds so as to be agreeable to the ear, constitutes melody. Harmony is the pleasure that arises from co-existing sounds. Verse therefore can only reach melody, and not harmony.

ing

ing than capable to instruct us, who have no genius for verse. Hence the use of prose, which, for the reason now given, is not confined to precise rules. There belongs to it, a certain modulation of an inferior kind, which, being extremely ornamental, ought to be the aim of every writer. But to succeed in it, practice is necessary more than genius. Nor are we rigid on this article. Provided the work answer its chief end of instruction, we are the less solicitous about its dress.

Having ascertained the nature and limits of our subject, I proceed to the laws by which it is regulated. These would be endless, were verse of all different kinds to be taken under consideration. I propose therefore to confine the inquiry, to Latin or Greek hexameter, and to French and English heroic verse; which perhaps will carry me farther than the reader may chuse to follow. The observations I shall have occasion to make, will at any rate be sufficient for a specimen; and these with proper variations may easily be transferred to the composition of other sorts of verse.

Before I enter upon particulars, it must  
be

be premised in general, that to verse of every kind, five things are of importance. 1st, The number of syllables that compose a verse. 2d, The different lengths of syllables, i. e. the difference of time taken in pronouncing. 3d, The arrangement of these syllables combined in words. 4th, The pauses or stops in pronouncing. 5th, Pronouncing syllables in a high or low tone. The three first mentioned are obviously essential to verse. If any of them be wanting, there cannot be that higher degree of modulation which distinguisheth verse from prose. To give a just notion of the fourth, it must be observed, that pauses are necessary for three different purposes. One is, to separate periods and members of the same period according to the sense: another is, to improve the modulation of verse: and the last is, to afford opportunity for drawing breath in reading. A pause of the first kind is variable, being long or short, frequent or less frequent, as the sense requires. A pause of the second kind, is in no degree arbitrary; its place being determined by the modulation. The last sort again is in a

II measure

measure arbitrary, depending on the reader's command of breath. This sort ought always to coincide with the first or second; for one cannot read with grace, unless, for drawing breath, opportunity be taken of a pause in the sense or in the melody; and for that reason this pause may be neglected. With respect then to the pauses of sense and of melody, it may be affirmed without hesitation, that their coincidence in verse is a capital beauty. But as it cannot be expected, in a long work especially, that every line should be so perfect; we shall afterward have occasion to see, that the pause necessary for sense must often, in some degree, be sacrificed to the verse-pause; and the latter sometimes to the former.

The pronouncing syllables in a high or low tone, contributes also to melody. In reading, whether verse or prose, a certain tone is assumed, which may be called *the key-note*; and in this tone the bulk of the words are sounded. Sometimes to humour the sense and sometimes the melody, a particular syllable is sounded in a higher tone; and this is termed *accenting a syllable*, or *gracing*

it with an accent. Opposed to the accent, is the cadence, which I have not mentioned as one of the requisites of verse, because it is entirely regulated by the sense, and hath no peculiar relation to verse. The cadence is a falling of the voice below the key-note at the close of every period; and so little is it essential to verse, that in correct reading the final syllable of every line is accented, that syllable only excepted which closes the period, where the sense requires a cadence. The reader may be satisfied of this by experiments; and for that purpose I recommend to him the *Rape of the Lock*, which, in point of versification, is the most complete performance in the English language. Let him consult in particular a period canto 2. beginning at line 47. and closed line 52. with the word *gay*, which only of the whole final syllables is pronounced with a cadence. He may also examine another period in the 5th canto, which runs from line 45. to line 52.

Though the five requisites above mentioned, enter the composition of every species of verse, they are however governed by differ-

ent

ent rules, peculiar to each species. Upon quantity only, one general observation may be premised, because it is applicable to every species of verse. Syllables, with respect to the time taken in pronouncing, are distinguished into long and short; two short syllables, with respect to time, being precisely equal to one long. These two lengths are essential to verse of all kinds; and to no verse, so far as I know, is a greater variety of time necessary in pronouncing syllables. The voice indeed is frequently made to rest longer than commonly, upon a word that bears an important signification. But this is done to humour the sense, and is not necessary for the modulation. A thing not more necessary occurs with respect to accenting, similar to that now mentioned. A word signifying any thing humble, low, or dejected, is naturally, in prose as well as in verse, pronounced in a tone below the keynote.

We are now sufficiently prepared for entering upon particulars; and Latin or Greek Hexameter, which are the same, coming first in order, I shall exhaust what I have to



say upon this species of verse, under the four following heads; of number, arrangement, pause, and accent; for as to quantity, so far as concerns the present point, what is observed above may suffice.

Hexameter lines are, with respect to time, all of the same length. A line may consist of seventeen syllables; and when regular and not Spondaic, it never has fewer than thirteen. Hence it is plain, that where the syllables are many, the plurality must be short; where few, the plurality must be long. And upon the whole, the number of syllables in every line with respect to the time taken in pronouncing, are equivalent to twelve long syllables, or twenty-four short.

With regard to arrangement, this line is susceptible of much variety. The succession of long and short syllables, may be greatly varied without injuring the melody. It is subjected however to laws, that confine its variety within certain limits. For trying the arrangement, and for determining whether it be perfect or faulty, grammarians have invented a rule by Dactyles and Spondees,

dees, which they denominate *feet*. One at first view is led to think, that these feet are also intended to regulate the pronunciation. But this is far from being the case. It will appear by and by, that the rules of pronunciation are very different. And indeed were one to pronounce according to these feet, the melody of a Hexameter line would be destroy'd, or at best be much inferior to what it is, when properly pronounced\*. These feet then must be confined to their

sole  
 \* After some attention given to this subject, and weighing deliberately every circumstance, I have been forc'd to rest upon the foregoing conclusion, That the Dactyle and Spondee are no other than artificial measures invented for trying the accuracy of composition. Repeated experiments convince me, that though the sense should be altogether neglected, an Hexameter line read by Dactyles and Spondees, will not be melodious. And the composition of an Hexameter line demonstrates this to be true, without necessity of an experiment. It will appear afterward, that in an Hexameter line, there must always be a capital pause at the end of the fifth long syllable, reckoning, as above, two short for one long. And when we measure this line by Dactyles and Spondees, the pause now mentioned divides always a Dactyle or a Spondee: it never falls in at the end of either of these feet. Hence it is evident, that if a line be pronounced, as it is scanned, by Dactyles and Spondees, the pause must be utterly neglected; which consequently

sole province of regulating the arrangement, for they serve no other purpose. They are withal so artificial and complex, that, neglecting them altogether, I am tempted to substitute in their room, other rules, more simple and of more easy application; for example, the following. 1st, The line must always commence with a long syllable, and close with two long preceded by two short. 2d, More than two short can never be found

quently must destroy the melody, because a pause is essential to the melody of an Hexameter verse. If, on the other hand, the melody be preserved by making this pause, the pronouncing by Dactyles and Spondees must be abandoned.

What has led grammarians into the use of Dactyles and Spondees, seems not beyond the reach of conjecture. To produce melody, the latter part of a Hexameter line consisting of a Dactyle and a Spondee, must be read according to these feet: in this part of the line, the Dactyle and Spondee are distinctly expressed in the pronunciation. This discovery, joined with another, that the foregoing part of the verse could be measured by the same feet, has led grammarians to adopt these artificial measures, and perhaps rashly to conclude, that the pronunciation is directed by these feet as well as the composition. The Dactyle and Spondee at the close, serve indeed the double purpose of regulating the pronunciation as well as the composition: but in the foregoing part of the line, they regulate the composition only, not the pronunciation.

If

found in any part of the line, nor fewer than two if any. And, 3d, Two long syllables which have been preceded by two short, cannot also be followed by two short. These few rules fulfil all the conditions of a Hexameter line, with relation to order or arrangement. To these again a single rule may be substituted, for which I have a still greater relish, as it regulates more affirmatively the construction of every part. That I may put this rule into words with the

If we must have feet in verse to regulate the pronunciation, and consequently the melody, these feet must be determined by the pauses. The whole syllables interjected betwixt two pauses ought to be deemed one musical foot; because, to preserve the melody, they must all be pronounced together, without any stop. And therefore, whatever number there are of pauses in a Hexameter line, the parts into which it is divided by these pauses, make just so many musical feet.

Connection obliges me here to anticipate, by observing, that the same doctrine is applicable to English heroic verse. Considering its composition merely, it is of two kinds. One is composed of five Iambi; and one of a Trochæus followed by four Iambi. But these feet afford no rule for pronouncing. The musical feet are obviously those parts of the line that are interjected betwixt two pauses. To bring out the melody, these feet must be expressed in the pronunciation; or, which comes to the same, the pronunciation must be directed by the pauses, without regard to the Iambus or Trochæus.

greater

greater facility, I take a hint from the twelve long syllables that compose an Hexameter line, to divide it into twelve equal parts or portions, being each of them one long syllable or two short. This preliminary being established, the rule is shortly what follows. The 1st, 3d, 5th, 7th, 9th, 11th, and 12th portions, must each of them be one long syllable; the 10th must always be two short syllables; the 2d, 4th, 6th, and 8th, may indifferently be one long or two short. Or to express the thing still more curtly, The 2d, 4th, 6th, and 8th portions may be one long syllable or two short; the 10th must be two short syllables; all the rest must consist of one long syllable. This fulfils all the conditions of an Hexameter line, and comprehends all the combinations of Dactyles and Spondees that this line admits.

Next in order comes the pause. At the end of every Hexameter line, no ear but must be sensible of a complete close or full pause. This effect is produced by the following



lowing means. Every line invariably is finished with two long syllables preceded by two short; a fine preparation for a full close. Syllables pronounced slow, resemble a slow and languid motion tending to rest. The mind put in the same tone by the pronunciation, is naturally disposed to a pause. And to this disposition the two preceding short syllables contribute; for these, by contrast, make the slow pronunciation of the final syllables the more conspicuous. Beside this complete close or full pause at the end, others are also requisite for the sake of melody. I discover two clearly, and perhaps there may be more. The longest and most remarkable, succeeds the 5th portion, according to the foregoing measure. The other, which being more faint, may be called *the semipause*, succeeds the 8th portion. So striking is the pause first mentioned, as to be distinguished even by the rudest ear. The monkish rhymes are evidently built upon it. In these, it is an invariable rule, to make the final word chime with that which immediately precedes the pause:



De planctu cudo || mitrum cum carmine nudo  
Mingere cum bumbis || res est soluberrima lumbis.

The difference of time in the pause and semipause, occasions another difference not less remarkable. The pause ought regularly to be at the end of a word; but it is lawful to divide a word by a semipause. The bad effect of dividing a word by the pause, is sensibly felt in the following examples.

Effusus labor, at||que inmitis rupta Tyranni

Again,

Observans nido im||plumes detraxit; at illa

Again,

Loricam quam De||moleo detraxerat ipse

The dividing a word by a semipause has not the same bad effect:

Jamque pedem referens || casus e|vaserat omnes.

Again,

Qualis populea || moerens Philo|mela sub umbra

Again,

Again,

Ludere quæ vellem || calamo per|mifit agreſti.

Lines, however, where words are left entire to be pronounced as they ought to be, without being divided even by a ſemipauſe, run by that means much the more ſweetly.

Nec gemere ærea || ceſſabit | turtur ab ulmo.

Again,

Quadrupedante putrem || fonitu quatit | ungula campum.

Again,

Eurydicen toto || referebant | flumine ripæ.

The reaſon of theſe obſervations, will be evident upon the flighteſt reflection. Betwixt things ſo intimately connected as ſenſe and ſound in pronunciation, to find diſcordance is unpleaſant to the ear; and for that reaſon, it is a matter of importance, to make the muſical pauſes coincide as much as poſſible with thoſe of the ſenſe. This is requiſite, more eſpecially, with reſpect

to the pause. A deviation from the rule is less remarkable in a semipause, which makes but a slight impression. Considering the matter as to modulation solely, it is indifferent whether the pauses be at the end of words or in the middle. But when we carry the sense along, nothing is more disagreeable than to find a word split into two parts, neither of which separately have any meaning. This bad effect, though it regard the sense only, is by an easy transition of ideas transferred to the sound, with which the sense is intimately connected; and by this means, we conceive a line to be harsh and grating to the ear, which in reality is only so to the understanding\*.

To the rule which places the pause after the 5th portion, there is one exception, and no more. If the syllable succeeding the 5th portion be short, the pause is sometimes postponed to it:

*Pupillis quos dura || premit custodia matrum*

\* See chap. 2. part 1. sect 4.

Again,

Again,

In terris oppressa || gravi sub religione

Again,

Et quorum pars magna || fui; quis talia fando

This contributes to diversify the melody; and where the words are smooth and liquid, is not ungraceful; as in the following examples.

Formosam resonare || doces Amaryllida fylvas

Again,

Agrícolas, quibus ipsa || procul discordibus armis

If this pause, postponed as aforesaid to the short syllable, happen also to divide a word, the melody by these circumstances is totally annihilated: witness the following line of Ennius, which is plain prose.

Romæ moenia terru||it impiger | Hannibal armis

Hitherto the arrangement of the long and short syllables of an Hexameter line and  
its

its different pauses, have been considered with respect to melody. But to have a just notion of Hexameter verse, these particulars must also be considered with respect to sense. There is not perhaps in any other sort of verse, such a latitude in the long and short syllables. This circumstance contributes greatly to that richness of modulation which is remarkable in Hexameter verse; and which makes Aristotle pronounce, that an epic poem in any other sort would not succeed \*. One defect however must not be dissimulated. The same means that contribute to the richness of the melody, render it less fit than several other sorts for a narrative poem. With regard to the melody, as above observed, there cannot be a more artful contrivance than to close an Hexameter line with two long syllables preceded by two short. But unhappily this construction proves a great embarrassment to the sense; as will be evident from what follows. As in general there ought to be a strict concordance betwixt every thought

\* Poet. cap. 25.

and

and the words in which it is dressed, so in particular, every close in the sense, complete and incomplete, ought to be accompanied with a similar close in the sound. In the composition of prose, there is sufficient latitude for applying this rule in the strictest manner. But the same strictness in verse, would occasion insuperable difficulties. Some share of the concordance betwixt thought and expression, may be justly sacrificed to the melody of verse; and therefore during the course of a line, we freely excuse the want of coincidence of the musical pause with that of the sense. But the close of an Hexameter line is too conspicuous to admit a total neglect of this coincidence. And hence it follows, that there ought to be always some pause in the sense at the end of every Hexameter line, were it but such a pause as is marked with a comma. It follows also, for the same reason, that there ought never to be a full close in the sense but at the end of a line, because there the modulation is closed. An Hexameter line, to preserve its melody, cannot well permit any greater relaxation;  
and



and yet in a narrative poem, it is extremely difficult to keep up to the rule even with these indulgences. Virgil, the greatest poet for verification that ever existed, is forc'd often to end a line without any close in the sense, and as often to close the sense during the running of a line: though a close in the melody during the movement of the thought, or a close in the thought during the movement of the melody, cannot fail to be disagreeable.

The accent, to which we proceed, is not less essential than the other circumstances above handled. By a good ear it will be discerned, that in every line there is one syllable distinguishable from the rest by a strong accent. This syllable making the 7th portion, is invariably long; and in point of time occupies a place nearly at an equal distance from the pause which succeeds the 5th portion, and the semipause, which succeeds the 8th:

Nec bene promeritis || capitur nec | tangitur ira

Again,

Again,

Non sibi sed toto || genitum se | credere mundo

Again,

Qualis spelunca || subito com|mota columba

In these examples, the accent is laid upon the last syllable of a word. And that this is a favourable circumstance for the melody, will appear from the following consideration. In reading, there must be some pause after every word, to separate it from what follows ; and this pause, however short, supports the accent. Hence it is, that a line thus accented, has a more spirited air, than where the accent is placed on any other syllable. Compare the foregoing lines with the following.

Alba neque Assyrio || fucatur | lana veneno

Again,

Panditur interea || domus omnipo|tentis Olympi

Again,

Olli sedato || respondit | corde Latinus

In lines where the pause comes after the short syllable succeeding the 5th portion, the accent is displaced and rendered less sensible. It seems to be split into two, and to be laid partly on the 5th portion, and partly on the 7th, its usual place; as in

*Nuda genu, nodôque || sinûs col|lecta fluentes*

Again,

*Formosam resonâre || docês Amar|yllida sylvas*

Beside this capital accent, slighter accents are laid upon other portions; particularly upon the 4th, unless where it consists of two short syllables; upon the 6th, which is always a long syllable; and upon the 11th, where the line concludes with a monosyllable. Such conclusion, by the by, lessens the melody, and for that reason is not to be indulged unless where it is expressive of the sense. The following lines are marked with all the accents.

*Ludere quæ véllem calamô permîsit agresti*

Again,

Again,

*Et durae quercus sudabunt rosida mella*

Again,

*Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus*

Inquiring into the melody of Hexameter verse, we soon discover, that order or arrangement doth not constitute the whole of it. Comparing different lines, equally regular as to the succession of long and short syllables, the melody is found in very different degrees of perfection. Nor does the difference arise from any particular combination of Dactyles and Spondees, or of long and short syllables. On the contrary, we find lines where Dactyles prevail and lines where Spondees prevail, equally melodious. Of the former take the following instance :

*Æneadum genetrix hominum divumque voluptas.*

Of the latter :

*Molli paulatim flavescet campus arista.*

What can be more different as to melody

than the two following lines, which, however, as to the succession of long and short syllables, are constructed precisely in the same manner?

Spond. Dact. Spond. Spond. Dact. Spond.  
Ad talos stola dimissa et circumdata palla. *Hor.*

Spond. Dact. Spond. Spond. Dact. Spond.  
Placatumque nitet diffuso lumine coelum. *Lucret.*

In the former, the pause falls in the middle of a word, which is a great blemish, and the accent is disturbed by a harsh elision of the vowel *a* upon the particle *et*. In the latter the pauses and the accent are all of them distinct and full: there is no elision, and the words are more liquid and sounding. In these particulars consists the beauty of an Hexameter line with respect to melody; and by neglecting these, many lines in the Satires and Epistles of Horace are less agreeable than plain prose; for they are neither the one nor the other in perfection. To make these lines sound, they must be pronounced without relation to the sense. It must not be regarded, that words are di-

vided

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vided by pauses, nor that harsh elisions are multiplied. To add to the account, profane low-sounding words are introduced; and which is still worse, accents are laid on them. Of such faulty lines take the following instances.

Candida rectaque sit, munda haecenus sit neque  
longa.

Jupiter exclamat simul atque audit; at in se

Custodes, lectica, ciniflones, parasitæ

Optimus est modulator, ut Alfenus Vafer omni

Nunc illud tantum quæram, meritone tibi sit.

Next in order comes English heroic verse, which shall be examined under the whole five heads, of number, quantity, arrangement, pause, and accent. This verse sometimes employs rhymes and sometimes not, which distinguishes it into two kinds; one named *metre*, and one *blank verse*. In the former, the lines are connected two and two by similarity of sound in the final syllables; and such connected lines are termed *couplets*. Similarity of sound being avoided in the latter, banishes couplets. These two sorts must be handled separately, because there  
are



are many peculiarities in each. The first article with respect to rhyme or metre, shall be discussed in a few words. Every line consists of ten syllables, five short and five long. There are but two exceptions, both of them rare. A couplet can bear to be drawn out, by adding a short syllable at the end of each of the two lines :

There hero's wits are kept in pond'rous vases,  
And beau's in snuff-boxes and tweezer-cases.

The piece, you think, is incorrect? Why, take it;  
I'm all submission; what you'd have it, make it.

This licence is sufferable in a single couplet; but if frequent would soon become disgusting.

The other exception concerns the second line of a couplet, which is sometimes stretched out to twelve syllables, termed an *Alexandrine line*.

A needless Alexandrine ends the song,  
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length  
along.

It

It doth extremely well when employ'd to close a period with a certain pomp and solemnity suitable to the subject.

With regard to the second article, it is unnecessary to mention a second time, that the quantities employ'd in verse are but two, the one double of the other; that every syllable is reducible to one or other of these standards; and that a syllable of the larger quantity is termed *long*, and of the lesser quantity *short*. It belongs more to the present article, to examine what peculiarities there may be in the English language as to long and short syllables. In every language, there are syllables that may be pronounced long or short at pleasure; but the English above all abounds in syllables of that kind. In words of three or more syllables, the quantity for the most part is invariable. The exceptions are more frequent in disyllables; but as to monosyllables, they may without many exceptions be pronounced either long or short. Nor is the ear hurt by this liberty; being accustomed to the variation of quantity in the same word. This shows that the melody of English

lish verse must depend less upon quantity, than upon other circumstances. In that particular it differs widely from Latin verse. There, every syllable having but one sound, strikes the ear constantly with its accustomed impression; and a reader must be delighted to find a number of such syllables, disposed so artfully as to raise a lively sense of melody. Syllables variable in quantity cannot possess this power. Custom may render familiar, both a long and short pronunciation of the same word; but the mind constantly wavering betwixt the two sounds, cannot be so much affected with a syllable of this kind as with one which bears always the same sound. What I have further to say upon quantity, will come in more properly under the following head, of arrangement.

And with respect to arrangement, which may be brought within a narrow compass, the English heroic line is commonly Iambic, the first syllable short, the second long, and so on alternately through the whole line. One exception there is, pretty frequent. Many lines commence with a  
Trochæus,

Trocheus, viz. a long and a short syllable. But this affects not the order of the following syllables. These go on alternately as usual, one short and one long. The following couplet affords an example of each kind:

Some in the fields of purest æther play,  
And bask and whiten in the blaze of day.

It is unhappy in the construction of English verse, that it excludes the bulk of polysyllables, though the most sounding words in our language; for upon examination it will be found, that very few of them are composed of such alternation of long and short syllables as to correspond to either of the arrangements mentioned. English verse accordingly is almost totally reduced to dissyllables and monosyllables. *Magnanimity* is a sounding word totally excluded. *Impetuosity* is still a finer word by the resemblance of the sound and sense; and yet a negative is put upon it, as well as upon numberless words of the same kind. Polysyllables composed of syllables long and short alternately, make a good figure in

verse; for example, *observance*, *opponent*, *ostensive*, *pindaric*, *productive*, *prolific*, and such others of three syllables. *Imitation*, *imperfection*, *misdemeanour*, *mitigation*, *moderation*, *observer*, *ornamental*, *regulator*, and others similar of four syllables, beginning with two short syllables, the third long, and the fourth short, may find a place in a line commencing with a Trochæus. I know not if there be any of five syllables. One I know of six, *viz. misinterpretation*. But words so composed are not frequent in our language.

One would not imagine without trial, how uncouth false quantity appears in verse; not less than a provincial tone or idiom. The article *the* is one of the few monosyllables that is invariably short. See how harsh it makes a line where it must be pronounced long:

This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,

Again:

The adventurous baron the bright locks admir'd.

Let

Let the article be pronounced short, and it reduces the melody almost to nothing. Better so however than a false quantity. In the following examples we perceive the same defect.

And old impertinence || expel by new.

With varying vanities || from ev'ry part.

Love in these labyrinths || his slaves detains.

New stratagems || the radiant lock to gain.

Her eyes half-languishing || half-drown'd in tears.

Roar'd for the handkerchief || that caus'd his pain.

Passions like elements || though born to fight.

The great variety of modulation conspicuous in English verse, will be found upon trial to arise chiefly from the pauses and accents; and therefore these circumstances are of greater importance than is commonly thought. There is a degree of intricacy in this branch of our subject, and it will require some pains to give a distinct view of it. But we must not be discouraged by difficulties. The pause, which paves the way to the accent, offers itself first to our examination. From a very short trial, the fol-



lowing facts will be verified. 1st, A line admits but one capital pause. 2d, In different lines, we find this pause after the fourth syllable, after the fifth, after the sixth, and after the seventh. These particulars lay a solid foundation for dividing English heroic lines into four sorts, distinguished by the different places of the pause. Nor is this an idle distinction. On the contrary, unless it be kept in view, we cannot have any just notion of the richness and variety of English versification. Each sort or order hath a melody peculiar to itself, readily distinguishable by a good ear; and, in the sequel, I am not without hopes to make the cause of this peculiarity sufficiently evident. It must be observed, at the same time, that the pause cannot be made indifferently at any of the places mentioned. It is the sense that regulates the pause, as will be seen more fully afterward; and consequently, it is the sense that determines of what order every line must be. There can be but one capital musical pause in a line; and this pause ought to coincide, if possible, with

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with a pause in the sense ; in order that the sound may accord with the sense.

What is said must be illustrated by examples of each sort or order. And first of the pause after the fourth syllable:

Back through the paths || of pleasing sense I ran

Again,

Profuse of blifs || and pregnant with delight

After the 5th :

So when an angel || by divine command,  
With rising tempests || shakes a guilty land,

After the 6th :

Speed the soft intercourse || from soul to soul

Again,

Then from his closing eyes || thy form shall part

After the 7th :

And taught the doubtful battle || where to rage

Again,

Again,

And in the smooth description || murmur still

Beside the capital pause now mentioned, other inferior or semipauses will be discovered by a nice ear. Of these there are commonly two in each line; one before the capital pause, and one after it. The former is invariably placed after the first long syllable, whether the line begin with a long syllable or a short. The other in its variety imitates the capital pause. In some lines it follows the 6th syllable, in some the 7th, and in some the 8th. Of these semipauses take the following examples.

1st and 8th :

Led | through a sad || variety | of wo.

1st and 7th :

Still | on that breast || enamour'd | let me lie

2d and 8th :

From storms | a shelter || and from heat | a shade

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2d and 6th :

Let wealth | let honour || wait | the wedded dame

2d and 7th :

Above | all pain || all passion | and all pride

Even from these few examples, it appears, that the place of the last semipause, like that of the full pause, is directed in a good measure by the sense. Its proper place with respect to the melody is after the eighth syllable, so as to finish the line with an Iambus distinctly pronounced, which, by a long syllable after a short, is a preparation for rest. If this hold, the placing this semipause after the 6th or after the 7th syllable, must be directed by the sense, in order to avoid a pause in the middle of a word, or betwixt two words intimately connected ; and so far melody is justly sacrificed to sense.

In discoursing of the full pause in a Hexameter line, it is laid down as a rule, That it ought never to divide a word. Such licence deviates too far from the connection  
that

that ought to be betwixt the pauses of sense and of melody. And in an English line, it is for the same reason equally wrong to divide a word by a full pause. Let us justify this reason by experiments,

A noble superfluity it craves

Abhor, a perpetuity should stand

Are these lines distinguishable from prose? Scarcely, I think.

The same rule is not applicable to a semipause, which being short and faint, is not sensibly disagreeable when it divides a word.

Relentless walls || whose darksome round | contains

For her | white virgins || hyme | neals sing

In these | deep solitudes || and awful cells

It must however be acknowledged, that the melody here suffers in some degree. A word ought to be pronounced without any rest betwixt its component syllables. The  
semipause

semipause must bend to this rule, and thereby vanisheth almost altogether.

With regard to the capital pause, it is so essential to the melody, that a poet cannot be too nice in the choice of its place, in order to have it full, clear, and distinct. It cannot be placed more happily than with a pause in the sense; and if the sense require but a comma after the fourth, fifth, sixth, or seventh syllable, there can be no difficulty about this musical pause. But to make such coincidence essential, would cramp versification too much; and we have experience for our authority, that there may be a pause in the melody where the sense requires none. We must not however imagine, that a musical pause may be placed at the end of any word indifferently. Some words, like syllables of the same word, are so intimately connected as not to bear a separation even by a pause. No good poet ever attempted to separate a substantive from its article: the dividing such intimate companions, would be harsh and unpleasant. The following line, for example,

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cannot be pronounced with a pause as marked.

If Delia smile, the || flow'rs begin to spring

But ought to be pronounced in the following manner,

If Delia smile, || the flow'rs begin to spring.

If then it be not a matter of indifferency where to make the pause, there ought to be rules for determining what words may be separated by a pause and what are incapable of such separation. I shall endeavour to unfold these rules; not chiefly for their utility, but in order to exemplify some latent principles that tend to regulate our taste even where we are scarce sensible of them. And to that end, it seems the eligible method to run over the verbal relations, beginning with the most intimate. The first that presents itself, is that of adjective and substantive, being the relation of substance and quality, the most intimate of all. A quality cannot exist independent of a substance, nor is it separable from it even in imagination, because they  
make

make parts of the same idea ; and for that reason, it must, with regard to melody, be disagreeable, to bestow upon the adjective a sort of independent existence, by interjecting a pause betwixt it and its substantive. I cannot therefore approve the following lines, nor any of the sort ; for to my taste they are harsh and unpleasant.

Of thousand bright || inhabitants of air  
 The sprites of fiery || termagants inflame  
 The rest, his many-colour'd || robe conceal'd  
 The same, his ancient || personage to deck  
 Ev'n here, where frozen || Chastity retires  
 I sit, with sad || civility, I read  
 Back to my native || moderation slide  
 Or shall we ev'ry || decency confound  
 Time was, a sober || Englishman wou'd knock  
 And place, on good || security, his gold  
 Taste, that eternal || wanderer, which flies  
 But ere the tenth || revolving day was run

First let the just || equivalent be paid  
 Go, threat thy earth-born || Myrmidons ; but here  
 Haste to the fierce || Achilles' tent (he cries)  
 All but the ever-wakeful || eyes of Jove  
 Your own resistless || eloquence employ

I have upon this article multiplied examples, that in a case where I have the misfortune to dislike what passes current in practice, every man upon the spot may judge by his own taste. The foregoing reasoning, it is true, appears to me just : it is however too subtile, to afford conviction in opposition to taste.

Considering this matter in a superficial view, one might be apt to imagine, that it must be the same, whether the adjective go first, which is the natural order, or the substantive, which is indulged by the laws of inversion. But we soon discover this to be a mistake. Colour cannot be conceived independent of the surface coloured ; but a tree may be conceived, as growing in a certain spot, as of a cer-  
 tain

tain kind, and as spreading its extended branches all around, without ever thinking of the colour. In a word, qualities, though related all to one subject, may be considered separately, and the subject may be considered with some of its qualities independent of others; though we cannot form an image of any single quality independent of the subject. Thus then, though an adjective named first be inseparable from the substantive, the proposition does not reciprocate. An image can be formed of the substantive independent of the adjective; and for this reason, they may be separated by a pause, when the former is introduced before the latter:

For thee, the fates || severely kind ordain

And curs'd with hearts || unknowing how to yield.

The verb and adverb are precisely in the same condition with the substantive and adjective. An adverb, which expresses a certain modification of the action expressed by the verb, is not separable from it even in imagination. And therefore I must also give up the following lines.

And

And which it much || becomes you to forget

'Tis one thing madly || to disperse my store

But an action may be conceived leaving out a particular modification, precisely as a subject may be conceived leaving out a particular quality; and therefore when by inversion the verb is first introduced, it has no bad effect to interject a pause betwixt it and the adverb which follows. This may be done at the close of a line, where the pause is at least as full as that is which divides the line :

While yet he spoke, the Prince advancing drew  
Nigh to the lodge, &c.

The agent and its action come next, expressed in grammar by the active substantive and its verb. Betwixt these, placed in their natural order, there is no difficulty of interjecting a pause. An active being is not always in motion, and therefore it is easily separable in idea from its action. When in a sentence the substantive takes the lead, we know not that action is to follow ; and

as

as rest must precede the commencement of motion, this interval is a proper opportunity for a pause.

On the other hand, when by inversion the verb is placed first, is it lawful to separate it by a pause from the active substantive? I answer not, because an action is not in idea separable from the agent, more than a quality from the substance to which it belongs. Two lines of the first rate for beauty have always appeared to me exceptionable, upon account of the pause thus interjected betwixt the verb and the consequent substantive; and I have now discovered a reason to support my taste:

In these deep solitudes and awful cells,  
Where heav'nly-pensive || Contemplation dwells,  
And ever-musing || Melancholy reigns,

The point of the greatest delicacy regards the active verb and the passive substantive placed in their natural order. On the one side it will be observed, that these words signify things which are not separable in idea. Killing cannot be conceived with-  
out



out some being that is put to death, nor painting without a surface upon which the colours are spread. On the other side, an action and the thing on which it is exerted, are not, like substance and quality, united in one individual subject. The active subject is perfectly distinct from that which is passive; and they are connected by one circumstance only, that the action exerted by the former, is exerted upon the latter. This makes it possible to take the action to pieces, and to consider it first with relation to the agent, and next with relation to the patient. But after all, so intimately connected are the parts of the thought, that it requires an effort to make a separation even for a moment. The subtilising to such a degree is not agreeable, especially in works of imagination. The best poets however, taking advantage of this subtilty, scruple not to separate by a pause an active verb from its passive subject. Such pauses in a long work may be indulged; but taken singly, they certainly are not agreeable. I appeal to the following examples.

The

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The peer now spreads || the glitt'ring forfex wide  
As ever fully'd || the fair face of light  
Repair'd to search || the gloomy cave of Spleen  
Nothing, to make || philosophy thy friend  
Shou'd chance to make || the well-dress'd rabble  
stare  
Or cros, to plunder || provinces, the main  
These madmen never hurt || the church or state  
How shall we fill || a library with wit  
What better teach || a foreigner the tongue?  
Sure, if I spare || the minister, no rules  
Of honour bind me, not to maul his tools.

On the other hand, when the passive subject by inversion is first named, there is no difficulty of interjecting a pause betwixt it and the verb, more than when the active subject is first named. The same reason holds in both, that though a verb cannot be separated in idea from the substantive which governs it, and scarcely from the substantive it governs; yet a substantive

may always be conceived independent of the verb. When the passive subject is introduced before the verb, we know not that an action is to be exerted upon it; therefore we may rest till the action commences. For the sake of illustration take the following examples.

Shrines! where their vigils || pale-ey'd virgins keep

Soon as thy letters || trembling I unclofe

No happier task || these faded eyes pursue

What is said about placing the pause, leads to a general observation, which I shall have occasion for afterwards. The natural order of placing the active substantive and its verb, is more friendly to a pause than the inverted order. But in all the other connections, inversion affords by far a better opportunity for a pause. Upon this depends one of the great advantages that blank verse hath over rhyme. The privilege of inversion, in which it far excels rhyme, gives it a much greater choice of pauses, than can be had in the natural order of arrangement.

We

We now proceed to the flighter connections, which shall be discussed in one general article. Words connected by conjunctions and prepositions freely admit a pause betwixt them, which will be clear from the following instances.

Assume what sexes || and what shape they please  
The light militia || of the lower sky

Connecting particles were invented to unite in a period two substantives signifying things occasionally united in the thought, but which have no natural union. And betwixt two things not only separable in idea, but really distinct, the mind, for the sake of melody, cheerfully admits by a pause a momentary disjunction of their occasional union.

One capital branch of the subject is still upon hand, to which I am directed by what is just now said. It concerns those parts of speech which singly represent no idea, and which become not significant till they be joined to other words. I mean conjunctions,

prepositions, articles, and such like accessories, passing under the name of *particles*. Upon these the question occurs, Whether they can be separated by a pause from the words that make them significant? Whether, for example, in the following lines, the separation of the accessory preposition from the principal substantive, be according to rule?

The goddess with | a discontented air

And heighten'd by || the diamond's circling rays

When victims at || yon altar's foot we lay

So take it in || the very words of Creech

An ensign of || the delegates of Jove

Two ages o'er || his native realm he reign'd

While angels, with || their silver wings o'erhade

Or separating the conjunction from the word it connects with what goes before :

Talthybius and || Eurybates the good

It will be obvious at the first glance, that the foregoing reasoning upon objects naturally

rally connected, are not applicable to words which of themselves are mere ciphers. We must therefore have recourse to some other principle for solving the present question. These particles out of their place are totally insignificant. To give them a meaning, they must be joined to certain words. The necessity of this junction, together with custom, forms an artificial connection, which has a strong influence upon the mind. It cannot bear even a momentary separation, which destroys the sense, and is at the same time contradictory to practice. Another circumstance tends still more to make this separation disagreeable. The long syllable immediately preceding the full pause, must be accented; for this is required by the melody, as will afterward appear. But it is ridiculous to accent or put an emphasis upon a low word that raises no idea, and is confined to the humble province of connecting words that raise ideas. And for that reason, a line must be disagreeable where a particle immediately precedes the full pause; for such construction

of



of a line makes the melody discord with the sense.

Hitherto we have discoursed upon that pause only which divides the line. Are the same rules applicable to the concluding pause? This must be answered by making a distinction. In the first line of a couplet, the concluding pause differs little, if at all, from the pause which divides the line; and for that reason, the rules are applicable to both equally. The concluding pause of the couplet, is in a different condition; it resembles greatly the concluding pause in a Hexameter line. Both of them indeed are so remarkable, that they never can be graceful, unless when they accompany a pause in the sense. Hence it follows, that a couplet ought always to be finished with some close in the sense; if not a point, at least a comma. The truth is, that this rule is seldom transgressed. In Pope's works, upon a cursory search indeed, I found but the following deviations from the rule.

Nothing

owt

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Nothing is foreign: parts relate to whole;  
One all-extending, all-preserving soul  
Connects each being —

Another:

To draw fresh colours from the vernal flow'rs,  
To steal from rainbows ere they drop in show'rs  
A brighter wash —

But now, supposing the connection to be so slender as to admit a pause, it follows not that a pause may always be put. There is one rule to which every other ought to bend, That the sense must never be wounded or obscured by the music; and upon that account, I condemn the following lines:

Ulysses, first || in public cares, she found,

And,

Who rising, high || th' imperial sceptre rais'd.

With respect to inversion, it appears both from reason and experiments, that many words which cannot bear a separation in their natural order, admit a pause when inverted. And it may be added, that when

two

two words, or two members of a sentence, in their natural order, can be separated by a pause, such separation can never be amiss in an inverted order. An inverted period, which runs cross to the natural train of ideas, requires to be marked in some measure even by pauses in the sense, that the parts may be distinctly known. Take the following examples.

As with cold lips || I kiss'd the sacred veil.

With other beauties || charm my partial eyes.

Full in my view || set all the bright abode.

With words like these || the troops Ulysses rul'd.

Back to th' assembly roll || the thronging train.

Not for their grief || the Grecian host I blame.

The same where the separation is made at the close of the first line of the couplet:

For spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease  
Assume what sexes and what shapes they please.

The pause is tolerable even at the close of the couplet, for the reason just now suggested,

ed, that inverted members require some slight pause in the sense :

'Twas where the plane-tree spread its shades a-  
round :

The altars heav'd; and from the crumbling ground  
A mighty dragon shot.

Thus a train of reasoning hath insensibly led us to conclusions with regard to the musical pause, very different from those in the first section, concerning the separating by an interjected circumstance words intimately connected. One would conjecture, that where-ever words are separable by interjecting a circumstance, they should be equally separable by interjecting a pause. But, upon a more narrow inspection, the appearance of analogy vanisheth. To make this evident, I need only premise, that a pause in the sense distinguishes the different members of a period from each other; that two words of the same member may be separated by a circumstance, all the three making still but one member; and therefore that a pause in the sense has no connection with the separation of words by interjected

circumstances. This sets the matter in a clear light. It is observed above, that the musical pause is intimately connected with the pause in the sense; so intimately indeed, that regularly they ought to coincide. As this would be too great a restraint, a licence is indulged, to place pauses for the sake of the music where they are not necessary for the sense. But this licence must be kept within bounds. And a musical pause ought never to be placed where a pause is excluded by the sense; as, for example, betwixt the adjective and following substantive which make parts of the same idea, and still less betwixt a particle and the word which makes it significant.

Abstracting at present from the peculiarity of modulation arising from the different pauses, it cannot fail to be observed in general, that they introduce into our verse no slight degree of variety. Nothing more fatigues the ear, than a number of uniform lines having all the same pause, which is extremely remarkable in the French versification. This imperfection will be discerned by a fine ear even in the shortest succession,

sion, and becomes intolerable in a long poem. Pope excels all the world in the variety of his modulation, which indeed is not less perfect of its kind than that of Virgil.

From what is now said, there ought to be one exception. Uniformity in the members of a thought, demands equal uniformity in the members of the period which expresses that thought. When therefore resembling objects or things are expressed in a plurality of verse-lines, these lines in their structure ought to be as uniform as possible, and the pauses in particular ought all of them to have the same place. Take the following examples.

By foreign hands || thy dying eyes were clos'd,  
 By foreign hands || thy decent limbs compos'd,  
 By foreign hands || thy humble grave adorn'd.

Again,

Bright as the sun, || her eyes the gazers strike,  
 And, like the sun, || they shine on all alike.



## Speaking of Nature, or the God of Nature:

Warms in the sun || refreshes in the breeze,  
 Glows in the stars || and blossoms in the trees,  
 Lives through all life || extends through all extent,  
 Spreads undivided || operates unspent.

Pauses are like to dwell longer upon hand than I imagined; for the subject is not yet exhausted. It is laid down above, that English heroic verse, considering melody only, admits no more than four capital pauses; and that the capital pause of every line is determined by the sense to be after the fourth, the fifth, the sixth, or seventh syllable. And that this doctrine holds true so far as melody alone is concerned, every good ear will bear testimony. At the same time, examples are not unfrequent, in Milton especially, of the capital pause being after the first, the second, or the third syllable. And that this licence may be taken, even gracefully, when it adds vigour to the expression, I readily admit. So far the sound may be justly sacrificed to the sense or expression. That this licence may be successfully taken, will

will be clear from the following example. Pope, in his translation of Homer, describes a rock broke off from a mountain, and hurling to the plain, in the following words.

From steep to steep the rolling ruin bounds;  
At every shock the crackling wood resounds;  
Still gath'ring force, it smocks; and urg'd amain,  
Whirls, leaps, and thunders down, impetuous to  
the plain:  
There stops || So Hector. Their whole force he  
prov'd,  
Resistless when he rag'd; and when he stopt, un-  
mov'd.

In the penult line the proper place of the musical pause is at the end of the fifth syllable; but it enlivens the expression by its coincidence with that of the sense at the end of the second syllable. The stopping short before the usual pause in the melody, aids the impression that is made by the description of the stone's stopping short. And what is lost to the melody by this artifice, is more than compensated by the force that is added to the description.

Milton

Milton makes a happy use of this licence; witness the following examples from his *Paradise Lost*.

————— Thus with the year  
Seasons return, but not to me returns  
Day || or the sweet approach of even or morn.

Celestial voices to the midnight-air  
Sole || or responsive each to others note.

And over them triumphant Death his dart  
Shook || but delay'd to strike.

————— And wild uproar  
Stood rul'd || stood vast infinitude confin'd.

————— And hard'ning in his strength  
Glories || for never since created man  
Met such embodied force.

From his slack hand the garland wreath'd for Eve  
Down drop'd || and all the faded roses shed.

Of unessential night, receives him next,  
Wide gaping || and with utter loss of being  
Threatens him, &c.

For

~~For now the thought~~  
For now the thought  
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain  
Torments him || round he throws his baleful  
eyes, &c.

If we consider the foregoing passages with respect to melody singly, the pauses are undoubtedly out of their proper place. But being united with those of the sense, they enforce the expression and enliven it greatly. And the beauty of expression is communicated to the sound, which, by a natural deception, makes even the melody appear more perfect than if the musical pauses were regular.

To explain the rules of accenting, two general observations must be premised. The first is, That accents have a double effect. They contribute to the melody, by giving it air and spirit: they contribute not less to the sense, by distinguishing important words from others. These two effects ought never to be separated. If a musical accent be put where the sense rejects it, we feel a discordance betwixt the thought and  
the

the melody. An accent, for example, placed on a word that makes no figure, has the effect to burlesk it, by giving it an unnatural elevation. The injury thus done to the sense, is communicated to the melody by the intimacy of connection, and both seem to be wounded. This rule is applicable in a peculiar manner to particles. It is indeed ridiculous to put an emphasis on a word which of itself has no meaning, and like cement serves only to unite words significant. The other general observation is, That a word of whatever number of syllables, is not accented upon more than one of them. Nor is this an arbitrary practice. The object represented by the word, is set in its best light by a single accent; reiterated accents on different syllables in succession, make not the emphasis stronger; but have an air, as if the sound only of the accented syllables were regarded, and not the sense of the word.

Keeping in view the foregoing observations, the doctrine of accenting English heroic verse, is extremely simple. In the first place, accenting is confined to the long syllables;

syllables; for the melody admits not an accent upon any short syllable. In the next place, as the melody is enriched in proportion to the number of accents, every word that has a long syllable ought to be accented, unless where the accent is rejected by the sense: a word, as observed, that makes no figure by its signification, cannot bear an accent. According to this rule, a line may admit five accents; a case by no means rare.

But supposing every long syllable to be accented, there is constantly, in every line, one accent which makes a greater figure than the rest. This capital accent is that which precedes the capital pause. Hence it is distinguishable into two kinds; one that is immediately succeeded by the pause, and one that is divided from the pause by a short syllable. The former belongs to lines of the first and third order: the latter to those of the second and fourth. Examples of the first kind.

Smooth flow the wâves || the zephyrs gently play,  
Belinda smil'd || and all the world was gay.



He rais'd his azure wând || and thus begun

Examples of the second.

There lay three gârters || half a pair of gloves;  
And all the trôphies || of his former loves.

Our humble prôvince || is to tend the fair,  
Not a less pleasing || though less glorious care.

And hew triumphal ârches || to the ground

These accents make different impressions on the mind, which will be the subject of a following speculation. In the meantime, it may be safely pronounced a capital defect in the composition of verse, to put a low word, incapable of an accent, in the place where this accent should be. This bars the accent altogether; and I know no other fault more subversive of the melody, if it be not that of barring a pause altogether. I may add affirmatively, that it is a capital beauty in the composition of verse, to have the most important word of the sentence, so placed as that this capital accent may be laid upon it. No single circumstance contributes more to the energy of verse, than to have

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have this accent on a word, that, by the importance of its meaning, is intitled to a peculiar emphasis. To show the bad effect of excluding the capital accent, I refer the reader to some instances given above, p. 000, where particles are separated by a pause from the capital words that make them significant, and which particles ought, for the sake of the melody, to be accented, were they capable of an accent. Add to these the following instances from the Essay on Criticism.

Oft, leaving what || is natural and fit,  
*line 448.*

Not yet purg'd off, || of spleen and sour disdain  
*l. 528.*

No pardon vile || obscenity should find  
*l. 531.*

When love was all || an easy monarch's care  
*l. 537.*

For 'tis but half || a judge's task, to know  
*l. 562.*

'Tis not enough, || taste, judgement, learning, join  
*l. 563.*

That only makes || superior sense below'd  
 l. 578.

Whose right it is, || uncensur'd, to be dull  
 l. 590.

'Tis best sometimes || your censure to restrain  
 l. 597.

When this fault is at the end of the line  
 that closes a couplet, it leaves not the least  
 trace of melody :

But of this frame the bearings, and the ties,  
 The strong connections, nice dependencies

In a line expressive of what is humble or  
 dejected, it improves the resemblance be-  
 twixt the sound and sense, to exclude the  
 capital accent. This, to my taste, is a  
 beauty in the following lines.

In these deep solitudes || and awful cells

The poor inhabitant || beholds in vain

To conclude this article, the accents are  
 not, like the syllables, confined to a certain  
 number. Some lines have no fewer than  
 five,

five, and there are lines that admit not above one. This variety, as we have seen, depends entirely on the different powers of the component words. Particles, even where they are long by position, cannot be accented; and polysyllables, whatever space they occupy, admit but one accent. Polysyllables have another defect, that they generally exclude the full pause. I have shown above, that few polysyllables can find place in the construction of English verse. Here are reasons for excluding them, could they find place.

I am now prepared to fulfil a promise concerning the four sorts of lines that enter into English heroic verse. That these have, each of them, a peculiar melody distinguishable by a good ear, I ventured to suggest, and promised to account for: and though this subject is extremely delicate, I am not without hopes of making good my engagement. First, however, like a wary general, I take all advantages the ground will permit. I do not aver, that this peculiarity of modulation is in every instance perceptible.

ceptible. Far from it. The impression made by a period, whether it be verse or prose, is occasioned chiefly by the thought, and in an inferior degree by the words; and these articles are so intimately united with the melody, that they have each of them a strong influence upon the others. With respect to the melody in particular, instances are without number, of melody, in itself poor and weak, passing for rich and spirited where it is supported by the thought and expression. I am therefore intitled to insist, that this experiment be tried upon lines of equal rank. And to avoid the perplexity of various cases, I must also insist, that the lines chosen for a trial be regularly accented before the pause: for upon a matter abundantly refined in itself, I would not willingly be embarrassed with faulty and irregular lines. These preliminaries being adjusted, I begin with some general observations, that will save repeating the same thing over and over upon each particular case. And, first, an accent succeeded by a pause, makes sensibly a deeper impression than where the voice goes without

out a stop : to make an impression requires time ; and there is no time where there is no pause. The fact is so certain, that in running over a few lines, there is scarce an ear so dull as not readily to distinguish from others, that particular accent which immediately precedes the full pause. In the next place, the elevation of an accenting tone, produceth in the mind a similar elevation, which is continued during the pause. Every circumstance is different where the pause is separated from the accent by a short syllable. The impression made by the accent is more slight when there is no stop ; and the elevation of the accent is gone in a moment by the falling of the voice in pronouncing the short syllable that follows. The pause also is sensibly affected by the position of the accent. In lines of the first and third order, the close conjunction of the accent and pause, occasions a sudden stop without preparation, which rouses the mind, and bestows on the melody a spirited air. When, on the other hand, the pause is separated from the accent by a short syllable, which always happens in

lines



lines of the second and fourth order, the pause is soft and gentle. This short unaccented syllable succeeding one that is accented, must of course be pronounced with a falling voice, which naturally prepares for a pause. The mind falls gently from the accented syllable, and slides into rest as it were insensibly. Further, the lines themselves, derive different powers from the position of the pause. A pause after the fourth syllable divides the line into two unequal portions, of which the largest comes last. This circumstance resolving the line into an ascending series, makes an impression in pronouncing like that of mounting upward. And to this impression contributes the redoubled effort in pronouncing the largest portion, which is last in order. The mind has a different feeling when the pause succeeds the fifth syllable. The line being divided into two equal parts by this pause, these parts, pronounced with equal effort, are agreeable by their uniformity. A line divided by a pause after the sixth syllable, makes an impression opposite to that first mentioned. Being divided into two unequal

qual portions, of which the shortest is last in order, it appears like a flow descending series; and the second portion being pronounced with less effort than the first, the diminished effort prepares the mind for rest. And this preparation for rest is still more sensibly felt where the pause is after the seventh syllable, as in lines of the fourth order.

No person can be at a loss in applying these observations. A line of the first order is of all the most spirited and lively. To produce this effect, several of the circumstances above mentioned concur. The accent, being followed instantly by a pause, makes an illustrious figure: the elevated tone of the accent elevates the mind: the mind is supported in its elevation by the sudden unprepared pause which rouses and animates: and the line itself, representing by its unequal division an ascending series, carries the mind still higher, making an impression similar to that of mounting upward. The second order has a modulation sensibly sweet, soft, and flowing. The accent is not so sprightly as in the former, because a

short syllable intervenes betwixt it and the pause: its elevation, by the same means, vanisheth instantaneously: the mind, by a falling voice, is gently prepared for a stop: and the pleasure of uniformity from the division of the line into two equal parts, is calm and sweet. The third order has a modulation not so easily expressed in words. It in part resembles the first order, by the liveliness of an accent succeeded instantly by a full pause. But then the elevation occasioned by this circumstance, is balanced in some degree by the remitted effort in pronouncing the second portion, which remitted effort has a tendency to rest. Another circumstance distinguisheth it remarkably. Its capital accent comes late, being placed on the sixth syllable; and this circumstance bestows on it an air of gravity and solemnity. The last order resembles the second in the mildness of its accent and softness of its pause. It is still more solemn than the third, by the lateness of its capital accent. It also possesses in a higher degree than the third, the tendency to rest; and by that circumstance is of all the best qualified

lified for closing a period in the completest manner.

But these are not all the distinguishing characters of the different orders. Each order also, by means of its final accent and pause, makes a peculiar impressi<sup>o</sup>n; so peculiar as to produce a melody clearly distinguishable from that of the others. This peculiarity is occasioned by the division which the capital pause makes in a line. By an unequal division in the first order, the mind has an impressi<sup>o</sup>n of ascending; and is left at the close in the highest elevation, which is display'd on the concluding syllable. By this means, a strong emphasis is naturally laid upon the concluding syllable, whether by raising the voice to a sharper tone, or by expressing the word in a fuller tone. This order accordingly is of all the least proper for concluding a period, where a cadence is proper, and not an accent. In the second order, the final accent makes not so capital a figure. There is nothing singular in its being marked by a pause, for this is common to all the orders; and this order, being destitute of the im-

pression of ascent, cannot rival the first order in the elevation of its accent, nor consequently in the dignity of its pause; for these always have a mutual influence. This order, however, with respect to its close, maintains a superiority over the third and fourth orders. In these the close is more humble, being brought down by the impression of descent, and by the remitted effort in pronouncing; considerably in the third order, and still more considerably in the last. According to this description, the concluding accents and pauses of the four orders being reduced to a scale, will form a descending series probably in an arithmetical progression.

After what is said, will it be thought refining too much to suggest, that the different orders are qualified for different purposes, and that a poet of genius will be naturally led to make a choice accordingly? I cannot think this altogether chimerical. It appears to me, that the first order is proper for a sentiment that is bold, lively, or impetuous; that the third order is proper for subjects grave, solemn, or lofty; the second for  
what



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what is tender, delicate, or melancholy, and in general for all the sympathetic emotions; and the last for subjects of the same kind, when tempered with any degree of solemnity. I do not contend, that any one order is fitted for no other task, than that assigned it. At that rate, no sort of modulation would be left for accompanying ordinary thoughts, that have nothing peculiar in them. I only venture to suggest, and I do it with diffidence, that one order is peculiarly adapted to certain subjects, and better qualified than the others for expressing such subjects. The best way to judge is by experiment; and to avoid the imputation of a partial search, I shall confine my instances to a single poem, beginning with the first order.

On her white breast, a sparkling cross she wore,  
Which Jews might kiss, and Infidels adore.  
Her lively looks, a sprightly mind disclose,  
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those;  
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;  
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.  
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,  
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.

Yet



Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,  
 Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide:  
 If to her share some female errors fall,  
 Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.

*Rape of the Lock.*

In accounting for the remarkable liveliness of this passage, it will be acknowledged by every one who has an ear, that the modulation must come in for a share. The lines, all of them, are of the first order; a very unusual circumstance in the author of this poem, so eminent for variety in his versification. Who can doubt, that, in this passage, he has been led by delicacy of taste to employ the first order preferably to the others?

Second order,

Our humbler province is to tend the fair,  
 Not a less pleasing, though less glorious care;  
 To save the powder from too rude a gale,  
 Nor let th' imprison'd essences exhale;  
 To draw fresh colours from the vernal flow'rs;  
 To steal from rainbows ere they drop their show'rs,  
 &c.

Again,

Again,

Oh, thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,  
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.  
Sudden, these honours shall be snatch'd away,  
And curs'd for ever this victorious day.

Third order.

To fifty chosen sylphs, of special note,  
We trust th'important charge, the petticoat.

Again,

Oh say what stranger cause, yet unexplor'd,  
Could make a gentle belle reject a lord?

A plurality of lines of the fourth order, would not have a good effect in succession; because, by a remarkable tendency to rest, its proper office is to close a period. The reader, therefore, must be satisfied with instances where this order is mixed with others.

Not louder shrieks to pitying Heav'n are cast,  
When husbands, or when lapdogs, breathe their  
last.

Again,

Again,

Steel could the works of mortal pride confound,  
And hew triumphal arches to the ground.

Again,

She fees, and trembles at th' approaching ill,  
Just in the jaws of ruin, and codille.

Again,

With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,  
He first the snuff-box open'd, then the case.

And this suggests another experiment, which is, to set the different orders more directly in opposition, by giving examples where they are mixed in the same passage.

First and second orders.

Sol through white curtains shot a tim'rous ray,  
And ope'd those eyes that must eclipse the day.

Again,

Not youthful kings in battle seiz'd alive,  
Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,  
Not ardent lovers robb'd of all their blifs,  
Not ancient ladies when refus'd a kifs,

Not

Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,  
Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinn'd awry,  
E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,  
As thou, sad virgin! for thy ravish'd hair.

First and third.

Think what an equipage thou hast in air,  
And view with scorn two pages and a chair.

Again,

What guards the purity of melting maids,  
In courtly balls, and midnight-masquerades,  
Safe from the treach'rous friend, the daring spark,  
The glance by day, the whisper in the dark?

Again,

With tender billet-doux he lights the pyre,  
And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise the fire;  
Then prostrate falls, and begs, with ardent eyes,  
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize.

Again,

Jove's thunder roars, heav'n trembles all around,  
Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing deeps resound,

Earth shakes her nodding tow'rs, the ground gives  
way,

And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day!

Second and third.

Sunk in Thalestris' arms, the nymph he found,  
Her eyes dejected, and her hair unbound.

Again,

On her heav'd bosom hung her drooping head,  
Which with a sigh she rais'd; and thus she said.

Musing on the foregoing subject, I begin to doubt whether I have not been all this while in a reverie. Here unexpectedly a sort of fairy-scene opens, where every object is new and singular. Is there any truth in the appearance, or is it merely a work of imagination? The scene seems to be a reality; and if it can bear examination, it must exalt greatly the melody of English heroic verse. If uniformity prevail, in the arrangement, in the equality of the lines, and in the resemblance of the final sounds; variety is still more conspicuous in the pauses and accents,  
which

which are diversified in a surprising manner. The beauty that results from combined objects, is justly observed to consist in a due mixture of uniformity and variety\*. Of this beauty many instances have already occurred, but none more illustrious than English versification. However rude it may be by the simplicity of arrangement, it is highly melodious by its pauses and accents, so as already to rival the most perfect species known in Greece or Rome. And it is no disagreeable prospect to find it susceptible of still greater refinement.

We proceed to blank verse, which hath so many circumstances in common with rhyme, that what is necessary to be said upon it may be brought within a narrow compass. With respect to form, it differs not from rhyme farther than in rejecting the jingle of similar sounds. But let us not think this difference a trifle, or that we gain nothing by it but the purifying our

\* See chap. 9.



verse from a pleasure so childish. In truth, our verse is extremely cramped by rhyme; and the great advantage of blank verse is, that, being free from the fetters of rhyme, it is at liberty to attend the imagination in its boldest flights. Rhyme necessarily divides verse into couplets: each couplet makes a complete musical period; the parts of which are divided by pauses, and the whole summed up by a full close at the end: the modulation begins anew with the next couplet: and in this manner a composition in rhyme proceeds couplet after couplet. I have more than once had occasion to observe the influence that sound and sense have upon each other by their intimate union. If a couplet be a complete period with regard to the melody, it ought regularly to be so also with regard to the sense. This, it is true, proves too great a cramp upon composition; and licences are indulged, as explained above. These however must be used with discretion, so as to preserve some degree of uniformity betwixt the sense and the music.

There

There ought never to be a full close in the sense but at the end of a couplet; and there ought always to be some pause in the sense at the end of every couplet. The same period as to sense may be extended through several couplets; but in this case each couplet ought to contain a distinct member, distinguished by a pause in the sense as well as in the sound; and the whole ought to be closed with a complete cadence. Rules such as these, must confine rhyme within very narrow bounds. A thought of any extent, cannot be reduced within its compass. The sense must be curtailed and broken into pieces, to make it square with the curtness of melody; and it is obvious, that short periods afford no latitude for inversion. I have examined this point with the greater accuracy, in order to give a just notion of blank verse; and to show that a slight difference in form may produce a very great difference in substance. Blank verse has the same pauses and accents with rhyme; and a pause at the end of every line, like what concludes the first line of a couplet. In a word, the rules of  
melody

melody in blank verse, are the same that obtain with respect to the first line of a couplet. But luckily, being disengaged from rhyme, or, in other words, from couplets, there is access to make every line run into another, precisely as the first line of a couplet may run into the second. There must be a musical pause at the end of every line; but it is not necessary that it be accompanied with a pause in the sense. The sense may be carried on through different lines; till a period of the utmost extent be completed, by a full close both in the sense and the sound. There is no restraint, other than that this full close be at the end of a line. This restraint is necessary in order to preserve a coincidence betwixt sense and sound; which ought to be aimed at in general, and is indispensable in the case of a full close, because it has a striking effect. Hence the aptitude of blank verse for inversion; and consequently the lustre of its pauses and accents; for which, as observed above, there is greater scope in inversion, than when words run in their natural order.

In

In the second section of this chapter it is shown, that nothing contributes more than inversion to the force and elevation of language. The couplets of rhyme confine inversion within narrow limits. Nor would the elevation of inversion, were there access for it in rhyme, be extremely concordant with the humbler tone of that sort of verse. It is universally agreed, that the loftiness of Milton's style supports admirably the sublimity of his subject; and it is not less certain, that the loftiness of his style arises chiefly from inversion. Shakspeare deals little in inversion. But his blank verse, being a sort of measured prose, is perfectly well adapted to the stage. Labour'd inversion is there extremely improper, because in dialogue it never can appear natural.

Hitherto I have considered the advantage of laying aside rhyme, with respect to that superior power of expression which verse acquires thereby. But this is not the only advantage of blank verse. It has another not less signal of its kind; and that is, of a more extensive and more complete melody.

Its

Its music is not, like that of rhyme, confined to a single couplet; but takes in a great compass, so as in some measure to rival music properly so called. The intervals betwixt its cadences may be long or short at pleasure; and, by this means, its modulation, with respect both to richness and variety, is superior far to that of rhyme; and superior even to that of the Greek and Latin Hexameter. Of this observation no person can doubt who is acquainted with the *Paradise Lost*. In that work there are indeed many careless lines; but at every turn it shines out in the richest melody as well as in the sublimest sentiments. Take the following specimen.

Now Morn her rosy steps in th' eastern clime  
 Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl,  
 When Adam wak'd, so custom'd, for his sleep  
 Was aëry light from pure digestion bred,  
 And temp'rate vapours bland, which th' only sound  
 Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,  
 Lightly dispers'd, and the shrill matin song  
 Of birds on every bough; so much the more  
 His wonder was to find unwaken'd Eve  
 With tresses discompos'd, and glowing cheek,

As

As through unquiet rest : he on his side  
 Leaning half rais'd, with looks of cordial love  
 Hung over her enamour'd, and beheld  
 Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,  
 Shot forth peculiar graces ; then with voice  
 Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,  
 Her hand soft touching, whisper'd thus. Awake  
 My fairest, my espous'd, my latest found,  
 Heav'n's last best gift, my ever new delight,  
 Awake ; the morning shines, and the fresh field  
 Calls us ; we lose the prime, to mark how spring  
 Our tended plants, how blows the citron grove,  
 What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,  
 How Nature paints her colours, how the bee  
 Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet.

*Book I. l. 1.*

Comparing the Latin Hexameter and English heroic rhyme, the former has obviously the advantage in the following particulars. It is greatly preferable as to arrangement, by the latitude it admits in placing the long and short syllables. Secondly, the length of an Hexameter line hath a majestic air : ours, by its shortness, is indeed more brisk and lively, but much less fitted for the sublime. And, thirdly, the long high-sound-



ing words that Hexameter admits, add greatly to its majesty. To compensate these advantages, English rhyme possesses a greater number and greater variety both of pauses and of accents. These two sorts of verse stand indeed pretty much in opposition: in the Hexameter, great variety of arrangement, none in the pauses or accents: in the English rhyme, great variety in the pauses and accents, very little in the arrangement.

In blank verse are united, in a good measure, the several properties of Latin Hexameter and English rhyme; and it possesses beside many signal properties of its own. It is not confined, like a Hexameter, by a full close at the end of every line; nor, like rhyme, by a full close at the end of every couplet. This form of construction, which admits the lines to run into each other, gives it a still greater majesty than arises from the length of a Hexameter line. By the same means, it admits inversion even beyond the Latin or Greek Hexameter, which suffer some confinement by the regular closes at the end of every line. In  
its

its music it is illustrious above all. The melody of Hexameter verse, is circumscribed to a line; and of English rhyme, to a couplet. The melody of blank verse is under no confinement, but enjoys the utmost privilege of which the melody of verse is susceptible, and that is to run hand in hand with the sense. In a word, blank verse is superior to the Hexameter in many articles; and inferior to it in none, save in the latitude of arrangement, and in the use of long words.

In the French heroic verse, there are found, on the contrary, all the defects of the Latin Hexameter and English rhyme, without the beauties of either. Subjected to the bondage of rhyme, and to the full close at the end of each couplet, it is further peculiarly disgusting by the uniformity of its pauses and accents. The line invariably is divided by the pause into two equal parts, and the accent is invariably placed before the pause.

Jeune et vaillant herôs || dont la haute sagesse  
 Ne'st point la fruit tardif || d'une lente vieillesse.

Here every circumstance contributes to a most tedious uniformity. A constant return of the same pause and of the same accent, as well as an equal division of every line; by which the latter part always answers to the former, and fatigues the ear without intermission or change. I cannot set this matter in a better light, than by presenting to the reader a French translation of the following passage of Milton.

Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,  
 Godlike erect, with native honour clad  
 In naked majesty seem'd lords of all;  
 And worthy seem'd, for in their looks divine  
 The image of their glorious Maker shon,  
 Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure,  
 Severe, but in true filial freedom plac'd;  
 Whence true authority in men: though both  
 Not equal, as their sex not equal seem'd;  
 For contemplation he and valour form'd,  
 For softness she and sweet attractive grace,  
 He for God only, she for God in him.

Were the pauses of the sense and found in this passage, but a little better assorted, nothing in verse could be more melodious. In general,

general, the great defect of Milton's versification, in other respects admirable, is the want of coincidence betwixt the pauses of the sense and sound.

The translation is in the following words,

Ce lieu délicieux, ce paradis charmant,  
Reçoit deux objets son plus bel ornement;  
Leur port majestueux, et leur démarche altière,  
Semble leur mériter sur la nature entière  
Ce droit de commander que Dieu leur a donné,  
Sur leur auguste front de gloire couronné,  
Du souverain du ciel drille la ressemblance :  
Dans leur simples regards éclatte l'innocence,  
L'adorable candeur, l'aimable vérité,  
La raison, la sagesse, et la sévérité  
Qu'adoucit la prudence, et cet air de droiture  
Du visage des rois respectable parure.  
Ces deux objets divins n'ont pas les mêmes traits,  
Ils paroissent formés, quoique tous deux parfaits ;  
L'un pour la majesté, la force, et la noblesse ;  
L'autre pour la douceur, la grace, et la tendresse ;  
Celui-ci pour Dieu seul, l'autre pour l'homme  
encor.

Here the sense is fairly translated, the words are of equal power, and yet how inferior the melody !

I take the liberty to add here a speculation, which, though collateral only, arises naturally from the subject, and shall be discussed in a few words. Many attempts have been made to introduce Hexameter verse into the living languages, but without success. The English language, I am inclined to believe, is not susceptible of this melody; and my reasons are these. First, the polysyllables in Latin and Greek are finely diversified by long and short syllables, a circumstance that qualifies them for the melody of Hexameter verse. Ours are extremely ill qualified for this service, because they superabound in short syllables. Secondly, the bulk of our monosyllables are arbitrary with regard to length, which is an unlucky circumstance in Hexameter. Custom, as observed above, may render familiar a long or short pronunciation of the same word: but the mind wavering betwixt the two sounds, cannot be so much affected with either, as with a word that hath always the same sound; and for that reason, arbitrary sounds are ill fitted for a melody which is chiefly supported  
by

by quantity. In Latin and Greek Hexameter, invariable sounds direct and ascertain the melody: English Hexameter would be destitute of melody, unless by artful pronunciation; because of necessity the bulk of its sounds must be arbitrary. The pronunciation is easy in a simple movement of alternate short and long syllables; but would be perplexing and unpleasant in the diversified movement of Hexameter verse.

Rhyme makes so great a figure in modern poetry, as to deserve a solemn trial. I have for that reason reserved it to be examined with some deliberation; in order to discover, if possible, its peculiar beauties, and the degree of merit it is intitled to. The first view of this subject leads naturally to the following reflection, “ That rhyme  
 “ having no relation to sentiment, nor any  
 “ effect upon the ear other than a mere  
 “ jingle, ought to be banished all com-  
 “ positions of any dignity, as affording but  
 “ a trifling and childish pleasure.” It will  
 also be observed, “ That a jingle of words  
 “ hath



" hath in some measure a ludicrous effect ;  
 " witness the celebrated poem of *Hudibras*,  
 " the double rhymes of which contribute  
 " no small share to its drollery ; that this  
 " effect would be equally remarkable in a  
 " serious work, were it not obscured by the  
 " nature of the subject ; that having how-  
 " ever a constant tendency to give a ludi-  
 " crous air to the composition, it requires  
 " more than ordinary fire to support the dig-  
 " nity of the sentiments against such an un-  
 " dermining antagonist \*."

These arguments are specious, and have undoubtedly some weight. Yet, on the other hand, it ought to be considered, that rhyme, in later times, has become universal among men as well as children ; and that to give it a currency, it must have some foundation in human nature. In fact, it has been successfully employ'd by poets of genius, in their serious and grave compositions, as well as in those which are more light and airy. Here, in weighing autho-

\* Vossius, *de poematum cantu*, p. 26. says, " Nihil æque  
 " gravitati orationis officit, quam in sono ludere syllabarum."

rity against argument, the balance seems to hang pretty even ; and therefore, to come at any thing decisive, we must pierce a little deeper.

Music has great power over the soul ; and may be successfully employ'd to inflame or sooth our passions, if not actually to raise them. A single sound, however sweet, is not music ; but a single sound repeated after proper intervals, may have an effect upon the mind, by rousing the attention and keeping the hearer awake. A variety of similar sounds, succeeding each other after regular intervals, must have a still stronger effect. This is applicable to rhyme, which consists in the connection that two verse-lines have by closing with two words similar in sound. And considering deliberately the effect that this may have ; we find, that it rouses the attention, and produceth an emotion moderately gay without dignity or elevation. Like the murmurings of a brook gliding through pebbles, it calms the mind when perturbed, and gently raises it when sunk. These effects are scarce perceived when the whole

poem is in rhyme; but are extremely remarkable by contrast, in the couplets which close the several acts of our later tragedies. The tone of the mind is sensibly varied by them, from anguish, distress, or melancholy, to some degree of ease and alacrity. For the truth of this observation, I appeal to the speech of Jane Shore in the fourth act, when her doom was pronounced by Gloucester; to the speech of Lady Jane Gray at the end of the first act; and to that of Calista, in the *Fair Penitent*, when she leaves the stage, about the middle of the third act. The speech of Alicia, at the close of the fourth act of *Jane Shore*, puts the matter beyond doubt. In a scene of deep distress, the rhymes which finish the act, produce a certain gaiety and cheerfulness, far from according with the tone of the passion.

*Alicia.* For ever? Oh! For ever!  
 Oh! who can bear to be a wretch for ever!  
 My rival too! his last thoughts hung on her:  
 And, as he parted, left a blessing for her.  
 Shall she be bless'd, and I be curs'd, for ever!  
 No; since her fatal beauty was the cause

Ot

Of all my suff'rings, let her share my pains ;  
 Let her, like me, of ev'ry joy forlorn,  
 Devote the hour when such a wretch was born:  
 Like me to deserts and to darkness run,  
 Abhor the day and curse the golden sun ;  
 Cast ev'ry good and ev'ry hope behind ;  
 Detest the works of nature, loathe mankind:  
 Like me with cries distracted fill the air,  
 Tear her poor bosom, and her frantic hair,  
 And prove the torments of the last despair. }

Having described, the best way I can, the impression that rhyme makes on the mind ; I proceed to examine whether rhyme be proper for any subject, and to what subjects in particular it is best suited. Great and elevated subjects, which have a powerful influence, claim justly the precedence in this inquiry. In the chapter of grandeur and sublimity, it is established, that a grand or sublime object, inspires a warm enthusiastic emotion disdaining strict regularity and order. This observation is applicable to the present point. The moderately-enlivening music of rhyme, gives a tone to the mind very different from that of grandeur and sublimity. Supposing then

an elevated subject to be expressed in rhyme, what must be the effect? The intimate union of the music with the subject, produces an intimate union of their emotions; one inspired by the subject, which tends to elevate and expand the mind; and one inspired by the music, which, confining the mind within the narrow limits of regular cadency and similar sound, tends to prevent all elevation above its own pitch. Emotions so little concordant, cannot in union have a happy effect.

But it is scarce necessary to reason upon a case, that never did, and probably never will happen, *viz.* an important subject clothed in rhyme, and yet supported in its utmost elevation. A happy thought or warm expression, may at times give a sudden bound upward; but it requires a genius greater than has hitherto existed, to support a poem of any length in a tone much more elevated than that of the melody. Tasso and Ariosto ought not to be made exceptions, and still less Voltaire. And after all, where the poet has the dead weight of rhyme constantly to struggle with, how  
can

can we expect an uniform elevation in a high pitch ; when such elevation, with all the support it can receive from language, requires the utmost effort of the human genius ?

But now, admitting rhyme to be an unfit dress for grand and lofty images ; it has one advantage however, which is, to raise a low subject to its own degree of elevation. Addison \* observes, “ That rhyme, without  
“ any other assistance, throws the language  
“ off from prose, and very often makes an  
“ indifferent phrase pass unregarded ; but  
“ where the verse is not built upon rhymes,  
“ there, pomp of sound and energy of ex-  
“ pression are indispensably necessary, to  
“ support the style and keep it from falling  
“ into the flatness of prose.” This effect of rhyme is remarkable in the French verse, which, being simple and natural and in a good measure unqualified for inversion, readily sinks down to prose where it is not artificially supported. Rhyme, by rousing the mind, raises it somewhat above the

\* Spectator, N<sup>o</sup> 285.



tone of ordinary language: rhyme therefore is indispensable in the French tragedy; and may be proper even for their comedy. Voltaire \* assigns this very reason for adhering to rhyme in these compositions. He indeed candidly owns, that even with the support of rhyme, the tragedies of his country are little better than conversation-pieces. This shows, that the French language is weak, and an improper dress for any grand subject. Voltaire was sensible of this imperfection; and yet Voltaire attempted an epic poem in that language.

The cheering and enlivening power of rhyme, is still more remarkable in poems of short lines, where the rhymes return upon the ear in a quick succession. And for that reason, rhyme is perfectly well adapted to gay, light, and airy subjects. Witness the following.

O the pleasing, pleasing anguish.  
When we lové, and when we languish!

\* Preface to his *OEdipus*, and in his discourse upon tragedy, prefixed to the tragedy of *Brutus*.

Wishes rising,  
Thoughts surprising,  
Pleasure courting,  
Charms transporting,  
Fancy viewing,  
Joys ensuing,  
O the pleasing, pleasing anguish.  
*Rosalind, act 1. sc. 2.*

For this reason, such frequent rhymes are very improper for any severe or serious passion: the dissonance betwixt the subject and the modulation, is very sensibly felt. Witness the following.

Ardito ti renda,  
T'accenda  
Di sdegno  
D'un figlio  
Il periglio  
D'un regno  
L'amor.  
E' dolce ad un' alma  
Che aspetta  
Vendetta  
Il perder la calma  
Fra l'ire del cor.  
*Metastasio. Artaserse, act 3. sc. 3.*

Rhyme

Rhyme is not less unfit for deep distress, than for subjects elevated and lofty; and for that reason has been long disused in the English and Italian tragedy. In a work, where the subject is serious though not elevated, it has not a good effect; because the airiness of the modulation agrees not with the gravity of the subject. The *Essay on Man*, which treats a subject great and important, would show much better in blank verse. Sportive love, mirth, gaiety, humour, and ridicule, are the province of rhyme. The boundaries assigned it by nature, were extended in barbarous and illiterate ages, and in its usurpations it has long been protected by custom. But taste in the fine arts, as well as in morals, improves daily; and makes a progress, slowly indeed, but uniformly, towards perfection: and there is no reason to doubt, that rhyme in Britain will in time be forc'd to abandon its unjust conquests, and to confine itself within its natural limits.

Having thrown out what occurred upon rhyme, I close the section with a general observation.

observation. The melody of articulate sound so powerfully enchants the mind, as to draw a veil over very gross faults and imperfections. Of this power a stronger example cannot be given, than the episode of Aristæus, which closes the fourth book of the *Georgics*. To renew a stock of bees when the former is lost, Virgil asserts, that they will be produced in the intrails of a bullock, slain and managed in a certain manner. This leads him to say, how this strange receipt was invented; which is as follows. Aristæus having lost his bees by disease and famine, never dreams of employing the ordinary means for obtaining a new stock; but, like a froward child, complains heavily of his misfortune to his mother Cyrene, a water-nymph. She advises him to consult Proteus, a sea-god, not how he was to obtain a new stock, but only by what fatality he had lost his former stock; adding, that violence was necessary, because Proteus would say nothing voluntarily. Aristæus, satisfied with this advice, though it gave him no prospect of repairing his loss, proceeds to execution. Proteus is caught sleeping,

bound with cords, and compelled to speak. He declares, that Aristæus was punished with the loss of his bees, for attempting the chastity of Euridice, the wife of Orpheus; she having got her death by the sting of a serpent in flying his embraces. Proteus, whose fullness ought to have been converted into wrath by the rough treatment he met with, becomes on a sudden courteous and communicative. He gives the whole history of Orpheus's expedition to hell in order to recover his spouse; a very entertaining story indeed, but without the least relation to the affair on hand. Aristæus returning to his mother, is advised to deprecate by sacrifices the wrath of Orpheus, who was now dead. A bullock is sacrificed, and out of the intrails spring miraculously a swarm of bees. How should this have led any mortal to think, that, without a miracle, the same might be obtained naturally, as is supposed in the receipt?

*A list of the different FEET, and of their NAMES.*

1. PYRRHICHIUS, consists of two short syllables. Examples: *Deus, given, cannot, hillock, running.*
2. SPONDEUS, consists of two long syllables. Ex. *omnes, possess, forewarn, mankind, sometime.*
3. IAMBUS, composed of a short and a long. Ex. *pious, intent, degree, appear, consent, repent, demand, report, suspect, affront, event.*
4. TROCHÆUS, or CHOREUS, a long and a short. Ex. *feruat, whereby, after, legal, measure, burden, holy, lofty.*
5. TRIBRACHYS, three short. Ex. *melius, property.*
6. MOLOSSUS, three long. Ex. *delectant.*

3 M 2

7. ANA-



7. ANAPÆSTUS, two short and a long.  
 Ex. *animos, condescend, apprehend,*  
*overheard, acquiesce, immature, over-*  
*charge, serenade, opportune.*
8. DACTYLUS, a long and two short.  
 Ex. *carmina, evident, excellence,*  
*estimate, wonderful, altitude, burden-*  
*ed, minister, tenement.*
9. BACCHIUS, a short and two long. Ex.  
*dolores.*
10. HYPOBACCHIUS, or ANTIBACCHIUS,  
 two long and a short. Ex. *pel-*  
*luntur.*
11. CRETICUS, or AMPHIMACER, a  
 short syllable betwixt two long.  
 Ex. *insito, afternoon.*
12. AMPHIBRACHYS, a long syllable be-  
 twixt two short. Ex. *honore, confi-*  
*der, imprudent, procedure, attended,*  
*proposed, respondent, concurrence, ap-*  
*prentice, respective, revenue.*

13. PRO-

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13. PROCELEUSMATICUS, four short syllables. Ex. *hominibus, necessary.*

14. DISPONDEUS, four long syllables. Ex. *infinitis,*

15. DIAMBUS, composed of two Iambi, Ex. *severitas.*

16. DITROCHÆUS, of two Trochæi. Ex. *permanere, procurator.*

17. IONICUS, two short syllables and two long, Ex. *properabant.*

18. Another foot passes under the same name, composed of two long syllables and two short. Ex. *calcaribus, possessory.*

19. CHORIAMBUS, two short syllables betwixt two long. Ex. *Nobilitas.*

20. ANTISPASTUS, two long syllables betwixt two short. Ex. *Alexander.*

21. PÆON 1st, one long syllable and three short. Ex. *temporibus, ordinary, inventory, temperament.*

22. PÆON

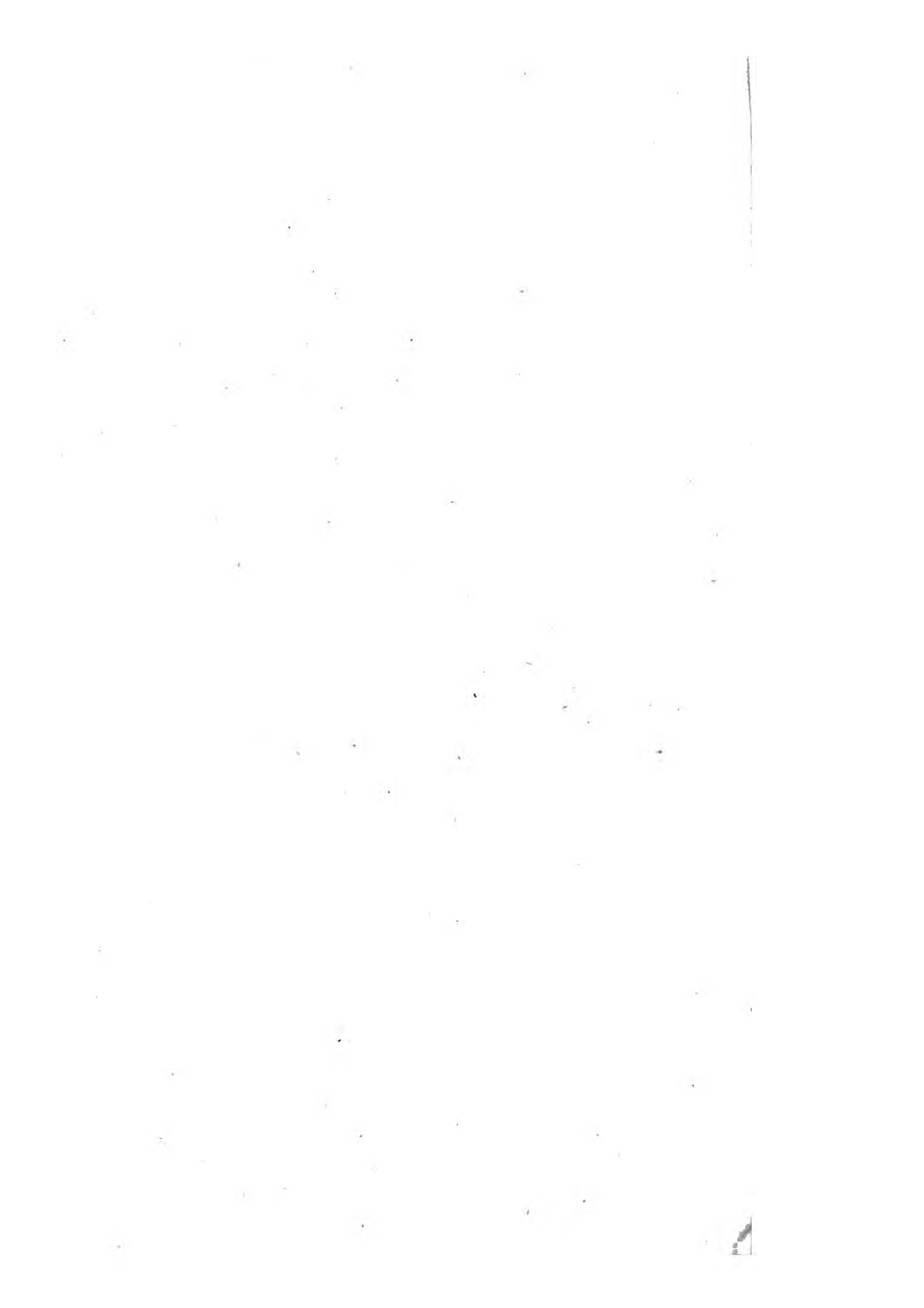
22. PÆON 2d, the second syllable long, and the other three short. Ex. *potentia, rapidity, solemnity, minority, considered, imprudently, extravagant, respectfully, accordingly.*
23. PÆON 3d, the third syllable long and the other three short. Ex. *animatus, independent, condescendence, sacerdotal, reimbursement, manufacture.*
24. PÆON 4th, the last syllable long and the other three short. Ex. *Celeritas.*
25. EPITRITUS 1st, the first syllable short and the other three long. Ex. *voluptates.*
26. EPITRITUS 2d, the second syllable short and the other three long. Ex. *pœnitentes.*
27. EPITRITUS 3d, the third syllable short and the other three long. Ex. *discordias.*
28. EPITRITUS 4th, the last syllable short and the other three long. Ex. *fortunatus.*
29. A

29. A word of five syllables composed of a Pyrrhichius and Dactylus. Ex. *ministerial*.
30. A word of five syllables composed of a Trochæus and Dactylus. Ex. *singularity*.
31. A word of five syllables composed of a Dactylus and Trochæus. Ex. *precipitation, examination*.
32. A word of five syllables, the second only long. Ex. *necessitated, significance*.
33. A word of six syllables composed of two Dactyles. Ex. *impetuosity*.
34. A word of six syllables composed of a Tribrachys and Dactyle. Ex. *pusillanimity*.

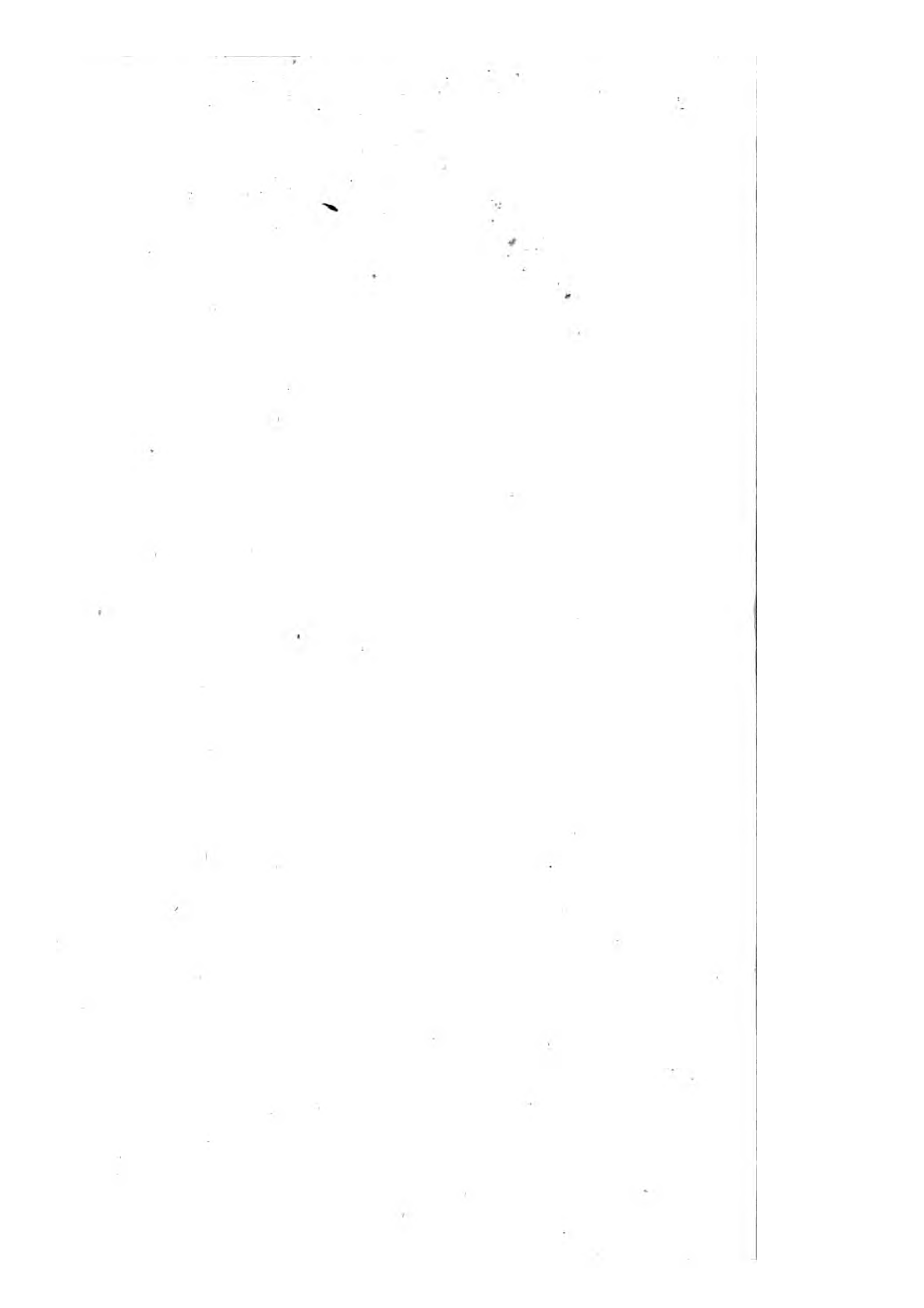
*N. B.* Every word may be considered as a prose foot, because every word is distinguished by a pause; and every foot in verse may be considered as a verse word, composed of syllables pronounced at once without a pause.

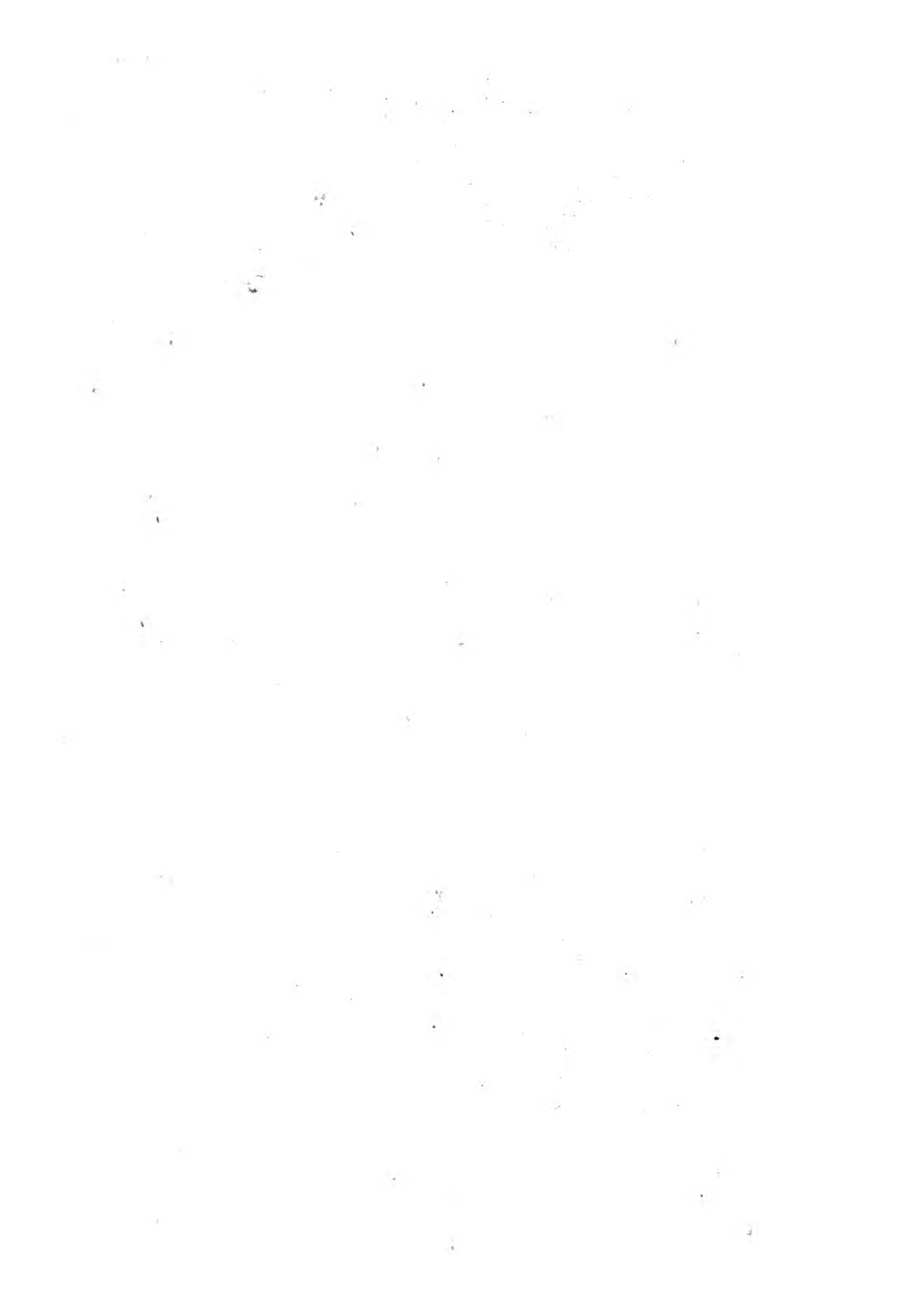
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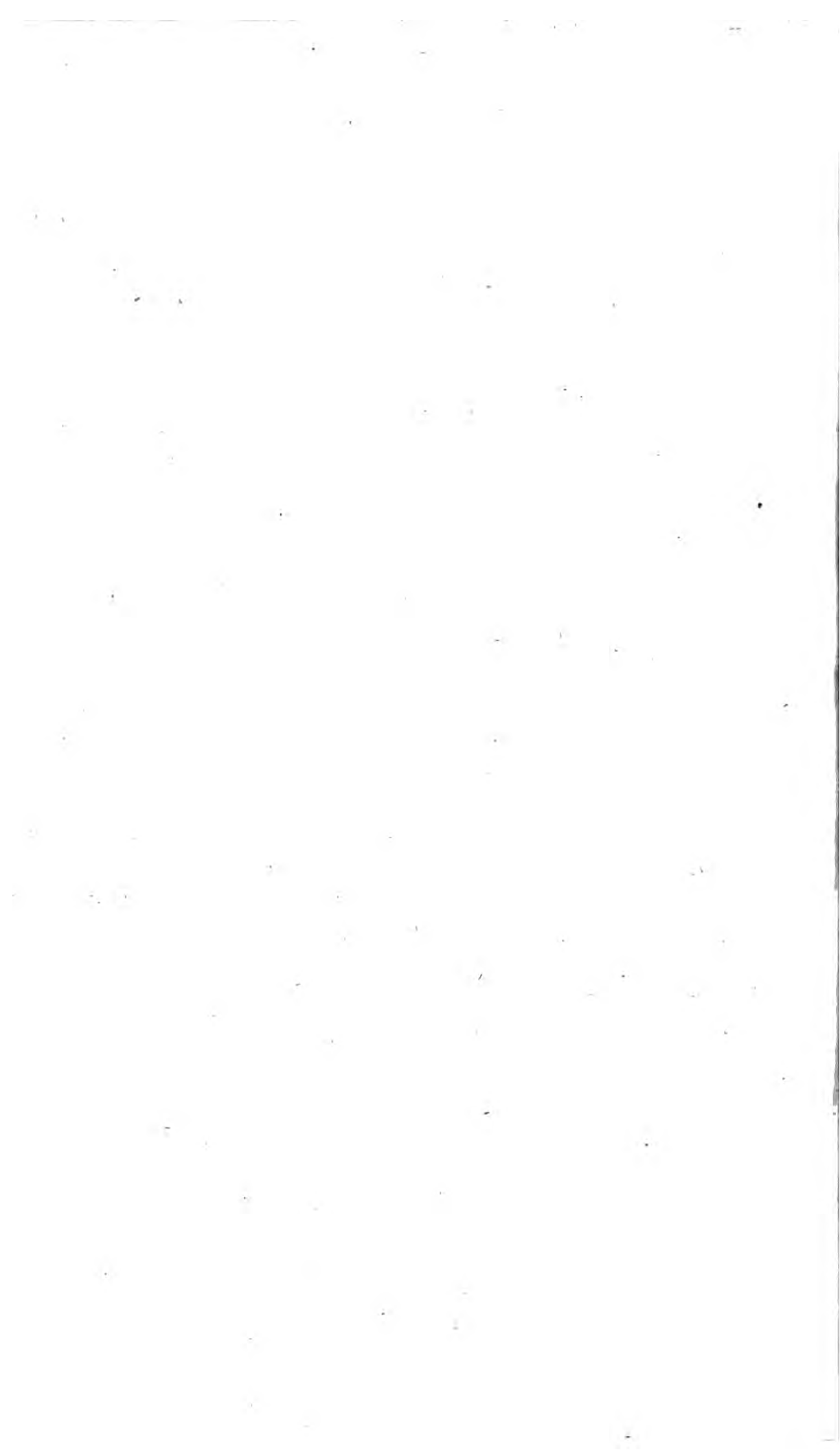


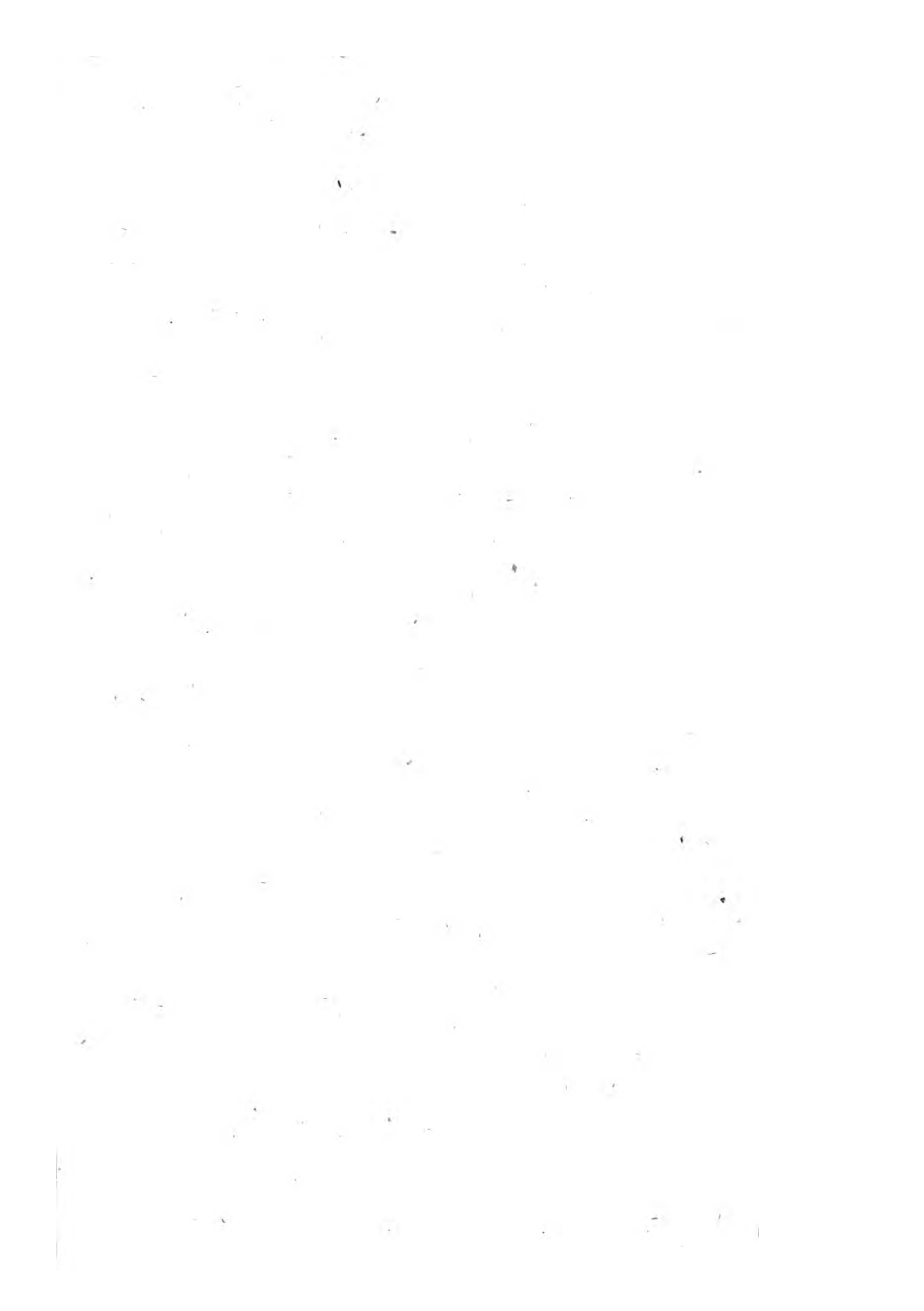




















*William Adair Esq*



