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F. H. Scott

**THE  
PRINCIPLES  
OF  
ENGLISH COMPOSITION:**

**ILLUSTRATED BY EXAMPLES,  
WITH  
CRITICAL REMARKS.**

---

**By DAVID BOOTH,  
AUTHOR OF THE ANALYTICAL DICTIONARY.**

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**LONDON:  
COCHRANE AND PICKERSGILL,  
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**1831.**

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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PENTONVILLE,

June 27, 1831.



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# PRINCIPLES

OF

## ENGLISH COMPOSITION.

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### CHAPTER I.

OF COMPOSITION, AND ITS DIVISIONS INTO GRAMMATICAL AND RHETORICAL.—DISTINCTION BETWEEN SYNTAX AND CONSTRUCTION.—OF ACCENT AND EMPHASIS.

The objects of language, whether spoken or written, are threefold:

1. To communicate to others the impressions which the speaker has received;
2. To recal to the memory of others what they once knew; and,
3. To excite sensations in others through the medium of the imagination.

To produce either, or all, of these ends, by means of speech and gesture, is the business of the orator; to gain the same purpose, by an arrangement of characters that represent words and

sentences, is the province of the writer. The speech is an ORATION, and the writing is a COMPOSITION; and both are eloquent if they please the ear and satisfy the judgment of those to whom they are addressed. The distinction, however, between an Oration and a Composition is only occasional,—not universal. An unpremeditated harangue has seldom any of the advantages of literary labour; but the Orations of those Masters, who, in successive ages, have rivetted the attention and penetrated the hearts of their hearers, have all smelt of the lamp ever since the days of Demosthenes.

Composition may, with propriety, be divided into two parts: Grammatical and Rhetorical. The former treats of the arrangement of the materials; the latter of the materials themselves. The one teaches the art of mounting the skeleton, with pins and with wires; the other chuses the fairest forms from the valley, binds them with sinews and covers them with flesh, and, animating them with the breath of Genius, bids the dry bones live.

The Grammatical division of our work has been much more generally investigated than the Rhetorical. Something on the subject may be seen in every Grammar; and, unless when we hope to illustrate what has been left obscure, or

to bring forward what has been neglected, we are not much inclined to tread anew the wearisome path of our childhood. For the present, therefore, with the exception of a few casual remarks, the declensions and conjugations shall be allowed to remain, unaltered, as they are found in the initiatory Schools. Before, however, entering upon the ground which we mean to occupy, we must beg leave to differ so far from the ordinary Grammars, as to distinguish between Syntax and Construction.

SYNTAX (from the Greek *syn*, with, and *taxis*, arrangement) treats of the Orthography that certain words should assume with regard to each other. It belongs to Grammar, strictly so called, and is, in every particular language, that collection of Rules which fixes its grammatical inflexions. Thus:

'*He* came to see *me*, at *my* lodgings, yesterday morning; and *I* returned with *him*, to *his* house, in the evening.'

Here the words *I*, *me* and *my* all refer to the speaker; and *he*, *him* and *his*, to the person spoken of: varying as either *acts*, is *acted upon*, or is a *possessor*, in the sentence. Again:

'*She* loves you, but you do not love her.'

'*He* loved her once, but he loves her no longer.'

In the former sentence, the verb, *to love*,

changes with the *person*; and, in the latter, with the *time* of the action.

To preserve the customary uniformity, in such relations, is the proper province of Syntax.

CONSTRUCTION (from the Latin *construere*, to pile up, or build,) is the placing of the words and phrases of a sentence in a certain order; and, hence, we speak, metaphorically, of the *structure* of a sentence, pronouncing it to be bad, or good, according as it is perplexed or explicit,—rugged or harmonious. For example, the following are two Constructions of the same phrases, and which present the same thoughts though not with equal elegance and precision:

‘Success and miscarriage are empty sounds, (*for*) I have protracted my work till most of those have sunk into the grave, whom I wished to please; having little to fear or to hope from censure or from praise, with frigid tranquillity, I therefore dismiss it.’

‘I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds, I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or to hope from censure or from praise.’

Other arrangements of these phrases might be formed, or even the phrases themselves might be

inverted; and he is the best Composer who is able to chuse the most luminous and most harmonious of the several Constructions. Strictly speaking, there is, probably, a shade of distinction in meaning, more or less obvious, between every two Constructions of the same sentence; but the investigation of this subject would here be premature: for we are now giving definitions—not examples.

HARMONY of Construction may be understood in two different senses: One is the accordance of the several members of the sentence and may be compared to symmetry in Architecture. The other is the pleasing succession of accents and emphases, and would, perhaps, be more accurately denominated by the term Melody: it forms the beauty and elegance of Prose; and, when the order of succession is preserved with measured regularity, it constitutes the essence of verse. POETRY is not, exclusively, allied to either. It consists in embodying the forms of things unknown, and in giving to airy nothing a local habitation and a name.

PROSE, (Latin *prosa*) is from *prorsus*, straight forward, in contradistinction to VERSE (Latin *versus*) from *vertere*, to turn; because, in the one case, the reader goes on to the end of the paragraph, whereas, in the other, he must turn back

at the end of every verse, whether the line be filled up or not. It is on account of these turnings that the lesser divisions in the Bible are called Verses.

That part of Composition which teaches the laws of Versification is named **PROSODY**, from the Greek *prosodia*, accent; and, although the English language does not possess the modulations which belonged to the accents of the Greeks, yet accentuation, such as we have it, is the sole foundation of our Verse. Those are supposed to have been of the nature of musical notes, and hence their name, from the Latin compound *accino*, I sing.

The accents of the English tongue (which are only to be found in Dictionaries) merely mark the stress of the voice, when resting upon certain syllables, in the same way that **EMPHASIS** (Greek *phao*, I speak) denotes a more forcible pronunciation of a particular word in a sentence. Seeing that, on our principles, every polysyllable is a combination of so many separate words, Accent and Emphasis are the same; and every compound, with its accentuated syllable, is, obviously, a minor sentence (or Phrase) with its emphatical word. "As emphasis," says Mr. Walker, "evidently points out the most significant word in a sentence, so, where other reasons

do not forbid, the accent always dwells with greatest force on that part of the word which, from its importance, the hearer has always the greatest occasion to observe; and this is necessarily the root, or body, of the word."

Accents, having been fixed by custom, are invariable; but Emphasis shifts with the meaning of the speaker. Although the example given by Mr. Sheridan has been often quoted, it is an illustration so plain, and yet so ample, that it would be affectation to substitute another. It is a question of six words which may have five different interpretations:

" Shall you ride to town to-morrow?"

" If the emphasis is on shall, as '*Shall* you ride to town to-morrow?' it implies, that the person spoken to had expressed before such an intention, but that there is some doubt, in the questioner, whether he be determined on it or not; and the answer may be, 'certainly,' or, 'I am not sure.' If it be on you, as, 'Shall *you* ride to town to-morrow?' the question implies that some one is to go, and 'Do you mean to go yourself, or send some one in your stead?' and the answer may be 'No, but my servant shall.' If on ride, as, " Shall you *ride*, &c.?' the answer may be 'No, I shall walk, or go in a coach.' If on town, as, 'Shall you ride to *town* to-morrow?' the answer may be, 'No, but I shall ride to the forest.' If on to-morrow, as, 'Shall you ride to town *to-morrow*?' the answer may be, 'No, not to-morrow, but the next day.'"



The Accents and Emphases, in a sentence, may, therefore, be compared to the pulsations of a string; and it is easy to conceive that they may strike the ear, as dissonant or musical, according as their succession is abrupt or harmonious. But, separate from the Emphasis on individual words, there is a tone and cadence, belonging to each of the members of a period, which, if not properly assorted, will destroy the harmony of the whole. The varied tones of narration, of interrogation, of entreaty and of command, are discriminative of these different feelings in the speaker. To these tones, the arrangement of the words is completely subordinate; and, although they are not pronounced in the page, an attentive writer always takes them silently into account, in the construction of his sentences. It would seem that those vocal expressions of the passions are different in different countries, if what Condillac says be accurate, "that the tone in which an Englishman expresses anger would, in Italy, be only a mark of surprise." But, this subject will come again under review when we treat of the laws of Versification.

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## CHAPTER II.

## OF AUXILIARY VERBS.

A Verb is modified in several ways, and particularly by the conjunction of another verb. 'I love to ride,' and 'I like to write,' specify that the actions of *riding* and of *writing* are agreeable to me. The infinitives 'To ride' and 'To write' are the names of actions, and may, therefore, be considered as nouns in the accusative case, as much as if I had said, 'I love Mary' and 'I like money.' It is this kind of union of words that grammarians allude to in their rule, "One verb governs another in the infinitive."

There are certain verbs that are called *Auxiliaries*, because they are seldom used except to precede the names of action, or states of being; that is, they are chiefly employed to modify other verbs. These conjunctions of one verb with another form circumlocutions, by which the English are enabled to express with precision the vast variety of moods and tenses that exist in general Grammar; part of which are designated by means of terminations in the classic and some other tongues. The terminations of the English

verb are few, and, comparatively, of little importance; and, therefore, it is of material consequence, in a Work on Composition, that the power of the auxiliary verbs should be more minutely stated than is usual in the common Grammars of the Schools.

To DO and To BE express ACTION and *existence* in general; and the nature of the *act*, or *state*, can be known only from the verbal noun or participle, to which each respectively may be joined. Every active verb (as it is termed) is despoiled of its variable affixes of activity, as well as of person, when it is conjugated with the auxiliary *To do*, and appears in the simple state of an infinitive, as in—

I do love	<i>for</i>	I love.
Thou dost love	—	Thou lovest.
He does love	—	He loves.
I did love	—	I loved.
Thou didst love,	—	Thou lovedst,
&c.		&c.

DID (*doed*) is believed to have been once *do*, marking by repetition that the act is finished, and hence the ED. These two forms of conjugation have exactly the same original signification; but, (as happens in all cases where we have two words, or phrases, that are etymologically equi-

valent,) either one becomes obsolete, or custom gradually produces a shade of distinction. Accordingly, the prefixing of the auxiliary *do* is understood to make the expression more determinately energetic. Wherever it is not recognized as producing that effect, it is a mere expletive, from its adding a word to the sentence without any additional idea. The minor poets frequently write *do*, *does*, and *did*, for no other purpose than to make up the requisite number of feet, a practice thus satirized by Pope :—

“ While expletives their feeble aid *do* join,  
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line.”

There is a third manner of conjugating the active verb, by means of the auxiliary *To be*. Thus,—

I am loving	<i>for</i>	I love.
Thou art loving	—	Thou lovest.
He is loving	—	He loves.
We are loving,	—	We love,
&c.		&c.

In the preceding form, the participle *loving* is considered more as relative to the action itself than as pointing to the *object*; and hence the state, or exertion, seems to be continuous. “*I crossed the street yesterday*” is simply the relation

of a past event; but "I *was crossing* the street yesterday" is a suspension of the action, and the natural inquiry is, what happened while you were so doing? The classical reader will readily discover an affinity between this mode of speech and the middle voice of the Greeks.

It is this state of unfinished action which is understood in such phrases as, "The house is building," and "The house was building," in which the action is taken abstractedly, without attending to the agent. The Romans expressed the same idea by means of the passive voice, "*domus edificatur*," and "*domus edificabatur*." Every language has its idioms, which pedants only would attempt to change. For some time past, "the bridge is *being built*," "the tunnel is *being excavated*," and other expressions of a like kind, have pained the eye and stunned the ear. Instead of "The stone is falling," and "The man is dying," we shall next be taught to say, "The stone is *being fallen*," and "The man is *being dead*."

Viewing the present participle solely in its verbal state, it becomes assimilated to the infinitive, and is a general name for the whole class of *continuous exertions*. The Latins changed its termination, and called it a GERUND, from *gero*, I carry on. They treated it as a noun, and accom-

modated it with cases. The gerund, however, is not purely abstract, for it is so far verbal as to connect itself with the time and manner of an action. The idioms of two languages are seldom the same, but there is a certain resemblance between the Latin gerund and that usage of the English participle above quoted, such as we shall afterwards find to exist between the supines of the one and the infinitive of the other. In the sentences "He fell asleep *in the* reading," "he is sick *of* writing," the words *reading* and *writing* are used substantively, but not as nominatives. "The house is *a* building," "The man is *a* dying," although nearly obsolete, are legitimate phrases, from which the *a* is now generally excluded; but, in the following, "He has gone *a* hunting," "He went *a* begging," "He is out *an* airing," and many others, if the expressions are allowed at all, the article appears to be indispensable: without it, the words *hunting*, *begging*, *airing*, &c. would cease to be general, and would each require an objective word, or sentence, on which the action might fall. .

The substantive verb *To be* is also compounded with the past participle, and thereby forms the whole of what, in other languages, is termed the *passive voice*, which, in English, exists nowhere except in that participle. In the form of conjugation,—

I am loved,	I was loved,
Thou art loved,	Thou wert loved,
He is loved,	He was loved,
&c.	&c.

the verbal adjective (or participle) *loved* is a quality or state of the nominatives *I, thou, he, &c.* as marked by the different parts of the verb *To be*, in a similar manner as if we were to make a conjugation of—

I am strong,	I was strong,
Thou art strong,	Thou wert strong,
He is strong,	He was strong,
&c.	&c.

The analogy will appear more perfect if we advert to the etymology of the adjective **STRONG**, which is a varied orthography of the past participle (*strung*) of the verb *To string*, (or *tie*,) alluding to the tension of the ligaments of the joints in the human body. In the same metaphor, we say that a man is *well knit*: thus, in Scott's *Lady of the Lake* :—

“Of stature tall, and slender frame,  
But firmly *knit* was Malcolm Græme.”

And more directly to our purpose in Dryden :—

“By chance our long-lived fathers earn'd their food;  
Toil *strung* the nerves, and purified the blood.”

The apparent conjugation, by means of the substantive verb, is not confined to participles and participial adjectives. Every adjective whatever, and even substantives, may be so combined. We may write, "I am wise," "Thou art wise," or "I am the man," "Thou art the man," &c. either of which expressions might as well be termed a simple verb as the phrase "I am loved," an assertion which, although written in one word (*amor*) in Latin is made up of three separate words in English, and of these *am* only is the verb. The substantive verb *To be* unites the noun to its adjective,—the substance to its quality,—gives them existence, and endows them with power.

TO HAVE (Latin *habere*, and Saxon *habban*,) is to hold or keep in our possession the thing of which we speak. The word is unlimited in its metaphorical usage. Less permanent in duration and power than the verb *To possess*, (Latin *possidere*, from *potis* and *sedere*,) it holds dominion, for the time, not only over every thing that exists, but over the most evanescent shades of memory and imagination. A man, for example, has been puzzling you with a metaphysical subtlety which eludes your grasp, when, all at once, you exclaim "I have you," you get possession of him, that is, you catch his thought, for which you had so long



*followed* him in vain. The *had* (*haved*), at the close of the sentence, is an *additional* metaphor: he was *followed*, and that action was yours:—you *had* it.

As an auxiliary, *To have* is almost always conjoined with the past participle, and denotes being in *possession* of the *action*, which, in consequence, is understood to be *completely finished*. “I loved is in the past tense, but the action might have been left as unfinished or continuing: “I have loved” states the action to be over, because in the *possession* of the speaker. “I was” and “I have been” are tenses of a like import. In the same manner, the verb is compounded with its own participle: thus, “I had” means that I *possessed* at a certain time, which is left indefinite; but “I have had” relates to the past circumstance, when the object once in possession is now leaving me, or is already gone.

Thus far the writers of grammars have treated the verb *To have* as an auxiliary. It has, however, other usages, and is prefixed to infinitives like ordinary verbs. For example, the expressions

“I *have* to see him to-morrow,” and

“*Having* to see them to-morrow, I will mention your case,”

consider the speaker as *holding* the *right* of “see-

ing them to-morrow,"—that the interview, notwithstanding its being at present only prospective, is *real* property, and *belongs* to him.

In a similar manner:—

"I *had* to see him yesterday," and

"*Having had* to see them yesterday,"

express the speaker's *having*, at one time, possessed an anticipated property over what is now also past. "I had had" denotes that I had possession at a past time, prior to another definite period.

With the termination *ilis* and *habere*, to have, was formed the Latin *habilis*, and from hence the old English *habile*, which signifies *having* or *possessing* any quality that might be requisite. This, by contraction, has originated the adjective **ABLE**, that is, *having* the power or quality necessary for any specific purpose. Taking the phrase *to be able* as an auxiliary verb, we can thereby form all the tenses of what, in other languages, is termed the **POTENTIAL MOOD** (Latin *potens*), the expression of *power*. As—

I am able to walk,	We are able to walk,
Thou art able to walk,	Ye are able to walk,
He is able to walk,	They are able to walk,
&c.	&c.

Another form of the expression of power is by

means of the defective verb CAN,—Saxon *cunnan* and German *können*, to be able. The infinitive, *To can*, is out of use in modern English, but the Scotch dialect has the substantive *Can* for ability: “He has no *can*,” meaning that the man is deficient in power,—that he is unable to do what is requisite.

We cannot too often repeat, that no two words, or expressions, are completely synonymous; but, often, the nice shades of distinction vary with circumstances so as to be appreciable by no general rule, except, what is necessary in all cases, a strict discrimination of the precise idea that we wish to express, with an habitual and critical (not slavish) attention to the practice of the most approved authors. In a general usage,

I <i>can</i> walk	is equivalent to	I am <i>able</i> to walk,
Thou <i>canst</i> walk	—	Thou art <i>able</i> to
		walk,
He <i>can</i> walk	—	He is <i>able</i> to walk,
&c.		&c.

but we should use the first form in the case of a general assertion, and the second when the question of *ability* is intended to be particularly kept in view. We shall afterwards have occasion to notice other distinctions.

The Saxon *cunnan*, in its more direct meaning,

signified *To know*, and *Cunning*, (which had not then a suspected character,) denoted knowledge in general, and, particularly, that kind which is obtained by a sound judgment from experience. That sort of *cunning* gave a superiority to its possessors over other minds,—thus adding an etymological confirmation of the aphorism that “Knowledge is Power.”

The imperfect tense *COULD* is dependent, and, in its modern usage, might be properly termed the *conditional*. It asserts the possession of power at a specified time, but leaves us to enquire the reason why that power was, or is, not exerted.

“I *could* have lent you the money yesterday, but I *cannot* now.”

“I *could* even now give you the money, but I *will* not.”

In the latter example, *could* appears as a present tense, and yet we could not with propriety write *can*. “I *can* give you the money, but I *will* not” is a solecism; because the word *can* denotes *unlimited* power, which would not be so if I had not the *will*. *Could* is truly contingent, for its exertion may be dependent on other circumstances than the *will* of the speaker, as in the following sentences:

“I *could* sing a good song, if I had not such a bad cold.”

“ I *could* tell you a long story, but, at present, I am too much engaged with other matters.”

The Saxon *magan*, to be able, was more particularly allusive to physical than to mental power. *Mighty* is powerful, and *might* is bodily strength. The English derivative *MAY* denotes power to act, whether that power be intrinsic in the actor, or derived from another. *May* might be by *permission*, (and indeed this is its more usual acceptation,) a circumstance which *can* never contemplates. When a person says, “ I may walk,” he announces his possession of a power which is left dependent on his will. “ I *can* walk,” alludes to *ability* alone. “ You *may* do so; I give you liberty.” “ You *can* do so; I have not the power to prevent you.”

*MIGHT* is the conditional of *may*, as *could* is of *can*; and may be explained and exemplified in a similar manner:

“ You *might* do what I desire: why, then, do you not do so?”—That is,

“ There is nothing to hinder you from doing what I wish; why then?” &c.

“ I *might* have put a hundred guineas in my pocket, had I taken his advice,” means that it was a probable event that, had I taken his advice, I should have gained a hundred guineas; but the expression—

“ I *could* have put a hundred guineas into my pocket,” &c.

reduces the *probability* to a *certainty*.

“ May I ask you a favour?” is equivalent to

“ Will you permit me to ask you a favour?”

“ *Might* I ask you a favour?” would be

“ Am I *able* to ask you a favour?”

Proverbs are the traditions of language as well as of thoughts. Thus, the impropriety of procrastination is expressed in the adage—

“ He that *will* not when he *may*, *may* not when he *will*.”

And, when we say “ *Might* creates right,” we assert, whether mistakenly or not, that, in this world, “ Right is wholly dependent on power.”

**MUST** expresses necessary action; but the necessity may either be the consequence of outward compulsion, or of internal conviction. The German *müssen* to be *obliged* (*bound*), is an irregular verb, having all the variety of conjugation usually found in that language; and the Saxon *most*, although imperfect, has its different tenses; but the English *must* never changes its orthography. In consequence of this defect, we can only learn, from the other words in the sentence, at what *time* the compulsion takes place.

“ I *must* walk” is equivalent to “ I feel the

*necessity* of walking," or "I am *compelled* to walk."

"I *must* have walked" denotes that, at some past time, I had been *obliged* to walk. "I *must* walk to-morrow" foretells a future necessity: future, in consequence of the word *to-morrow*.

To DARE (Saxon *dearran*), is to risk the exertion of an assumed but uncertain power, and is more appropriately connected with verbs that indicate opposition or danger :—

"If I *dare* eat, or drink, or breathe, or live,  
I *dare* meet Surry in a wilderness."

The imperfect tense is DURST in all the three persons, both singular and plural, as "I *durst*," "Thou *durst*," "He *durst*," &c.

When it is not employed as an auxiliary, the verb *To dare* is regular in the past as well as in the present tense, as "I *dared*," "Thou *daredst*," "He *dared*," &c.; but the construction of the two forms of conjugation are different. In the one case we say, "I *durst* meet him," or "He *durst* meet him," and in the other, "I *dared* to meet him," or "He *dared* to meet him."

*Durst* is not limited, like *dared*, to past time, but has a contingent application, similar to that of *could* and *might*, without regard to tenses.—  
"I *durst* as soon hang myself as contradict her,"

might be the melancholy speech of a hen-pecked husband.

It must have been already observed that the auxiliaries, which we have mentioned, coalesce more closely to the infinitives that follow them than other verbs can be made to do: it is a distinguishing characteristic of the class. "I wish *to* read," "I learn *to* read," and "I love *to* read," show the manner of the junction of ordinary verbs; while "I may read," "I can read," and "I must read," show that of the auxiliaries. In the former case, the *to* is prefixed to the infinitives; in the latter it is discarded. The arrangement of our language, by placing the auxiliaries *before*, instead of *after*, the principal verbs, has prevented that closer union which, in the form of contractions, would have given us moods and tenses in the shape of terminations. It is the tendency of all languages to combine monosyllables into polysyllables,—roots into compounds; and to untie the rudely-twisted knots is the fruitless never-ending labour of the etymologist.

There are a few other words which belong to an intermediate tribe between ordinary verbs and auxiliaries. They, too, dispense with the prefix *to* in their following infinitives; but, being transitive, they require an interjected accusative. The following are of this class: To hear, to let, to make, to feel, to see, and to bid. Thus:



I <i>heard</i> him say so,	I <i>felt</i> him touch me,
I <i>let</i> him do it,	I <i>saw</i> him steal,
I <i>made</i> him do it,	I <i>bade</i> him go away.

There are, however, occasional deviations from this practice, especially in the verb *To bid*. Smollet writes, "He *bade* them to open their bundles;" and Goldsmith, more harmoniously,

"Those gentle hours that plenty *bade* to bloom."

TO NEED, to want, or to be in want of, is akin to those above-mentioned, but is something different in its usage. The *to* of the succeeding infinitive is requisite in the affirmative sentence, but not in the negative. Thus we say, "He *needs to* go, or "I *need to* go;" but "He *needs not* go" or "I *need not* go" when the negative intervenes. Young writers are apt to confound the third person singular of this verb with the adverb NEEDS; because they have the same orthography: "He must *needs* go" signifies "He must *necessarily* go:" a necessity, however, arising from some *want*, or *need*, of his own rather than from outward compulsion. Shakspeare seems to consider it as dependent on the will.

"He was a foole,  
For he *would needs* be vertuous."

The extensive application of the word *need* (from the slightest *occasional use* to the most

*urgent necessity*,) gave frequent opportunities to our great Bard for exhibiting his punning propensities: Thus, in Timon of Athens,

“ Oh you gods, what *need* we have any friends; if we should nere have *need* of 'em? They were the most *needlesse* creatures living; should we nere have *use* for 'em.”

And again in Hamlet,

“ And hitherto doth Love on Fortune tend,  
For who *not needs* shall never *lacke* a Frend :  
And who in *want* a hollow Frend doth try,  
Directly seasons him his Enemy.”

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## CHAPTER III.

OF THE FUTURE TENSE, AND THE USAGE OF  
SHALL AND WILL.

When speaking of tenses we have hitherto confined ourselves to the *present* and the *past*. In reality there are no *future* actions; they exist only in anticipation. Nevertheless, those embryo beings,—the creations of hope or of fear,—play a splendid part on the theatre of human thought. The *past* soon loses its interest;—the *present* (if there be a present) has only a momentary duration; and we may be truly said to live among the nonentities of the *future*.

Actions that are to come can only be contemplated through our present conception of how they may be produced. All past actions are necessary, otherwise they would not have been; and the thoughts, or things (termed *causes*), which preceded and are supposed to have produced them, are left for the investigation of the historian; but, in looking forward to the future, we perceive nothing but *causes*, for there is no action previous to their exertion.

We may conceive actions to arise from three different sources; and consequently they are divisible into as many kinds:

1. Voluntary, that is, such as follow the *Will* of the Agent.

2. Compulsory,—such as follow the *Will*, or *Power* of a being different from the Agent.

3. Contingent,—such as are either not referrible to any known cause, or which we chuse to consider as simply future.

To express these three several divisions, we make use of only two auxiliaries, *will* and *shall*.

To *WILL* (Saxon *willan*.) with some change of conjugation, though a little antiquated, still exists in our language as a regular verb. “I will,” “Thou willest,” “He wills,” “We willed,” &c. express the consent or desire of their nominatives; and hence the defective auxiliary is well fitted to mark a *voluntary* future.

*SHALL* is the Saxon *scealan*, to *owe*, or to *be obliged*; and therefore properly applies to any prediction of a *compulsory* kind. In very old English, it was the only future auxiliary, *Will* being then restricted to its regular meaning.

So far all is well, but how, with only these two words, *will* and *shall*, can we designate an act which is purely *contingent*,—a simple future? The Germans use the verb *werden*, to become, for

that purpose. It is equivalent to the Saxon *weorthan*; but that verb, (unless perhaps in some anomalous usages of the word *were*,) has not reached our times. Accordingly, by means of a few dextrous manœuvres, which puzzle the brains of the Scots and Irish, we have contrived to make *will* and *shall* answer all the three divisions of futurity. With regard to which of the two shall, in any particular case, become a simple future, our choice is founded on the following principles:—

1. Knowing little of the *will*, or determination, of others, we denote their *contingent* actions by *will*, and their *compulsory* ones by *shall*.

2. Knowing our own *will*, we denote our *voluntary* actions by *will*, and our *contingent* actions by *shall*.

3. When we would express our own *necessary* actions, we use a periphrasis, such as “I *shall* be *forced*,” or “I shall be *obliged*” to do such a thing: or, changing the verb, we say “I *must* do it” or “I am *obliged* (or *forced*) to do it.”

4. When we would express the *voluntary* actions of others, we lay an emphasis on the word *will*, and say “You *will* do it;” or we use such prophetic phrases as “You will *surely* do so,” “I am *convinced* that he *will* do so,” &c.

5. SHOULD and WOULD are the conditionals

of *shall* and *will*, and follow similar rules of construction. *Should* is sometimes used unconditionally, and is then equivalent to *ought*. *Would* is also used in the same manner, and then signifies *wish*. "I *should* have done that" signifies "I *ought* to have done that;" and "I *would* that you were wise" is equivalent to, "I *wish* that you were wise." In these usages, *should* and *would* cease to be conditionals.

The preceding principles are, probably, unexceptionable, but they are too general to be easily referred to, in particular instances. The choice between *shall* and *will* depends so much upon the intention of the speaker, that it is scarcely possible to teach a foreigner to distinguish their usage; for even our best writers must be sometimes in fault, seeing that they are not always uniform in their practice. Nevertheless, an attention to accuracy in the use of those words is of the utmost importance; for, on the nice discrimination of the signs of the future tense, much of the precision and elegance of composition depends. As, in incurable diseases, the prescriptions are always most numerous and generally specifics, so, on this subject, every grammarian has promulgated his own infallible instructions; and we have now before us a work, devoted entirely to *shall* and *will*, containing no

fewer than thirty-five Rules, with numerous observations and examples upon each. However correct these may be, (and we believe that they are correct,) they defeat their purpose by their multiplicity. Mr. Brightland's Rule (from the Latin of Dr. Wallis) has the advantage of being easily retained in the memory ; but it is not sufficiently comprehensive :

“ In the First Person, simply, *shall* foretels ;  
In *will*, a threat, or else a promise, dwells ;  
*Shall*, in the Second and the Third, does threat :  
*Will*, simply, then foretels the future feat.”

When it is said that *will*, in the first person either *promises*, or *threatens*, it is understood only in its combination with other words, or from its known connexion with other circumstances. The *will* or *desire* of the speaker is all that is expressed in the simple sentence, and this *will* may promise a favour or threaten a punishment ; for we never use *will* in the first person without assuming that we have power. *Shall*, in the second and third person, also presumes the power of compulsion ; for it would be absurd to say “ You *shall*,” or “ He *shall*,” act in a certain manner, if we had no power to enforce obedience : it would be an empty threat.

When we would employ *shall* and *will* as inter-

rogatories, we find, by a little attention, that the choice for the different futures depends on the same principles as in direct assertions. The expected answer ought always to be made by the same auxiliary with which the question is asked; and the answer will immediately determine the choice. Thus, "When *shall* we meet again?" is to be answered by "We *shall* meet again" (at such a time). Had the reply been "We *will* meet again" (at such a time) it would have expressed the *will*, or desire, of meeting, which was no part of the question. Again, "*Shall* your brother be in town to-morrow?" The answer, if in terms of the question, must either be "He *shall*" or "He *shall* not," which, in either case, would imply compulsion; and, therefore, if it were not intended to exercise power over this brother, the question should have been *put*, as well as *answered*, by *will*. "Shall I have my money to-morrow" is proper; and the answer may be "You *shall*," which is a *promise* of payment. "*Shall* I call upon you to-morrow" is a substitution of *shall* for *may*; or the sentence may be considered as elliptical, in place of "Shall I (be allowed to) call upon you to-morrow?" or, in other words, "Will you allow me to call upon you to-morrow?" "*Shall* I help you to a cup of tea?" "*May* I help you to a cup



of tea?" and "*Will* you allow me to help you to a cup of tea?" are spoken indiscriminately. The etiquette of polished society has prescribed laws to these and other colloquial phrases with which written language, in general, has nothing to do. The Scotch mode of expression "*Will* I call upon you?" or "*Will* I help you?" is, however, unquestionably, erroneous. It would signify "*Am I willing* to do so?" which is not, probably, the meaning of the speaker.

We shall now proceed to give some miscellaneous examples of the application of these troublesome auxiliaries; but, previously, we beg the reader's attention to the following Rule, which embraces the whole of the subject; and, being of easy application, will be convenient for referring to in our explanatory remarks:

#### GENERAL RULE.

If the speaker is the nominative to the *verb*, and also determines its accomplishment;—or, if he is neither the nominative to the *verb* nor determines its accomplishment,—the proper auxiliary is *WILL*:—in every other case it is *SHALL*.

#### *Miscellaneous Examples.*

"*I will speak.*" Here *I* is the nominative and also determines the act *to speak*, which therefore

requires *will*. Had the speaker simply declared the act as a *future*, without alluding to his determination, the phrase should have been “I *shall* speak.”

“He says that James *will* be hanged.” This is a compound sentence, and will be better understood by reversing the clauses thus: “James *will* be hanged,—he says that.” We have then only to consider the simple sentence, “James *will* be hanged,” in which *James* is the nominative, but the *speaker* is not *James*, neither does he determine James’s death; and, therefore, according to the Rule, *will* is the proper auxiliary. Had the speaker been a judge, and pronouncing his fiat from the judgment seat, he would, then, have determined James’s death, and the expression would have been “He says that, James *shall* be hanged.”

“My master desires me to tell you that,—he *will* call upon you to-morrow.” Here it is the servant (not the master) who speaks; and he is neither the nominative of the verb *call*, nor possessed of power over the action; *will* is, therefore, the proper auxiliary.

“Thou *shalt* not steal.” Here the speaker is not the nominative, but he determines the verb, which, in consequence, requires *shalt*. *Shall* and *must* are often, erroneously, considered as syno-

nymous. They have nevertheless distinct meanings. "You *must* not steal" is an imperious moral precept, for which different reasons may be assigned; but "You *shall* not steal" is a mandate independent of any regard to the crime, and assumes that the speaker will exercise his power, either in preventing, or in punishing. When the latter is in view, the penal clause is frequently added, as, "Thou *shalt* not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, *for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*"

Speaking of the defender of a fortress, it may be said, "He *will* die rather than surrender," which, by Dr. Wallis's Rule, would be ungrammatical, because *will* is here in the third person, and nevertheless is not a simple future; but, according to the preceding General Rule, it is good English: for "the speaker is neither the nominative to the verb nor determines its accomplishment." "He *shall* die," &c. would express a determination in the speaker to put the governor to death, should he attempt to surrender the fortress.

The solemn and the poetical styles have generally been said to be excepted from the ordinary rules, in the use of these auxiliaries: but this we

believe, in most cases if not all, to be a misapprehension. The spirit of enthusiasm views the future as if it were present. The threatenings of the Bard and the denunciations of the Prophet, though derived from different sources, have a similarity of manner. The language too has the same name: it is that of Inspiration.

When we look at the phraseology of ordinary life, we perceive no *compulsive* act unassociated with the agent that compels. If the judge say "the man *shall* die," we know that it is in consequence of the fiat of the speaker that the man is to suffer death; but the predictions of the prophet, or the poet, although they are equally absolute, suppose no energy inherent in the speaker; he is the real or the imaginary representative of a superior being in whose name he speaks. That being is shrouded in darkness. Unseen and unapproachable, his will is inexorable and his fiat irrevocable; and hence it is that denunciations of the future are so often allied to the sublime. The following examples will explain what we have now stated:

" Rapt into future times, the Bard begun:  
A virgin *shall* conceive,—a virgin bear a son!  
From Jesse's root, behold a branch arise  
Whose sacred flower with fragrance fills the skies.

Th' ætherial spirit o'er its leaves *shall* move,  
And on its top descends the mystic dove.

\* \* \* \* \*

The sick and weak, the healing plant *shall* aid,  
From storms a shelter, and from heat a shade,  
All crimes *shall* cease and ancient fraud *shall* fail;  
Returning Justice lift aloft her scale;  
Peace o'er the world her olive wand extend,  
And white-robed Innocence from heaven descend."

Pope.

The *contingent* future in the *third* person is marked by *will*; but these are, obviously, *necessary* futures, determined by a power known to the Bard, but not described. *Shall* is also understood in many of the lines where the verse prevents its insertion.

Mr. Day puts the following prediction in the mouth of his "Dying Negro:"

"The time *shall* come, the fated hour is nigh,  
When guiltless blood *shall* penetrate the sky.  
Amid these horrors, and involving night,  
Prophetic visions flash before my sight;  
*Eternal Justice* wakes, and in their turn  
The vanquished triumph, and the victors mourn!

\* \* \* \* \*

Then the stern Genius of my native land,  
With *delegated* vengeance in his hand,  
*Shall* raging cross the troubled seas, and pour  
The plagues of Hell on yon devoted shore.

What tides of ruin mark his ruthless way!  
How shriek the Fiends exulting o'er their prey!"

In the preceding lines, the *necessary* futures, expressed by *shall*, are consequent upon the *will* of "Eternal Justice," who holds in her hands the links of a dependent chain. The "Fiends," as executioners, are incited by the "Genius of Africa," who is, himself, only the "delegated" minister of vengeance; and, hence, it is properly said that he "*shall* raging cross the seas,"—not that he *will*; which latter would have been the auxiliary, had the Genius been the *primary* agent in pouring the torrent of desolation.

Past actions are always *necessary*; and we may view an action as past, although, in reality, it is yet indeterminate: in which case, we use *shall* in the third person, as if the *will* of the agents were to have no influence. Thus we may say of a candidate: "If he *shall* be elected, he *will* do his duty to his constituents; that is, "Grant this,—He *shall* be elected," and, this being done, I assert *that*,—"He will do his duty to his constituents." Thus also in Rowe's Lucan:

"Cæsar is all things in himself alone,  
The silent Court is but a looker on;  
With humble votes, obedient they agree,  
To what their mighty Subject *shall* decree:

Whether a King, or God, he *will* be fear'd,  
If royal thrones, or altars, *shall* be rear'd."

The Author of the "Observations on Shall and Will," formerly mentioned, has extracted the following paragraph, from the Spectator, which, he says, points to no "particular time, past, present, or to come."

"There is indeed something very barbarous and inhuman in the ordinary scribblers of lampoons. An innocent young lady *shall* be exposed for an unhappy feature. A father of a family turned to ridicule, for some domestic calamity. A wife be made uneasy all her life, for a misinterpreted word or action. Nay, a good, a temperate and a just man, *shall* be put out of countenance by the representation of these qualities, &c."

These are all *suppositions*, and were we to preface each of them by the words, "Let us suppose that," or others of a similar import, they would be so many *necessary* futures,—necessary in consequence of the *supposition*.

Actions, or results, that are unknown, are equally *contingent*, in the mind of the speaker, whether they are imagined to exist in the *past*, the *present*, or the *future*; and, hence, he often makes use of the same forms of expression. Thus we say of a ship that "she *will have completed*

her voyage before now ;” or, of an absent friend, “ He *will* perhaps, at this moment, *be reading* my letter.” “ You *will have seen* my last publication.” “ You *will*, no doubt, be surprized that I have not written to you.”

We have said that errors in the use of *shall* and *will* are more generally found among the Scotch and Irish ; and, in fact, the influence of early habits is so powerful that their most correct writers have occasional slips of this kind. The following are prominent examples :

“ Without having attended to this, we *will* [shall] be at a loss in understanding several passages of the Classics, which relate to the public speaking, and the theatrical entertainments, of the ancients.” *Blair’s Lectures.*

“ In the Latin language, there are no two words we *would* [should] more readily take to be synonymous, than *amare* and *deligere*.” *Ibid.*

“ This we know well, that, in every period of life, the path of happiness *shall* [will] be found steep and arduous ; but swift and easy the decent to ruin.” *Blair’s Sermons.*

“ If they act well, they know, that in such a parliament, they *will* [shall] be supported against any intrigue ; if they act ill, they know that no intrigue can protect them.” *Burke.*

“ If I draw a catgut, or any other cord, to a



great length between my fingers, I *will* [shall] make it smaller than it was before.”—*Goldsmith*.

There is a species of *future* which we may mention in this place. It links itself more intimately with the present; but, often, leads to expressions that are ungrammatical, and seldom to such as are elegant. It is a sort of translation of the Latin participle *futurus* (*going to be*,) usually rendered by the Gallicism *about to be*;—the notification of what metaphysicians would call an *incipient existence*. “I am *about to marry*” denotes that I am on the *very point* (*àû bout*, French,) of the act of marrying. “I am *going to marry*” asserts that I have proceeded so far on my journey to commit that action. These modifications of the verb may be made through all its tenses, and, thereby, constitute an addition to the forms of Conjugation that are usually exhibited in Grammars. It may be termed the “Immediate Future.” The French have a similar link between the past and the present by means of the verb *venir*, to come, as,—*Je viens de le quitter*, I have just left him; literally “I *come* from quitting him.”

The English conjugation is as follows:

I am *going to marry*,    I am *about to marry*,  
 Thou art *going to marry*,    Thou art *about to marry*,  
 He is *going to marry*,    He is *about to marry*,

We }  
 Ye } are *going* to  
 Or They } marry.  
 &c.

We }  
 Ye } are *about* to  
 They } marry.  
 &c.

It were useless to dwell upon the import of these several phrases. Their meaning will be obvious to an Englishman; and a foreigner, in order to understand them, would require to have them translated into his native tongue.

We noticed, in the outset, the abuse to which these expressions are peculiarly liable. It arises, chiefly, from considering the words *about* and *going* as superfluous, and, in consequence, dismissing them from the sentences to which they necessarily belong. "I am to marry" is neither future nor present. To marry is the name of the action, and we might as well say "I am *marriage*." "I am to be married to-morrow" is a confused junction of the future with the present, and would be much more clearly expressed by the words "I shall be married to-morrow." It may be said that good writers never fall into such mistakes; but the following sentence is evidence to the contrary:

"Of the geneneral characters of style, *I am afterwards* to discourse; but *it* will be necessary to begin with examining the more simple qualities

of *it*; from the assemblage of which, *its* more complex denominations, in a great measure, result." *Blair's Lectures.*

Once for all, we request that the Reader will not accuse us of the futile design to depreciate the merits of the Writers whose mistakes we quote. Those vessels that float unhurt along the stream of time are best fitted to mark the rock to which they have approached too near. Scotticisms are very venial faults in the court of Apollo; and the etiquette, usually observed towards living authors, has alone prevented us from lighting our beacon at a luminary which still gladdens the nation, by continually adding to the stock of its harmless enjoyments.

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## CHAPTER IV.

## OF MOODS.—THE SUBJUNCTIVE.—CONDITIONAL.

The manner in which a state, or action is enunciated is called the **MODE** or **MOOD** of the Verb. Thus, a simple affirmation is termed the **INDICATIVE MOOD**, and a dependent one is the **SUBJUNCTIVE**. If it is in the form of a command, it is the **IMPERATIVE**;—if expressed as a wish, it is the **OPTATIVE**. The verb itself,—the mere name of the state, or act, is the **INFINITIVE MOOD**, which we have already examined. It is, however, only when any mode of expression is represented by a change in the orthography of the verb that it has properly, in a grammatical sense, the name of **Mood**, otherwise the **Moods**, would be as numerous as the passions of the mind. The mood of the speaker's thought is, generally, better indicated by tone and gesture than by any means that written characters can convey.

The **Indicative Mood** is common to all languages. The **Latin** has the **Subjunctive** and **Imperative**, and the **Greek**, in addition, has an **Optative Mood**. The **French**, **Spanish**, **German**, and, we believe, most modern languages, have

also a Subjunctive Mood, under which form other modes of expression are arranged; but the English Verb has no changes of orthography different from the few formerly mentioned; and all the modifications of mind are left to be expressed by the auxiliaries *can, could, may, might, &c.* already explained, Nevertheless, although the principal verb remains unaltered, there are certain arrangements of these auxiliaries which have rendered it a matter of doubt, in attending to the practice of our best writers, whether or not the English tongue possesses a Subjunctive Mood. To have an unsettled Syntax is derogatory to the character of a language; and, as our grammarians have hitherto failed to produce uniformity on this subject, we cannot pass it over without particular notice.

A subjunctive (or subjoined) clause, is the part of a sentence which is dependent on what either precedes, or follows, it. Thus:

“I did these things, that he *might understand* me.”

“I have written him a letter, lest he *should forget.*”

The clauses in these sentences might be reversed:

“That he *might understand* me, I did these things.”

“ Lest he *should forget*, I have written him a letter.”

But, however they may be arranged, the verbs *to understand* and *to forget* would, in some languages, have a different termination from what they have in the Indicative, or *independent*, state; and such termination would incorporate (though imperfectly) the meanings which we have here expressed by the separate words *might* and *should*. We say *imperfectly*, because the Subjunctive affix only denotes *dependency* in general,—the shades of which are distinguished by means of the auxiliaries *might*, *should*, *would*, and *could*.

The Subjunctive Future, of English grammarians, refers solely to contingencies; for it declares that a state, or action, will follow, provided another, which is also named, shall take place. Thus:

“ I shall be glad to see him, if he will call upon me.”

The latter member of this sentence is said to be in the Subjunctive, or **CONDITIONAL MOOD**, because it is on this *subjoined condition* that the prediction “ I shall be glad to see him ” depends. It is not, however, necessary that the condition should be literally *subjoined*; for it may precede, in the present example, with equal propriety, as:

“ If he will call upon me, I shall be glad to see him.”

In languages that have a regular change of termination of the verb, in the several tenses and persons of this mood, words corresponding with *will call* have, as before-mentioned, another form, whereas this does not differ from the Indicative "*You will call;*" but it is a general practice in English to dismiss the Auxiliary from the Subjunctive Verb, leaving the Infinitive only. Thus:

"If he *call* upon me, I shall be glad to see him."

Where no doubt is implied, the Subjunctive form is laid aside, and the sentence is put in the Indicative, as simple declaratory. As:

"When *he calls* on me, I shall be glad to see him."

It is here taken for granted that *he is to call*; and it is at the *when*, or *time*, at which he calls that "I shall be glad to see him." Again:

"When the sky *falls* we shall catch larks," is in the Indicative Mood, and in the present tense; for we transport ourselves, in imagination, to a future period, when the falling of the sky and the catching of the larks will be present and simultaneous actions: but were we to consider the event of this supposed phenomenon to be uncertain the sentence would be Subjunctive. As:

"If the sky *fall* we shall catch larks."

In this case there are two futures: the first

being uncertain, the Infinitive, *to fall*, is written without any preceding auxiliary,—but the latter, though provisional, is a direct assertion, and is, therefore, put in the Indicative, “We *shall* catch.”

“Whether he *run* east or west he will certainly be overtaken.” That is, “Though he *run* east he will be overtaken” and “Though he *run* west he will be overtaken.” The direction in which he *will* run is uncertain, and has, on that account, the Subjunctive form, the Infinitive *run* not being preceded by any other verb. This elision of the auxiliary is not however necessary. It may be inserted if we choose, and the only reason why it is not always so (and it is the case with every elision) is that the idea can be equally well understood without it. The following are examples in both ways:

“If, in some future year, the foe *shall* land  
His hostile legions on Britannia’s strand,  
May she not, then, the alarum sound in vain,  
Nor miss her banish’d thousands from the plain.”

*Hon. H. Erskine.*

“Nor Fame I slight, nor for her favours call;  
She comes unlook’d for, if she *comes* at all.  
But, if the purchase *cost* so dear a price  
As soothing Folly, or exalting Vice;



Oh! if the Muse must flatter lawless sway,  
And follow still where Fortune leads the way;  
Or, if no basis *bear* my rising name,  
But the fallen ruins of another's fame;—  
Then teach me, heaven, to scorn the guilty bays,  
Drive from my breast the wretched lust of praise."

*Pope.*

The first couplet of the latter example is in the Indicative form, because the thought is general, without reference to future time; and, therefore, we have *comes* after the conjunction *if*, although against the Rules of ordinary Grammars.

The difference, then, between the construction of an Indicative and that of a Subjunctive clause, is, that, in the former, the verb must always be preceded by an auxiliary, and that in the latter, the auxiliary [*shall* or *will*] may be inserted or not, as we please: and the sole rule of distinction depends upon the intended meaning of the speaker, as derivable from the general drift of the sentence.

Thus much for the future tense; we shall now inquire, whether, or not, there exists a present tense in the English Subjunctive Mood; and, for this purpose, we shall begin with the verb *To Love*, on which so many changes have been rung through all the languages of Europe. According to Lowth and his followers, the present tense of the Subjunctive is as follows:

*Singular.**Plural.*

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. If I love,         | 1. If we love,        |
| 2. If thou love,      | 2. If ye or you love, |
| 3. If he or she love, | 3. If they love,      |

where (say they) the place of the *if* may be supplied by "*any other conjunction proper for the Subjunctive Mood.*"

We may observe, in the outset, that it is only in the second and third persons singular that this Subjunctive differs from the Indicative "I love, Thou lovest, He loves," &c. Let us then endeavour to form a dependent sentence, in the present tense, so as we may discover in what this difference consists:

"If he *love* her, he should [ought to] marry her."

In this sentence, the verb *love* appears in the Infinitive, and, consequently, as in the case of future subjunctives, an auxiliary may be understood as preceding it. But, the clause being in the present tense, that auxiliary must be the verb, *To do*, and therefore we may complete the sentence thus:

"If he *does love* her, he should marry her."

This, however, brings us back to the Indicative, and we might as well have said,

"If he *loves* her, he should marry her."

Again, "If thine eye *offend* thee pluck it out." That is, if meant to be in the present tense, "If thine eye *does offend* thee, pluck it out;" but as it is here given, it may be altogether future; and (as is probable from the context) may mean generally,

"If thine eye *shall offend* thee, then pluck it out."

The sentence "If thou *love* me, keep my commandments" is liable to the same uncertainty; and, in general, while the Indicative form is clearly expressive of the idea, the elision of the *es*, or *est*, *does*, or *doth*, is almost always productive of ambiguity.

By these and other considerations, we are persuaded that we should never have found a present Subjunctive in our language, had it not arisen from a peculiarity in the conjugation of the Substantive Verb *To be*. The Indicative had at one period a double form, which is thus given by Ben Jonson in his Grammar, published in 1640:

*Present Tense.*

I am	We are	or	I bee	We be
Thou art	Ye are		Thou beest*	Ye be
He is	They are		He beeth*	They be.

\* We may add to this that I bee, Thou bee, and He bee, were also written; although both those singulars had become obsolete in the time of Jonson.

*Past Tense.*

I was      We were   or   I were   We were  
 Thou wast   Ye were      Thou wert   Ye were  
 He was      They were      He were   They were.

Jonson's partiality for the classic tongues is well known,—his "learned sock" is proverbial; and yet, notwithstanding those varieties of the Verb, he never speaks of a Subjunctive Mood: on the contrary, when quoting an example, which we should be apt to consider as a Subjunctive, he resolves it by stating that it contains an Infinitive whose governing verb is understood.

Adelung tells us that the Substantive Verb is regular in the languages of Mexico and Peru. It is seldom so in other tongues. The Saxons (for they were different tribes) had two Infinitives, *beon* and *wesan*; and the modern English appears to be a mixture of these with some other Conjugations. *Be* and *been* are from the first; *was* and *wast* belong to the second; *wert* and *were* seem more allied to the Danish *være*; while *am*, *art*, *is*, and *are*, would claim a different origin. Dr. Wallis, whose "*Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae*" was first printed in 1653, differs little from Jonson. "This verb," says he, "is sufficiently anomalous, and has in fact a double form.

In the present,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{am, art, is,} \text{---plural } \textit{are.} \\ \textit{be, be'st be,} \text{---plural } \textit{be.} \end{array} \right.$

In the Preterite { *wast, wast, was*,—plural *were*.  
 Imperfect. { *were, wert, were*,—plural *were*.

“The first form, as well in the present as in the preterite, is chiefly used wherever the Latins would put the Indicative Mood;—the second, almost always in other cases.” Here we discover the earliest dawnings of a Subjunctive; for it was then not only unstable in its usage, but had not even acquired the name.

Having, accidentally, got two Indicative forms of the Verb *To Be*, Grammarians, when language came to be more critically investigated, endeavoured to discriminate between them; and (as is practised with all words that are originally synonymous) they wished to assign to each its peculiar province. Hence arose the imperfect attempts at a present Subjunctive; we say *imperfect*, because there is no case in which the Indicative form would be ungrammatical. Besides, such phrases as, “If I *be*,” “If thou *be*,” “If I *love*,” “If thou *love*,” &c. are perpetually in danger of being mistaken for futures, where the words *be*, *love*, &c. are undoubtedly Infinitives. On the other hand, if the word *be* is merely considered as a substitute for *am*, *art*, *is*, and *are*, it ceases to be a Subjunctive.

The translators of the authorized version of

the Bible have tended, by their example, to continue this use of *be* in the present tense :

“ If thou *be* the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”

If, (as we shall afterwards find) is equivalent to *give*, *allow*, or *grant*; and, supplying the necessary auxiliaries, we shall have,

“ Granting that thou *shouldst be* the Son of God, command that these stones *shall be* made bread.”

Turn it as we will, there appears a kind of *obscure future* in the first *be*, unless we understand it as synonymous with *art*. In this latter case the sentence would be clear, and so it ought to have been written even as an accurate translation: for the corresponding Greek verb is in the Indicative Mood, and is so rendered by Wiclif:

“ Yf thou *art* goddis son seye that these stones *be* maad looves.”

The use of *be* in the present tense, throughout the Scriptures, is extremely irregular: being in many cases, a present Indicative common to all the persons singular and plural, and in others a pure Infinitive, an auxiliary verb being understood. The following examples are taken from the Book of Job:

“ There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary *be* [are] at rest.”

“ Call now, if there *be* [are] any that will answer thee.”

“ If I *be* [am] wicked, why then labour I in vain ?”

“ And if it *be* [is] not so now, who will make me a liar ?”

“ If his children [shall ?] *be* multiplied, *it is* for the sword.”

“ If thou *sinnest*, what *doest* thou against him ? or if thy transgressions *be* multiplied, what *doest* thou unto him ? If thou *be* righteous, what *givest* thou him ? or what *receiveth* he of thine hand ?”

The last example is rather confused, according to our present ideas of moods and tenses: and the following, written by one who made language his particular study seems also liable to objection:

“ But I must observe, in the next place, that, although this part of stile *merit* attention, and *be* a very proper object of science and rule; although much of the beauty of composition *depends* on Figurative Language; yet we must beware of imagining that it *depends* solely, or even chiefly, upon such language.”

We come now to what is termed the past tense of the Subjunctive Mood, because it is formed by means of the past tenses of the Auxiliary Verbs.

As in the preceding case, the Verb *to be* performs a principal part; and, having also two sets of the singular, in the past tense, one of these is exclusively appropriated to the Indicative, and the other to those Conditional phrases of which we are about to speak.

I *was*, Thou *wast* or *wert*; and He, She, or It *was*, are then Indicatives; and I *were*, Thou *wert*, and He, She, or It *were*, are Conditionals, or (as they are usually called) Subjunctives. In the other verbs there is no such distinction.

In *future* Contingencies we suppose that a State, or Action, shall exist; and on that supposition, predict another State, or Action, as a Consequence.

In *present* Contingencies we predict, or assert, a Consequence of a State, or Action, which may be now in existence.

In *past* Contingencies (if the phrase is not a contradiction in terms) we imagine a State, or Action, which *might* have been; and then assert another State, or Action, which, we say, *would have followed*, as a consequence, had our previous supposition existed. Thus in the following,

“If I *had taken* his advice, I *should have been wiser*,” though both parts of the sentence are in the past tense, the one is the consequence of the other. The introductory conjunction is not re-



quisite in such sentences; for that now given would have been as intelligibly and perhaps more elegantly written thus,

“ *Had* I taken his advice, I should have been wiser.”

Again:

“ *Could* I have foreseen what was to happen, I *might* (or *should*) have been better prepared.”

This is in the Subjunctive form, but were we to say,

“ *I could* not foresee what was to happen, and therefore *I was* not sufficiently prepared,” we should have had the same thought in the Indicative.

When treating of the Auxiliary Verbs, we mentioned that *Could* and *Might*, the past tenses of *Can* and *May*, have the effect of Conditionals. *Should* and *Would*, the ancient past tenses of *Shall* and *Will*, are also *Conditionals*. The following investigation will show how they all become so.

It is to be observed that neither of the words *could*, *might*, *should*, or *would*, express a *past action*. They merely denote a *state of the mind* of the agent at some past period. He was *able*, he had *power*, he was *obligated*, or, he was *willing* to act as the conjoined Verb specified; and why did he not do so? The reason is to be found either in

the preceding, or the succeeding part of the sentence.

" I <i>could</i> have done it,	} had I not been prevented."
" I <i>might</i> have done it,	
" I <i>should</i> have done it,	
" I <i>would</i> have done it,	

Or, transposing the clauses,

" Had I not been prevented, I *could*, *might*, *should*, or *would* have done it.

Nevertheless, these sentences are all in the Indicative Mood. They are declarations of things that are past. They are four plain and independent assertions: The *state* of mind, and the *action* of hindrance are both determined.

" I <i>was able</i> to have done it,	} but I was prevented."
" I <i>had it in my power</i> to have done it,	
" I <i>was obligated</i> to have done it,	
" I <i>was willing</i> to have done it,	

Could, might, should, and would are then Conditionals from their significations alone, and Conditionals are much akin to Subjunctives; but it is only when the dependent clause of a sentence is necessarily expressed by forms of the Verbs, different from what are used in the Indicative, that it constitutes a different Mood. This is the case in many other tongues, but there is no choice in English; because there is no

double Conjugation in the language, except in the verb *to be*. The past tense of the Subjunctive must, therefore, rest altogether on the distinction between *was* and *were*, in the first and third persons singular, where alone they are distinguished; for, in the second person, "Thou wert" is as generally employed in the Indicative as "Thou wast," and is daily becoming more so. The second person with *thou*, is almost wholly in the hands of the poets; and "thou wast" has rather an inharmonious sound. Pope and Addison wrote "thou wert;" and Milton and Dryden used the words indifferently. Wert, in the Indicative, has also the authority of Dr. Johnson, which, if not great among grammarians, is powerful among the people. "I were," and "She, He, or It were," are then the only past tenses in the English language that can be distinguished from the Indicative; but these materials, scanty as they are, might be formed into a separate mood; and the question is, has such a mood been generally recognized by good writers, or is it merely a manufacture of the Grammarians of modern times?

We believe that the two conjugations of the Substantive Verb have long tempted classical scholars to separate them into Indicative and Subjunctive Moods; but the practice, both in

spoken and written language, has been against this distinction; so that phrases really subjunctive strike the reader as uncommon, and appear either as the composition of a pedant, or of one whose knowledge of English has been gathered from grammars rather than from general reading. Indeed, our most approved authors have, in this respect, violated every rule now laid down for the instruction of youth. It is to the translators of the authorized version of the Bible that we have chiefly to attribute the anxiety to encumber our language with moods. In the modern translations from the French, we observe numerous idioms which we term Gallicisms; and the Bible abounds, in a similar manner, with Latinisms and Græcisms. It is almost exclusively in the Scriptures that we have to look for examples of the Subjunctive; and most of those are plainly erroneous if tried by any modern rule. Besides, they are so contradictory, that, were we to manufacture a Grammar from that translation alone, as has been done in the Gothic from the mutilated Gospels of Ulphilas, we should strive in vain to discover a regular Subjunctive.

Lowth, whose Grammar has been plundered without being improved by many of his successors, seems to have been very doubtful concerning this mood. He cites several examples, most of

which, he acknowledges, would have been better put in the Indicative. From the few to which he does not himself object we extract the following :

“ Whether it *were* I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.” 1 Cor. xv. 11. -

Here the word *were* is certainly not in the Indicative form; but, arranged as the sentence is, how could *was* have been substituted? Two pronouns (I and they) the one singular and the other plural, are referred separately, by means of the distributive *whether*, to the same verb, *were*, and there was no escape from the blundering construction, but by violating one of the best acknowledged rules of Grammar.

It would seem, from other quotations given by the Doctor, that “He *were*” and “He *was*” had once been written indifferently, and that they were merely duplicates of the past Indicative. Thus :

“ Though he *were* a Son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered.” Heb. v. 8.

“ Though he *was* rich, yet for your sakes he became poor.” 2 Cor. viii. 9.

If then *were*, in the first and third persons singular, is not a Subjunctive, it may be asked, why has it retained its place in the language? We answer that it has another usage, which is very general, but has been less investigated.

## OF CONDITIONAL CLAUSES.

It must have been observed that Conditional sentences are often prefaced by *if*, or *though*, which in grammars are usually noted as signs (if not the governing causes) of the Subjunctive. These words are placed in the list of Conjunctions; and, however obvious it may now appear, we believe that Mr. Tooke was the first to discover that they were Verbs.

*If* is the imperative of the Saxon *gifan*, to give, grant, or allow, and has come down through the stages of *gef*, *yef*, and *yf*. The Scotch is *gif*, and in some counties *gin*, with the hard *g*: the former is *give* and the latter *gi'en*, a contraction of *given*. "If it exist" is then equivalent to "Give, grant, or allow, that the thing does exist."

*THOUGH* (the Scotch guttural *thoch*, sometimes pronounced *thof*) is the imperative of the Saxon *thafian*, to allow, grant, or permit. *ALTHOUGH* is granting *all*;—the *whole* of what we speak.

*If* and *though* have, therefore, similar origins, and are generally confounded; but a distinction is preserved among accurate writers. "*If* he do" is *granting* that he shall do." *Though* he do" is "*notwithstanding* he should do." In the former case I shall act *because* something is done; in the latter, *without regard* to, or even *in opposi-*

*tion* to, that doing. "I will do so *if* you oppose me" means that I will do so, *only* if you shall object. "I will do so *though* you oppose me," is I will do it *in spite* of your opposition.

There is a peculiar usage of the past tense to which *If*, or *Though*, is often prefixed that, in the hands of some grammarians, might be raised to the dignity of a mood. This usage is generally applied to Conditional sentences, and, in so far is similar to the Conditional tenses of the French; but it includes other applications which those tenses are not accustomed to designate. The English past tense is imperfect and merely marks continued state or action, without any other regard to *time* than that it should be previous to any other time of which we may speak. "I had" affirms that I was in possession of the thing spoken of at a certain time now past. "If I had" is a conditional, and leaves us to guess what *did* or *would* happen in consequence of that supposition's being granted, or allowed. "If I had struck him, I could not have been blamed, considering the provocation," is a conditional phrase in the past tense. "If I had money I would pay my debts" is a present Conditional; but the times of the two verbs are successive, the *wish* to pay being subsequent to the *having* of the money. "If I had had the money I would

have paid my debts" carries the condition back to a time that does not now exist. "If I durst speak, I could unfold a tale," and "If I durst have spoken I could have unfolded a tale," are similar examples. Allow, grant, or any other request or command of a similar signification, may take place of the *though* or *if*, and even all of them may be dispensed with by placing the verb before its nominative, that is, in the *Imperative* form, the ordinary way in which a command, or request, is written. Thus: "Had he the money he would pay his debts." "Did you behave as you ought no one would complain." Although hypothetical sentences are usually formed by means of the auxiliary verbs, they are not necessarily so. The past tense of other verbs may be transposed into a present without such assistance. Thus: "If he loved me as much as I do him we might both be happier than we are." "If he had loved me he would not have deserted me."—"Though he used me ill I did not complain." "Though he used me ill I would not complain." The latter sentence might be as well, or perhaps better, expressed by "Though he *were* to use me ill I would not complain;" and we shall find that *were* often produces an elegant variety in English composition. It is this form only of the past tense which is employed when the Substantive Verb is necessary to produce



*present* Conditionals. Thus: "*Were* he to reflect upon his own faults, he would not be so ready to quarrel with those of his neighbours." Here *were* is certainly the past tense, and yet the action is still unexerted. In the language of the schoolmen, we foresee the future without determining its accomplishment.

Comparative states of existence are expressed in the same manner as Conditionals. The past tenses of the Auxiliary Verbs are likewise rendered present, or predictive of the future; because such comparisons naturally include the idea of succession, although the latter may not depend upon what precedes. "I would *rather* go to Paris *than* to Amsterdam" intimates that of the two journeys I choose the former in the first instance, and the latter afterwards, if I must perform both. Milton's Satan thought it "*better* to reign in hell *than* serve in heaven;" that is, of the two states, which are both placed before us in imagination, he preferred the former. The import of the word *than* (or *then*) will be more clearly elucidated when we speak of the other Adverbs. The following are additional examples of the comparison of verbal clauses:

"He *would* sooner have died than have consented;" that is, it *was* his determination.

"He *would* sooner die than consent;" that is, it *is* his determination.

“ He *will* sooner die than consent;” that is, it is his *known* determination.

“ He *should* rather have died than have consented;” that is, he *ought* rather to have died.

“ He *should* rather die than consent;” that is, he *ought* rather to die.

*Should* and *would* are, more than *shall* and *will*, confined to their original associations of compulsion and desire; because the latter are more frequently employed in the expression of contingent futures. The past tense, *were*, of the Substantive Verb is free from this embarrassment of referring to either to necessary or to voluntary actions, and often expresses contingencies with an elegant discrimination. In so far it evinces its relationship to the Saxon *weorthan* and the German *werden*, to become. The nearly obsolete Interjectional phrase “*Woe WORTH thee*,” (may evil *be* to thee, or betide thee,) which is still common in the North, is another remnant of the Saxon Verb. *Were*, in the following examples, is generally resolvable by *would be* or *should be*, but unrestrained by the peculiar characteristics of the *would* and *should*.

“ To mention more *were* but to perplex the reader.” *Ben Jonson*.

“ To admit it for moment *were* to erect this

power, useful at home, into a legislature to govern mankind." *Burke.*

"It *were better* for him that a milstone *were* hanged about his neck and he cast into the sea than that *he should* offend one of these little ones." Luke, xvii. 2.

"Yet soon enforced to fly  
Thence into Egypt, till the murderous king  
*Were dead*, who sought his life."

*Milton.*

"*Were* it not *better* done, as others use,  
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,  
Or with the tangles of *Næra's* hair."

*Ibid.*

"I am not mad, I would to heaven I *were*,  
For then 'tis like I should forget my selfe :

\* \* \* \*

If I *were* mad, I should forget my sonne,  
Or madly thinke a babe of clowts *were* he."

*Shakspeare.*

From the preceding remarks, it appears that English Verbs have no change of form by which to express any variation of Moods. In their simple state, they are all Indicative (or direct) assertions; and phrases become Imperative, Subjunctive, Potential, &c. in consequence of the arrangement and modification of the principal

Verb in its junction with other words: and, particularly, with the Auxiliaries which are tied to the Verb in the Conjugations of other tongues.

There is one general Rule with respect to these arrangements. When the phrase is a direct assertion, the Nominative precedes; and in other cases it either follows the Verb, or is understood. Thus in the Imperative we say 'Go home,' 'Bear thou with him,' 'Let him go,' &c. Those are, in fact, imperfect sentences, where the words 'I command,' 'I order,' 'I desire,' or some similar Verb is understood to precede, and which, if prefixed, would transpose them into the Indicative Mood. 'I command you to go home,' 'I request that thou wilt bear with him,' and 'I desire you to let him go,' are Imperatives in meaning but Indicatives in form. On further analysis it will appear that, in Imperative sentences, the Verb is always in the Infinitive, to which the auxiliary *Do* is either prefixed, or understood. The person is called upon *to do* the act, and is not in that state which can be recognized as an agent, or Nominative to the Verb, because the time for exertion is not yet come: the Noun is in the Vocative. The Imperatives of the Grammars, 'Love thou,' or 'Do thou love,' are, therefore, equivalent to 'O thou, do love!' 'I wish—I command you, *to love*.' The arrange-

ment of the English language, however, even in its simple phrases, is too arbitrary to be comprehended under any fixed Rule. It refuses restraint; and, provided the meaning of the sentence be preserved, the words may follow one another in any order that is most agreeable to the writer.

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## CHAPTER V.

## ON PUNCTUATION.

The great advantages of spoken over written language are the accompaniments of tone and gesture:—advantages that are but poorly supplied by means of points and accents. The early alphabets of nations had only one set of characters; and the manuscripts of the fourth and fifth centuries are written in large letters, similar to those on medals and inscriptions, without points, aspirates, or accents; and even without any division between the words. The latter circumstance would appear, to us, to have rendered the writings almost unintelligible. To be sure, speech itself proceeds in an uninterrupted flow; but then the speaker, by the modulation of his voice, produces that variety of accent which is still more observable by the ear, than the separation of the words is distinguishable by the eye. In the early days of Greece, (and, indeed, of most nations,) every composition was chaunted, or sung. Rhythm was the soul of their language; and their letters and words, though linked toge-

ther in appearance, would have been, in some degree, divided: in the same manner as we should be able to distinguish the versification of Milton, although printed in succession without separating the lines. Even now (and we may say the same of every Alphabetical tongue) the words of the Greek language are yet in many cases conjoined; for its compounds are extremely numerous.

The English seems, for a century past, to have been retrograding in this respect, seeing that we have now many compounds which were formerly separate words: such as himself, for him self; cannot for can not; farewell for fare well; nevertheless for ne ever the less, &c. The process is easy, and the manufacture is still going on. For example, the words *well* and *bred*, which signify 'properly educated,' were found to occur very frequently together; especially after their meaning was limited to that sort of education which teaches the common courtesies of social life, and hence became equally applicable to a gentleman, a lady, or a lap dog. This frequent occurrence was observed by the printer. These words had become a sort of compound adjective; and he, at first, ventured to conjoin them by a hyphen, (well-bred,) and, after a time, the hyphen was withdrawn. Such compounds are, generally,

still separable, and, in that case, present shades of distinction. 'He was bred well' alludes to the mode of training; 'He was wellbred' signifies that he behaved properly at some past period. Almost all the compounds of old English monosyllables may be so separated, but this is not the place for that sort of investigation.

In the seventh century, when small letters were first introduced, the transcribers of manuscripts no longer employed the *uncial*, or large letters, except in an ornamental form: in Titles and at the *Heads*, or chief divisions of works. It was hence that they received the name of CAPITALS, from the Latin *caput*, the head. Our present practice is to put a *small* capital at the beginning of every sentence, and also of every proper name, whether of persons or of things, in contradistinction to general denominations. Thus we write, 'the man,' 'the city,' 'the river,' 'the mountain,' &c. with a small letter; but 'John,' 'London,' 'the Thames,' 'the Appenines,' &c. require an initial capital. Adjectives, derived from proper names, are included in the same rule, as 'Johnsonian,' 'Oxonian,' 'Pyrenean,' 'English,' &c. The pronoun I, the interjection O, (or Oh), and the first letter of every line in verse, are also written in Capitals; and we may



add to these, the initial of any word which we chuse particularly to distinguish.

The usage of Capitals, as above mentioned, is but of modern date; for many of our early printed works have not a single Capital except at the beginning of a new subject. At the close of the sixteenth century, when the Old English, or Black Letter, was superseded by the Roman Character, the capitals were employed almost exactly as they are now; but, before the middle of the seventeenth century, almost every noun, whether substantive or adjective, received this initial mark of distinction. The following from "*Holder's Elements of Speech*," printed in 1669, will serve as an example.

"*Language* is a Connexion of Audible signes, the most apt and excellent in whole nature for Communication of our Thoughts and Notions by Speaking. *Written Language* is a description of the said Audible Signes, by Signes Visible. The *Elements* of Language are Letters, viz. Simple discriminations of Breath or Voice, Articulated by the Organs of Speech."

This confused intermixture of Capitals and Italics was meant, at that period, to suggest the emphasis, or energy, with which the words should be spoken; but the plan proved abortive,

and has been abandoned for the last hundred years. The Germans uniformly print every substantive with a capital, a practice which, in that language, is almost indispensable, in order to distinguish between their verbs and their nouns.

In modern printing, a discourse is divided into heads, by which the uniformity of the lines is broken off, and a new line begun, preceded by a short blank. These divisions are termed **PARAGRAPHS**. In the early stage of the art, there were no such divisions; for the lines ran on, in an uniform length, until the discourse was closed. It was, however, found convenient to point out the several heads of the general subject; and this was done by inserting a mark (§) at each division. These scattered black patches having a disagreeable appearance in the body of the reading, they were afterwards transferred to the margin, (where they may yet be seen in our Bibles,) and received the Greek name, **PARAGRAPHS**, signifying *side writings*. Marginal Notes were, at one period, very general, especially as Glosses on the classics, and were, sometimes, so numerous as to fill three-fourths of a page. When they were few, they were occasionally indented in the side, or placed within **BRACKETS**, [ ], in the body of the text. Brackets are yet in

use, generally for the purpose of inclosing a Note of reference.

PARENTHESES, ( ), are employed to include a portion of a sentence which is too directly connected with the whole to be thrown into a separate note; and, at the same time, if not so confined, might tend to embarrass the construction.

The Note of INTERROGATION (?) is an old-fashioned Q, for *question*; in the same way that the Latin Et (and) has been converted into &. In the present form of the Roman character, these contractions are not obvious; but in the old Italic capitals, the similarity of the ? to the Q and that of the & to the *Et* were sufficiently apparent. It has often been suggested that the Notes of Interrogation, and of EXCLAMATION (!), (as well as one for IRONY which is wanting), ought to be placed at the beginning rather than at the end of a sentence. In catechisms the Q precedes.

The lengths of the several pauses indicated by the COMMA (,), SEMICOLON (;), COLON (:), and PERIOD (.), are treated of in every Grammar; and, although authors differ on the subject, we shall not enter into the dispute; for it is only their use, in marking the subdivisions of a paragraph, with which we are here concerned. In a general view, the Period separates the Paragraph

into Sentences; the Semicolon divides a compound sentence into simple ones; and the Comma collects, into clauses, the scattered circumstances of manner, time, place, relation, &c. belonging to every verb and to every noun. When something explanatory, or illustrative, is added to a sentence, the construction of which was previously complete, the addition is preceded by a Colon. A few examples of accurate punctuation will be preferable to a multitude of Rules and Exceptions:

“ Didactic works are, in general, either too laconic for the ignorant, or too garrulous for the learned; and it is, probably, impossible to satisfy both classes of readers, in the same production.”

This sentence is divided into two portions (by a semicolon) which are reunited by the conjunction *and*. The former part gives us the choice of two assertions:

‘ Didactic works are too laconic for the ignorant,’—and

‘ Didactic works are too garrulous for the learned.’

Each of these is modified by the words, “ in general,” which are, therefore, placed between commas. The latter part of the sentence asserts that, “ it is, *probably*, impossible to satisfy both classes of readers, *in the same production.*” The

clauses "probably" and "in the same production," limit the general assertion, which might, otherwise, be false, or doubtful.

"At this man's table I enjoyed many chearful and instructive hours, with companions such as are not often found; with one who has lengthened, and one who has gladdened life; with Dr. James, whose skill in physick will be long remembered; and with David Garrick, whom I hoped to have gratified with this character of our common friend: but what are the hopes of man! I am disappointed by that stroke of death, which has eclipsed the gaiety of nations, and impoverished the stock of harmless pleasure."

The skeleton of the preceding paragraph is, merely, "I dined at this man's table with Dr. James and David Garrick;" but the structure is completed by the ideas which that remembrance suggests. Every portion of a sentence that can be transferred to another place, without injury to the construction, may be considered as a clause and marked off by points accordingly; but this is not always done, for the best writers often unite two or more clauses to avoid what is termed 'too close pointing.' In the preceding example, the first clause may be divided into two, by placing a comma after the word 'table;' and we might, therefore, write,

‘At this man’s table, I enjoyed many chearful and instructive hours,’ &c.

‘I enjoyed many chearful and instructive hours, at this man’s table,’ &c. Or,

‘I enjoyed, at this man’s table, many chearful and instructive hours,’ &c.

It is not pretended that either of these transmutations would improve the style, (for who will pretend to polish the periods of Dr. Johnson?) but the observation is equally applicable to examples of a less perfect kind.

The **BREAK** (—) is a mark of recent introduction, and is now, perhaps, often used unnecessarily. It intimates an unexpected interruption to the flow of thought, whether from extraneous circumstances, or a change of mind. Goldsmith’s “Gift to Iris” is a playful example: the following, is in a different strain.

“Sweet bud of Spring! how frail thy transient bloom;

“Fine film,” she cried, “of nature’s fairest loom!

“Soon beauty fades upon its damask throne!”—

Unconscious of the worm that mined her own!

—Pale are those lips where soft caresses hung,

Wan the warm cheek, and mute the tender tongue;

Cold rests that feeling heart on Derwent’s shore,

And those love-lighted eyeballs roll no more!”

The **DASH** (——,) because it is also a line, is sometimes confounded with the Break. It

denotes the omission of a word, or part of a word; and, instead of being always a straight line, is occasionally made up of **ASTERISKS** ( \* \* \* \* ); as if filling the place of the suppressed letters. These marks are seldom, if ever, seen in respectable Composition: they are meant to insinuate what the author is either afraid or ashamed to write.

There are other marks, such as the **HYPHEN**; the **APOSTROPHE**; the **CARET**; the **ACCENT**, &c. but these are the province of the printer rather than of the author; and, besides, are explained sufficiently in every Spelling Book.

Next to the separation of the words themselves, nothing is so necessary to fix the signification of a passage as punctuation; and, notwithstanding, there is no part of composition so shamefully neglected. Few, even among professed authors, pay any attention to the subject, but send their manuscripts to the press, without comma or semicolon, leaving those little matters to the judgment of the compositor. Yet, the misplacing of a single comma is often fatal to the intended meaning of the sentence; and, if it is not nonsense already, it has every chance of becoming so. The late Mr. Sharpe committed a strange blunder of this kind, when he wrote the following under the likeness of his patron saint:

“ Believing Richard Brothers to be a prophet sent, by God I have engraved his portrait.”

Had he removed the comma two words forward, the assertion would have been different. Literary men are well aware of the ambiguities in the text of ancient authors, arising from this source; and Dr. Hunter's famous Editions of the Latin Classics, owe the greatest part of their merit to his corrections of punctuation.

Let us suppose that Thomson had been indolent enough to have sent his verses to the printer without points. We shall suppose, too, that the printers of those days were as capable of distinguishing the members of a sentence as they are now; and, with these qualifications, we will imagine the reader of proofs set down to his task, and endeavouring to scan the following lines:

“ Come gentle spring ethereal mildness come  
And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud  
While music wakes around veil'd in a shower  
Of shadowing roses on our plains descend.”

The first hesitation will be, whether ‘spring’ and ‘mildness’ are the same, or two different personifications; but this knot can be cut, if it cannot be untied; for the verb ‘come,’ will



apply in either case. 'Ethereal,' too, as far as construction is concerned, may be either an epithet of 'spring,' or of 'mildness;' but he will probably discover that 'ethereal mildness' is equivalent to a 'mild æther,' or, otherwise, a 'soft atmosphere.' His next doubt, if he be wise enough to doubt, will be—who it is that is "veil'd in a shower of shadowing roses." To be sure 'spring,' as well as 'mildness,' is requested to come "from the bosom of a *dropping* cloud,"—but neither of them require a "Veil;" whereas, Music is always "veil'd,"—she is heard, but never seen. The *Revise* is sent to be wrought off in the following plausible form:

"Come, gentle Spring, ethereal Mildness come,  
And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,  
While Music wakes around veil'd in a shower  
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend."

But the author meant otherwise, and by merely shifting the place of a comma, and changing two of the capitals into small letters, he made "Spring" the sole personage in his picture:

"Come, gentle Spring, ethereal mildness, come,  
And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,  
While music wakes around, veil'd in a shower  
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend."

If a sentence is well arranged, and properly punctuated, there is no clause which may not be removed without affecting its construction. To satisfy ourselves of the accuracy of the Rule, we shall try the following by this criterion:

“On the fifth day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always keep holy, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hills of Bagdad, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer.”

Here we may dismiss clause after clause, and still something like construction will remain. Taking out the second clause, we read:—

“On the fifth day of the moon,——which I always keep holy, &c.”

Take away the third, and we have,

“On the fifth day of the moon,——after having washed myself, &c.”

Dismiss a fourth clause and the edifice is stript bare; there remaining only the mere timbers of the building: the use, for which it was intended, is no longer expressed:—

“On the fifth day of the moon,——I ascended the high hills of Bagdad,——in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer.”

The conclusion states the purpose of the action.

There now only remain three clauses which, though they do not express all the ideas of the general sentence, still retain the form of grammatical construction.

- 1 "On the fifth day of the moon,
- 2 I ascended the high hills of Bagdad,
- 3 In order to pass *the rest of* the day in meditation and prayer."

The Italics, in the last division, are *relatives*, referring to the *morning meditations*." Relatives and Conjunctions have no part in the analysis of construction,—they are the pegs and joints that keep the clauses in combination. It will be found, on trial, that these three remaining members of the original sentence may be arranged six different ways with equal perspicuity. They have only to be written down, according to their numbers, in the following order: 1, 2 & 3; 1, 3 & 2; 2, 1 & 3; 2, 3 & 1; 3, 1 & 2 and 3, 2 & 1.

We are well aware that every sentence cannot be thus anatomized; for every writer is not an Addison. Regularity in language is consonant with regularity of thought. If the ideas be confused, the sentence will be equally so. If there be no ideas the words will be unmeaning. If it be asked how words can be written without being preceded by ideas; we will answer by another question: How can Parrots be taught to speak?

The truth is that the minds of the great mass of writers are not stored with ideas, but with phrases; and these, right or wrong, sense or nonsense, are written down in succession; and, with a due intermixture of points, are formed into the shape of sentences. The order of that succession of phrases has nothing to do with judgment: they follow one another as incongruously as the phantoms of a dream.

Legal Deeds, in this country, are written wholly without points, and this, say the conveyancers, accounts for the tautologies with which they abound. There are other writings, too, in which punctuation may be dispensed with: where the meaning is unintelligible, we gain no advantage by dividing it into portions. Besides, whether it arises from that whirlpool of the mind which "blunders round about a meaning," or is the consequence of the total want of the "Organ of Constructiveness" in the pericranium, we shall not determine; but there are sentences which are not absolute nonsense, and yet place all the Rules of Punctuation at defiance.

The following is from the Preface to a recently published English Grammar; and, as the author seems neither deficient in industry nor in judgment, he will probably improve the arrangement in a subsequent Edition:

“ An early predilection for grammatical studies having led me, to pay particular attention to the subject, during a course of multifarious reading for many years, in which I noted down for my own use many particulars that occurred to me; I had long been dissatisfied with every grammar of the English language, that came in my way, and still continued so; when I was induced to avail myself of the materials I had collected, and employ them in an attempt to supply the deficiencies I had observed and regretted.”

Having ventured so far with this Gentleman, we shall make no apology for extracting an example which he has, himself, given of faulty punctuation in another writer.

“ The following might seem a caricature, drawn purposely to ridicule the practice, did I not quote the work.

“ Here, the malignant huntress, sought repose,  
 And stretch'd supine, beneath a clust'ring rose;  
 A deeper blush, the clust'ring flow'rs pervade,  
 Compell'd, to yield reluctantly, their shade.  
 When vice, approaches, bashful virtue, bleeds;  
 Who sees the metaphor, the moral reads.  
 Say on, my muse, account for this disgust;  
 Declare, who foster'd it, by whom, 'twas nurst?

\* \* \* \* \*

Perfidious fate! to lead her steps, that way,  
 At such, an hour! ah! black, disastrous, day!

At thy, return, shall virgin's eyes, run o'er,  
Maids, shun the danger, you with tears, deplore !  
*Mrs. Gunning, Virginus and Virginia.*"

Whoever proposes to instruct others takes it for granted that he, himself, is acquainted with the subject which he professes to teach; and, therefore, we trust that we shall not be reckoned too presumptuous, for closing this chapter in the words of the author of a work, on "*the craft of poynting*," printed three hundred years ago :

"¶ Sethyn we (as we wolde to god euery precher wolde do) haue kept owre rulis, bothe in owre englisshe and latyn, what nede we, sethyn owre own be sufficient ynoch, to put any other exemplis."

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## CHAPTER VI.

OF THE CONSTRUCTION, OR ARRANGEMENT,  
OF SENTENCES.

Hitherto we have been employed about the choice of words; we now come to what is more properly termed Construction,—the arrangement of those words into sentences. A *simple sentence* (Latin *sententia*, from *sentire*, to feel, or think,) is an indication of a detached feeling of the mind, or of a single action, which, in grammar, is expressed by two or more words. Thus, ‘I think,’ ‘I stand,’ ‘I am beloved,’ ‘He will walk,’ &c. are simple sentences. There are then two words indispensable in an assertion,—a Noun (or a Pronoun) and a Verb; and if the Verb be transitive, there must be three,—the *Nominative*, or Agent; the *Verb*; and its *Accusative*, or Object. Thus, ‘Peter loves Mary,’ in which *Peter* is the Nominative, *loves* the Verb, and *Mary* is the Accusative, or Object of the love.

In some languages the accusative has a different termination to distinguish it from the nominative; as in the Latin ‘*Petrus amat Mariam*,’ Peter loves Mary; or ‘*Maria amat Petrum*,’ Mary

loves Peter. *Petrus* and *Maria* are nominatives, and *Petrum* and *Mariam* are accusatives. In that language, the arrangement of the three words is of no consequence to the sense, the agent and object being known from their terminations. Thus, whether we write

*Petrus amat Mariam, Mariam Petrus amat, Petrus Mariam amat, Amat Petrus Mariam, or, Mariam amat Petrus, Amat Mariam Petrus,* the meaning, 'Peter loves Mary' would be still equally well understood; but whether or not they would have been all equally agreeable to a Roman ear we cannot now determine. Cicero writes indifferently, "*Accepi litteras tuas; Tuas accepi litteras,*" and *Litteras accepi tuas,*" "I have received your letter." In English, the circumstance of *Peter* being placed before and *Mary* after the verb *loves* is the only means of distinguishing the *lover* from the *beloved*. The cases of the Pronouns enable us to give some variety to our arrangements; for instance we may say, with equal propriety, 'Mary loves him,' or, 'Him Mary loves:' the one is the language of prose and the other of verse. We should not, however, venture the counterpart 'Her Peter loves;' because, the pronoun *her* being a Genitive as well as an Accusative, the phrase would be ambiguous. It asserts that *Her* Peter is *in love*, but does not fix



the *object*: he may love *another*. ‘Peter loves her,’ is definite; but add the word *sister* and the word *her* becomes again a Genitive.

For the sake of perspicuity, we have generalized the preceding examples; but the ‘simple sentence’ is not necessarily confined to two, or to three, words. The Nominative and the Accusative (or Objective) may have each their qualities, designated by Adjectives; and the Verb its modifications, denoted by Auxiliaries and Adverbs. For example:

‘*The rich farmer Peter passionately loves the beautiful shepherdess Mary.*’

Here we have ten words instead of the three, (‘Peter loves Mary’): but it is, nevertheless, still a simple sentence. It has only one agent, one verb, and one object.

In the preceding arrangement Peter is the first and prominent figure on the canvas; but we may transfer this place to Mary, by putting the sentence in the passive voice, thus, ‘Mary is loved by Peter.’ Mary is still the object of the active verb *to love*, but she is the nominative to the verb *is*, which declares the *state of being loved*, in which she is placed,—by Peter. Peter is the *cause* of that *state*; and, in the Latin language, *Petrus*, instead of being distinguished solely by a preposition, as in the English *by*, would have a change

of orthography and be written, in the ablative case, *Petro*. That case does not belong to English Nouns, but were we to use the Pronoun, we should say, 'Mary is loved by *him*.'

The different forms of Construction which depend on the power of varying the arrangement have a material effect upon the precision and harmony of the expression; and, in this respect, the learned languages possessed an evident superiority. The ties that bound the Noun to its cases, and the Verb to its moods and tenses, facilitated the transpositions of clauses, which, in the modern tongues, contain so many separate particles that they are apt to be confounded, or lost, in the hands of a careless compositor. Nevertheless, the English has more power, of this kind, than is generally supposed; for, even in the simplest sentence, we, frequently, can *choice* among several changes. As an example, let us take the words 'Was John buried here?' and note the combinations which might be adopted both by the querist and the answerer, without rendering the idea ambiguous. The whole number of changes on four words is twenty-four, which we shall here exhibit. The first six are questions and the other eighteen are answers.

Was John buried here? Was John here buried?  
Was buried John here? Was buried here John?

Was here John buried? Was here buried John?

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Buried John was here.	Buried John here was.
Buried was John here.	Buried was here John.
Buried here John was.	Buried here was John.
John was buried here.	John was here buried.
John buried was here.	John buried here was.
John here was buried.	John here buried was.
Here John was buried.	Here John buried was.
Here was John buried.	Here was buried John.
Here buried John was.	Here buried was John.

However uncommon many of the preceding arrangements may appear, there are few of which the meaning is either different or doubtful; and had we added another word, such as, ‘Was John buried here yesterday?’ we might have made one hundred and twenty changes. To some persons these things may seem trifling, but a power over the arrangement of words and phrases is the great secret of elegant and luminous composition. Every sentence has its natural emphasis, as every polysyllable has its accent; and the art of writing is to make this emphasis fall, where it is, not only most expressive of meaning, but, at the same time, most harmonious. In poetry, the propriety of this Rule is acknowledged by every one:—why should it not be so prose?—

Those simple sentences which admit of no transposition while nakedly expressed may, notwithstanding, be variously arranged when clothed with adjectives and adverbs. ‘Peter loves Mary’ is a sentence of this kind. Its construction is invariable; but ‘*The farmer Peter passionately loves the shepherdess Mary*’ may be written in twelve different ways, all of which are good English. Thus:

*The farmer Peter passionately loves the shepherdess Mary.*

*The farmer Peter passionately loves Mary the shepherdess.*

*The farmer Peter loves passionately the shepherdess Mary.*

*The farmer Peter loves passionately Mary the shepherdess.*

*The farmer Peter loves the shepherdess Mary passionately.*

*The farmer Peter loves Mary the shepherdess passionately.*

*Peter the farmer passionately loves the shepherdess Mary.*

The others are obvious, and may be extended by the reader. Besides, were the sentence changed into the passive form, thus,

“The shepherdess Mary is passionately beloved by the farmer Peter,”

we should have a choice of other twelve different forms of arrangement.

It will be observed that, in the preceding example, there are four different substantives; the Farmer, Peter, the Shepherdess, and Mary. There is, notwithstanding, only one nominative and one accusative; for the *Farmer* is merely another name for Peter, as the *Shepherdess* is for Mary. But other independent substantives may enter into the composition of an expression, without taking away its character as a simple sentence. For instance,—“The *Highwayman* took a *watch* from a *gentleman's servant* by *force*,” has only one verb, but contains five separate substantives, each of which is in a different state from the others. The Highwayman is the agent or nominative to the verb; the Watch is the thing acted upon,—the accusative; the Gentleman's is the possessive case,—the person to whom the servant belongs; the Servant is he *from* whom the Watch was taken; and Force is the means by which the robbery was committed. In the Latin language, the nouns Highwayman, Watch, Gentleman's, Servant and Force would be put, respectively, in the Nominative, Accusative, Genitive, Dative, and Ablative cases; and in those several states they, in fact, stand in English, though not so obviously, on account of

their want of specific terminations. The state in which each substantive exists in a sentence is more easily perceived when we are able to make use of the pronouns, most of which have three forms or cases. *I, He* and *They*, for example, are changed into *Me, Him* and *Them* to mark the accusative, or object, on which the action falls; and (by the help of the prepositions *to, for, by, with, &c.*) the same words supply the place of the Datives and Ablatives; while the Possessives, *My, His* and *Their*, perform, to a certain extent, the functions of the Genitives of the Latin tongue.

Though the English language has no regulated Dative case, there is, nevertheless, a form of construction (not generally attended to) which in a great degree supplies its place. When two substantives, or pronouns, are relative to the same transitive verb as accusative and dative, the latter is sufficiently marked, without a preposition, provided it is put immediately after the verb. Thus, we may write 'He gave Peter the book,' and 'I bought my boy a book,' instead of 'He gave the book *to* Peter,' and 'I bought a book *for* my boy.' 'Bring me my horse,' 'Pay them their wages,' 'I wrote him a letter,' &c. are every day expressions of the same kind. Neither is this form of construction confined to the lan-

guage of common life; for examples might be cited from our most approved writers :

“ Fetch me that flower: the herb I show’d thee once.”

*Shakspeare.*

“ And if I *give thee* honour due,  
Mirth, admit me of thy crew.”

*Milton.*

This twofold method of expressing the dative, by prepositive particles or by position, is peculiarly advantageous. It gives always a choice with regard to the harmony, and often directs the emphasis to the most effective part of the sentence,

Whatever may be the number of nouns, adjectives, participles, or other words, if there be only *one verb*, with its nominative, or nominatives, we should still call the whole a simple sentence. Such sentences, however, often contain several divisions, which, for the sake of clearness, requiring some mark of separation, are termed **CLAUSES**: because they are *inclosed* between commas, or other points. This combination of clauses is especially to be found in Poetry. The following, from Thomson, may serve as an instance:

“ For,—In her helpless years, deprived of all,  
Of every stay, save innocence and Heaven,

*She*, with her widow'd mother, feeble, old,  
And poor, *lived* in a cottage, far retired  
Amid the windings of a woody vale;  
By solitude and deep surrounding shades,  
But more by bashful modesty, conceal'd."

"She lived" is the assertion: all the rest are trappings and circumstances. The '*For*,' at the beginning, does not belong to these verses, considered as a simple sentence. It is a reference to the preceding lines, and indeed only to *one word*, as the cause of her living in retirement:

'The lovely young Lavinia once had friends;  
And fortune smiled, *deceitful*, on her birth:  
*For*,—in her helpless years,' &c.

It would be no unprofitable exercise for students to mark the different arrangements of which the sentence is capable; not only by shifting the position of words, but by the transposition of entire clauses. Some of these inversions, which would be easy in prose, are prevented by reason of the versification, but others,—even whole lines,—may change places, with little injury, either to the music or the measure. To a writer like Thomson, such changes would seldom produce an improvement upon his first sketch, but young authors, and especially poets, would, ge-



nerally, do well to study the arrangement of their lines before they give them to the world; for the purpose of chusing that which is most perspicuous and harmonious.

The place of a noun, whether it be in the nominative, accusative, or any other case, may be supplied by any number of words which we can conceive to be united, so as to denote a single real or imaginary being. Thus we may say :

‘ The inevitable lot of all mankind *is* to die.’

*Lot*, with its adjective *inevitable*, is the nominative, *mankind* is the genitive, and *to die* is the infinitive of a verb. It expresses the state of this ‘ Lot of mankind,’ and is equivalent to the substantive *death*. We have said before that Infinitives do not differ from Nouns; and *to die*, for *death*, was once the usual mode of writing. So in Ben Jonson :

“ And sculpture that can keepe thee from *to dye*.”

And in Spenser :

“ For not to have been dipp’d in Lethe’s lake  
Could save the son of Thetis from *to dye*.”

These seem, in our day, to be peculiar applications of the verb; but such phrases as ‘ He deserves *death*,’ and ‘ He deserves *to die*,’ are of common occurrence and are accounted synonymous.

“The profound *respect* [which] I bear to the gracious Prince who governs this country, with no less honour to himself than with satisfaction to his subjects, and who restores you to your rank under his standard, *will save you from a multitude of reproaches.*” *Junius.*

The nominative of the verb ‘*will save*’ is ‘*respect*,’ but it is respect of a particular kind, modified by the half-narrative which precedes the verb, and which might, if we pleased, be included in a parenthesis. *You* is the accusative, or person *saved*; and the dative, or thing from which he is saved, is *a multitude of reproaches*. In a few words:

‘Respect for my Sovereign will save you from a multitude of reproaches.’

When two, or more, simple sentences belong to one consequence, so as not to be separable without disjoining the general idea, and thereby rendering the subject incomplete, these subordinate assertions are conjoined into one COMPOUND SENTENCE. Thus:

‘Peter loves Mary,’—and

‘Mary is beautiful,’

are simple sentences; but:

‘Peter loves Mary because she is beautiful,’ is a compound of both sentences; and, in consequence of the conjunction *because*, expresses

something which, in a separate state, they are unable to do.

Similar to the above are such sentences as the following; in which the members, although of themselves separate assertions, are so necessarily connected that they form one individual whole:

“It is with diseases of the mind as with diseases of the body; we are half dead before we understand our disorder, and half cured when we do.”—*Lacon*.

“The day of the christening being come, and the house filled with Gossips, the levity of whose conversation suited but ill with the gravity of Dr. Cornelius, he cast about how to pass this day more agreeably to his character; that is to say, not without some *profitable conference*, nor wholly without observance of some ancient custom.”—*Martinus Scriblerus*.

But, besides these and such like sentences, there are others where the connecting tie is less strong; and which, in the hands of some writers, are divided into simple sentences. The following, from Colton's *Lacon*, may be taken as an example:

“Death is the liberator of him whom freedom cannot release; the physician of him whom medicine cannot cure; and the comforter of him whom time cannot console.”

This sentence is easily divisible into three sentences that are quite disconnected with each other.

“Death is the liberator of him whom freedom cannot release.”

“Death is the physician of him whom medicine cannot cure.”

“Death is the comforter of him whom time cannot console.”

The separated parts remain; but the building is disjointed, and the symmetry of the architecture is gone.

A judicious intermixture of simple and of compounded thoughts is the style most adapted to modern times. The unlinked succession of short sentences, (like a string of proverbs,) seems to carry us back to the origin of writing; when objects were placed separately and nakedly before our eyes;—ere man had learned to classify his ideas, and to clothe them with foliage.

## CHAPTER VII.

CONSTRUCTION OF SENTENCES *continued*.  
 COMPARISON WITH THE ARRANGEMENT OF  
 OTHER LANGUAGES.

We have repeatedly spoken of the arrangement of words and clauses, and of the power of transposing any particular arrangement: Let us now endeavour to discover whether or not there is any natural order; and, if there is, to what extent our language admits of inversion.

A simple thought appears to us to be instantaneously acquired. Our feelings are affected, or our will is exerted, with the rapidity of lightning. But when we endeavour to communicate this thought to another person, it does not seem to be so easy of acquisition. He is not acted upon by the mysterious machinery of nature, but gathers the thought, by separate portions, as artificial language is able to impart: we say *artificial*, because there is also a natural language which expresses, with energetic swiftness, the feelings of the human heart:

“ A single look more marks th’ internal wo  
 Than all the windings of the lengthen’d Oh !

Up to the face the quick sensation flies,  
And darts its meaning from the speaking eyes;  
Love, transport, madness, anger, scorn, despair,  
And all the passions—all the soul is there."

Spoken language, by means of gesture, emphasis and accents, is benefitted by this half-mute language of nature. It is imitated by the actor, and is the soul of unpremeditated oratory. But the writer possesses no such advantages. Ask the lover if the broken whisper, the gentle pressure of the hand, and the furtive glance of the eye, can be sufficiently expressed, by the softest words in the vocabulary of love.

When we speak of the natural order of a sentence, if we do not allude to simplicity in opposition to affectation, we must mean that of calm narrative, as differing from what is the effect of strong excitement. The passions, standing in peculiar points of view, see objects in different lights, and in other arrangements than those in which they appear to a less interested spectator; and they have, therefore, in all languages, peculiar modes of utterance, consequent upon the modifications of the mind of him who speaks.

'Yesterday morning, as I was walking in the fields, I saw John stab James through the heart, with a dagger.'

This, certainly, is a calm narrative, for the cir-

cumstances are as coolly related as if the speaker had, merely, seen a man shoot a hare. The language of feeling would have been differently arranged: the prominent part of the picture would have been brought forward, and the circumstances cast into shade.

‘ James is murdered! I saw John stab him to the heart!’ Such would naturally have been the exclamation of a friend.

The former narrative is what would be expected in a Court of Justice; where every circumstance is of consequence, and where the passions ought not to be excited.

“ In the Greek and Roman languages,” says Dr. Blair, “ the most common arrangement is, to place that first which strikes the imagination of the speaker most;” and he proceeds to contrast this principle with the order of modern tongues :

“ All the modern languages of Europe,” says he, “ have adopted a different arrangement from the ancient. In their prose compositions, very little variety is admitted in the collocation of words; they are mostly fixed to one order, and that order is, what may be called, the Order of the Understanding. They place first in the sentence, the person or thing which speaks or acts; next its action; and lastly, the object of the action. So

that the ideas are made to succeed one another, not according to the degree of importance which the several objects carry in the imagination, but according to the order of nature and of time.

“An English writer, paying a compliment to a great man, would say thus: “It is impossible for me to pass over, in silence, such remarkable mildness, such singular and unheard of clemency, and such unusual moderation, in the exercise of supreme power.” Here we have, first presented to us, the person who speaks. “It is impossible for me;” next, what that person is to do, “impossible for him *to pass over in silence;*” and lastly, the object which moves him so to do, “the mildness, clemency, and moderation of his patron.” Cicero, from whom I have translated these words, just reverses this order; beginning with the object, placing that first, which was the exciting idea in the speaker’s mind, and ending with the speaker and his action. “*Tantum mansuetudinem, tam inusitatam inauditamque clementiam, tantumque in summa potestate rerum omnium modum, tacitus nullo modo præterire possum.*” [Orat. pro Marcell.]

“The Latin order is more animated; the English, more clear and distinct. The Romans generally arranged their words according to the order in which the ideas rose in the speaker’s



imagination. We arrange them according to the order in which the understanding directs those ideas to be exhibited, in succession, to the view of another."

We have extended this extract, because it is generally taken for granted that the English language admits of little variation of construction from what is here termed "the Order of the Understanding." This belief, however, appears to us to be completely erroneous; for scarcely any language can be found that admits of inversion in a greater degree. Every sentence may be begun, at pleasure, with the agent, or with the object; for the Passive voice is the reverse of the Active. There is, indeed, a drawling uniformity of style which has long pervaded the English tongue, but this is no necessary part of its original character; for, in hands that are able to wield its energies, it does not yield in animation to the language of the Romans. The preceding translation might be placed in the Latin order, by a simple transposition, without rendering the meaning ambiguous; or, by changing the voice it would read thus:

"Such remarkable mildness, such singular and unheard-of clemency, and such unusual moderation in the exercise of supreme power, cannot possibly be passed over, by me, in silence."

We might easily cite numerous examples, where this "Order of the Understanding" is disregarded by our best writers :

" In describing the nuisance erected by so pestilential a manufactory, by the construction of so infamous a brothel, by digging a night-cellar for such thieves, murderers, and house-breakers, as never before infested the world, I am so far from aggravating, that I have fallen infinitely short of the evil."

The preceding is from Burke, the following is from Dr. Blair, himself :

" Not only in professed descriptions of the scenery, but in the frequent allusions to natural objects, which occur, of course, in pastorals, the poet must, above all things, study variety."

While, however, we endeavour to free ourselves from the trammels of dull uniformity, we must beware of such inversions as might excite surprise, from the difficulty of unravelling them, or by their pedantic imitation of the structure of the learned tongues. The cases of the pronouns give a facility of transposition, in some degree similar to the more general declensions of the Greek and Latin; but it will seldom be found proper to make much use of this advantage. The pronouns represent nouns; and we feel as if force had been used to drag them from their

proper station, when they are made to stand in a place which the nouns themselves could not possibly occupy. The great value of pronouns is to avoid tautology,—not to form transpositions. The authorized translation of St. Paul's famous address to the Athenians contains a notable example of this pronominal inversion:

“Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To THE UNKNOWN GOD. *Whom* therefore ye ignorantly worship, *him* declare I unto you.”

The acknowledged sanctity of the subject, and the hoar of years which covers the translation, must shield the preceding passage from criticism. It has even been quoted as elegant; but it is not, therefore, to be imitated.

The relative pronouns *This* and *That* (and their plurals *These* and *Those*) are used with nice discrimination, in the construction of sentences: *this* referring to the noun, or to the phrase, last spoken, and *that* to what was first mentioned. Thus,

“*Self-love*, the spring of motion, acts the soul;  
*Reason's* comparing balance rules the whole:  
 Man, but for *that*, no action could attend,  
 And, but for *this*, were active to no end.”

\* \* \* \* \*

" *Some place the bliss in action, some in ease;  
Those call it pleasure, and contentment these.*"

Pope.

A regulation of a somewhat similar nature is observed, when two pairs of Antithetical clauses occur in the same sentence. In such a case the same order is preserved in the consequent phrases as was assumed in the antecedents to which they refer. In this respect, the first of the following couplets is faulty, and the second correct. The poet is speaking of Superstition:

" She, from the rending earth,—and bursting skies,  
Saw Gods descend,—and Fiends infernal rise:  
Here fix'd the dreadful,—there the bless'd abodes;  
Fear made her Devils,—and weak Hope her Gods."

Pope.

In every language, (at least in every modern one,) there is a certain arrangement which, when the thoughts are common, the words are apt to assume. This is what we termed the *narrative form*, and, we believe, is what Dr. Blair meant by the "Order of the Understanding." On this subject, he copied Du Marsais, who compared the order of the Latin with that of his own nation. But the French language is, of all others, the least capable of inversion; for even its Poetry depends on rhyme alone to distinguish the construction from

that of the plainest prose. We shall take, as an example, the introductory lines of "*La Henriade*," accompanied with a literal and interlinear translation:

" *Je chante ce Héros qui régna sur la France,*  
 I sing the Hero who reigned over France,  
*Et par droit de conquête, et par droit de naissance ;*  
 Both by right of conquest, and by right of birth ;  
*Qui par de longs malheurs apprit à gouverner,*  
 Who through long misfortunes learned to govern,  
*Calma les factions, sut vaincre et pardonner,*  
 Calmed the factions, knew to conquer and to pardon,  
*Confondit et Maïenne, et la Ligue et l'Idère,*  
 Confounded Maïenne, and the League and Spain,  
*Et fut de ses sujets le vainqueur et le père.*  
 And was of his subjects the conqueror and the father.  
*Descends du haut des cieux, auguste Vérité,*  
 Descend from the height of the heavens, august Truth,  
*Répands sur mes écrits ta force et ta clarté :*  
 Spread upon my writings thy strength and thy clear-  
 ness."

With those lines of Voltaire, one of their greatest poets, let us contrast the opening of Milton's *Paradise Lost*:

" Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit  
 Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
 Brought death into the world, and all our woe,  
 With loss of Eden, till one greater Man  
 Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,  
 Sing, heavenly Muse! that on the secret top

Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire  
That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,  
In the beginning how the heavens and earth  
Rose out of Chaos."

The interjection of numerous details, between those parts of a sentence which are closely combined by the rules of Syntax, is so frequent in English poetry that it escapes the notice of a native; while, to foreigners, when studying the language, it presents a series of insoluble enigmas. Goldsmith is characterized by the simplicity of his diction, as much as by the tenderness of his sentiments; but, nevertheless, we suspect that the grammatical analysis of the following, as well as many of his other paragraphs, would puzzle a French learner:

*But me, not destin'd such delights to share,  
My prime of life in wandering spent and care;  
Impell'd, with steps unceasing, to pursue  
Some fleeting good, that mocks me with the view;  
That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,  
Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies;  
My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,  
And find no spot of all the world my own.*

The Syntax of this passage connects the penult line with the first, "*But my fortune leads me to traverse,*" &c. All the intermediate lines are completely parenthetical.

English adjectives, having no change of termination, either in gender, number, or case, are scarcely separable from their substantives; and, in so far, the Latin is less limited in its construction; but the French have gender and number in their adjectives, without being able, in their composition, to make use of those advantages. With a few fixed exceptions, their adjectives always follow the substantives, and this they term the natural order, while we account it the reverse. They say, for instance, that ‘une pomme aigre,’ an apple *sour*, is a more natural arrangement than ‘a *sour* apple;’ and they give this unanswerable reason “that a thing must exist before it can have qualities.” We should say, on the other hand, that they are *qualities only* with which we are acquainted: take these away, one by one, and you annihilate the being.

The comparison of languages is of great advantage to the student; for it leads him to reflect on the peculiarities of his own. Dr. Spurzheim, of Craniological fame, makes the following curious remarks on this subject:

“The construction of every language denotes the manner of thinking of each nation. The French like *facts*, and direct their attention to them without first considering the cause. It is natural to begin, in general, with the subject;

[agent] and, after that, the French immediately join the action of the subject; after this, the other circumstances are expressed. If cause and effect are indicated, the French style begins with the *effect*; and the *cause* is related afterwards. The German language is quite different; it requires much more attention than the French. It begins also, ordinarily, with the subject; then follow the expressions of the *relations* between the subject and the object, which are mentioned; and, lastly, the *action* of the subject upon the object is expressed. Moreover, if a fact and its cause are spoken of, the *cause* is ordinarily denoted first, and the *fact* after it. It is known that certain languages admit a great number of inversions, others very few. It appears to me, that the former are more logical; for, it seems natural that attention should be directed first to the most important object. The French language begins almost always with the *fact*; hence French understandings consider the fact as the most important. From these observations relative to languages, we may easily conceive that the spirit of any one language cannot become general. I am of opinion that the spirit of the French language never will please Germans; and that Frenchmen, on the other hand, will always dislike the spirit of the German; because the manner of



thinking, and the concatenation of ideas, are quite different in the two nations."

The unfettered state of the arrangement of the subordinate parts, in an English sentence, gives us some advantages over the formal (though differing) constructions of the French and German. A teacher of English Composition ought not to hold forth any particular style of writing as a pattern to his pupils. He who gives "his days and nights to the study of Addison," cultivates only one branch of his art: the gentle murmuring of the stream, that wanders through the vale, is soothing to the ear; but there are moments in which we are not unwilling to be roused by the precipitous dashing of the mountain torrent.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

## OF METAPHORS.—SYMBOLS.

**METAPHOR** (Greek *metaphora*, from *phero*, I carry, and *meta*, beyond) is that form of speech by which a word, or phrase, is extended *beyond* its original acceptation, and applied to something else which the mind conceives to be, in a certain respect, similar, or analogous. Thus, a stone is the general name of a class of minerals, better known, perhaps, than defined; and the phrase, “a pillar of stone” describes what we consider as a reality; but when a man is said to have “a heart of stone,” we allude to some imaginary likeness, and speak in the language of metaphor: “his heart is *hard* and *impenetrable*,”—“it is *cold* and *unfeeling*.”

The fact is, that speech is almost entirely composed of metaphor. There are but few objects, or relations, in nature with which mankind are acquainted; and yet it must be solely from these few that our ideas can be formed. Abstract thoughts are the shadows of reality; but shadows cannot exist without the substances on which

they depend. The structure of language, however aerial it may appear, is not a palace of enchantment. The materials of which it is built are taken from the palpable objects around us. They are rude and common in their appearance, while the beauty and fairy elegance of the fabric are owing entirely to the illusions of imagination. Things and actions, the most ordinary and obvious, are, in the most eminent degree, stretched in their signification; and we compare the primary and consequent meanings of the term with a portion of incredulity, when we are told that the distinction has been produced solely by custom and usage. Examples may be easily adduced: To *SIT* and to *STAND* are common actions of the human body, but their figurative significations are uncommonly extensive. A *SEAT* is that on which we *sit*, but it also denotes a *villa* or country residence. *SITUATION* is literally the action of *sitting*, but it expresses our *manner of existence*, whether in body or mind. The Latin *status*, like our *STATE* and the French *estat* or *état*, in its first sense, is merely a *standing*, or the particular posture of the body which to *STAND* recalls to our mind. These words, however, signify *condition* of whatever kind; as, also, a *government*, and the *country* so governed. When we follow the French spelling, *ESTATE*, it is used for a

*quantity of land* in the possession of a proprietor. The word *stand* is, likewise, subject to a similar figure; and we say of an advocate, who has had long and extensive practice, that he is of considerable **STANDING** at the bar. **STATION** is the place where any thing *stands*;—it is, also, the rank held in society.

The nature of our language (made up, in a great degree, of compounds, the parts of which exist only in other tongues,) serves to hide, from common eyes, many of the metaphors that would, otherwise, be obvious. The last written word (**OBVIOUS**), for instance, is a Latin compound, (from *ob* and *via*) and denotes that the thing spoken of stands *in the way*; and that, consequently, it cannot escape notice. Now a man, an animal, or any material substance, may, naturally, be in the way; but to such as these the word *obvious* is never applied: it is confined to metaphorical usage. ‘The church is *obvious*,’—meaning that it is *before my eyes*,—would be reckoned a strange application of the word. ‘It is *obvious* that he hates me,’ would pass without notice, although it is *obvious* that there is no real **OBJECT**, (Latin *objectus*),—nothing *thrown before* me, to be seen.

As a farther illustration, we shall take a sentence from Mr. Lindley Murray’s “Address to

Young Students," which its author intended to be simple rather than figurative:

"Contemplating the *dangers* to which you are exposed, the *sorrows* and *dishonour* which accompany *talents* misapplied, and a *course* of *indolence* and *folly*, may you exert your utmost *endeavours* to avoid them!"

Here are eight substantives of which certain things are asserted; but there is not one of them which represents any object that is cognizable by the senses:

"*Contemplating* (that is *looking at*) the dangers to which you are *exposed* (that is *placed among*)," must be merely a metaphorical view; for *dangers* are contingent evils that may or may not happen.

"*Sorrows* and *dishonour* which *accompany* (that is, go *along with*) misapplied talents." Sorrows and dishonour are feelings of the mind, and it is a strong figure, indeed, that makes them the *companions* of *talents* (that is *abilities*), however those talents *may* be applied. It is conduct, not talents, to which *dishonour* can be associated; and, with respect to *sorrows*, they, like the showers of heaven, fall equally on the just and the unjust.

"A course of indolence and folly;" that is, "a *race*, or *circuit*, of *laziness* and—*stupidity*," for this is the only sort of *folly* connected with *indo-*

*lence*. The metaphor, it must be confessed, is rather an awkward one.

“May you *exert* your *utmost* endeavours to avoid them!” That is, “May you *put forth* your *farthest out* attempts to keep away from the dangers to which you are (already) exposed.”

The whole of the Address is in the same strain. It is a series of metaphors; scarcely referring literally to a single object in nature. This, however, arises from the subject and not from the writer; for nothing that is general, or abstract, can be expressed in other terms. The thoughts and feelings of man have no visible prototype in external nature. All is comparison of imaginary similitudes. The philosophy of the human mind is a science of metaphors.

Since, then, it appears that Metaphor is, necessarily, in possession of the far greater portion of the thoughts which language endeavours to express; it may be asked, what do we mean when we particularize a phrase, or sentence, as being metaphorical? We answer, that, in grammatical usage, the term is applied to such deviations, from the literal meaning of words, or phrases, as have not been incorporated, by custom, into the language. The new allusions are striking, because uncommon; while the customary ones

glide over the eye and the ear, without exciting attention. It is from this cause that we are so surprised at the metaphors employed by distant nations, whether that distance be in time, or in space; and even in those tongues with which we are, in a great degree, familiar, we distinguish, by the name of Idioms, numerous phrases, that differ from our own modes of expression, ‘He is *drowned* in debt,’—‘He is *over head and ears* in love; ‘He is *plunged* in grief,’ &c. are noticed as English idiomatical phrases, by our continental neighbours. Virgil says that the Trojans were *buried* in sleep and wine when they were surprised by the Greeks:

“*Invadunt urbem somno vinoque sepultam.*”

It has been observed that the salutations of different countries are derived from different metaphors. The English say ‘How do you *do*?’ literally, ‘How do you *act*?’; the French, *comment vous portez-vous?* ‘How do you *carry* yourself?’; and the Dutch, ‘*Hoe vaart gy?*’ ‘How do you *sail*?’

Translations are the chief sources of the introduction of foreign words; and the early authorized translations of the Bible, following principally the text of St. Jerom, inundated the

language with Latin compounds The pulpit (and the press, which was, at one time, almost entirely theological) adopted those new-fangled derivations, and, assisted by the Lawyers and Physicians, we, soon after the invention of printing, had, in many cases, duplicates of words from which we could make a choice. But a language cannot long exist under two forms. One of the synonymous words is either speedily forgotten, or it takes a different department. The Latin intruders are now almost wholly confined to metaphorical meanings. It was not so, however, in former times; in proof of which we shall cite a few examples:

To PROMOTE (Latin *promovere*) is simply to *bring forward*; but we could not now say in bringing forward a young actor on the stage, or a culprit to the bar, that he was *promoted*. To *promote* is now to *move* a person *forward* to a more advantageous situation in life:—for instance, to make a Bishop of a Dean. Milton used the Word literally:

“ Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay  
To mould me man? Did I solicit thee  
From darkness to *promote* me ?”—

To PREVENT (Latin *prævenire*) is to *come before*; and as to *come before* is to be in one's way, the



word now signifies to *hinder*, that is, to keep another *behind*. The Liturgy of the church (composed in the time of Edward VI.) has "*prevent* us, O Lord, in all our doings," &c. being a prayer that the Lord would *go before* them, and guide them in all their actions. This literal use of the verb to *prevent* was not lost sight of in the beginning of the last century; for we find the following lines in Rowe's *Lucan* :

"Where'er the Battle bleeds, and Slaughter lies,  
Thither, *preventing* Birds and Beasts, she hies;  
Nor then content to seize the ready Prey,  
From their fell Jaws she tears the Food away."

To **CONVINCE** (Latin *convincere*) is to conquer. It is now used only to *conquer in argument*; but Shakspeare has its literal sense in *Cymbeline*:

"Your Italy containes none so accomplish'd a Courtier to *convince* the Honour of my Mistris."

To **PROVOKE** (Latin *provocare*, to call forth) was once understood literally,—as in the *Tempest* :

"*Miranda*. Wherefore did they not  
That howre destroy us?  
*Pros*. Well demanded, wench:  
My tale *provokes* that question."

**AFFLUENCE** (Latin *affluentia*, from *ad* and *fluens*, *flowing to*) is now appropriated to denote *Riches*; from which it is distinguishable by considering those riches as continually increasing, or *flowing*

*in.* CONFLUENCE is still used literally to denote the junction of streams, which then *flow together*; and Johnson, in his Dictionary, quotes examples of AFFLUENCE and AFFLUENT with their primary significations.

ANGEL (Latin *angelus* from the Greek *aggelos*) originally signified a *messenger*, and was so understood by Ben Jonson, when he termed the Nightingale

“The dear good *angel* of the spring.”

We might add hundreds of other instances in which foreign words have left the literal, and confined themselves to the metaphorical, meanings. Indeed, the double set of words, thereby produced, constitutes the peculiar characteristic of the English tongue; and, he who is not well aware of the distinctions thus created is incapable of appreciating the language of his country. Even in those words which are purely English, that is, such as were known to our Saxon ancestors, the literal signification is generally laid aside, wherever the monosyllables are compounded. The verb TO FULFILL may serve as an example: its present acceptation is to *accomplish completely* (or *fully*) the object intended. But the words taken singly (*to fill full*) denote the *filling* of a vessel until it can hold no more; and

in this sense they were, at one time, generally written. Thus, in Cranmer's version of Isaiah:

"Let there a way be sought to destroy their children that be in their fathers' wickedness, that they come not up again to possess the land, and *fill* the world *full* of enemies."

*To fill* would now be reckoned sufficient, without the additional word *full*.

In the prologue to *Troilus and Cressida*, supposed to have been written by Ben Jonson, the words are conjoined:

"Their braue Pauillions, *Priam's* six-gated City,  
*Dardan* and *Timbria*, *Helias*, *Chetas*, *Troien*,  
 And *Antenonidus* with massie Staples,  
 And corresponsiue and *fulfilling* Bolts  
 Stirre up the *Sonnes* of *Troy*."

*To fulfill*, in its figurative sense, was chosen by divines to signify the final accomplishment of a prophecy, which, for ages, was gradually accomplishing, or *filling*, and became complete: (*filled up*) in what they called the *fulness* of time. To fill, as in a vessel, is the primary usage of the word, while all its metaphorical applications may be, and generally are, expressed by compounds of the Greek *plao* (and its old Latin derivative *pleo*) I fill; from which our Dictionaries

have been enriched by about eighty words, whose composition is unknown to the mere English scholar.

It is generally believed that the first written language was a painting, or other actual representation, of the things themselves of which an idea was to be conveyed; and, as far as material objects were concerned, it was, thereby, possible to communicate the thought. Thus, the figure of a Lion, standing over a mangled body, might denote that a man had been killed by a Lion; and, if there were added a crescent, the time would be fixed to that of the new moon. But, were we to express our doubts of the intentions of a pretended friend, we might depict him in the act of holding out a *heart* partially covered with a *veil*. The former painting would be a delineation of facts as they occurred, but the figures in the latter would be **SYMBOLS**, (Greek *syn*, together and *ballo*, I throw) because, representing certain objects, they conjoin the ideas of other things,—the picture is *symbolical*. Symbols, therefore, in picture-writing, were equivalent to metaphors, in the spoken and written language of the present day:—the olive-branch was the symbol of peace, and the laurel wreath was woven to decorate the brow of the conqueror.

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## CHAPTER IX.

OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE GENERALLY—  
DIFFERENT SPECIES OF TROPES.

Rhetoricians, in their arrangements, have usually divided verbal metaphors into various species, with different names, and classed the whole under the general head of TROPES: a term from the Greek *trepo*, I turn. These treat of the different senses in which the same word may be understood in the same language, in consequence of the various forms or shapes which the imagination may cause it to assume. These *Forms*, or *Shapes*, are also termed FIGURES; and every expression which differs from the natural expression of the thought is Figurative. The word Figure, however, is applied to the Grammatical forms of words as well as to the Rhetorical. The elision of a letter, or of a syllable, for example,—as *e'er* for *ever*; *wint'ry* for *wintery* &c., (so common in poetry,) is a Figure, called *Syncope*. This and others of a like kind belong to Grammar properly so called; and, therefore, for the purpose of distinction, the Figures of Rhetoric, as far as they concern the signification of

Words, are termed Tropes. In the manner that we have spoken of Metaphors, in the preceding Chapter, Tropes and Metaphors would seem to be synonymous. The fact is that, in ordinary language, the word *Metaphor* includes all those Figures that are termed Tropes. The latter is merely a more scientific denomination; because it has been adopted whenever Rhetoric has been treated as an art. In the arrangement of Du Marsais, Metaphor is one of the species of Tropes, being that which is founded on an imaginary resemblance.

### METONYMY.

Metonymy, from the Greek *meta* and *onoma*, a name, is, literally, a transposition or change of one name for another. The word is generally limited to denominate such sorts of change as the following:

1. *Substituting the CAUSE for the EFFECT.* Thus, the *land* is taken for its *produce*:

“ A time there was, ere England’s griefs began,  
When every rood of ground maintain’d its man.”

2. *Substituting the EFFECT for the CAUSE.* Thus, Junius asks:

“ Can *grey hairs* make folly venerable?” where *Grey hairs*, which are the usual consequence of *age*, are put for *age* itself.

3. *Substituting the CONTAINING for the CONTAINED.* It is in this metaphor that the toper is said to be fond of his *bottle*; and the highwayman calls out ‘your *purse* or your *life*!’ In a quotation already made, the country is substituted for its inhabitants:

“A time there was, ere *England’s* griefs began.”

4. *Substituting the name of the PLACE where a thing is made for that of THE THING itself.* It is hence that we speak of ‘a bottle of *Burgundy*,’ or of a glass of *Hollands*,’ meaning *Burgundy Wine*, or *Holland Gin*: but these are elliptical phrases rather than metaphors.

5. *Substituting the SIGN for the thing SIGNIFIED.* Thus, ‘He carried away the *palm*,’ means that *he conquered*: the palm being the emblem of victory.

6. *Substituting the ABSTRACT NAME for the CONCRETE.* Thus, in the expression, ‘*Hope* deferred maketh the heart sick,’ *hope* is taken for the things that are *hoped for*; and when we say, ‘O Lord, grant us our *prayer*,’ we mean by *prayer* the things *prayed for*.

The preceding are the principal species of Metonymy; but, under this head, we may include a whole class of Metaphors, derived from the theories of antiquity, which connect certain parts

of the human body with the powers and feelings of the mind. Thus, the Brain,

‘Which some suppose the soul’s frail dwelling house,’ has been long considered as the seat of the understanding; and diseases of the brain are believed to be the chief causes of the diseases of the mind. ‘He has no *brains*’ is equivalent to saying ‘he is a fool.’ Whether, in fact, the brain is, or is not, the seat of the soul, as our ancestors imagined it to be, we shall not attempt to determine; but the subject has of late been admirably burlesqued, by the revivers of the ancient science of phrenology. But to return:

The *Heart* has been accounted the seat of the mental affections; and hence we say that a man has a *good*, or a *bad*, heart, according as we suppose him to be actuated, generally, by kind or by envious feelings. The epithets are numerous. One is said to be openhearted, or kindhearted; and another is blackhearted, rottenhearted, &c. all from the same hypothesis.

A variable or temporary influence has been ascribed to the state of other viscera. The *Liver*, according to the old anatomists, was the seat of the turbulent passions; and hence Shakspeare’s repeated allusions:

“O she that hath a heart of that fine frame  
To pay this debt of love but to a brother,



How will she love, when the rich golden shaft  
 Hath kill'd the flooke of all affections else  
 That live in her. When *Liver*, *Braine*, and *Heart*,  
 These soveraigne thrones, are all supply'd and fill'd."

That yellow-coloured bitter fluid called Bile, which is secreted in the liver and concentrated in the gall-bladder, is connected, in its quantity and consistence, with the healthful or diseased functions of the body; and, consequently, is frequently referred to when speaking of the mind. 'A Liver burning hot' is Shakspeare's phrase for excessive love; and *White-livered* is understood as the symbol of Cowardice. The virulent passions are the effects of an *Atrabilarious* habit of body; and the vindictive satyr is said to dip his pen in gall. The spleen is the chosen abode of Envy. Vapours, Nervousness, Lowspirits, and various other names, are metaphors from theories some of which are now obsolete.

#### METALEPSIS.

The Metalepsis, or transmutation, (from the Greek *meta* and *lambano*, I take) is a combination of Tropes, by which one idea, or thought, is exchanged for another which precedes or follows, in point of time: it consists in taking the consequent for the antecedent, or the antecedent for the consequent, and is, therefore, a species of

**Metonymy.** For example, 'He was then alive' informs us that he is *now* dead; and a previous intimacy is inferred from the expression 'He has forgotten me,'—in consequence of the word *forgotten*. 'He has got his wish,' implies that he has got what he wished for.

### SYNECDOCHE.

A Synecdoche (from the Greek *syn*, together with, and *ekdechomai*, to expect, or look for,) is a figure which comprehends more or less in the expression than the word which is employed literally signifies. Thus, in taking the census of the inhabitants of a district, they are often enumerated as so many thousand *souls*; whereas, a *soul* is only the thinking part of a human being. In like manner, a direct tax, imposed upon every individual, is termed a *poll-tax*, from *poll* an old word signifying *head*; and we still say 'a hundred *head* of cattle.' Workmen, belonging to the same workshop, are termed *hands*. 'The manufacturer employs *fifty hands*,' means that he has fifty labourers in his trade. A *sail*, for a ship, and a *door*, for a house, are figures of every day occurrence

The Metaphor of a part referring to the Whole is sometimes practically expressed by symbols: 'The governor came forth, and delivered up the

*keys* of the fort to the conqueror';—'The Lord Chancellor waited on His Majesty and resigned the *seals*': The *Keys* are the symbols of power, as the *Seals* are of office.

In the following example, an Individual represents a Nation:

"Others more soft may carve the breathing brass;  
 Nay, living looks, I think, from marble draw;  
 Plead causes better; with a wand, describe  
 The heavenly host; and count the rising stars:  
*Roman*, remember *thou*, to rule the world;  
 Be these thy arts;—to fix the laws of peace,  
 To spare the suppliant and confound the proud!"

The Synecdoche of taking the *whole* for a *part* requires very careful management to prevent it from running into *Hyperbole*. There are, however, expressions, in every language, which, though hyperbolical in their origin, do not usually produce the idea of exaggeration. 'Every body,' meaning a very great proportion of the persons alluded to, is legitimate English; and Pope has literally translated the equivalent French phrase (*tout le monde*) in his *Rape of the Lock*:

"Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay."

'He knows the *World*,' 'He has seen the *World*,' 'Nothing in the *World* would give me greater pleasure,' &c. are similar metaphors which pass unobserved: they are idioms of the language.

## CATACHRESIS.

A *Catachresis* (from the Greek *kata*, against, and *chrasmai*, to use,) is an *abuse* or false use of a word, by which it is wrested from its original application, and made to express something which is at variance with its etymology. It is a sort of blundering denomination, chiefly caused by retaining the name of an object after the qualities from which it derived that name are changed. The thing that is made, for example, is often designated by that of the substance from which it is fabricated. Thus, a vessel in which we boil liquids is called a *Copper* because, in most cases, it is made of that material; and this figure is a *Metonymy*. But, such vessels are occasionally made of other metals, still retaining the name of *Coppers*; and it is this misnomer which is called a *Catachresis*. The cases in which the name of the forming substance is substituted for the thing formed are numerous. *Gold* and *Silver* are common names for coined money; and paper-money has simply the name of *paper*. God said unto Adam, ‘*Dust* thou art, and unto *dust* shalt thou return.’ These phrases, however, are *Metonymies* and not *Catachreses*. When boats were made of the *Bark* of trees, the denomination of *Barks* was given to them by the former kind of Trope; but when they came to be built of other

materials the term *Bark* became *Catachrestical*. The word *Inkhorn* is still written, although the *Ink-holder* is now generally made of glass; and the lovers of genuine English even prefer the former name, accounting the latter (*Ink-holder*), or even *Inkstand*, as a fastidious innovation. We should have too much to do, were we to re-model all our idiomatical words and phrases, so as to render them literally accurate. Besides, it would, in many cases, be impossible; for the original etymon is often either lost or forgotten.

#### ANTONOMASIA.

*Antonomasia* (Greek *anti* for, or in place of, and *onomazo*, I name,) is a figure by which we put a common name for a proper, or a proper for a common name. Thus 'the Roman Orator' signifies Cicero; and Anacreon is called 'the Bard of Teios.' Gibbon's *Roman History* abounds with such transpositions: Rome is 'the Country of the Cæsars;' Constantinople is 'the Imperial City;' and Constantine is 'the Protector of the Church.' Similar expressions are to be found in almost every page of that work: the *Antonomasia* is a figure which constitutes a marked characteristic, in the style of 'the Historian of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.'

In the second species of *Antonomasia*, a glut-

ton is said to be a Heliogabulus; a courtesan is a Messalina; and a tyrant is a Nero.

### SYLLEPSIS, OR COMPREHENSION..

That sort of Trope, by which a word is taken in two different senses (as the literal and the metaphorical) in the same phrase, has the Greek name Syllepsis, equivalent to the Latin *Comprehensio*. Thus, when we say ‘His temper is as *sour* as a Crab-apple, the word *sour* is used literally as to the Crab-apple; but metaphorically as applied to temper. The following translation, from Ovid, furnishes us with an example:

“ I burn, I burn, as when through ripen’d corn  
By driving winds the spreading flames are borne!  
Phaon to Ætna’s scorching fields retires;  
While I consume with more than Ætna’s fires!”

This figure requires careful management, without which it is apt to degenerate into a pun. Indeed its distinction from the latter rests solely on the currency of the metaphor, which prevents the comparison from exciting surprise. In the well-known ‘Epitaph upon a bad Architect,’

“ Lie heavy on him Earth; for he  
Laid many a heavy load on thee,”

the *point* consists in the two-fold meaning of the word *heavy*; but, in the musings of Childe Harold

over the tomb of a Roman Lady, a double application of the same word passes unnoticed; being sunk in the interest of the subject and covered by the beauties of the stanza:

“ Perchance she died in youth: it may be, bowed  
With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb  
That weighed upon her gentle dust. A cloud  
Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom  
In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom  
Heaven gives its favourite—early death; yet shed  
A sunset charm around her, and illumine  
With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead,  
Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-like red.”

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## CHAPTER X.

## FIGURES OF THOUGHT.

Having thus briefly defined the principal divisions of Verbal Metaphors, it will be proper, before proceeding farther, to speak of those forms of expression which are applicable to thoughts rather than to individual words,—to the figures of the mind rather than to Tropes. The phrases ‘Metaphorical language’ and ‘Figurative language’ are often used synonymously. In an extended sense, Figures of Speech are, metaphorically, the *forms, shapes, or figures*, in which the thoughts of the speaker are exhibited to his auditors: such as, Allegory, Personification, Irony, or any other mode of expression; and it is his business to *shape* his discourse, so as it may best suit his purpose: whether it be to amuse, to instruct, or to persuade.

Although we have thus distinguished between Figures of Thought and Tropes which are Figures of Words, the whole structure of language is so interwoven with Metaphor, that we may consider what follows merely as a continuation



of the same subject. Verbal Metaphors, when multiplied, or conjoined, become figurative expressions. In their simple state, they follow the genius of the language; while, in their connected state, they appear to be combined at the will of the writer. Rhetoricians have attempted to classify them, by giving them separate names; but the forms are too numerous and too intermingled for minute classification. They include all the shapes, in which a thought can be embodied, or an auditory addressed; from the delicate forms of politeness or of flattery, to the bitter language of remonstrance or denunciation. The following are what we consider as most deserving of particular notice.

#### ANACOINOSIS, OR COMMUNICATION.

Anacoinosis, a Greek compound, signifying *Communication*, is a figure of speech in which the orator appeals to the judgment of his audience: as, ‘What could I do?’ ‘What would you have done in my situation?’

“ He did oblige me every hour,  
Could I but faithful be ?  
He stole my heart, could I refuse  
Whate’er he ask’d of me ?”

There is an indirect species of Communication

which, being verbal, is generally classed among the Tropes. It is when the speaker includes his audience in his proceedings, by using the plural **WE** in the place of **I**. It is thus in didactic discourses, where it is generally said '*We* shall now proceed,' '*Let us* next consider,' &c. in place of '*I* shall now proceed,' '*I* shall next consider,' &c. This phraseology is comparatively modern, and seems to have been introduced to avoid the Egotism (Latin *ego*, *I*.) of former times. Its first appearance was in those Literary Reviews which purported to be written by a Society of Editors who, individually, chose to be unknown; and thus were enabled to shoot their critical arrows, from behind a covert, without fear of personal retribution. In a work, such as the present, to which the author prefixes his name, the '*solemn we*' appears, abstractedly, to be improper, if not ridiculous; and yet so much has it become an idiom of the language that, to most readers, the substitution of the *I* would seem impertinent.

**LIPTOTES, OR DIMINUTION.—HYPERBOLE, OR EXAGGERATION.**

**LIPTOTES, OR DIMINUTION**, (Greek *leipo*, to be deficient) is a figure by which, in seeming to lessen, we increase the force of the expression. Thus, when we say '*The man is no fool*,' we are

understood to assert that he is *wise*. 'I cannot *praise* such conduct' means that I despise it. The opposite of this figure is **HYPERBOLE** (a Greek word signifying *excess*) by which more is said of a subject than is expected to be believed. It is **EXAGGERATION**. The last verse of St. John's Gospel,—

"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written"—

is a real Hyperbole. Indeed, Exaggeration is a prominent feature in Eastern poetry; and it is perhaps in imitation of this style that the following lines are to be found in the works of one of the first poets of the present day:

"Yet, *one* relief this glance of former years  
 Brought, mingled with its pain,—tears, floods of tears,  
 Long frozen at her heart, but now like rills  
 Let loose in spring-time from the snowy hills,  
 And gushing warm, after a sleep of frost,  
 Through valleys where their flow had long been lost."  
*Lalla Rookh.*

Such extravagant similes will be pardoned in Mr. Moore; but we should not exhibit them to younger poets as objects of imitation.

Hyperbole ought to be very carefully as well

as sparingly used; for it is requisite that the mind of the hearer, as well as that of the speaker, should be strongly excited; else it degenerates into *Bombast*. It is usually the flash of an over-heated imagination, and is seldom consistent with the cold canons of criticism. The following flight corresponds more with the enthusiasm of youth than with the sobriety of age:

“Too long hath War—War the blackest fiend that ever rose from the bottomless pit—ravaged the globe and desolated the nations. Every page of history is written with human blood. Where is the field which hath not been the scene of battle, murder and death? Where is the plain, however extensive, which hath not been one grave? Are not the mountains swelled to double their height with human clay? Where is the river whose course hath not been choked with bodies—whose stream hath not rolled purple to the sea, and dyed the very Ocean with man’s blood, shed by men’s hands?—Name the town, the city, the village, which, at one period or other, hath not been reduced to ashes,—whose smoke hath not eclipsed the sun at noon,—whose flames have not illuminated the brows of midnight!”

#### HYPOTYPOSIS, OR IMAGERY.

*Hypotyposis* (from the Greek *hypo*, under, and

*typos*, an image,) is the representation of what we speak, as if it existed before our eyes. What is absent is brought near, and what is past, or predicted in the future, becomes present. The Imagery of Goldsmith, when describing the effects of a compulsory emigration, furnishes a beautiful example:

“ Even now, the devastation is begun,  
 And half the business of destruction done;  
 Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,  
 I see the rural Virtues leave the land.  
 Down, where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail  
 That idly waiting flaps with every gale,  
 Downward they move, a melancholy band,  
 Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.  
 Contented Toil, and hospitable Care,  
 And kind connubial Tenderness, are there.”

That sort of Imagery which is addressed solely to the eye is often transferred to the canvas: the following is beyond the power of the painter:

——“ Thanks, righteous God!—Revenge shall yet be  
 mine ;  
 Yon flashing lightning gave the dreadful sign.  
 I see the flames of heavenly anger hurl'd,  
 I hear your thunders shake a guilty world.”

*Dying Negro.*

PROSOPOPOEIA, OR PERSONIFICATION.—

APOSTROPHE.

Prosopopoeia (Greek *prosopon*, a person, and

*poieo*, I make) is equivalent to the Latin derivative Personification. It is that figure by which the absent, or the dead, are brought before us on the stage,—and by which inanimate and even abstract existences are raised to the rank of living beings. In a general sense, Personification is a species of Metaphor, and that species, too, which appears in every line of literary composition; for the nominative of every active verb, if it be conceived at all, must necessarily be considered as an *active* existence. But, we do not always take the trouble so to conceive it; and it is only when such Metaphors are protruded upon our notice that we acknowledge the Figure and give it the name of Personification.

The English language, in its modern state, is peculiarly favourable to this figure of speech. The substantives that have no life, having naturally no gender, become animated the moment they are metaphorically endowed with sex. ‘Virtue is *its* own reward,’ although metaphorical, is not striking; but ‘Virtue is *her* own reward’ is an obvious, and complete, Personification. Examples of this figure are to be found everywhere. It is the ornament of Prose and the soul of Poetry. In the following lines, Learning, Existence and Time are spoken of as living beings:

“ When Learning’s triumph o’er her barbarous foes  
First rear’d the stage, immortal Shakspeare rose.

Each change of many-colour'd life he drew ;  
Exhausted worlds, and then imagin'd new :  
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign ;  
And panting Time toil'd after him in vain."

Johnson.

The poets, in all ages, have personified abstractions, and invented tales concerning beings of their own creation. Such were the deities of Greece and Rome, whose fabulous adventures constitute the whole system of Classic Mythology. The imaginary personages of English poetry (when the objects are the same) usually assume the genders that were given them by the Greeks and Romans; but, when an object is to be personified for which there is no acknowledged precedent, we give it that sex which we judge to have the greater metaphorical congruity with its nature. These rules, however, though general, are not of universal application; for, in this respect, writers of equal character are, occasionally, inconsistent with one another. In languages, such as the French and Italian, where every substantive is either masculine or feminine, the personification of abstractions is made without any hazard as to sex; but it is otherwise in the English of the present day: The French noun *Jalousie*, for example, is feminine, and remains so when she is ranked with the *infernal Demons*. Darwin takes the masculine gender:

"The Demon, Jealousy, with Gorgon frown,  
 Blasts the sweet flowers of Pleasure not *his* own,  
 Rolls *his* wild eyes, and through the shuddering grove  
 Pursues the steps of unsuspecting Love;  
 Or drives o'er rattling plains *his* iron car,  
 Flings *his* red torch, and lights the flames of war."

The old English poets, on the contrary, make Jealousy a female. Thus Daniel, in his complaint of Rosamond:"

"O Jealousie, *daughter* of Env'y and Love,  
 Most wayward issue of a gentle sire;  
 Fostred with feares, thy fathers joyes t' improve,  
 Mirth-marring Monster, borne a subtile lier;  
 Hateful unto thy selfe, flying thine owne desire:  
 Feeding upon suspect that doth renue thee,  
 Happy were Lovers if they never knew thee."

The Edition of Daniel's Works, from which we have made the preceding extract, was printed in 1602; at and previous to which period, every English Substantive was either masculine or feminine.\* The modern custom, of refusing the sexual distinctions (except poetically) to every thing that is inanimate, has given us two degrees of Prosopopoeia: one a simple personification, and the other where the *person* is endowed with a

\* See "Analytical Dictionary."—Introduction Page cxvii.



specified sex Unless the poetical gender is so well known as to be easily and universally understood, the simple personification is always imperfect. It produces no Imagery. The groups, indeed, figure in the page as they would on the canvas of the painter; but, without the distinction of sex, the portraits must remain unfinished, because the drapery cannot be ascertained.

The Prosopopoeia appears very frequently in the form of Address or APOSTROPHE (Greek *apo*, from, and *strepho*, I turn) when the Orator *turns from* his subject to address himself to some other being whether real, or imaginary,—to the absent, or to the dead. The poems ascribed to Ossian are filled with this species of Imagery:

“Green thorn of the hill of ghosts,—that shakest thy head to nightly winds! I hear no sound in thee; is there no spirit’s windy skirt now rustling in thy leaves? Often are the steps of the dead, in the dark-eddying blasts; when the moon, a dun shield, from the east, is rolled along the sky.

“Ullin, Carril and Ryno, voices of the days of old! Let me hear you, while yet it is dark, to please and awake my soul.—I hear you not, ye sons of song; in what hall of the clouds is your rest? Do you touch the shadowy harp, robed with morning mist, where the rustling sun comes from his green-headed waves?”

## IRONY.—SARCASM.

Irony (Greek *eironeia*, dissimulation,) is mock praise, and of all the figures of speech is the most insulting: it is contempt pretending to cover herself with a veil. Mr. Burke was an adept in this species of warfare. In his famous "Letter to a noble Lord" respecting the attack made upon himself and his pension, by the Duke of Bedford, he draws the following parallel:

"The persons who have suffered, from the cannibal philosophy of France, are so like the Duke of Bedford, that nothing, but his Grace's probably not speaking quite so good French, could enable us to find out any difference. A great many of them had as pompous titles, and were of full as illustrious a race: some few of them had fortunes as ample; several of them, without meaning the least disparagement to the Duke of Bedford, were as wise, and as virtuous, and as valiant, and as well educated, and as complete in all the lineaments of men of honour as he is: And to all this they had added the powerful out-guard of a military profession, which, in its nature, renders men somewhat more cautious than those, who have nothing to attend to but the lazy enjoyment of undisturbed possessions. But security was their ruin. They are dashed to pieces

in the storm, and our shores are covered with the wrecks."

When Irony, or any similar figure, is so strong as to be termed bitter (*biting*) or cutting, it is **SARCASM**; from the Greek *sarkasmos*, flesh. The Irony of Junius is seldom playful. It is sarcasm always inflicting a wound. Witness the following from one of his Letters to the Duke of Grafton:

"The character of the *reputed* ancestors of some men, has made it possible for their descendants to be vicious in the extreme, without being *degenerate*. Those of your Grace, for instance, left no distressing examples of virtue *even to their legitimate posterity*; and you may look back with pleasure to an illustrious pedigree, in which heraldry has not left a single good quality upon record to insult or upbraid you. You have better proofs of your descent, my Lord, than the register of a marriage, or any troublesome inheritance of reputation. There are some hereditary strokes of character, by which a family may be as clearly distinguished as by the blackest features of the human face. Charles the First lived and died an hypocrite. Charles the Second was an hypocrite of another sort, and should have died upon the same scaffold. At the distance of a century, we see their different characters revived and

blended in your Grace. Sullen and severe without religion, profligate without gaiety, you live, like Charles the Second, without being an amiable companion; and, for aught I know, may die as his father did, without the reputation of a martyr."

We shall add another example of sarcastic Irony from the "Letter to a noble Lord" already quoted; because it will serve a twofold purpose. The comparison of the styles of different authors is a profitable exercise; and this will show how closely that of Junius in 1769 was *imitated* (or rather *preserved*) by Burke in 1806:

"In the name of common sense, why should the Duke of Bedford think, that none but of the House of Russel are entitled to the favour of the Crown? Why should he imagine that no King of England has been capable of judging of merit but King Henry the Eighth? Indeed, he will pardon me; he is a little mistaken: all virtue did not end in the first Earl of Bedford;—all discernment did not lose its vision when his Creator closed his eyes. Let him remit his rigour on the disproportion between merit and reward in others, and they will make no enquiry into the origin of his fortune. They will regard with much more satisfaction, as he will contemplate with infinitely more advantage, whatever

his pedigree has been dulcified, by an exposure to the influence of heaven in a long flow of generations, from the hard, acidulous, metallick tincture of the spring. It is little to be doubted, that several of his forefathers, in that long series, have degenerated into honour and virtue."

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## CHAPTER XI.

FIGURES OF THOUGHT *continued*.—

## ALLUSION.

Allusion (from the Latin *ad*, and *ludere*, to play) is that figure by which some word, or phrase, in a sentence, calls to mind, as if accidentally, another similar, or analogous, subject. Thus, were a person to say ‘I was surrounded with difficulties, and possessed no clue by which I could effect my escape,’ the classical reader would, immediately, be reminded of the *Clue* of Ariadne and the Labyrinth of Crete. The speaker evidently alluded to that tale of heathen mythology.

There are two requisites to constitute a proper Allusion: that the subject alluded to shall be readily perceived, and that it recompense by its beauty, or its utility, for our being drawn aside from the main object of the discourse. Du Marsais adduces a fine example of this figure, in a petition of M. Robin to Louis XIV., requesting to be allowed to retain possession of a small island in the Rhone:

“ Qu'est-ce en éfet pour toi, Grand Monarque des Gaules,  
 Qu'un peu de sable et de gravier ?  
 Que faire de mon ile? Il n'y croît que des saules;  
 Et tu n'aimes que le laurier.”\*

In these lines the *Willow* is taken in its literal, and the *Laurel* in a figurative, signification; but it may be remarked that the Allusion could only be seen among those Nations where the Laurel is the symbol of victory.

#### PARONOMASIA, OR PUN.

A Pun is a verbal allusion in consequence of words of similar sound, or of the same orthography, having different meanings. The Rhetorical name of this figure is from the Greek *para*, near, and *onoma*, a name. It is a species of Witticism, because it contains an unexpected thought. Thus, a Gentleman, who had undertaken to make a *pun* upon any given subject, when it was proposed that he should make one on the King, replied that the King was not a *subject*. That *Majesty* if stript of its externals would remain a *jest* is only a *pun* upon part of a word.

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\* Monarch of France ! my little Isle  
 Is worthless sand, unfit for Thee :  
 Why look for Laurels from a soil  
 Which scarcely bears the Willow tree ?

The author of that amusing work, "Heraldic Anomalies," quotes a number of clever Puns, among which is the following:

"Voltaire had a stupid fat Friar living with him at Ferney, who was useful to him, and who went by the name of *Pere Adam*, Father Adam; a Gentleman who was visiting there, happening to get a glimpse of this inmate of so celebrated a house, asked Voltaire if that was Father Adam? Yes, replied Voltaire, that is *Father Adam*, but *not the first of men*."

When a Pun is reckoned worth preserving it is generally turned into verse, and appears among collections of Epigrams: for example,

"I cannot move," yon clamorous beggar cries,  
"Nor sit, nor stand":—if he says *true* he *lies*.

When dress'd for the evening, the girls now-a-days  
Scarce an atom of dress on them leave;  
Nor blame them:—for what is an *evening* dress  
But a dress that is suited for *Eve*?

And this Rondeau:

\*  
By two black eyes my heart was won,  
Sure never wretch was more undone:—  
To Celia with my suit I came,  
But she, regardless of the prize,  
Thought proper to reward my flame  
With two black eyes.



It is a lower species of this play upon words when the sound only is considered without regard to the orthography. These are Puns to the ear and not to the eye. They originate in the comparison of such words as *knight* and *night*,—*wrung* and *rung*,—*hare* and *hair*; but they are so little valued that we shall be excused from citing examples. Indeed, punning altogether is now banished from good writing. It might be a very proper exercise for young masters and misses in a winter evening, provided it could be kept clear of that contamination with which it was so unfortunately associated, in the works of the early English writers. “A quibble,” says Dr. Johnson, “is to Shakspeare, what luminous vapours are to the traveller; he follows it at all adventures: it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulph him in the mire. It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations are irresistible. Whatever be the dignity or profundity of his disquisition, whether he be enlarging knowledge or exalting affection, whether he be amusing attention with incidents, or enchainning it in suspense,—let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished. A quibble is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation. A quibble, poor

and barren as it is, gave him such delight, that he was content to purchase it, by the sacrifice of reason, propriety and truth. A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra, for which he lost the world and was content to lose it."

Notwithstanding this severe denunciation there have been *Puns* so indicative of Genius as to be well worthy of preservation; among which, "the following, *pretended to be* from the pen of the immortal Shakspeare, and addressed to the Lady he married"\* ought not to be neglected:

*To the Idol of mine Eyes and the Delight of my Heart,*

ANNE HATHAWAY.

I.

Would ye be taught ye feather'd throng  
 With love's sweet notes to grace your song,  
 To pierce the heart with thrilling lay,  
 Listen to mine *Anne Hathaway!*  
 She *hath a way* to sing so clear,  
 Phoebus might wond'ring stop to hear,  
 To melt the sad, make blithe the gay,  
 And Nature charm, *Anne hath a way;*  
     *She hath a way,*  
     *Anne Hathaway,*  
 To breathe delight *Anne hath a way.*

II.

When Envy's breath and ranc'rous tooth  
 Do soil and bite fair worth and truth,

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\* "Heraldic Anomalies," vol. i.

And merit to distress betray;  
 To soothe the heart Anne *hath a way*.  
 She *hath a way* to chace despair,  
 To heal all grief, to cure all care,  
 Turn foulest night to fairest day.  
 Thou know'st, fond heart, Anne *hath a way*;  
     She *hath a way*,  
     Anne Hathaway,  
 To make grief bliss, Anne *hath a way*.

## III.

Talk not of Gems, the orient list,  
 The diamond, topaz, amethyst,  
 The emerald mild, the ruby gay;  
 Talk of *my* gem, Anne Hathaway!  
 She *hath a way* with her bright eye,  
 Their various lustre to defy,  
 The jewel she, and the foil they,  
 So sweet to look Anne *hath a way*.

    She *hath a way*,  
     Anne Hathaway,  
 To shame bright Gems Anne *hath a way*!

## IV.

But were it to my fancy giv'n  
 To rate her charms, I'd call them Heaven;  
 For though a mortal made of clay,  
 Angels must love Anne Hathaway;  
 She *hath a way* so to controul,  
 To rapture the imprison'd soul,  
 And sweetest Heav'n on earth display,  
 That to be Heaven Anne *hath a way*;  
     She *hath a way*,  
     Anne Hathaway,  
 To be Heav'n's self Anne *hath a way*!

## ALLEGORY.

An Allegory (Greek *Allegoria*, from *allo*, another (thing) and *agoreo*, or *agoreyo*, I narrate,) is a discourse made up of a continued allusion; so that, while professedly treating of one subject, it has an observable similitude to another, to which every part may be metaphorically applied. Pope's "Essay on Man" commences with a well-sustained Allegory, in which his pursuit is figured under that of a sportsman in quest of game; but it is needless to quote what is to be found in every library. The following elegant verses are less commonly to be met with:

## THE PARTERRE.

I rais'd a little fairy bower,  
And fenc'd it round with care;  
And gemm'd it, too, with many a flower,  
To scent the ambient air.

I plac'd a little Elfin there,  
The loveliest of her kind;  
And, as her form was passing fair,  
As fair believ'd her mind.

I offer'd there my treasur'd heart,  
A tribute at her feet,  
Nor sigh'd with Liberty to part,  
But deem'd such bondage sweet.

And there grew Honesty around,  
To show that heart sincere ;  
And there the Sensitive was found,  
That trembled still with fear.

Heart's-case, too, there my fancy placed,  
And there methought it grew ;  
And Violets, which my bosom graced,  
Brought Constancy to view.

And there the amorous Woodbine twined  
Around the blushing Rose ;—  
Such were the scents that bless'd my mind,  
And gave my soul repose.

O, yes! it was the sweetest bower  
That Fancy ever wove ;  
And, heedless of Misfortune's power,  
I liv'd alone to love.

Yet soon the dream was chaced away ;  
Inconstancy appear'd,  
And blighted every flower so gay,  
Which Self-delusion rear'd.

My Violets, bruise'd, were scatter'd round,  
Here's Honesty o'erthrown,  
There Love-lies-bleeding on the ground,  
And Heart's-case trampled down.

The Sensitive, affection's pride,  
Beneath a blast so rude,  
Shrunk, by the deadly Nightshade's side,  
From base Ingratitude!

The Woodbine, too, was rudely torn  
From the fond blushing tree,  
Whose flowers all wither'd,—while a thorn  
Alone remain'd for me :

Yes, deep within this injur'd heart  
Lies hid the thorn of Care ;  
And, till with life itself I part,  
It still will rankle there.

The "Vision of Mirza," so universally known, is a prose Allegory which has scarcely an equal in the language. One, of a lighter cast, from the French of Fontenelle, will be given in a subsequent part of this volume, where its place will be more appropriate.

There is a lengthened period in the history of European literature which is almost filled with the species of composition of which we now speak. "The taste for poetical Allegory and Vision (says an anonymous author\*) was derived from the Provençal writers, which probably was introduced into England by Richard I. who ranks among the most eminent of the Troubadours. It was highly in fashion in the age of Lydgate, Gower, and Chaucer, and continued to be so down to the age of Spencer, and the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Every story had its moral, and was told in the way of Allegory and Vision.

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\* The Editor of "The King's Quair."

The machinery of these poems were fiery dragons, giants and fairies; the scenery enchanted forests, castles and lakes. The virtues, vices, and passions were personified, and the mythology was a mixture of the Greek, Roman, Arabian, and Christian. The advancement of learning has long banished this false taste; and it cannot be denied, that perhaps the meanest modern composition, even the flimsy flowers of a monthly miscellany, will better stand the test of criticism; yet how fleetly do these short lived embryos vanish, never to appear again, at the approach of the great visionary figures, called up by our old bards! How is the imagination carried away in their lofty flights into the regions of fancy, adorned with the glow of genuine poetry!"

The Clergy, also, adopted a similar style of writing, in which they considered themselves warranted, by the mystical allusions of the Old Testament. The "*Pelerinage de vie humaine*," (of which an old manuscript still exists in the Library at Lyons) an Allegorical French Poem in Rhyme, is a spiritual parody of the "*Romaunt of the Rose*"; and was translated and published in most of the continental languages, immediately after the invention of printing. "*The Parable of the Pilgrim*," by Dr. Symon Patrick (afterwards, in succession, Bishop of Chichester and

of Ely) was first published in 1665, and speedily passed through several editions. This gave place to "The Pilgrim's Progress," a work of a very different cast: the rigid Calvinistic principles of which acquired for it immediate popularity; while the management of the Allegory has given no small portion of fame to the name of Bunyan.

**APOLOGUE—FABLE—PARABLE—COMPARISON.**

The Apologue, Greek *apo*, from, and *logos*, a speech,—(because meaning something beyond the literal words) is a short allegorical fiction, from which a separate meaning, or moral lesson is drawn. It is only another name for an *Æsopian* Fable, in which animals, vegetables, stocks and stones speak and act as monitors to mankind.

An Apologue, or Fable, differs from a Tale in being written expressly for the sake of the moral. Let there be no moral and there is no Fable. The word Fable is used here in a confined sense; for, generally speaking, all literary fabrications are Fables:—We have fabulous histories and fabulous cosmogonies. There are few modern Fables that are sufficiently concise. Those of Gay often lengthen into Tales, or lose themselves in Allegory. The following, from the Italian of Baldi, has been quoted for its singularity:

"Sicily addressed Neptune, praying to be re-



joined with Italy:—You are foolish, answered the God, if you do not know how much better it is to be a small head than a great foot.”—“The allusion to the form of Italy, which resembles a Boot, gives an air of conceit to the turn of the moral.”

A Parable (Greek *parabole*, from *paraballein*, to compare,) is a Fable, but is more generally used to denominate those allegorical Tales, in Scripture, which were introduced for the purpose of illustrating some truth to which they have a similitude: such is that of “The Prodigal Son” and many others.

An author, whose name is unknown and whose work has been unjustly neglected, has made some excellent remarks on these and other literary subjects:\*

“Comparisons, Proverbial Speeches, Parables and Fables, may be easily converted, the one into the other.

Sometimes the moral is expressed, sometimes understood. By some writers it is set in front, as by Fontaine; by some, at the end, as by Æsop; and occasionally it is placed in the middle of the work.

Those moral sentences which we find so fre-

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\* “Genuine Letters from a Gentleman to a young Lady his Pupil.” 2 vols. 12mo. 1772.

quently interspersed in Homer, Virgil, Milton, &c. before, in the middle, or at the close of some interesting narration, are entirely in the nature of morals to a Fable.

I shall throw a little illustration on these points, particularly relative to proverbial sentences and phrases, and then release my dear scholar.

We have a proverb in Scotland,

“Cocks are free of horse corn;”

meaning to imply that people are liberal or profuse of what belongs to another.

Again, we have,

“Use a cat to the churn, and she will call it custom;”

signifying, if you accustom your servants, or other folks, to make too frequent use of what is yours, they will think, at last, that they have acquired a right to it.

How easily now may these be changed into a Comparison! for instance, “As a Cat that has been allowed,” &c.—“As a Cock that sits in a manger,” &c.—or into a Fable, as, “A widow had a favourite cat, whom she indulged,” and so on. These simple examples clearly show how closely the figures are allied.

A Fable or Story may be either true or false, it matters not which, so that a moral accompanies it, and flows naturally from it.

Here follows a quotation from Spencer, where a Fable, Comparison, and Moral are finely wrought up together.

As when a weary traveller, that strays  
By muddy shore of broad seven-mouthed Nile,  
Unweeting of the per'lous wandering ways,  
Doth meet a cruel, crafty crocodile,  
Which, in false grief hiding his harmful guile,  
Doth weep full sore, and sheddeth tender tears,  
The foolish man, that pities, all this while,  
His mournful plight, is swallow'd unawares,  
Forgetful of his own, who minds another's cares."

#### ENIGMA, OR RIDDLE.

The general allusion of an Allegory ought to be easily perceived, otherwise it becomes an Enigma, a Greek word signifying an obscure speech. Such Allegories, made up of ambiguous terms, are formed on purpose to exercise the mind in discovering their meanings.

Enigmas are the amusements of wit and ingenuity; but they hold no higher rank in literature. Many of them, however, are given in verse, and, as small poetical pieces, are not without merit. The most recent, to which any character is attached, is the following, said to have been written by Lord Byron:

'Twas whisper'd in heaven, 'twas mutter'd in hell,  
And Echo caught faintly the sound as it fell :

On the confines of earth 'twas permitted to rest,  
 And the depths of the ocean its presence confest.  
 'Twill be found in the sphere when 'tis riven asunder,  
 Be seen in the light'ning, and heard in the thunder.  
 'Twas allotted to man with his earliest breath,  
 Attends at his birth and awaits him in death;  
 It presides o'er his happiness, honour, and health,  
 Is the prop of his house, and the end of his wealth:  
 Without it the soldier, the seaman, may roam,  
 But woe to the wretch who expels it from home.  
 In the whispers of conscience its voice will be found,  
 Nor e'en in the whirlwind of passion be drown'd:  
 'Twill not soften the heart, and though deaf to the ear,—  
 'Twill make it acutely and instantly hear.  
     But in shade let it rest, like a delicate flower,—  
     Oh! breathe on it softly,—it dies in an hour.

The following by an unknown Latin writer, is  
 of very ancient date:

Ego sum principium mundi, et finis seculorum;  
 Ego sum trinus et unus, et tamen non sum Deus.

#### ANAGRAM.

The ANAGRAM (Greek *ana* backwards and *gramma*, a letter) is the transposition of the letters of a word, or short sentence, so as to form another word, or phrase, with a different meaning. Thus, the letters that compose the word *stone* may be arranged either into *tones* or *notes*; and (taking *j* and *v* as duplicates of *i* and *u*) the

letters of the alphabet may be formed into the words *Styx*, *Phlegm*, *Quiz*, *Frown'd*, and *Back*.

The English, German and other Gothic languages are but little calculated for this play of letters; for what metamorphoses can be made of such words as *strength* and *schwarz*? The Latin and its derivative tongues, having a greater proportion of vowels and liquids, are much more fitted for the purpose; and, although we do not know that the Romans ever made Anagrams, it seems to have been a favourite amusement among the idle Monks of the middle ages. Pilate's question, *quid est veritas?* (what is truth?) has been happily answered by the Anagram, '*Est vir qui adest,*' It is the man who is before you.

D'Israeli, in the third volume of his "Curiosities of Literature," records a number of Anagrams, on which his "Monthly Reviewer" gives the following anecdote:

"In the Paper on Anagrams, the best of all is omitted; that with which Jablonski welcomed the visit of Stanislaus, King of Poland, and his noble relatives of the house of Lescinski, to the annual examination of the students under his care, at the gymnasium of Lissa. The recitations closed with an heroic dance, in which each youth carried a shield incrimed with a legend of the letters contained in the words *Domus Lescinia*. After

a new evolution, the boys exhibited the words *Ades incolumis*: next, *Omnis es lucida*: fourthly, *Omne sis lucida*: fifthly, *Mane sidus loci*: sixthly, *Sis columna Dei*; and at the conclusion, *I scande solium*."

Anagrams were formerly (and perhaps are still) employed in Cypher-writing. Newton was in the habit of concealing his mathematical discoveries by depositing the principles in the form of Latin Anagrams; by which he might afterwards claim the merit of the invention, without its being stolen by others. At one period the French kings kept a regular salaried Anagrammatist, as the English still have a Poet Laureat. We are apt to wonder at such a custom; but perhaps he was merely the Decypherer of the Government, whose office it was to carry on and to detect secret correspondence.

### SIMILE.

A Simile (Latin *simile*, like) is the likening the subject, of which we speak, to another subject having some similarity, in order to render the description more forcible and perspicuous. In a strict sense, it differs from Comparison in which the subjects may have an obvious likeness. This figure is extremely frequent both in prose and poetry; and it is often as necessary to the exhi-

bition of the thought, as it is ornamental to the language in which that thought is conveyed.

A writer in favour of Republican Governments, after remarking on the greater facility of their establishment in new than in old countries, adds,

“While other constitutions must submit to the modification of a thousand variable causes, that which is impressed on a primitive community may safely be the precise result of rigorous metaphysical principles. The more *regular* the government, in this sense of the word, the more it will combine prosperity with vigour, and with the ideal beauty of the sage. Praxitelles strikes the block of marble, and a Venus starts forth: but had a coarser hand already sculptured a Fury, who would have been able to chisel her into a Grace?”

The subjects here compared are of different kinds; but there exists a sufficient congruity in the metaphor to warrant the introduction of the Simile.

A Simile of a like kind, in which the workings of the mind are illustrated by visible objects, is employed by Parnel:

A life so sacred, such serene repose,  
Seem'd heaven itself, till one suggestion rose:

That vice should triumph, virtue vice obey,  
This sprung some doubt of Providence's sway.  
His hopes no more a pleasing prospect boast,  
And all the tenor of his soul is lost.  
So, when a smooth expanse receives impress  
Calm nature's image on its watery breast,  
Down bend the banks, the trees depending grow;  
And skies beneath with answering colours glow:  
But, if a stone the gentle sea divide,  
Swift ruffling circles curl on every side;  
And glimmering fragments of a broken sun,  
Banks, trees and skies in thick disorder run.

We have distinguished between Simile and Comparison; but some writers on Rhetoric (and Dr. Blair among the number) have treated the two words as synonymous. If, however, the reader understand the meaning of his author, the minute distinctions of classifications are of little consequence. "Comparisons," says Blair, "founded on philosophical discoveries, or on any thing in which persons of a certain trade only, or a certain profession, are conversant, attain not their proper effect. They should be taken from those illustrious, noted objects, which most of the readers either have seen, or can strongly conceive."

Nevertheless, soon after this warning was published, a Poet of the first class appeared, whose Similes were almost wholly of the de-



scription thus reprobated. Contrary to all the ancient canons of criticism, his comparisons themselves (which are intended for illustration) required notes of explanation. But success with such daring was the result of no ordinary genius. Dr. Darwin not only pleased, but created his admirers. Nearly forty years have now elapsed since the first appearance of "The Botanic Garden"; but these years have not passed in vain. So much more generally has science been cultivated, that, we believe, the beauties of the following extract will not pass unobserved even by the Readers of an elementary work:

"Nymphs! you first taught to pierce the secret caves  
Of humid earth, and lift her ponderous waves;  
Bade, with quick stroke, the sliding piston bear  
The viewless columns of incumbent air:—  
Press'd by th' incumbent air, the floods below,  
Through opening valves, in foaming torrents flow;  
Foot after foot, with lessen'd impulse, move,  
And rising seek the vacancy above:—  
So, when the mother, bending o'er his charms,  
Clasps her fair nurseling in delighted arms;  
Throws the thin kerchief from her neck of snow,  
And half unveils the pearly orbs below;  
With sparkling eye, the blameless plunderer owns  
Her soft embraces, and endearing tones:  
Seeks the salubrious fount, with opening lips,  
Spreads his enquiring hands, and smiles, and sips."

The attempt to illustrate a subject by comparing it with one still less known is the crying sin of young poets. It is a Bathos, or sinking of the thought, which is always disagreeable to a cultivated taste. For example,

“ The *silent* moon, with her locks of light,  
Peep’d through the shadowy veil of night;  
And the sparkling stars began to shine,  
Like scatter’d gems in a diamond mine ”

Granting the facts, that there are ‘*silent moons*,’ and ‘*Diamond mines*,’ that are lighted with ‘*scatter’d gems*,’ it is really no compliment to the stars to liken them to precious stones. Besides the Simile is useless; for the twinkling of the stars is as generally observed as the radiations of the diamond.

Another class of Similes to be avoided is that of endeavouring to illustrate the known by the unknown. In this respect the following lines seem faulty:

“ ——— from behind  
Those Persian hangings, that but ill could screen  
The Haram’s loveliness, white hands were seen  
Waving embroider’d scarfs, whose motion gave  
A perfume forth;—*like those the Houris wave*  
*When beckoning to their bowers th’ immortal Brave.*”

Nothing is more common than for a young

poet to compare his Mistress to an Angel; or rather to a seraph, which he, somehow, supposes to be more decidedly feminine.—The plants watered by her hands are such as scent the gardens of Elysium; and her song is the music of the Spheres.—He forgets that the bowers of Paradise have been reared by mortals; and that they do not contain a single shrub, or flower, which has not been transplanted from the Earth.

#### ANTITHESIS.

An Antithesis, from the Greek *antitithemi*, I oppose, is the counterpart of a simile. It presents two subjects in opposition to one another, for the purpose of rendering their distinction more apparent: as,

“A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger.”

And the following from the Guardian:

“True Honour, though it be a different principle from Religion, is that which produces the same effects. The lines of action, though drawn from different parts, terminate in the same point. Religion embraces virtue as it is enjoined by the laws of God; Honour, as it is graceful and ornamental to human nature. The religious man fears, the man of honour scorns, to do an ill action. The latter considers vice as something

that is beneath him; the former as something that is offensive to the Divine Being;—the one as what is unbecoming, the other as what is forbidden.”

Antithesis, by placing subjects in contrast, prompts the judgment, and is, therefore, a common figure in logical Rhetoric. It is, probably, on this account, that it is such a favorite with Mr. Pope; for, whether right or wrong, he always reasons. In the ‘Essay on Man’ this figure occurs in every page: the following lines, from his ‘Characters of Women,’ are of a lighter kind:

“ See how the world its veterans rewards!  
A youth of frolics,—an old age of cards;  
Fair to no purpose,—artful to no end;  
Young without lovers,—old without a friend;  
A fop their passion,—but their prize a sot;  
Alive, ridiculous,—and dead, forgot!”

### CLIMAX.

The gradual ascent of a subject, from a less to a higher interest, is termed a Climax, a Greek word signifying *gradation*. The speaker makes an assertion which, he feels, is not strong enough for his thought;—he adds another, and another, until he reaches that point which his mind contemplates to be sufficiently expressive; and then the

climax (or *climbing*) ends. Shakspeare furnishes some fine examples :

“ You all do know this Mantle, I remember  
 The first time euer *Cæsar* put it on,  
 ’Twas on a Summer’s Euening in his Tent,  
 That day he ouercame the *Neruij*.  
 Looke, in this place ran *Cassius* Dagger through,  
 See what a rent the enuious *Caska* made:  
 Through this, the well-beloued *Brutus* stabb’d,  
 And as he pluck’d his cursed Steele away:  
 Marke how the blood of *Cæsar* followed it,—  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 This was the most unkindest cut of all.  
 For when the Noble *Cæsar* saw him stab,  
 Ingratitude, more strong then Traitors armes,  
 Quite uanquish’d him : then burst his Mighty heart.”

*Julius Cæsar.*

“ Our Reuels now are ended : These our actors,  
 (As I foretold you) were all Spirits, and  
 Are melted into Ayre, into thin Ayre,  
 And like the baselesse fabricke of this uision  
 The Clowd-capt Towres, the gorgeous Pallaces,  
 The solemne Temples, the great Globe it selfe,  
 Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolue,  
 And like this insubstantiall Pageant faded  
 Leaue not a racke behinde,”

*Tempest.*

#### ANTICLIMAX.

The descent from great things to small is an

Anticlimax; and is allowable only in ludicrous composition. Martinus Scriblerus, in his Treatise on the Bathos, or Art of Sinking in Poetry, has left us scarcely any thing to add under this head. "Considering," says he, "how many promising geniuses of this age are wandering (as I may say) in the dark without a guide, I have undertaken this arduous but necessary task, to lead them as it were by the hand, and step by step, the gentle down-hill way to the Bathos;—the *bottom*, the end, the central point, the *ne plus ultra* of true modern poesy!" His examples are numerous, and applied to many of the Figures of Speech which we have already described as well as to that now under consideration. It may be observed, however, that Scriblerus dwells solely on their abuse.

*On the Extent of the British Arms.*

"Under the tropic is our language spoke,  
And part of Flanders hath received our yoke."

*On a Warrior.*

"And thou Dalhousie, the great god of war,  
Lieutenant-colonel to the Earl of Mar."

PERIPHRAISIS, OR CIRCUMLOCUTION.—EUPHEMISM.—AMPLIFICATION.

The Greek *periphrasis* and the Latin *circumlo-*

*cutio* are, each, equivalent to the English '*round-about expression*;' which explanation is, itself, an example of the verbal figure; because denoting in three words what Periphrasis, or Circumlocution, does in one. The definitions of words as they appear in Dictionaries are Periphrases. Those Circumlocutions are necessary; and the same necessity often occurs in translating from foreign languages, when we can find no word in our own exactly equivalent to that which we have to translate.

Words or phrases that call up disagreeable ideas are, in polite language, softened by means of circumlocutions. In these changes, as well as in most others, custom is the guide. It is reckoned more decorous, for example, to the memory of the departed, to say that 'he perished on the scaffold' than that 'he was hanged.' Such softening is called EUPHEMISM; a Greek word signifying *a kind speech*.

AMPLIFICATION is the expansion of a discourse by enumerating circumstances which are intended, by the Orator, to excite more strongly in his audience the feelings of approbation or of blame. It is dwelling upon the subject longer than is actually necessary for its enunciation; and is in so far a species of Circumlocution.

Periphrases of every kind require careful ma-

nagement; because, perhaps more than any other Figure of Speech, they are apt to run into bombast: For examples of this extreme we shall again quote *Scriblerus*.

“*Periphrase* is another great aid to *prolixity*, being a diffused circumlocutory manner of expressing a known idea, which should be so mysteriously couched, as to give the reader the pleasure of guessing what it is that the author can possibly mean, and a strange surprise when he finds it. The poet I last mentioned (Blackmore) is incomparable in this figure :

‘A waving sea of heads was round me spread,  
And still fresh streams the gazing deluge fed.’

Here is a waving sea of heads, which, by a fresh stream of heads, grows to be a gazing deluge of heads. You come at last to find, it means *a great crowd*.”

“We may define *Amplification* to be making the most of a thought: it is the spinning wheel of the *Bathos*, which draws out and spreads it in the finest thread. There are Amplifiers who can extend half a dozen thin thoughts over a whole folio; but for which, the tale of many a vast romance, and the substance of many a fair volume, might be reduced into the size of a primer.

“A passage in the civth. Psalm, ‘He looks on



the earth and it trembles. He touches the hills, and they smoke' is thus amplified by the same author.\*

' The Hills forget they're fix'd, and in their fright  
Cast off their weight, and ease themselves for flight:  
The Woods, with terror wing'd, outfly the wind,  
And leave the heavy panting hills behind.'

" You here see the hills not only trembling, but shaking off the woods from their backs, to run the faster: after this you are presented with a foot race of mountains and woods, where the woods distance the mountains, that, like corpulent pursy fellows, come puffing and panting a vast way behind them."

We might, advantageously, add other quotations from the work before us; but the perusal of the whole of this admirable Satire is indispensable to every one who would study the principles of English composition.

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\* Blackmore.

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## CHAPTER XII.

## OF PROSODY.

The enunciation of the common people of Greece, like that of all other nations, must have been varied according to the natural feelings of the Speaker; but, in the studied harangues of their Orators, and in the chant and chorus of their Dramas, a system of intonation was adopted, —regulated by means of marks termed accents, the powers of which are now unknown. It was that system, combining thought with sound, which produced those miraculous effects which are attributed to the music of the Greeks. Music and song were then invariably combined; and the words are still synonymous, in the language of the poet. Apollo was the God of Verse; but he was never seen without his lyre. In these latter times, however, Poetry has become an Art, and Music a Science; and it will scarcely be accounted a caricature of this modern division, when we say that the former teaches the pleasing arrangement of *thoughts*, independent of *sounds*; and the latter, the pleasing succession of *sounds* unaccompanied by *thoughts*. These things could never have been conceived by the ancients. Enunciation with them was the soul of language;

and tones without corresponding ideas were left (if truly there) to the choristers of the woods. Even now, the divorce is not complete. The Poet yet mutters his wayward fancies; and the Musician, unless he is hackneyed in his trade, still joins his voice to his harp: or he associates its tones with the pensive, or the pleasing, remembrances of other days.—But we are wandering from our subject.

We have already spoken of Accents, under the general head of Composition. The Accent, in English, merely determines the syllable of a word, on which the stress of pronunciation rests; but this stress may be either on the consonant or on the vowel. In the former case, the syllable is pronounced in a shut or contracted manner, while, in the latter, it is full and in some degree prolonged. *Not'* and *nóte*, for instance, are distinctly different with regard to time; and, though we will not pretend to say that the one syllable is exactly double the other, we have, to a certain extent at least, the *longs* and *shorts* of the classic tongues. The accents, as divided into the grave, the acute and the circumflex, have no distinguishing marks in our language. They are left to the unfettered impulse of natural feeling, or to be taught (if they can be taught,) by the Masters of Elocution.

In every collection of sentences, regularly pronounced, the ear will be struck with a succession of syllables, or simple sounds, differing in their duration, and some of which will be more forcible than others. The discourse, then, will assume a character of melody or of discord, according as the succession shall be pleasing or grating to the ear. A selection of those sounds, in a regulated order, may be made to form a sort of chant,—a short piece of music, performed on two strings. The short and long syllables will mark the time, while the ideas which the words convey will prompt its tone and expression. This composition is a Verse. Two or more Verses complete the Chant, and constitute a Stanza,—one or more Stanzas, united in their subject, form the body of a Poem:—its soul must be the breath of Inspiration.

Independent of the concord of sweet sounds Poetry must, in all ages, have possessed some fascinating spell in its language, before it could have acquired its power over the minds of the multitude. This arose from the subject. The records of the life of a Hero, who falls in defence of his country, warm the hearts of those who emulate his glory; and the praises of the Gods swell the breast of the devotee. The description of the pains and pleasures of Love find a

responsive string in the youthful heart; and Tales of the Wild and the Wonderful arrest the attention of the timid and the ignorant. Such are the Subjects of Poetry; and, we may add, that, among a superstitious people the Poets sometimes assumed a more imposing character: they were Seers and Soothsayers,—they saw the future in visions, and predicted the coming events. In all cases, an invisible world was ready at the call of the Bard. He peopled Earth, Sea and Air with Spirits of his own creation. They are the Machinery with which he yet works, and, in rude ages, they were mistaken for realities. Men who were not its dupes favoured the delusion; because it was considered as a powerful engine in the cause of virtue. Tartarus was the abode of the Furies; and the ghosts of the departed were brought back from the other world to haunt the steps of the murderer. The fictions of the Poet were received as truths; and followed, if they did not create, the superstitions of the people. Such tales as still impress the nursery with terror, or with delight, had once an influence over riper years; and even now the mind, though aware of the deception, is willingly led captive. Leaving probability behind, it follows with ardour the combats of Demigods; or it wanders through the secret caverns of the Earth with the Fairies

and the Genii. The empire of the Poet is more extended than Nature: it is that of Imagination. He is the Creator of Worlds, and it is hence that he is said to be animated by a divine furor,—by the Inspiration of the Gods.

The question is often asked, but seldom answered, What is a Poem? It is a composition of words so modulated as to make a pleasing impression on the ear; while, at the same time, the ideas that they convey communicate, to the hearer, a species of enthusiasm, by which, forgetting his own identity, he becomes wholly absorbed in the imaginations of the author. Poetry, then, is not a *thing*, but a *relation* between the Poem and the mind of the Reader. If the effect is produced, the title cannot be refused. He who feels his soul exalted, by the Gospel Sonnets of Ralph Erskine, has as good a right to call that Reverend Gentleman a Poet, as the most enthusiastic admirer of the *Paradise Lost* has to bestow that epithet upon Milton. There are few, perhaps, even of those who have afterwards become fastidious in their taste, that have not, in infancy, shed tears over the *Babes of the Wood*; and there have been men, of ripened years and literary fame, who have dignified, with the name of Epic Poem, the murderous ballad of Chevy Chase.

In our definition of a Poem, we have included the modulation of its language with respect to sound, which, if not indispensable, is assuredly its greatest ornament. It is in vain that we endeavour to collect our scattered thoughts, when dragged through the jolting inequalities of a rugged road; but we may indulge the reveries of imagination, while our boat glides on the smooth surface of a lake: and, in consequence of the regularity of the intervals, even the dashings of the oars become too imperceptible to disturb the dream. The highest value of Versification, is when the idea of its structure vanishes from the mind.

The Writers on Greek and Latin Prosody divide a Verse into *feet*, each *foot* consisting of two, of three, or of four syllables. These are similar to the Musical Bars; and received the name of Feet, because their time was regulated by the movement of the Foot of the Corypheus, or director of the Greek chorus: this action was called *beating time*. The following are the Latin denominations to which we shall, sometimes, have occasion to refer. The Feet of the Greek poets are much more numerous.

The Latins counted twenty-eight sorts of Feet; twelve simple and sixteen compound. The simple feet were either dissyllables or trisyllables, and the compound were tetrasyllables.

The species of Dissyllabic Feet are four:

1. Pyrrhic, two shorts (U U) as *Deus*, and the English, *fitted*.
2. Spondee, two longs (— —) as *omnes*, and the English, *love-lorn*.
3. Iambus, one short and one long (U —) as *pius*, and the English, *deplore*.
4. Trochee one long and one short (— U) *servat*, and the English, *bounding*.

The Compound or Tetrasyllabic feet are made up of all the binary combinations of the Dissyllables, and, not being applicable to the English language, they need not here be minutely described.

The simple trisyllabic feet are eight,

1. Dactyl, one long and two short, (— U U) as *carmina*, and the English, *bounteous*.
2. Anapaest, two short and one long, (U U —) as *animos*, and the English, *disappoint*.
3. Tribrach, three short, (U U U) as *melius*, and the English, *indigent*.
4. Amphibrach, one short, one long and one short, (U — U) as, *honore*, and the English, *depended*.
5. Molossus, three long, (— — —) as *delectant*, and the English, 'Fade day-dream.'
6. Amphimacer, one long, one short and one long (— U —) as *insito*, and the English, 'Flowery fields.'
7. Bacchius, one short and two long (U — —) as *dolores*, and the English, 'The Sky-lark.'
8. Antibacchius, two long and one short (— — U) as, *pelluntur*, and the English, 'Flow gently.'



As there is properly but one accented syllable in the word, and an accented syllable only can be *long*, there is never more than *one long*, in an English polysyllable. On this account, if we would endeavour to imitate the march of the four last mentioned feet, it must be by means of two or more words. It is the same with the spondee which when introduced (as it occasionally is for the sake of variety) is either formed by two separate monosyllables, or by such as have not yet been regularly conjoined. It was otherwise in the Greek and Latin; for, in those languages, every syllable in a verse is believed to have had, either naturally, or from situation, its fixt time of pronunciation, without any relation to *accent* as the word is now understood. This time was termed its *quantity*. The arrangement, or order of succession of the quantities, constituted the *Rhythm* (Greek *rhythmos*) of the verse. A sort of key to those regulated arrangements was prefixed to lyric poems, in numeral characters; and hence the Greek *rhythmos*, the Latin *numerus* and the English *number*, when speaking of versification, are synonymous:—

“ I lisp’d in *numbers* for the *numbers* came.”

The varieties of classic verse are many, and are differently denominated according to the measures (Greek *meter*) or number of feet which they

severally contain; or they take the names of the Poets by whom they were more particularly adopted. Attempts have been made to adapt some of those ancient measures to the modern languages, but generally without success. The *Hexameter*, (Greek *hex*, six) or measure of six feet, is also termed the *Heroic*; because it is that of the Epic poems of Homer and of Virgil. The first four feet may be Dactyls or Spondees indifferently; the fifth is a Dactyl and the sixth a Spondee. The indiscriminate use of Dactyls and Spondees, in the greater portion of the feet, together with several customary exceptions, give a wide range to this kind of versification, on which it would be foreign to our present purpose to comment. The following are examples of Latin Hexameters,—*scanned*, that is, divided into feet. To *Scan* is derived from *scandere*, to climb, or move by steps.

Aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare Poëtæ. *Hor.*

Tu nihil invitâ dicas faciasve Minervâ. *Id.*

Intonsi crines longâ cervice fluebant. *Tibull.*

which are thus scanned.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Aut pro-	desse vo-	lunt, aut	dele-	ctare Po-	ëtæ,
Tu nihil	invi-	tâ di-	cas faci-	asve Mi-	nervâ.
Inton-	si cri-	nes lon-	gâ cer-	vice flu-	ebant.

The manufacture of English Hexameters was

undertaken by Sir Philip Sidney two hundred and fifty years ago; but it never got into repute; and the attempt was forgotten, until it was renewed by the present Laureate in his "Vision of Judgment." This poem has been published nearly ten years without its versification having acquired a single imitator. The German Poets have been more successful; for Klopstock's "Messiah," which has many admirers, is written in this kind of verse. The Feet, however, of this writer are less confined than the Latin, seeing that he substitutes, at will, Trochees for Spondees. Why this sort of Verse has not hitherto been found agreeable to the English taste may be accounted for on examining a specimen. We shall take it from "The Vision of Judgment" when speaking of Washington:

"Thoughtful awhile he gazed; severe, but serene, was  
his aspect;

Calm, but stern; like one whom no compassion could  
weaken,

Neither could doubt deter, nor violent impulses alter:  
Lord of his own resolves,—of his own heart absolute  
master.

Awful spirit! his place was with ancient sages and  
heroes:

Fabius, Aristides, and Solon, and Epaminondas."

English dissyllables, in consequence of the

accent, are necessarily either Iambics or Trochees; and, therefore, the terminating words, *aspect*, *weaken*, *alter*, *master*, and *heroes*, require a strained pronunciation before they can be drawled out into Spondees. The fifth foot creates no difficulty, for our language is full of Dactyls of which *impulses* and *absolute*, in the preceding lines, are examples. How the first four feet can be made up by any intermixture of Dactyls and Spondees we know not: the latter requires the succession of two obviously emphatic monosyllables, and the former would lengthen the verse so as to be intolerable to the English ear. The consequence is, that the first four feet of such Hexameters must be always prosaic and the last inaccurate; and the whole costs almost as much trouble to the Reader as to the Poet. The scanning, such as it is, can only be exercised upon the two last feet; for the former part of the line is nothing but recitative. Indeed, the measure of English Hexameters is only measure to the eye; and were it not for the abrupt terminations of the lines, the sentences would be merely a kind of poetical prose; distinguishable from common prose, solely by its inversion and declamatory mood. The following example is extracted from the poem already quoted. It will be an exercise for a learner to cut up the paragraph into verses.

“On them is the guilt of the contest, who, for wicked ends, with foul arts of faction and falsehood, kindled and fed the flame: but verily they have their guerdon. Thou and I are free from offence. And would that the nations, learning of us, would lay aside all wrongful resentment, all injurious thought, and honouring each in the other kindred courage and virtue, and cognate knowledge and freedom, live in brotherhood wisely conjoined. We set the example. They who stir up strife, and would break that natural concord, evil they sow, and sorrow will they reap for their harvest.”

There have been English imitations of other species of ancient verse; but, as none of them have been successful, a single example will be sufficient for illustration. The Sapphic verse consists of five feet, which are usually disposed in the following manner:

1	2	3	4	5
Trochee	Spondee	Dactyl	Trochee	Trochee
— u	— —	— u u	— u	— u

The Strophe, or Stanza, is, in most cases, made up of three such verses, followed by an Adonic, or verse of two feet, thus:

Swēet thē | skȳ-lārċ | sīngs, ōn hēr | sōarīng | pīnion;  
 Mōrning | dāwns brīght, | shīnīng īn | āll īts | glōry;  
 Flōwers thāt | fāde lōve- | lōrn īn thē | nīght,rē- | vīvīng,  
 Blōōm īn thē | sūn-bēam.

Dr. Watts's Ode entitled "The Day of Judgment," is specified to be "attempted in English Sapphick." It begins thus:—

"When the fierce north wind with his airy forces  
Rears up the Baltic to a foaming fury;  
And the red lightening with a storm of hail comes  
Rushing amain down:  
How the poor sailors stand amaz'd and tremble!  
While the hoarse thunder, like a bloody trumpet,  
Roars a loud onset to the gaping waters  
Quick to devour them.

The Adonic (made up of a Dactyl and a Spondee, or a Trochee,) was so called, because originally used in the Threnodies, or lamentations for the death of Adonis.

Although there are certainly long and short syllables in the English language, they are apt to change their character by the effect of accent; for, when the accent (or *stress*) falls upon a close consonant, it produces a slight pause in the pronunciation, which has the effect of lengthening the syllable that would otherwise be short. Thus, *whet* (in the verb to whet) is naturally short, and *stone* is long; but the word *whetstone* having the accent on the first syllable prevents the voice from dwelling on the second, and thereby neutralizes the word with respect to quantity. There

are, therefore, two principles,—quantity and stress;—and the judicious intermixture of these constitutes the harmony of English verse. We have before observed, that our Dissyllables are seldom, if ever, Spondees; and, consequently, (with the exception of a few recent compounds, such as *day-star* and *moon-beam*, which have scarcely acquired an accent) the succession of two long syllables requires a management which has prevented such feet as included that succession from forming the basis of any system of English Versification. Spondees may, however, be occasionally introduced, and they often are so with propriety and elegance. The Tribrach, or succession of three short syllables, is another foot which is difficult of introduction; because we seldom find three successive syllables without one of them being either long or accented. On the same principle, our dissyllables, which are numerous, are never pure Pyrrhics. In consequence of those peculiarities in the language, English Versification has been generally limited to two kinds:

1. To feet of two syllables,—either Iambics or Trochees.

2. To feet of three syllables,—either Anapæsts, Amphimacers, or Dactyls.

These denominations, however, do not here

express the same ideas as they do in the scanning of classic verse. The English poet is guided by his ear, and reads those learned names only to forget them. The length of the verse is dependent on another circumstance to which we shall now advert.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

## OF RHYME AND ALLITERATION.

It is plain that, were every word a monosyllable, we should have no such thing as Accent in the sense of *Stress*. Its place would be filled by Emphasis, which is regulated solely by the feelings of the speaker. There would then be no marks to inform the reader where those emphases should be laid, and the chant of verse would be uncertain, if not wholly unknown. Such was nearly the case, at a certain period, among the nations of the North; and their poets had recourse to other expedients, to adapt their songs to the music of the harp: those were Rhyme and Alliteration.

The Saxon *hriman*, or *hryman*, is to cry out, or make a sound, whether pleasing or mournful; and is so far equivalent to the Swedish *skalla*, to echo, or to ring. *Hringan*, or *ringan*, in Saxon, is to ring; and *hrime*, *rim*, or *rima*, the origin of the English Rhyme, is resonance, or echo. *Rim*, or *rima*, was also *number*,—the *rythmos* of the Greeks;—and Arithmetic, in the language of our ancestors, was *rimcraft*. From *skalla*, the poets of Scan-

dinavia had the name of *Skalds*, in the same manner as our versifiers have been termed Rhymesters: the latter, however, is, with us, become a degraded appellation, because a poet is supposed to have higher qualifications than the petty talent of tagging Rhymes. In modern usage Rhyme is the similitude of sounds, recurring at certain intervals, as distinguished from the Rhythm, or relation of the feet. The arrangement of the Rhythm is the *metre*, or measure of the verse.

The Rhymes (ring, or clink, of syllables) now mark the termination of the verse; but, in former times, they followed so rapidly that two or three Rhymes were often written in the same line. The following by Snorro Sturlson, an Icelandic poet of the 13th century, has an excess of jingle:

“ Ræsir glæsir  
 Rökkva dökva  
 Huitom ritom  
 Hreina reina  
 Skreytir breytir  
 Hrafna stafna  
 Hringa stinga  
 Hiörtum svörtum

In English—“ The king richly clothes his rustic warriors. Our bounteous prince adorns them, neat and expert, with bright armour, to

provide transfix'd heaps of black hearts for the ravens."

These Liliputian Lyrics seem sufficiently ridiculous; but, on examination, we shall find that this extra-rhyming propensity was common among our forefathers. Harum-scarum; Helter-skelter; Higgledy-piggledy; Hocus-pocus; Pell-mell, and other clinking compounds have found their way into the Dictionaries.

In a legitimate English rhyme, the two corresponding syllables must begin their *consonance* with the accented vowel and preserve it through the remaining letters. Thus, *text* and *vert*, *song* and *long*, echo one another, respectively, in the sounds *ert* and *ong*. They are the sounds and not the letters which require to be similar; for *reign* and *plain*, though different to the eye, form an unobjectionable rhyme. The letter or letters, in the syllable, which precede the accented vowel must not be the same in each, otherwise the *consonance* would be disagreeable to an English ear. Hence *tend* and the last syllable of *contend* make a bad rhyme. The practice of the French poets is otherwise; and, provided the meaning of the syllables be different, the initial consonants may not only be the same, but their being so is accounted a beauty. Our older poets differ from the modern, on this subject, allowing them-

selves the same latitude as the French. Thus Chaucer:

And specially fro euery shyres ende  
Of Englonde to Canterbury they wende  
The holy blisful martir for to *seke*  
That hem hath holpen, when they were *seke*.

Again;

Here in this tale, as thei should *stande*  
My wit is short, ye maie well *understande*.

This admission of complete *consonances* (*les Rimes riches*, as the French term them) formed a characteristic feature in English rhyme until the beginning of the seventeenth century. They are numerous in Spenser; and Daniel appears to have collected them with great care, as ornaments to his verse: for such rhymes as *deed* and *indeed*, *charge* and *discharge*, *light* and *delight*, are to be found in every page of his works. The practice, however, had not then been universal, for Drayton, who was Daniel's contemporary, has wholly excluded it from his multitude of verses. Milton makes a rhyme of *knot* and *not*; but probably the *k*, in the former word, was pronounced in his time, as it still is in Scotland. This articulation of *kn* would be sufficiently distinct from that of the simple *n*, to authorize the rhyme under our

present laws: for such consonances as *slight* and *light*, *train* and *rain*, are considered as legitimate. We must take care, however, that one at least of the two echoing syllables shall always be preceded by an articulated consonant; and, hence *hour* and *our*, as well as *ore* and *oar*, is inadmissible. Hopkins and Sternhold have left us some curious specimens of those now discarded Rhymes, as the following, from the "Lamentation of a Sinner":

Whose bloody wounds are yet to see,  
 Though not with mortal eye:  
 Yet do thy saints behold them all,  
 And so I trust shall I.

When an English verse terminates with a Trochee, that to which it chimes must also be a Trochee, and the consonance is termed a Double Rhyme, as, *faīrĕst* and *rārĕst*, *mōrning* and *adōrning*. Such may be constructed by accent only, without the antepenult syllable's being necessarily long: as in, *bĕt'tĕr* and *lĕt'tĕr*, *dĭp'pĭng* and *trĭp'pĭng*, which are merely accented Pyrrhics. It is necessary that the two pairs of syllables should rhyme throughout; the first, on which the accent falls, obeying the same laws as in the case of single Rhymes. The French have rested their versification almost wholly upon those single and

double Rhymes to which they have given the names of masculine and feminine. The latter are all formed by means of the *e* mute; and, in their Heroic Verse, the feminine couplets alternate with the masculine, or Rhymes of a single syllable. With us, the introduction of a double Rhyme is voluntary, and, consequently, irregular; but in every case, both in French and English, it adds a syllable to the general tenor of the verse. The following, for example, is that of ten syllables:

Oh grief, beyond all other griefs, when fate  
 First leaves the young heart lone and desolate  
 In the wide world, without that only tie  
 For which it lov'd to live, or fear'd to die;  
 Lorn as the hung-up lute, that ne'er hath *spoken*  
 Since the sad day its master-chord was *broken*.

Triple Rhymes are formed by the consonance of Dactyls, — one long, or accented, syllable, followed by two short, or unaccented. Such are, *wāndērēr* and *slāndērēr*, *līt'tērĭng* and *pīt'tērĭng*; the initials of the first syllables being formed in the same manner as directed in single Rhymes. These triple Rhymes are chiefly used in ludicrous compositions, the apparent labour of finding them being scarcely compatible with a serious subject. Unexpected consonances, by producing

surprise, partake of the nature of wit; and such, whether double or triple, are sometimes called Hudibrastic, because they remind us of the humourous Satire of Butler.

“ In mathematics he was greater,  
 Than Tycho Brahe or Erra Pater;  
 \*       \*       \*       \*       \*  
 Beside, he was a shrew’d philosopher,  
 And had read every text and gloss over;  
 Whate’er the crabbed’st author hath,  
 He understood b’ implicit faith:  
 Whatever sceptic could enquire for,  
 For every Why he had a Wherefore.”

*Hudibras.*

Whether the consonance be single, double, or triple, the first syllables, according as they are long or short, constitute two distinct species of Rhymes. Thus,

däre; dāring; dāringlŷ,  
 späre; spāring; spāringlŷ,

are examples of consonances, beginning with a long syllable, and

flät; flättër; flättëring,  
 pät; pättër; pättëring,

are Rhymes that have their first syllable short. Although a long vowel is often merely a protracted

pronunciation of a short one, yet those *shorts* and *longs* should not be indiscriminately yoked together. Such pairs as *den* and *fane*; *pin* and *mean*, make but imperfect echoes. Formerly words ending with *y* unaccented were made to rhyme with *ee*—probably these words were then accented on the last syllable, as “a far countreé,” for a far country.

The Spanish have a peculiar species of Rhyme called *asonantes*, in which the vowels only of the rhyming syllables are the same. Such terminating words as *toda*, *monta*, *tropa*, and *briosa*, belong to this species of Rhyme; and the echo of the vowels, *o* and *a*, are thus repeated, without regard to the consonants, from the beginning to the end of the poem. The versification in which these *asonantes* are used is termed *Romance*, and consists of eight syllables, making four Trochaic feet. The first line is a Blank Verse and the second an Assonant one; and so on, alternately, to the close of the piece. All the Spanish Dramas are written in this species of verse which seems well adapted to the orthography of that language. The first stanza of the old popular ballad of “William and Margaret,” contains an Assonant Rhyme:

“ When all was wrapt in dark midnight,  
And all were fast asleep,



In,glided Margaret's grimly ghost,  
And stood at William's *feet*."

*Sleep* and *feet* are now considered as a false Rhyme.

Alliteration (Latin *ad* to, and *litera*, a letter) is another species of Rhyme. It is the resonance, or sounding *again*, of the same consonant, as in the words Bug-bear, Hell-hound and Sea-sick. The return of such sounds, like that of the Rhymes above treated of, if not too frequent, is agreeable to the ear; because the succeeding impression is made with less effort than that which precedes. Perhaps it is for this reason, that Alliteration, as well as Rhyme, has a tendency like verse to fix a sentence on the memory. It is hence that Proverbs have generally one or other of those auxiliaries, without any pretension to poetical feeling. Thus,

' Birds of a *feather*—*flock* together.'

' *Fast* bind,—*fast* *find*.'

' If you *trust* before you *try*,—you may repent before you die.'

' Cut your coat according to your cloth.'

' When the *steed* is *stolen*, *shut* the *stable* door.'

' 'Tis too late to *spare*, when all is *spent*.'

' I talk of *chalk*, and you of *cheese*.'

The reader will recollect a multitude of others which have been implanted in the memory, by

means either of Rhyme or Alliteration. Indeed those Proverbs which contain neither may be considered as of later introduction; or, else, as having been translated from a more ancient saw. Thus, 'Burnt children dread the fire' has neither Alliteration nor Rhyme; but the Scotch 'Burnt bairns' fear the fire' is genuine: *bearn* being the Saxon for child, from *bearan*, to bear. We could mention many such alterations which have arisen, as in the present case, from words becoming obsolete; and, in others, on account of indelicacies, real or apparent, which were either tolerated or not perceived by our ancestors.

Previous to the Norman conquest, we have no remains of Anglo-Saxon poetry that deserve the name. "They are," says Warton, "for the most part, little more than religious rhapsodies, and scarce any compositions remain marked with the native images of that people in their Pagan state." In some stanzas of a Norman ballad written about the year 1200 and quoted by the last-mentioned author, it seems doubtful whether the poet trusted most to Alliteration or to Rhyme. The "Visions of Pierce Plowman," composed by Longlandes, about the year 1350, present a curious display of Alliteration. These Visions are humourous and satirical; but filled with those allegorical personifications which constituted the

machinery of so many poets and prozers from the thirteenth to the close of the seventeenth century:—which tires us in Spenser, and is the only merit of Bunyan. But it is the versification (if it can be so called) of Longlandes with which we are now concerned. The following is “an extract in which *Nature* (*Kynde*) at the command of *Conscience* and its companions, *Age* and *Death*, sends her diseases from the planets :

Kynde, Conscience then heard, and came out of the  
 planetts,  
 And sent forth his forriours, Fevers and Fluxes,  
 Coughes and Cardiacles, Crampes and Toth aches,  
 Reumes and Kadgondes, and raynous Scalles,  
 Byles and Botches, and burnynge Agues  
 Frenesces and foule Evill, foragers of Kynde.  
 There was ‘Harowe! and Helpe! here cometh Kynde!  
 With Death that is dreadful, to unde us all!  
 The lord that lyveth after lust tho aloud cried ——”

A few of the preceding lines are similar to the Hexameters formerly mentioned, while others present no feature of regularity,—but depend on Inversion and Alliteration to distinguish them from prose. In this the poet imitated the Anglo-Saxons, who, probably, acquired the practice of writing lines, without either Rhythm or Rhyme, in consequence of translating literally from Latin Verses. Here, however, Longlandes was peculiar;

for, soon after the conquest, Rhyme became almost universal.

About this time, Gower, Chaucer and others, set the example of regular versification. Rhyme was, by them, considered of chief importance; while Alliteration was either wholly neglected or introduced only as an occasional ornament; and such, except in a few sports of fancy, has ever since been the general relation between those two adjuncts to English Verse. Nevertheless, as an ornament, Alliteration has never been lost sight of by those who knew its value; for, if not affectedly obtruded, it adds to the melody of verse. We might produce numerous examples, from almost every classic writer, in which this echoing of letters has a pleasing effect, even when used in excess. Thus, in Spencer:

“ And other whiles, with amorous delights,  
And pleasing toyes he would her entertaine,  
Now singing sweetly, to surprise her sprights,  
Now making layes of loue and louers paine,  
Bransles, ballads, virelayes, and verses vaine.”

*Faerie Queene.*

The Alliterations of the more modern poets are usually managed so as not to appear promi-

nent; yet, in the most guarded, we often discover marks of design; as in the following lines of Goldsmith:

“ Yet would the village praise my wond’rous power,  
And dance forgetful of the noon-tide hour:  
Alike all ages. *Dames of ancient days*  
Have led their children through the mirthful maze;  
And the *gay grandsire*, skill’d in gestic lore,  
Has frisk’d beneath the burden of threescore.”

*Traveller.*

The Poems of Cunningham are alliterative to satiety. In his “Elegy on a Pile of Ruins,” the echo of letters is unbounded, and such as would be unpardonable in any piece of inferior merit. The whole is an arena, in every quarter of which, Sound and Sense are struggling for the mastery. Speaking of the devastation of Time, the Poet expresses himself thus:

“ Yet the hoar tyrant, though not mov’d to spare,  
Relented, when he struck its finish’d pride;  
And, partly the rude ravage to repair,  
The tottering towers with twisted ivy tied.”

And alluding to the ancient Lord of Roslin Castle:

“ Though to the clouds his castle seem’d to climb,  
And frown’d defiance on the desperate foe;

Though deem'd invincible, the conqueror Time  
Levell'd the fabric, as the founder, low.

Where the light lyre gave many a softening sound,  
Ravens and rooks, the birds of discord, dwell;  
And, where society sat sweetly crown'd,  
Eternal solitude has fix'd her cell."

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## CHAPTER XIV.

## OF THE DIFFERENT SPECIES OF VERSE.

With different lengths of verse, and various combinations of stanza, rhyming terminations continued to be indispensable for nearly two hundred years after the age of Chaucer, when the unfortunate Howard, Earl of Surrey, translated the second and fourth Books of Virgil's Eneid into Blank Verse,—that is, Verse without Rhyme. This translation was printed in 1557; four years after that of Gawm Douglas. The ten-syllable verse, chosen by Howard, had been long in use; but, we believe, he was the first who freed it from its rhyming chain, and enabled it to stand alone. In this unfettered state, it has since been rendered sacred by the genius of Shakspeare and the talents of Milton.

The verse of ten syllables, whether blank or tied to a rhyme, is generally composed of five Iambic feet: having its syllables, alternately, *short* and *long*; or else *unaccented* and *accented*. Thus:

With what | attract- | ive charms | this good- | ly frame  
Of Na- | ture touch- | es the | consent- | ing hearts,

Of mor- | tal men; | and what | the pleas- | ing stores  
 Which beau- | teous im- | ita- | tion thence | derives  
 To deck | the po- | et's, or | the paint- | er's toil:  
 My verse | unfolds. | Attend, | ye gen- | tle powers  
 Of mus- | ical | delight! | and, while | I sing,  
 Your gifts, | your ho- | nours, dance | around | my strain.

It is not understood, in the English tongue, that these Iambics are to be fixed to time, or even to the *stress* of accent, with invariable formality; but we are to consider this as the strain, or flow, of the verse: and, keeping that in view, we must preserve the emphasis of the sentence, with as much favour as we can to the imperfections of the poet. *The*, for instance, in the second line of the preceding quotation, is unnecessarily accented: a perfect verse would ask for no such indulgence.

The chief variation allowed in this kind of verse is, that the first foot may be a Trochee, and the other four Iambics, as before. This often gives a spirit to the line, and breaks the monotony which a long continued series of Iambics produces:—

Āll āre | būt pārts | ōf ōne | stūpén- | dōus w hōle,  
 Whōse bō- | dý Nā- | tūre is | ānd Gōd | thē sōul;  
 Thāt chānged | thrō' āll | ānd yēt | īn āll | thē sāmē;  
 Grēat īn | thē eārth | ās īn | th' æthēr- | īal frāme;  
 Wārms īn | thē sūn, | rēfrēsh- | ēs īn | thē brēeze,  
 Glōws īn | thē stārs | ānd blōs- | sōms īn | the trēes,—



To avoid confusion the straight line (-) is here used to mark both the long and accented syllable. The Trochee, at the beginning of the first line, is determined by the sense. To have laid the stress on the word *are*, would have seemed as if the assertion of the poet had been previously contradicted.

There are other liberties, taken with this species of verse, which can scarcely be considered as regular exceptions; because, depending on the flow of expression, they would be inadmissible in a string of languid lines. It is to snatch a grace beyond the reach of art:—

But to my task: Neptune, besides the sway  
Of *every Salt-flood* and each ebbing stream,  
Took in by lot twixt high and nether Jove  
Imperial rule of all the *sea-girt* isles,  
That like to rich and various gems inlay  
The unadorned bosom of the deep,  
Which he to grace his tributary Gods,  
By course commits to *several* government,  
And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns,  
And wield their little tridents; but this isle,  
The greatest and the best of all the main,  
He quarters to his blue-hair'd deities:—

We should err, if we did not consider the words *salt-flood* and *sea-girt* as real Spondees, and read them accordingly, though this is at

variance with the general rule of the measure. *Every* and *several* need not be mutilated into *ev'ry* and *sev'ral*; for the middle *e*, being almost silent, does not add a syllable to the foot, but gives a softness to the sound: the same may be said of *flowery*, *fluttering*, *wintery*, and other similar words. But the grand exception is in the last line:

Hè quārtērs tō hīs blūe-hāir'd dēltēs.

Thus, closing the line with a Dactyl is inadmissible in serious Rhyme; because, although an echo were found, the labour of the search would be too apparent; but in Blank Verse, especially when the speech is long, it forms a pleasing variety. The following, from the same poem, (Milton's *Comus*) are additional examples:

————— O thievish Night,  
Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end,  
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars  
That Nature hung in heaven, and fill'd their lamps  
With everlasting oil, to give due light  
To the misled and lonely trāvēllēr?

\* \* \* \* \*

What might this be? A thousand fāntāsies  
Begin to throng into my mēmōry.

A common variety of this form of versification, is made by the addition of a single unaccented

syllable at the end of the line. Thus, in Othello's address, the first, second, third and fifth lines are of this kind, and the other termination is a Dactyl like those last quoted :

Most potent, grave and reverend Signiors,  
My very noble, and approv'd good Mästers;  
That I have tane away this old man's Däughtër,  
It is most true; true I have mārriëd hër;  
The very head and front of my offendīng  
Hath this extent, no more.—

The close of a verse makes a natural pause; but, besides, there is a slight suspension of the voice, in verses of a certain length, somewhere about the middle, which is termed the *Cæsura*: a Latin word from *cædo*, I cut, because it divides the verse into two Hemistichs, or half-verses. The cæsural pause, in the verse of which we now speak, has an extensive range; and regulates the *cadence*, or fall of the voice in the enunciation. It may be placed any where between three syllables from the beginning and three from the end of the line; but is usually after the fourth, fifth or sixth syllable. An early Cæsura is supposed to give lightness to the verse, while the gravity deepens as it progresses to the close. The great art of the poet is to make this pause coincide with the natural cadence of the thought; and

hence the fine effect of the Antitheses of Pope. In the following lines the Hemistichs are separated according to the place of the Cæsura:

Oh Happiness, | our being's end and aim!  
 Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content! whate'er thy name:  
 That something still, | which prompts th' eternal sigh,  
 For which we bear to live, | and dare to die;  
 Which still so near us, | yet beyond us lies,  
 O'erlook'd seen double, | by the fool, and wise:  
 Plant of celestial seed, | if dropt below,  
 Say in what mortal soil | thou deign'st to grow?—

Verses of ten syllables are now termed *Heroics*,—probably since they were adopted by Dryden and Pope in their translations of Virgil and Homer, and by Milton in his *Paradise Lost*. In earlier times *Heroics* (or tales of Heroes) were told in longer lines. Tragedy has also been written in these *Heroics* ever since the days of Shakspeare.

The eight-syllable couplet was once much employed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in translating the chivalrous Tales of the Troubadours. Chaucer's "*Romaunt of the Rose*" is wholly in that light measure; and a poet of our own time has re-strung the almost neglected lyre. It is well adapted to rapid description; not requiring the mass of Epithets

which are necessary to eke out the more lengthened lines. The Cæsura cuts the verse into equal hemistichs.

“ Thus, while I ape the measure wild  
Of tales that charmed me yet a child,  
Rude though they be, still with the chime  
Return the thoughts of early time ;  
And feelings roused in life’s first day,  
Glow in the line, and prompt the lay,  
Then rise those crags, that mountain tower,  
Which charmed my fancy’s wakening hour,  
Though no broad river swept along,  
To claim, perchance, heroic song ;  
Though sighed no groves in summer gale,  
To prompt, of love, a softer tale ;  
Though scarce a puny streamlet’s speed  
Claimed homage from a shepherd’s reed ;  
Yet was poetic impulse given,  
By the green hill and clear blue heaven.”

*Marmion.*

From the preceding extract, it will be seen that this shortened verse assumes all the licence which has been granted to the ten syllable couplet. It allows the occasional insertion of Spondees. It begins with either an Iambic or a Trochaic foot; and terminates with a single or a double rhyme, at pleasure. Trochaic Verses are the reverse of Iambics; and, the one may frequently be transformed into the other, by the curtailment or the addition of a single syllable.

Begin the verse with an unaccented syllable, and it is an Iambic; with an accented one, it is a Trochaic; and the Trochees are complete if we terminate the verse with a double Rhyme. In scanning there is always a slightly-perceptible pause at the close of every foot; and this it is which alone determines the distinction between the two measures. This semi-pause, however, is not indifferent to the poet. It must be accommodated to the thought, and fixes the character of light or grave. The ten-syllable line is naturally of a solemn caste; and hence, though it frequently begins with a Trochee, it speedily re-assumes the Iambic. The spirited satires of Swift are filled with Trochees. Of the following couplets the two first are complete; but the two latter are defective by having a single in place of a double Rhyme: the verse has only seven while the others have eight syllables. The Cæ-sura, if properly placed, is a more efficient guide to the Rythmus than any attempted distinction into Trochees and Iambics. The real division of the verse is into pairs of syllables, *long* and *short*; *accented* and *unaccented*,—which follow each other in such succession as the ear of the poet shall dictate.

As I rōam | thē cīty ōft I  
Sēē ā būldīng | lārgē and lōfty;

Scårce a bōw-shot | frōm the cōllege;  
 Hålf the glōbe | from sēnse ånd knōwledge:  
 Bȳ the prūdēt | ārchitēct,  
 Plāced agāinst | the chūrch dirēct;  
 Måking gōōd | my grānnam's jēst,—  
 Nēar the chūrch | you knōw the rēst.

The intermixture of Iambics and Trochees is frequent in Lyric Poetry:

Thēē the vōice, | the dānce obēy,  
 Tēmpēr'd | to thy wārbled lāy!  
 O'er Idālīa's | vēlvet grēē,  
 The rōsy-crōwned | Lōves are sēē,  
 On Cȳtherēa's day.——

According to the tenor of the verse, the *to* in the second line should be accented; but this poetical licence is managed by the Reader, who, by anticipating the Cæsura, bends the Rhythm to the thought.

Verses of six and of five syllables (and even of four and of three) have been written; but, in the form of couplets, they are unfit for a poem of any length. They are either modified into other arrangements of Rhyme, of which we shall have afterwards to treat, or they constitute portions of Odes and Songs:

Six syllables—

Alas, I love in vain,  
 She treats me with disdain;

Yet, though her scorn I prove,  
I cannot cease to love.

Five syllables—

Cupid, hear my prayer,  
Save me from despair;  
Pierce her harden'd heart,  
With thy sharpest dart.

Four syllables—

With ravish'd ears,  
The monarch hears;  
Assumes the God,  
Affects to nod———

Three syllables—

In amaze,  
Lost I gaze.

Twelve-syllable verses (having six feet of two syllables each) are termed *Alexandrines*; as is said, from an old French poem, concerning Alexander the Great, written in that measure. However this may be, Alexandrines have long been, and still are, the Heroic verse of that nation. Their first usage in English has been generally ascribed to Spencer; but this is an error, for we find them in Skelton, nearly a century before the publication of the *Fairy Queen*. Drayton's *Polyolbion* is written in couplets of this verse, with, occasionally, a double Rhyme. As in Heroics, the first foot may be a Trochee. Speaking of the Tweed and the Severn, he says,



Beyond these if I pleas'd, I to your praise could bring.  
 In sacred *Tempe*, how (about the hoofe-plow'd Spring)  
 The *Heliconian* Maides, vpon that hallowed ground,  
 Recounting heavenly Hymnes eternally are crown'd.  
 And as the earth doth vs in her owne bowels nourish;  
 So euery thing, that growes by vs, doth thrue and flourish.

The Cæsura in this species of verse always falls after the sixth syllable, thereby dividing it into equal Hemistichs: a circumstance which has given occasion to separate the couplet so as to form four lines, thus :

Ah, why that falling tear,  
 Which secret pain bespeaks?  
 'Twill blight the flowers of hope,—  
 The roses of thy cheeks.

Alexandrines are now seldom written, except in connexion with other verses, to wind up the close of a subject or a stanza, in what the poet supposes a graceful manner, when often,

A needless Alexandrine ends the song,  
 Which, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length  
 along.

Iambic verses of seven feet, or fourteen syllables, were, at one time, frequently written. Chapman's version of Homer's *Iliad* is wholly in couplets of that measure. Hector says :

“ But what a shame, and fear it is, to thinke how Troy  
would scorne  
(Both in her husbands and her wiues, whom long-  
train’d gownes adorne)  
That I should cowardly flie off? The spirit I first did  
breath,  
Did neuer teach me that; much lesse, since the con-  
tempt of death  
Was settl’d in me.—”

The Cæsura is here after the eighth syllable, and hence, as with the Alexandrine, there was formed a four-lined stanza which will be afterwards more particularly noticed. These long verses were easily written, the rhymes returning at such distant intervals. A line of fourteen syllables rhyming to one of twelve was also formerly in common use, as in the 130th Psalm:

My longing Eyes look out | for thy enliv’ning Ray,  
More duly than the Morning Watch | to spy the dawn-  
ing Day.

The Rhymes in a Poem, when extended beyond Couplets, are generally formed on a regular system, including three, four, five, or more lines; after which the same series returns: This bunch of verses is termed a Stanza;—an Italian word denoting, literally, the ground on which any building is erected: the *Stance* (as the Scotch

call it) or area on which the house stands. The Stanza of three rhyming verses is called a *Triplet*. It is occasionally introduced, in Heroic Poems, among Couplets; and is, erroneously, said to have been first employed by Dryden. It seldom adds to the harmony; but, in translations, it sometimes preserves the energy, by enabling the poet to compress in three lines what must otherwise be expanded into four. Our older poets cut the difficulty; for, when the sense was completed, they did not scruple to place a full stop at the end of the first line of a Couplet, and to begin a new sentence, or even a new paragraph, with the second line. This practice seems still more awkward than the treble Rhymes; nevertheless, nothing can warrant the latter but the incapacity of avoiding them. Their unexpected occurrence mars the harmony of the Couplets with which they are usually intermingled; and, even in those few poems which are written wholly in that stanza, the effect is disagreeable.

*Quatrains* (a French denomination from *quatre*, four) are four-lined stanzas; of which there are several varieties. The simplest, and probably the earliest, is formed by cutting up the Alexandrine and other long-lined couplets into Hemistichs, as formerly noticed. Those vary from couplets in no other respect, and are quatrains only to

the eye. The metrical Psalms are almost wholly in this form of verse: sometimes of twelve and fourteen, alternate syllables; but more generally all of fourteen; or what are familiarly called "eights and sixes." Thus,

How blest is he who ne'er consents  
by ill Advice to walk;  
Nor stands in Sinners Way, nor sits  
where men profanely talk.

This (which we have taken from the authorized version of the first Psalm) is also termed the ballad stanza; because, in it, almost all our old ballads are written. The composition requires little art; for it contains many words in proportion to the rhymes. A consonance between terminations of the first and third lines is a modern improvement; as is also the occasional, or regular, insertion of double Rhymes:

Ah! why, since oceans, rivers, streams,  
That water all the nations,  
Pay tribute to thy glorious beams,  
In constant exhalations;—  
Why, stooping from the noon of day,  
Too covetous of drink,  
Apollo, hast thou stolen away,  
A poet's drop of ink?

These quatrains become more melodious when,

by adding two syllables to the shorter lines, the whole are of equal length:

Oh, happy shades,—to me unblest'd,  
Friendly to peace but not to me!  
How ill the scene that offers rest,  
And heart that cannot rest agree!  
That glassy stream,—this spreading pine;—  
Those alders quivering to the breeze,  
Might soothe a soul less hurt than mine,  
And please, if any thing could please.

The Heroic, or ten-syllable verse, whether in couplets, or in quatrains, is also generally appropriated to Elegy; and it will be perceived that the stanzas last quoted have all the requisites of Elegiac Verse, and, in fact, are the same, with the elision of two syllables. *Friendly*, in the second line is a Trochee, with which Heroics are permitted to begin; and there would be nothing objectionable in double rhymes. Indeed, there are few of the ten-syllable lines of our would-be poets, which might not be advantageously reduced to this shorter measure. Epithets are generally adjectives of two syllables, and are often mere expletives. Pope's Verses on the Death of an unfortunate Lady furnishes a beautiful example of the ten-syllable Elegiac couplet,—as Gray's Lines on a Church Yard does of the

quatrain. The following is a specimen with alternate double Rhymes:

Farewell, oh native Spain! farewell for ever!  
 These banish'd eyes shall view thy coasts no more:  
 A mournful presage tells my heart, that never  
 Gonzalvo's steps again shall press thy shore.  
 Hush'd are the winds, while soft the vessel sailing,  
 With gentle motion, ploughs th' unruffled main:  
 I feel my bosom's boasted courage failing,  
 And curse the waves that bear me far from Spain.

The effect of those double terminations has, as formerly mentioned, a near resemblance to the feminine Rhymes of the French.

There is another form of the four-lined Stanza, in which the first Rhymes to the fourth and the second to the third:

O Nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray  
 Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,  
 Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,  
 While the jolly hours lead on propitious day.

But this form is seldom used except in conjunction with other stanzas; and, in that case, is rather a part of a compound. It chiefly appears in Sonnets such as that from which we have taken the preceding extract, and is of Italian origin. The true English quatrain is that of al-

ternate rhymes. The elision of a syllable is often allowable in verse; but that of the *y* in *jolly*, is scarcely pardonable even in Milton.

Stanzas of five lines are seldom seen in modern poetry. The following is from Chaucer:

The God of Love and benedicite,  
How mighty and how great a Lord is he!  
For he can make of lowé hertés hie,  
And of his lowe and lyké for to die,  
And hardé hertés he can maken free.

Of the conjunction of six lines, we find an example in the same poet. He thus encourages wives to preserve their rights:

Ne dredeth hem not, doth hem no reverence,  
For though thin husbände armed be in maile,  
The arrowes of thy crabbed eloquence  
Shall pierce his brest, and eke his adventaile.  
In jelousye eke, loké thou him binde  
And that shal make him couch as doth a quaille.

The Rhymes of all the stanzas are the same. They echo one another, and thereby give a curious kind of uniformity to the Poem.

Another form of the six-lined Stanza is made by adjoining a couplet to a quatrain; but the most regular is that which, preceded by one of

four lines, constitutes so elegant a compound in the hands of Gray:

Alas! regardless of their doom,  
The little victims play!  
No sense have they of ills to come,  
Nor cares beyond to-day;  
Yet see how all around them wait  
The ministers of human fate  
And black Misfortune's baleful train!  
Ah! show them where in ambush stand,  
To seize their prey the murderous band!  
Ah, tell them they are men.

A five-lined Stanza has been sometimes made up in a similar manner:

Tell me, Dorinda, why so gay,  
Why such embroidery, fringe, and lace?  
Can any dresses find a way  
To stop th' approaches of decay,  
And mend a ruin'd face?

A seven-lined Stanza was in general use among our early poets; for much of Chaucer and Lidgate and the whole of the King's Quare are in that form. The first four make a quatrain; the fifth rhymes to the fourth; and the two last are a couplet. Thus Daniel in his Complaint of Rosamond:



These presidents presented to my view,  
Wherein the presage of my fall was shown,  
Might have forewarn'd me well what would ensue;  
And other's harmes have made me shun mine owne:  
But fate is not prevented, though foreknowne;  
For that must hap, decreed by heavenly powres,  
Who worke our fall, yet make the fault still ours.

The eight-lined Stanza has been variously formed. A quatrain followed by two couplets, or two quatrains, equally make up the requisite number of verses; but it is supposed to link them more closely together by the intermixture of the rhymes. In the latter case the first line of the second quatrain usually rhymes with the last line of the first, as is exemplified by the following extract from Leyden's beautiful address to an Indian Gold Coin:

Ha! com'st thou now so late to mock  
A wanderer's banish'd heart forlorn,  
Now that his frame the lightening shock  
Of sun-rays tipt with death has borne?  
From love, from friendship, country, torn,  
To memory's fond regrets a prey,  
Vile slave, thy yellow dross I scorn!—  
Go mix thee with thy kindred clay.

Another and more ancient form of this stanza is to repeat the terminating rhymes of the first

quatrain in the fifth and sixth, and then conclude with a couplet. Daniel's History of the Civil Wars is written wholly in this stanza:

For when it nought availes, what folly then  
To strive against the current of the time?  
Who will throw downe himselfe for other men  
That make a ladder by his fall to clime?  
Or who would seek t' imbroile his Country when  
He might have rest; suffering but others crime;  
Since wise men ever have preferred farre  
Th' unjustest peace, before the justest warre?

Of all the old stanzas, that of Spencer has been most generally adopted by subsequent poets. Even the quaint stile and affected antiquity of his language has been imitated; and in spite of the generally improved taste of the times, he, as well as others of our early poets, has been recently outvied in that for which he is least to be praised. Moral Criticism, however, is no part of our present business: we have only to draw up a muster-roll of different forms of versification. The Stanza of Spencer is made up of two ten-syllable quatrains (tied together as those which we extracted from Leyden) with the addition of an Alexandrine, rhyming to its immediately preceding line.

## I.

Most sacred fire that burnest mightily  
 In living breasts, ykindled first above  
 Amongst th' eternal spheres and lamping sky,  
 And thence pour'd into man, which men call Love;  
 Not that same which doth base affections move  
 In brutish mindes and filthy lust inflame;  
 But that sweete fit that doth true beantie love,  
 And choseth vertue for his dearest Dame,  
 Whence spring all noble deedes and never dying fame:—

## II.

Well did Antiquity a God thee deeme,  
 That over mortal mindes hast so great might,  
 To order them as best to thee doth seeme,  
 And all their actions to direct aright:  
 The fatall purpose of divine foresight  
 Thou doest effect in destined descents,  
 Through deepe impression of thy secret might;  
 And stirredst up th' Heroës high intents,  
 Which the late world admyres for wondrous moniments.

B. iii. C. iii.

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We have hitherto considered English Versification as made up of feet of two syllables; and these, with the occasional interjection of a Spondee, are always either Trochees or Iambics. We shall now speak of feet of three syllables, or what our Grammars usually denominate the Anapaestic Measure. As the two syllable feet (with

the few insertions abovementioned) are always composed of one long and one short syllable, either of which may precede, so the three syllable feet are compounded of two short and one long, without respect to precedence: thereby giving a choice to the poet in regulating his emphases and pauses. Verses made up wholly of this species of feet must consist of six, nine, or twelve syllables; but it is allowable to cut off a syllable from the beginning, or the end; a practice which introduces a considerable variety; and changes, at pleasure, one species of feet into another. The following line is purely Anapæstic: (U U —).

At the clōse | of the dāy | when the hām- | lēt is still.

But in the three immediately succeeding lines of the same poem (Beattie's Hermit) the first foot of each is shortened into an Iambic, in consequence of the elision of a syllable; and the whole quatrain is thus scanned:

At the clōse | of the dāy | when the hām- | let is still,  
 And mōr- | tals the swēets | of forgēt- | fulness prōve ;  
 When nōught | but the tōr- | rent is heārd | on the hīll,  
 And nōught | but the nīght- | ingale's sōng | in the  
 grōve,—

We formerly observed how readily the Iambic

and Trochaic feet are interchanged; and a similar remark may be made with respect to feet of three syllables. The elision of a syllable from the beginning of an Anapæstic verse and the addition of one to the end, is sufficient to change the line into an Amphibrach; and this again, may as easily be formed into a series of Dactyls. The Cæsure, indeed, always tends to divide the verse into equal hemistichs, and thereby often checks such transformations. There is, besides, a slight pause which naturally takes place at the end of every foot; and which the poet, who attends to harmony, contrives to accommodate to the oratorical effect of the thought. These circumstances alone preserve the measure from capricious variations; for, otherwise, these treble-time feet have one principle in common,—the conjunction of two short syllables and one long,—differing solely in the order of succession. With respect to accentuation, great liberties are taken; for, in rigid scanning, we often see syllables which must be pronounced as short although they are always long in prose. This is the case, more or less, in every poem of any length; but especially so when the poet does not possess a delicate ear. The reader, in order to preserve the chant, is compelled to sacrifice the accent, which, like a false note in music, is

slurred over as he best can. The following verse may be read as made up of four pure Amphibrachs ( U — U ).

'Twas sūmmēr | ānd sōftly | thē brēezēs | wēre blōwīng;

and, with a little management, the same number of syllables may be formed into Dactyls (— U U ):

Fāir wās thē | flōw'rēt ānd | rūde wās thē | wīntēr-blāst.

Concluding Dactyls, however, are only fitted for blank verse; because, otherwise, they would require triple consonances; but the Trochee (which terminates the Amphibrach) is frequently employed in these sorts of versification, which indulge in Double Rhymes.

The six-syllable lines are hemistichs of the twelve; and are generally accommodated with rhymes at the middle pause so as to form complete quatrains. The following is a peculiar variety:

“ But if she appear  
     Where verdures invite her,  
 The fountains run clear  
     And the flowers smell the sweeter:  
 'Tis heaven to be by  
     When her wit is a-flowing;  
 Her smiles and bright eye  
     Set my spirits a-glowing.”

Shenstone's Ballads are in the nine-syllable measure :

" I have found out a gift for my fair;  
I have found where the wood-pigeons breed:  
But, let me that plunder forbear;  
She will say, 'twas a barbarous deed."

The three-syllable feet are chiefly confined to songs, or other small pieces. They do not appear in any lengthened work; and, in the southern part of the Island, seem to be of no great antiquity. They are generally characterized as quick and lively; but this, perhaps, arises from the general association of ideas: for examples might be produced in which they are, appropriately, expressive of the tender and melancholy feelings. We believe, it will be found, on examination, that it is the thought and not the measure which renders the stanza grave, or gay. Some of the old Scotch Ballads, in which the three-syllable feet prevails, are peculiarly plaintive:

*The Moans of the Forest, after the Battle of Flodden-field.*

I have heard a lilting,\* at the ewes milking,  
A' the lasses lilting before break of day;  
But now there's a moaning, in ilka green loaning,  
Since the flowers of the forest are weeded away.

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\* "*Lilting*. Singing cheerfully, with a brisk lively air, in a style peculiar to the Scots; whose music, being com-

At bughts in the morning, nae blythe lads are scorning,  
Our lasses are lonely, and dowie, and wae:  
Nae daffing, nae gabbing, but sighing and sobbing,  
Ilk lass lifts her leglin, and hies her away.

In har'st at the shearing, nae swankies are jeering,  
Our bansters are wrinkled, and lyard, and grey:  
At a fair, or a preaching, nae wooing, nor fleecing,  
Since the flowers of the forest are weeded away.

At e'en in the gloaming, nae youngsters are roaming  
'Bout stacks with the lasses at boggles to play;  
But ilk lass sits dreary, lamenting her deary,  
Since the flowers of the forest are weeded away.

Dool and wae fa' the order,—sent our lads to the border!  
The English for ance by a guile won the day:  
The flowers of the forest, that shone aye the foremost,  
The pride of our land now lie cauld in the clay!

We'll ha' nae mair lilting, at the ewes milking,  
Our women and bairns now sit dowie and wae;  
There's nought heard but moaning, in ilka green loaning,  
Since the flowers of the forest are weeded away.

---

posed for the bag-pipe, jumps over the discordant notes of the second and seventh, in order to prevent the jarring which it would otherwise produce with the drone or bass, which constantly sounds an octave to the key-note. Hence this kind of composition is commonly styled a *Scotch Lilt*."—*Herbert Croft*.



## CHAPTER XV.

## OF LYRIC POETRY.

We have, hitherto, attended only to the general Rules of regular versification. In long poems the writer, with few exceptions, chuses his Stanza, continuing in the same strain to the close; and this is generally one of the species already described; but in Lyric Poetry, which is understood to be written to accompany the tones of a Lyre, or other musical instrument, the versification is often united in fanciful combinations, in correspondence with the strain for which it is composed.

“The Lyric Poetry of the Grecians was not only sung, but composed to the chords of the lyre. This was at first the characteristic distinction of all that was called Lyric Poetry by the Romans, and their descendants and imitators in later times. The Poet was a musician: he called upon the God of verse, and animated himself with a prelude. He fixed upon the tune, the movement, and the musical period; the melody gave birth to the verse, and thence was

derived the unity of rhythm, character, and expression, between the music and the poem that was sung. Thus the poetry became naturally subservient to number and cadence, and thus each lyric poet invented not only the proper kind of verse, but also the Strophe analogous to the melody which he himself had created, and to which he composed it.

“In this respect, the lyric poem, or ode, with the Latins and with modern nations, has been nothing more than a frivolous imitation of the lyric poem of the Greeks: they say, *I sing*, but never do sing; they speak of the chords of the lyre, but have never seen a lyre. No poet, since Horace inclusively, appears to have modelled his odes upon a melody. Horace adopting, by turns, the different formulæ of the Greek poets, seems so much to have forgotten that an ode ought to be sung, that he has often suspended the sense at the end of the strophe, where the air ought to repose, to the beginning of the next stanza.”\*

The Lyre of the Greeks was a stringed instrument, the invention of which they ascribed to the Gods. The first lyre is fabled to have been the shell of a tortoise, found by Mercury on the border of the Nile, and in which the sinews of the

animal had been dried by the sun and stretched into sounding strings. It was a species of harp; changing in its form and in the number of its strings, as the art of music advanced towards perfection. It is in allusion to this imaginary origin that the poets still sing of the *sounding Shell*; and the Swedish *skal*, a shell (which also denotes a *sound*) gave the name of *Skalds* to the poets of Scandinavia.

Music and Poetry were doubtless, in their origin, the same art among the nations of the North, as the Encyclopædist has asserted of the Greeks. The narrative part of the vocal effusions of the Bards formed a chant, or recitative, interrupted by frequent bursts of high enthusiasm, or of tender feelings, which called forth the united melody of the voice and the harp. These several excitements of enthusiasm and of tenderness are, now, the separated provinces of the Lyric Muse; and, indeed, they comprehend all that is worthy of cultivation in the Empire of Poetry.

The highest of the modern lyric compositions is the ODE. It is a Greek name which we usually translate by the word *Song*, but it was not a song as we use the term in our language. The Ode was the result of strong excitement,—a poetical attempt to fill the hearts of the auditors with

feelings of the sublime. Those Odes that were sung in honour of the Gods, were termed **HYMNS**, from *hymneio*, I celebrate. They were the earliest of the Greek Odes; and the name has been retained to designate those pious poems that are sung in our churches. The Hebrew Hymns, said to have been written by King David, are termed **PSALMS** from the Greek *psallo*, I sing.

The characteristic principle of the Greek Ode was enthusiasm. It was a poeto-musical composition, brought forward by the united powers of art and of genius. When complete it was composed of parts: the **STROPHE**, the **ANTISTROPHE** and the **EPODE**. "The priests going round the altar singing the praises of the Gods, called their first entrance *Strophe* (*stropho*, I turn),—turning to the left, that is, from east to west; the second, turning to the right, they called *Antistrophe*, q. d. returning:—these were dances. Lastly, standing still before the altar, they sung the remainder, which they called the *Epode*," or end of the song. The same nominal divisions are sometimes substituted in the Odes that have been manufactured in modern times, though these have no concern, either with altars, or with priests. The **PÆANS** were songs of triumph, sung in procession in honour of Apollo, on occasion of a victory, or of a deliverance from public calamity.

Some suppose that *paian* was a denomination of Apollo, from *paio*, I heal, he being the God of medicine; but Pæans were also sung to other Deities: they were thanksgivings for the cessation (or cure) of an evil.

Were we not in possession of two or three successful efforts, we should pronounce the Pindaric Ode to be foreign to the genius of English poetry. The irregular Stanza is at variance with the very nature of rhyme, which shocks the ear when it returns unexpectedly at unmeasured distances. Regularity in the series of consonances is as requisite as accuracy in the rhymes themselves; and the termination of a line, which the reader cannot without effort refer to its correspondent sound, is an effectual check to the flow of thought. All sympathy with the poet is at an end:—the stanza becomes a riddle; and the mind is bewildered, in the comparison of sounds and the counting of syllables. That wild enthusiasm which, perpetually aiming at the sublime, not only leaves reason behind, but even soars beyond the sphere of imagination, is incompatible with the restraints of English verse, and, if not contented with the unmeaning tones of the lyre, should hum its accompaniment in prose. Those who would imitate the flights of Pindar forget the nature of the Lyrics of antiquity.

They were inseparable, in the mind, from the rude notes of the orchestra, and the movements of the dance. The Ode of these latter times is subject to separate criticism as a poem; but its poetical beauties are strained and torn to pieces, when combined with the subdivided gamut of modern music. Poetry, Music, and the Dance formed, among the ancients, a triple union, in which the Poet was the Coryphæus of the choir. Now-a-days, the Poet is nothing; the Musician is every thing, and the Dancer is his Harlequin.

The patient spirit of the early Christians, combined with the acknowledged humility of their conceptions with respect to the nature of the Deity, rendered their Religion unfavourable to that fervour of imagination which is essential to the composition of the Ode. The Jewish Religion was different. During the whole period of their sacred history, they considered themselves as the peculiar favourites of heaven; and, being continually in a state of warfare with the neighbouring nations, or else in captivity, their poetry was often animated with the divine furor of their appeals to the God of Hosts,—either in prayers for his assistance, or in thanksgivings for deliverance from slavery. Political and religious enthusiasm are grand sources of the sublime. It is not from the common versions of the He-

brew Scriptures that we are to judge of those sacred songs which animated the nation. A literal translation of a poem destroys its elegance, by tearing its flowers into minute fragments. Genius might reunite the scattered atoms into a new and pleasing form; but, unfortunately, our paraphrasts are seldom poets. Nevertheless, there have been several successful attempts to infuse a spirit into certain passages of the ordinary *caput mortuum* renderings; and those are sufficient to convince the unlearned reader that the originals are far from destitute of poetical beauty. Mason's "Ode on the fate of Tyranny" is a free paraphrase of part of the 14th Chapter of Isaiah, beginning at the 4th Verse, and ending with the 27th. It is divided into three parts, each containing its Strophe, Antistrophe, and Epode. We shall here transcribe the first portion:

## ODE

## ON THE FATE OF TYRANNY.

## I.

## STROPHE.\*

Oppression dies: the Tyrant falls:  
The golden City bows her walls!  
Jehovah breaks th' Avenger's rod.

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\* Verses 4, 5, and 6.

The Son of Wrath, whose ruthless hand  
Hurl'd Desolation o'er the land,  
Has run his raging race, has clos'd the scene of blood.  
Chiefs arm'd around behold their vanquish'd Lord;  
Nor spread the guardian shield, nor lift the loyal sword.

## ANTISTROPHE.\*

He falls; and Earth again is free,  
Hark! at the call of Liberty,  
All Nature lifts the choral song.  
The Fir-trees, on the mountain's head,  
Rejoice thro' all their pomp of shade;  
The lordly Cedars nod on sacred Lebanon:  
Tyrant! they cry, since thy fell force is broke,  
Our proud heads pierce the skies, nor fear the wood-  
maa's stroke.

## EPODE.†

Hell, from her gulph profound,  
Rouses at thine approach; and, all around,  
Her dreadful notes of preparation sound.  
See, at the awful call,  
Her shadowy Heroes all,  
Ev'n mighty Kings, the heirs of empire wide,  
Rising, with solemn state, and slow,  
From their sable thrones below,  
Meet, and insult thy pride.  
What, dost thou join our ghostly train,  
A fitting shadow-light and vain?

\* Verses 7 and 8.

† Verses 9, 10, and 11.



Where is thy pomp, thy festive throng,  
Thy revel dance, and wanton song?  
Proud King! Corruption fastens on thy breast;  
And calls her crawling brood, and bids them share the  
feast.\*

The sacred Ode has been seldom attempted, and has still seldomer succeeded in modern English. Poetry is peculiarly allied to the fictions of imagination. Its very name (Greek *poieo*, I make) is allied to falsehood. "A Poet is a maker, and he who cannot make, that is, *invent*, has his name for nothing."† The undisputed doctrines of faith are, therefore, obviously incompatible with an inherent principle of the poetic art. Even in the lesser Lyrics, this difficulty is seldom overcome. Johnson says, when speaking of Dr. Watts, "His devotional poetry is, like that of others, unsatisfactory. The paucity of the topics enforces perpetual repetition, and the sanctity of the matter rejects the ornaments of figurative diction. It is sufficient for Watts to have done better than others what no man has done well."

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\* A regular Ode, on the same subject, by G. Dyer, may be seen in his "Poetics."

† Dryden.

If we except Thomson's Hymn on the Seasons and a few other pieces, we may say that the modern English Ode is scarcely ever employed on the subject of Religion. It sings the praises of Heroes and of Kings ; or it addresses the passions through the medium of some personified abstraction. The twenty-second of November was long held as a festival in honour of Saint Cecilia, the patroness of music ; and we have, on record, between fifty and sixty irregular anniversary Odes which were set to music, recited and performed at those meetings between the years 1683 and 1740. Of those, the most famous is that of Dryden, entitled " Alexander's Feast," which is in the hands of every schoolboy. Pope also wrote an Ode, for one of those occasions, which has much merit, but has never been so highly esteemed. Collin's celebrated Ode (" The Passions ") is of the same class, and is extremely beautiful.

Future times will probably describe with wonder the establishment, so long upheld in this country, of a Poet Laureate ; whose especial duty it was (and but recently laid aside) to write two Odes annually, one for the King's Birth-day, and another to usher in the New Year. Both were of the irregular, or Pindaric Form, and set to music, as Songs of Praise on the Sovereign and his

Government. The present Laureate is, we believe, the first who has been excused from this periodical prostitution of talent.

There are numerous pieces under the title of Odes that are composed in uniform stanzas, and never were intended to be sung. Collins, Gray, and Akenside, have written many of this kind, as well as of the irregular form, which are too well known to warrant quotation.

With the Greek and Roman poets, every lyrical composition, regular or irregular, light or solemn, was termed an Ode, but in English we particularly distinguish between the ODE and the SONG. Both are professedly written so as they may be chanted, either alone or with instrumental accompaniments; but the former is more an imitation of the Songs of the ancients. The Odes of Anacreon and of Horace are often airy and gay; but there is, almost in all cases, something in the nature of their composition, (chiefly, perhaps, the incongruity between the antient and modern manners,) which prevents their translations from being ranked with the Songs of the present age in any nation of Europe.

The essence of the Song is the simplicity of the subject, as well as of the melody to which it is adapted. It is fitted for the social circle, and, in every verse, sings of the tender feelings of

love; the mirthful pleasures of the table; or, assuming a satiric strain, it laughs at the little follies of individuals, or lashes the vices of the age. The War-song rises to a higher tone. It approaches nearer to the ancient Ode, but is still addressed to the feelings of the many; and often animates the courage of the soldier, by reminding him that he is defending the inhabitants of his humble home, while resisting the enemies of his country.

The Song is divided into similar stanzas, each of which is sung to the same air; and, consequently, the several parts of the composition ought to have a character of similarity, so that it may not be at variance with the Music. The same train of thought must run through all the stanzas; and hence that simplicity which the Song requires. Were it otherwise, the music, like that of the Ode, would need to be varied with every verse. It is plain, too, that under such circumstances the poem cannot be of great length. The music, which is associated with the Song, is also simple, as in the early ages, and should never be allowed to hide the words of the poet.

Among the English poets, it is surprising how few have been Song-writers. It is a poem of a sociable character; and, if it does not interest

the little circle in which it is chanted, it never passes as a song. Neither Chaucer nor Gower have left a single stanza of the kind on record. Indeed, it is suspected that there were then no national airs to which such simple poems could have been sung. The Provençal melodies were at that period well known on the Continent, but we have no evidence that they were ever adapted to English words. Throughout the south of Europe, those short and artless Lyrics seem to have been coeval with the lengthened Romances of the Troubadours. The following French *Chanson*, though written nearly three hundred years ago, has all the simplicity and sweetness of our best modern songs. We shall here copy it, along with Dr. Burney's translation :

*Chanson de Marie Stuart, Reine d'Ecosse, en partant de  
Calais pour Londres.*

*Adieu plaisant pays de France,  
O ma patrie la plus chérie !  
Que a norrit ma jeune enfance,  
Adieu, France, adieu, mes beaux jours !  
La nef qui déjoint nos amours,  
N'a cy de moi que la moitié ;  
Une part te reste ; elle est tienne ;  
Je la fie à ton amitié,  
Pour que de l'autre il te souviens.*

---

*Song written by Mary Queen of Scots in sailing from Calais to London, 1560.*

Farewell the sweet, the ever blest abode !  
Farewell the country to my soul most dear !  
Where none but pleasure's flowery paths I trode,  
Far from the gloomy haunts of strife and fear.

The ship that wafts me from thy happy shore  
Is only freighted with the meaner part ;  
And, while my youthful pleasures I deplore,  
Leaves thee in full possession of my heart.

The following anonymous and more literal version, by giving the advantage of comparison, may be useful to young translators :

Ah ! pleasant land of France, farewell !  
My country dear  
Where many a year  
Of infant youth I loved to dwell.  
Farewell for ever, happy days !  
The ship which parts our love conveys  
But half of me ; one half behind  
I leave with thee, dear France, to prove  
A token of our endless love  
And bring the other to thy mind.

After all, we will not assert that, at this or even at an earlier period, there were no English Songs. We only are persuaded that they had not then risen to the rank which they now enjoy

among poetical productions. They were, probably, always the favourites of rural life; but not dignified enough to be admitted into a higher sphere. Simple thoughts chanted to simple melodies are, no doubt, indigenous in every age and country; and we may cite, in evidence, that what modern Musicians understand by Harmony was unknown to the Greeks as it yet is to the Chinese. Song, as distinguished from Duets and Glees, is the effusion of an individual. The music must be adapted to a single voice; and if other tones are introduced they must be completely subservient; otherwise "the auditor is tempted to say as the Chinese did (when 'God save the King' was played in parts) that the Air might be very good, if the accompaniments would let it be heard."

Whatever may have been the Airs to which they were sung, we learn, from Shakspeare, that popular Songs existed in England at an early period. The scene of 'Twelfth Night' is, indeed, laid in Illyria, but the Duke's speech was intended for the ears of an English audience; and a Clowne was sent for to sing:

"Give me some Musick"—"that piece of song,  
*That old and Anticke song we heard last night;*  
Me thought it did releev my passion much,

More then light ayres, and recollected termes  
 Of these most briske and giddy-paced times.  
 — — — — — — — — — *It is old and plaine;*  
 The Spinsters and the Knitters in the Sun,  
 And the free maides that weaue their thred with bones,  
 Do vse to chaunt it."——  
 " I prethee sing." [Musick.

## THE SONG.

Come away, come away death,  
 And in sad cypresse let me be laide.  
 Fye away, fie away breath,  
 I am slaine by a faire cruell maide :  
     My shrowd of white, stuck all with Ew, O prepare it.  
     My part of death no one so true did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweete  
 On my blacke coffin, let there be strowne :  
 Not a friend, not a friend greet  
 My poore corpes, where my bones shall be throwne :  
     A thousand thousand sighes to saue, lay me O where  
     Sad true louer neuer find my graue, to weepe there.

" The simplicity and wildness of several of the old Scottish melodies denote them to be the production of a pastoral age and country ; and prior to the use of any musical instrument beyond that of a very limited scale of a few natural notes, and prior to the knowledge of any rules of artificial music. This conjecture, if solid, must carry them up to a high period of antiquity.

" The most ancient of the Scottish Songs



still preserved, are extremely simple, and void of all art. They consist of one measure only, and have no second part, as the later or more modern airs have. They must, therefore, have been composed for a very simple instrument, such as the shepherd's reed or pipe, of few notes, and of the plain *diatonic scale*, without using the semitones, or sharps and flats. The distinguishing strain of our old melodies is plaintive and melancholy; and what makes them soothing and affecting, to a great degree, is the constant use of the concordant tones, the third and fifth of the scale, often ending upon the fifth, and some of them on the sixth. By this artless standard some of our old Scottish melodies may be traced; such as *Gil Morice*;—*There came a ghost to Marg'et's door*;—*O laddie, I man loo thee*;—*Hap me wi' thy pettycoat*:—I mean the old sets of these airs; as the last air, which I take to be one of our oldest songs, is so modernized as scarce to have a trace of its ancient simplicity. The simple original air is still sung by nurses in the country, as a lullaby to still their babes to sleep. It may be said, that the words of some of these songs denote them to be of no very ancient date; but it is well known, that many of our old Songs have changed their original names, by being adapted to more modern words. Some old tunes

have a second part; but it is only a repetition of the first part on the higher octave: and these additions are probably of more modern date than the tunes themselves.”\*

The oldest Scotch Song on record is entitled “The Bankis of Helicone;” and was, doubtless, written more than three hundred years ago. The measure is peculiar, and has often been chosen by the poets of that nation; but the Air is either little known, or neglected. The first stanza we shall here insert:

Declair ye banks of Helicone  
 Parnassus hill, and daills ilk on,  
 And fountain Cabellein,  
 Gif any of your Muses all,  
 Or nymphis may be peregall  
 Unto my lady schein;  
 Or if the ladies that did lave  
 Their bodies by your brim,  
 So seimlie were or yet so suave,  
 So beautiful or trim.

Contempill exempill  
 Tak be her proper port,  
 Gif onie sa bonie,  
 Amang you did resort.

To write a song worthy of being set to music,

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\* “Dissertation on the Scottish Music” by A. F. Tytler,  
 Lord Woodhouselee.

and to write one to be sung to an Air previously composed, require different species of talent. The genius of the poet is necessary in both cases; but in the latter he must also understand the principles and feel the power of music. It is this fortunate union of the two sister arts which has delighted the social circle with the Scottish Songs of Burns and the Irish Melodies of Moore. The ancient music of the two countries is, in general, so much alike, that it is often a matter of dispute to which nation a particular tune belongs. An anonymous writer has endeavoured to draw a probable line of distinction: "In Scotch tunes, says he, we have a perpetual recurrence of something which reminds the hearer that they were originally adapted to the *drone* of the bagpipe; while in Welsh melodies, and in those of Ireland, we have a rapid succession of notes, a redundant fulness in the bars and phrases, and a sort of jingle which immediately refers their origin to the harp: an instrument not adapted to the display of any prolonged modulation, nor capable of any swell, or what the Italians call '*sustenato*,'"—"The livelier Irish airs have a charm which is entirely peculiar, and are as superior to the Scotch tunes of that kind as the Scotch airs of the pathetic kind are superior to those of the Irish."

After all that has been said of National Music, we are persuaded that it owes much of its interest to early associations, which remind us of the scenes of our country and our homes. The famous '*Rans des Vaches*,' formerly so fatal to the emigrant Swiss, has lost its influence. Even the character of its music is held in little estimation; and we know of no strains which could now burst the adder, or cure the bite of the tarantula. But though mere sounds, unless associated with the memory of the past, are ill fitted to excite a train of ideas, yet there may be an incongruity between the Air and the words of the Song, which would be grating to the melody of the one and disturb the thought of the other. Modern musicians frequently shew so little attention to prosody, that the finest sentiments and the most polished verses are rendered unintelligible. "Unimportant expletives and particles are forced into notice by careless or ignorant composers, who, only intent upon *mere music*, pay no regard to her sister, poetry. But then, poetry, in revenge, is as little solicitous about musical effects; for symmetry of air, or simplicity of design, are generally so little thought of, that every heterogeneous idea, which can be hitched into rhyme, is indiscriminately crowded into the same song." —"If the writer has the least pity for the com-

poser, or love for music, or wishes to afford the least opportunity for symmetry in the air, the thought should be *one*, and the numbers as smooth, and the expression as easy and laconic as possible.”—“In general, every new line in our songs introduces a new thought; so that, if the composer is more tender of the poet’s reputation than his own, he must, at every line, change his subject, or be at strife with the bard; and in either case, the alternative is injurious to the general interest of the music, poetry, and audience.”\*

The most ordinary versifier knows that every stanza of a Song should contain the same number of lines, and that each line must have the same quantity of syllables: he probably knows too that the feet of each corresponding line ought to be of the same species; for unless the poem has all these requisites, the several stanzas could not be sung to the same air. There are, however, necessary points which require equal attention: the general flow of sentiment and the adaptation of the emphasis and cæsura to the bars of the tune. “Until I am complete master of a tune, says Burns, in my own singing (such as it is) I can never compose for it. My way is: I consider

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\* Dr. Burney.

the poetic sentiment correspondent to my idea of the musical expression; then choose my theme; begin one stanza; when that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out, sit down now and then, look out for objects in nature around me that are in unison and harmony with the cogitations of my fancy and workings of my bosom; humming every now and then the air, with the verses I have framed. When I feel my muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fireside of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper; swinging at intervals on the hind legs of my elbow chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures, as my pen goes on. Seriously, this, at home, is almost invariably my way.”\*

In writing for old airs it is often difficult to hit on a proper stanza, unless we have the old words to which they have been sung. “I have tried my hand (we again quote Burns) with *Robin Adair*, and you will probably think, with little success; but it is such a cramp, out-of-the-way measure, that I despair of doing any thing better to it.

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\* Burns’s Letters to Mr. Thomson.

## PHILLIS THE FAIR.

While larks with little wing,  
 Fann'd the pure air,  
 Tasting the breathing spring,  
 Forth I did fare;  
 Gay the sun's golden eye,  
 Peep'd o'er the mountains high;  
 Such thy morn! did I cry,  
 Phillis the fair.

In each bird's careless song,  
 Glad did I share;  
 While yon wild flowers among,  
 Chance led me there;  
 Sweet to the opening day,  
 Rosebuds bent the dewy spray;  
 Such thy bloom! did I say,  
 Phillis the fair.

\* \* \* \* \*

In a subsequent letter,  
 "That crinkum crankum tune, *Robin Adair*,  
 has run so in my head, and I succeeded so ill in  
 my last attempt, that I have ventured in this  
 morning's walk one essay more.

## SONG.

Had I a cave on some wild, distant shore,  
 Where the winds howl to the waves dashing roar:

There would I weep my woes,  
There seek my last repose,  
Till grief my eyes should close,  
Ne'er to wake more !

Falsest of womankind, canst thou declare  
All thy fond-plighted vows—fleeing as air !  
To thy new lover hie,  
Laugh o'er thy perjury;  
Then in thy bosom try,  
What peace is there !

Mr. Moore has written the following Song to  
the same tune, which the Irish call '*Aileen  
Aroon.*'

Erin ! the tear and the smile in thine eyes  
Blend like the rainbow that hangs in the skies ;  
Shining through sorrow's stream,  
Sadd'ning through pleasure's beam,  
Thy sons, with doubtful gleam,  
Weep while they rise !

Erin ! thy silent tear never shall cease,  
Erin ! thy languid smile ne'er shall increase,  
Till, like the rainbow's light,  
Thy various tints unite,  
And form, in Heaven's sight,  
One arch of peace.

Mr. Moore, as well as Burns, complained that  
the Music cramped the measure of his Songs ;



and of this we have apparent proofs in his Irish Melodies, in which he has been forced to use modes of versification that would not have been chosen for an unfettered poem. It requires some practice to give the proper cadence in reciting the following lines :

At the mid hour of night, when stars are weeping, I fly,  
To the lone vale we loved, when life shone warm in thine  
eye !

And I think that, if spirits can steal from the region of air  
To revisit past scenes of delight, thou wilt come to me  
there,  
And tell me our love is remember'd even in the sky !

Another five-barred cadence to the air "*I once had a true love,*" although the feet walk more smoothly, must also have cost considerable pains to the poet.

Through grief and through danger, thy smile hath cheer'd  
my way,  
Till hope seem'd to bud from each thorn that round me lay ;  
The darker our fortune, the brighter our pure love burn'd,  
Till shame into glory ; till fear into zeal was turn'd :  
Oh ! slave as I was, in thy arms my spirit felt free,  
And bless'd e'en the sorrows that made me more dear to  
thee.

We formerly remarked \* that it is the thought

and not the measure which renders the stanza grave or gay ; and something similar may be observed of the Music. Tenderness, and even pathos, may be given to the most lively air, provided it be accompanied with verses of a plaintive kind, sung with tender expression and to slow time. It is not, however, to be recommended, to the writer of a serious Song, to chuse an Air which has been originally adapted to lighter verses ; because the earlier association is apt to return upon the mind of the hearer, and thereby to retranspose the melody (and with it the song) into a species of burlesque. ‘ The Banks of the Dee’ (which the Scotch have appropriated as a National Song, although the Nightingale was never heard in their country) is set, in slow time, to the Irish Air of ‘ Languolee’ : that tune to which so many ludicrous verses have been made and sung.

It has been said that Love and Wine are the exclusive subjects of Song ; but he who said so forgot Patriotism to which we owe many of the finest Songs in every language. This patriotism, however, is not necessarily enlightened. The poet need only to be an enthusiast ; and the offspring of his muse will be equally prized by his party, whether they be in favour of republicanism, or of the divine right of kings. The Marseillois hymn animated the French sol-

diers to battle ; and many of our tenderest airs were composed by the adherents of the exiled Stuarts : these are associated with pity for misfortune, and ‘pity melts the mind to love.’ War-Songs are more assimilated to the ancient Ode : they aim at the sublime. ‘Scots wha hae wi’ Wallace bled’ is of this class ; but the following, by the same author, is probably less known :

*SCENE—A Field of Battle—Time of the Day, Evening—the wounded and dying of the victorious Army are supposed to join in the following*

SONG OF DEATH.

Farewell thou fair day, thou green earth, and ye skies,  
Now gay with the broad setting sun !  
Farewell loves and friendships, ye dear, tender ties,  
Our race of existence is run !

Thou grim king of terrors, thou life’s gloomy foe,  
Go, frighten the coward and slave ;  
Go, teach them to tremble, fell tyrant ! but know,  
No terrors hast thou to the brave !

Thou strik’st the poor peasant—he sinks in the dark,  
Nor saves e’en the wreck of a name ;  
Thou strik’st the young hero—a glorious mark !  
He falls in the blaze of his fame !

In the field of proud honour—our swords in our hands,  
Our king and our country to save—  
While victory shines on life’s last ebbing sands—  
O, who would not die with the brave !

Campbell's "Battle of Hohenlinden" is a spirited Song of the same class.

On Linden when the sun was low,  
All bloodless lay th' untrodden snow;  
And dark as winter was the flow

Of Iser rolling rapidly:

But Linden saw another sight,  
When the drum beat, at dead of night,  
Commanding fires of death to light  
The darkness of her scenery.

By torch and trumpet fast arrayed,  
Each horseman drew his battle blade;  
And furious every charger neighed,  
To join the dreadful revelry.

Then shook the hills, with thunder riven;  
Then rush'd the steed, to battle driven;  
And, louder than the bolts of heaven,  
Far flash'd the red artillery.

But redder yet that light shall grow,  
On Linden's hills of stained snow;  
And bloodier yet the torrent flow  
Of Iser rolling rapidly.

The combat deepens, on ye brave,  
Who rush to glory or the grave!  
Wave, Munich, all thy banners wave!  
And charge with all thy chivalry!

Few, few shall part, where many meet!  
The snow shall be their winding sheet;  
And every turf beneath their feet  
Shall be a soldier's sepulchre.

## CHAPTER XVI.

OF LYRIC POETRY—*continued.*

In the preceding Chapter we have treated at large of the Ode and the Song which, in this country, are the only species of poetry that are combined with instrumental Music. Other small poems, however, are usually included under the denomination of Lyric: some of which are considered as varieties of Song; and others are seldom, if ever, meant to be sung.

A Ballad is a rhyming record of some adventure or transaction, which is amusing or interesting to the populace, and written in easy and uniform verse, so as it may be sung by those who have little acquaintance with Music. Ballads are sung in the streets and at fairs, by itinerant minstrels, or they amuse the rustics during their sociable and sedentary occupations. They are so many amusing or interesting tales told in verse, and in a chant that is sufficiently agreeable to the ear. ‘Chevy Chase’ and ‘The Babes of the Wood’ are specimens of our ancient Ballads. Goldsmith’s ‘Edwin and Angelina,’ is a Ballad of

modern date; but of such we have few. In old English the words Ballad and Song were synonymous; but, as early as the time of Shakspeare, they were sufficiently distinguished. In the latter the sweetness of the music became more attended to, and in the former the interest rested more on the humourous or the tragic effect of the tale. Ballads were, at one time, the only vehicles of popular satire; and with this view they are occasionally still employed to raise a spirit of party among the multitude. Let me, said Fletcher of Saltoun, have the making of the Ballads of a nation, and I shall care very little who made its religion.

The French have divided their Lyric Poetry into several species, some of which we, of this country, have endeavoured to imitate, while of others we have merely imported the names without adopting their distinctions. Of these the Sonnet is best known. It has occupied the pen of many of our most distinguished poets; but, when the rules of its composition have been strictly observed, it has seldom added to their fame.

The laws of the French Sonnet are rigid and unalterable. It is composed of fourteen verses, of equal lengths, usually Alexandrines; but sometimes of ten, of eight, or even of seven syllables.

Those of twelve syllables, however, are accounted the most harmonious. These fourteen verses are divided into two quatrains, and one stanza of six lines.

The rhymes of the two quatrains (both masculine and feminine) must be similar, and must also follow in the same order: so that, in the terminations of the first eight lines, there are only two sounds which strike the ear.

In composing the concluding (six-lined) stanza, the two first verses must form a rhyme; and the other four must have their terminations so disposed as not to imitate the order of the first quatrains. Further, there must be a pause in the construction of this latter stanza which will have the effect of separating it into two parts of three verses each, which are called *Tercets*.

Such are the Rules of Boileau, which he feigns to have been announced by Apollo: Rules that experience has demonstrated to be incompatible with the genius of the English tongue; which is intolerant to rhymes that occur at irregular distances.

The French Sonnet, as well as its English imitations, is, doubtless, in its origin, of Italian growth. It was only in a language of vowels and liquids that the *Improvvisatori* could speak in Rhyme, without premeditation (as their name im-

plies); and that Petrarch could have celebrated his Laura in three hundred of those uniform Sonnets, without being himself disgusted with the labour, or tiring the patience of his readers. We shall give one of his amorous productions, with an English anonymous translation, as a specimen of the arrangement of the verses :

*Quel vago impallidir, che'l dolce riso  
D'un' amorosa nebbia ricoperse,  
Con tanta maestade al cor s' offerse,  
Che li si fece incontr' a mezzo 'l viso.  
Conobbi allor, siccome in paradiso  
Vede l'un l'altro; in tal guisa s'aperse  
Quel pietoso pensier, ch'altri non scerse :  
Ma vidi l'io, ch' altrove non m' affiso.  
Ogni angelica vista, ogn' atto umile  
Che giammai in donna ov' amor fosse, apparve,  
Fora uno sdegno a lato a quel ch' i' dico.  
Chinava a terra il bel guardo gentile;  
E tacendo dicea ( come a me parve)  
Chi m' allontana il mio fedele amico?*

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That charming paleness, that o'erclouding threw,  
O'er her bewitching smiles a love-sick shade,  
Came with such winning majesty arrayed,  
That forth my ravish'd heart to meet it flew.  
How saints greet saints in paradise I knew  
From that blest hour, so freely was displayed  
That tender sentiment none other read :  
But I, who still from her my being drew.



Each angel look, each condescending grace  
 That can on ladies' cheeks, when kindest, play,  
 Compar'd to this, would cold disdain appear.  
 She bent to earth her gentle beauteous face,  
 And in expressive silence seem'd to say,  
 Who from my side my faithful friend would tear?

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Of the English Sonnet thus fettered, it is sufficient to say that it was unsuccessful in the hands of Shakspeare and of Milton; but, with other forms of stanza, there have been many beautiful fourteen-lined poems under the name of Sonnets. Daniel, at the close of the sixteenth century, wrote fifty-seven addressed to Delia, as Petrarch did to his Laura. Although possessing a little of the conceit of the age, they are generally so excellent as to put to shame our modern Sonneteers :—One we extract :

Beautie (sweet Loue) is like the morning dew,  
 Whose short refresh ypon the tender greene,  
 Cheers for a time but til the Sun doth shew,  
 And straight tis gone as it had neuer beene.  
 Soone doth it fade that makes the fairest florish,  
 Short is the glorie of the blushing Rose:  
 The hew which thou so carefully dost nourish,  
 Yet which at length thou must be forc'd to lose,  
 When thou surcharg'd with burthen of thy yeeres,  
 Shalt bend thy wrinkles homward to the earth,  
 And that in Beauties lease expir'd, appears  
 The date of Age, the Kalends of our death.

But ah no more, this must not be foretold,  
For women grieve to think they must be old.

Drummond, of Hawthornden, who lived at the same period, was also a successful writer of Sonnets, of which the following is a proof.

#### TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

Dear Chorister, who from these shadows sends,  
Ere that the blushing morn dare shew her light,  
Such sad lamenting strains, that night attends,  
(Become all ear),—stars stay to hear thy plight;  
If one whose grief even reach of thought transcends,  
Who ne'er, not in a dream, did taste delight  
May thee importune, who like ease pretends  
And seems to joy in woe, in woe's despoight;  
Tell me (so may thou milder fortune try  
And long, long sing!) for what thou thus complains,  
Since winter's gone, and sun in dappled sky  
Enamoured smiles on woods and flowery plains?  
The bird, as if my questions did her move,  
With trembling wings sighed forth,—“I love, I love!”

The French Rondeau, like their Sonnet, is confined to a peculiar form of Stanza and of Rhyme. It consists of thirteen ten-syllable lines divided into two portions (eight and five), each portion terminating with three or more of the words that begin the Poem; but which make an agreeable and spirited meaning with the words

that precede them. An example will shew the trammels of its rhyme : it is by Voiture.

*Ma foi, c'est fait de moi, car Isabeau*  
*M'a conjuré de lui faire un Rondeau :*  
*Cela me met en une peine extrême.*  
*Quoi ! treize vers, huit in eau, cinq en ème !*  
*Je lui ferois aussitôt un bateau.*  
*En voilà cinq pourtant en un monceau :*  
*Faisons-en huit, en invoquant Brodeau,*  
*Et puis mettons, par quelque stratagème,*  
*Ma foi, c'est fait.*

*Si je pouvois encore de mon cerveau*  
*Tirer cinq vers, l'ouvrage seroit beau ;*  
*Mais cependant, me voilà dans l'onzième,*  
*Et si je crois que je fais le douzième :*  
*En voilà treize ajustés au niveau,*  
*Mo foi, c'est fait.*

This play of Rhymes was not adopted by our poets. The old English Roundels were short lyrical poems, of which the first verse, couplet, or quatrain, was repeated, at the end of every Stanza, to the same air ; making what was called the burden of the Song. Roundelay and Virelay (French *virer*, to turn round) were other old names for the same species of composition. All kinds of Poetry were formerly termed Lays ; but the French *lai* is distinguished from the other

Lyrics ; and designates a short song, having only two rhymes, as the following :

*Sur l'appui du monde  
Que faut-il qu'on fonde  
D'espoir ?  
Cette mer profonde  
En débris féconde  
Fait voir,  
Calme au matin l'onde ;  
Et l'orage y gronde  
Le soir.*

The Greek *epigramma* signified an Inscription; and, originally referred to the verses that were inscribed on tombs, on temples and other public monuments. The name was afterwards retained to denominate any short poem characteristic of some particular persons, or event. Its essence is, that it consists of a simple subject, rendered interesting by terminating with an unexpected but pointed thought or expression. The point of the modern Epigram often rests on a witticism, or on a verbal pun\*; but the higher species,—that which only deserves to be called a poem,—should be marked by fineness and delicacy rather than by smartness or repartee. Pope's couplet, written on a glass with a diamond pencil, lent

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\* See page 150.

him by Chesterfield, approaches to the latter kind :

Accept a miracle in place of wit;—  
See two dull lines by Stanhope's pencil writ.

That on the tombstone of a Fiddler who beat  
time to his music is an example of the satirical :

Stephen and Time are now both even :  
Stephen beat Time, now Time's beat Stephen.

The next, from the German, is general by  
allusion, although direct in its application :

#### ADAM'S SLEEP.

He laid him down and slept,—and from his side  
A woman in her magic beauty rose,—  
Dazzl'd and charm'd, he call'd that woman—"bride,"—  
And his first sleep became his last repose.

The following are more complimentary :

#### ON A FLOWER PAINTED BY VARELST.

When fam'd Varelst this little wonder drew,  
Flora vouchsaf'd the growing work to view :  
Finding the painter's science at a stand,  
The goddess snatch'd the pencil from his hand ;  
And, finishing the piece, she smiling said,  
*Behold one work of mine which ne'er shall fade !*

TO A LADY OF THE COUNTY OF LANCASTER, WITH A  
WHITE ROSE.

If this fair rose offend thy sight,  
It in thy bosom wear;  
'Twill blush to see itself less white,  
And turn Lancast'rian there.

The latter, which its author has, tastelessly, overwhelmed with additional stanzas, is a Madrigal, rather than an Epigram. The Madrigal is a small Song, terminating in a marked manner; and is, in so far, like the Epigram; but the thought is more delicate, and, usually, breathes the tenderness of love. This species of Poetry is more common on the continent. The following by Garrick, is imitated from the Spanish :

For me, my fair a wreath hath wove,  
Where rival flowers in union meet;  
As oft she kiss'd this gift of love,  
Her breath gave sweetness to the sweet.

A bee, within a damask rose  
Had crept, the nectar'd dew to sip;  
But lesser sweets the thief foregoes,  
And fixes on Maria's lip.

There, tasting all the bloom of spring,  
Wak'd by the ripening breath of May;—  
Th' ungrateful spoiler left his sting,  
And with the honey fled away.

Another beautiful Madrigal is from the pen of Lord Byron :

LINES WRITTEN BENEATH A PICTURE.

Dear object of defeated care!

Though now of love and thee bereft,  
To reconcile me with despair,  
Thine image and my tears are left.

'Tis said, with sorrow Time can cope,  
But this, I feel, can ne'er be true ;  
For, by the death-blow of my Hope,  
My Memory immortal grew.

While treating of the smaller Poems, we may notice Acrostics and Bouts Rimés, those play-things of the Muses.

An Acrostic is a number of Verses so contrived that the initial Letters, read from top to bottom of the Poem, make up a word or a phrase; generally a person's name, or a motto. This amusement has produced various forms. Some have the name made up by the terminating letters of the verses ; some both by the initials and the terminations ; others read backwards, beginning with the initial, or with the termination, of the last verse : while a few are extremely complicated, having the name, or words, repeated in many directions. One of the simpler kind will serve as an example :

## TO FRIENDSHIP.

'F riendship, thou'rt false ! I hate thy flattering smile !  
 R eturn to me those years I spent in vain :  
 I n early youth, the victim of thy guile,  
 E ach joy took wing ne'er to return again.'  
 N e'er to return : for, chill'd by hopes deceiv'd,  
 D ully the slow-paced hours now move along ;  
 S o changed the time when, thoughtless, I believ'd  
 H er honied words, and heard her syren song :  
 I f e'er, as me, she lure some youth to stray,  
 P erhaps, before too late, he'll listen to my lay.

The play of *Bouts Rimés*, like its name, is borrowed from the French ; and is introduced into the English social circle much seldomer than it ought. One of a party writes down the rhyming words for a short poem ; which another undertakes to complete, by filling up the several verses : on a subject either chosen at pleasure, or prescribed, as the case may be. The following will be sufficiently explanatory of the practice :

## TO HOPE.

Down, down, vain Hope ! to me no . . . more  
 Can Spring return, with blossoms . . . crown'd ;  
 Nor Summer ripen Autumn's . . . . . store  
 Which now lies withering on the . . . ground.



Fade, fade, vain Hope! all else has . . . faded;  
 Why should I dream and cherish . . . thee?  
 Since dark Despair that sun has . . . . shaded  
 Which once gave light and joy to . . . me.

Go, flatterer, go! thy hour is . . . . . past;  
 Thy promis'd pleasures all are . . . . vain;  
 I know they are not meant to . . . . . last,  
 And ne'er will trust to thee . . . . . again.

Another sort of poetical amusement has the name of Echoes. In these the repetition of the last word, or syllable, of a verse gives an answer to a question, or explains some subject, which that verse contains;—thus, by Cowley:

Oh! what has caus'd my killing miseries?

“EYES,” Echo said. What hath detain'd my *ease*?

“EASE,” straight the reasonable nymph replies.

That nothing can my troubled mind *appease*?

“PEACE,” Echo answers. What, is any *nigh*?

Philetus said. She quickly utters “I.”

Is't Echo answers? tell me then thy *will*:

“I WILL,” she said. What shall I get, says he,  
 By loving still? To which she answers, “ILL.”

Ill! Shall I void of wish'd-for pleasures *die*?

“I.” Shall not I, who toil in ceaseless pain,  
 Some pleasure *know*? “No,” she replies again.

False and inconstant nymph, *thou lvest!* said he :

"THOU LVEST," she said ; And I deserv'd her hate,  
If I should thee *believe*. "BELIEVE," saith she.

For why? Thy idle words are of no *weight*.

"WEIGHT," she answers. Therefore I'll *depart*.

To which resounding Echo answers, "PART."

There are some ludicrous Echoes of this kind in the third Canto of Hudibras, to which we refer the reader ; because they cannot well be separated from their context.

Although this species of composition is sufficiently trifling, it seems, from some allusions by Martial as well as other Authors, to have been well known to the Greek and Roman poets. In latter times, many playful specimens were produced. Such is that famous Echo of Erasmus, *Decem annos consumpsi in legendo Cicerone—one, ' that is ove, asine.'*

## CHAPTER XVII.

## OF PASTORAL POETRY.

The simple manners and calm enjoyments of rural life have always presented, to the moralist, a striking contrast to the vice and misery of crowded cities and the everlasting turmoil of the busy haunts of men. Much of this contrast really exists; but imagination has come in aid of the real distinction; and the Golden Age of the poets has ever been an Age of Shepherds who fed their flocks in luxuriant meadows, and played, on their reeds, to the listening divinities of the woods, or sung the charms of their mistresses: seated under the shade of a spreading beech, or on the banks of a murmuring stream. The narratives, songs, and dramas, which are supposed to have been recited, sung, or acted by shepherds (Latin *pastores*) are PASTORALS. They are necessarily confined to few objects and few incidents; and hence Pastoral Poetry is the simplest, but at the same time the most difficult, species of fictitious composition.

Pastorals are also called Bucolics, from the

Greek *bous* an ox, and *kolon* food, from which was derived *boukolos*, a herdsman, in opposition to one who tended sheep, or goats. Taste often differs, unaccountably, with the age and country. Our ideas of pastoral life are associated with the sheep. The goat can scarcely appear in a poem the characteristic of which is innocent simplicity; and both the ox and his owner are too apt to remind us of rudeness and vulgarity. It was otherwise with the Greeks and Romans. Oxen were, with them, the noblest of domestic animals. They shared, with men, the praise-worthy labours of agriculture; and, crowned with garlands, they had the honour of being sacrificed to the superior gods. Theocritus, who may be reckoned the father of Pastoral Poetry (for Virgil was not only his follower but his imitator) distinguishes the Goatherd, the Shepherd, and the Neatherd, as rising in the scale of rank. The Goatherds worshipped Pan, as their preceptor in the art of singing or playing on the pipe; while the Neatherds and the Shepherds were the disciples of Apollo and the Muses." The distinction of these three classes was afterwards lost.

The ancient Pastorals were either Dialogues or Monologues. A monologue (Greek *monos*, alone, and *logos*, a speech) is a poetical piece, where there is only a single speaker,—what, in

a Drama, would be called a Soliloquy. An Idyl, Idyllion, or Idyllium (Greek diminutive from *eidos*, an image, or representation,) is, strictly speaking, a short Pastoral, of the narrative or descriptive kind. An Eclogue (also Greek) is literally a chosen, or picked, discourse, and was originally the same as the Idyl, there being no difference in kind between the Idyls of Theocritus and the Eclogues of Virgil: but, in modern usage, they are shepherds only who converse in the Eclogue, while, in the Idyl, although the subject must be rural, there is no necessity to introduce a rustic speaker. The Idyllion has been seldom attempted in English. One of the most successful is a paraphrastical translation, by Cunningham, from the Greek of Bion. It is an address to the Evening Star; and is too well known to warrant our troubling the reader by repeating it. The following, besides giving an example of this species of poetry, may induce the student to turn his attention to poetical prose: a kind of composition which prevails among other nations, but which, though well suited to the language, is little cultivated in this country. The Hyacinth here addressed is the Harebell.

#### THE HYACINTH.

Of all the flowers of the spring, the rose is most cherished by Venus. She is pleased to behold it in the

woods of Idalia. With her delicate fingers she gently opens its odoriferous calyx ; and on its spreading flowers she cradles the God of Love, when, fatigued with his cruel labours, he resigns himself to sleep, while the wood-nymphs sing softly around him.

The queen of heaven, haughty Juno, protects the gaudy tulip. Upon its petals we behold the colours of the favourite bird of the goddess. I have seen the wood-nymphs, in their light dances, fear to tread upon the violet, their darling ornament. Echo is still enamoured of the pale narcissus.

The flowers chosen by the immortals are beautiful; but there is one still more beautiful for me. O, sweet and modest hyacinth ! It is thee whom I love—thee whom I prefer to all the flowers of the immortals. Come, rest upon my bosom, while I elevate my voice—while I consecrate thee in my song.

Lovely flower ! thy perfume excels that of the rose. Gently balanced on thy slender stem, thou hidest not thy head like the timid violet, nor courttest attention like the flaunting tulip, but receivest without exacting our homage. Thy colour, the pure tint of an azure sky, is associated with the tender and melancholy remembrance of what once has been. Thy delicate form gives a grace to the nosegay of the shepherdess, and, twined with the glossy ringlets, adorns her flowing hair. O, sweet and modest hyacinth !

Last evening, in the woods, I heard a young shepherd, whose voice mingled melodiously with the tones of the nightingale. He sung of the snowdrop, the earliest flower of the spring. Doubtless, young shepherd, it is beautiful ; but its beauties are transient: before thy song has ceased, they are no more. My hyacinth is more lovely

and more lasting. It forms a garland with the earliest of the roses, and, when the latest have perished, it is still in bloom. The flowers of the spring have long faded; but mine has yet preserved its freshness, and continues to blossom. Zephyrus himself is careful lest he should injure it with his wing. O, pluck not my darling flower. Tear not its trembling stem. Let it drink of the moisture of the earth. Let it be sprinkled with the tears of Aurora. Then will it exhale its sweetest perfume, and remind you of the flowers of spring that have ceased to blow. Ah, pluck not my flower! Scarcely is it torn from its stem when it droops its head and dies. May no rash hand despoil thy beauteous form—thy fragile existence; for I prefer thee to all the flowers of the immortals—to the flowers of spring—to the flower of which the shepherd sung in the woods; sweet and modest hyacinth!

Ye careless nymphs who recline at your ease on the surrounding trees, give ear to my song! Would you know why I love the hyacinth—why I prefer it to all the flowers of the field—come near, lest the malignant satyrs should hear me, or babbling echo should whisper my secret to the unfeeling rocks. Listen to me, ye thoughtless nymphs! Listen to my mournful song.

Ye have seen the amiable shepherd. Ye have seen my Alexis, wandering in your woods. Ye have not yet forgotten his sweet smile and his plaintive voice. Alas! ye will see him no more. Never again will ye hear his song. The shepherds assembled on the mead to enjoy their innocent sports—each was accompanied with the maid he loved. Alexis and I alone were sad. It was the eve of his departure. Our sighs answered to one another. I had a nosegay of hyacinth in my bosom. I lost it, and sought for it every where in vain, while the

## OF PASTORAL POETRY.

shepherds laugh'd in malice. Love made me bold. I promised a kiss to him who should find it, and my beating heart prayed that it might be Alexis. Love overcame me. This was the first—the last kiss. O, tender flower, thou wert the only witness of our parting! Hear me, ye dryads, listen to my mournful song.

Alas! I, alone, now sing of the tender flower. Alexis has forgotten it. He passes over the hyacinth. It bends under his feet and raises to him its perfume. He passes on without its being able to draw from his bosom a single sigh. Ungrateful shepherd—too dear, too amiable Alexis, all is then over! Thou hast forgotten thy shepherdess. Thou hast forgotten thy hyacinth, and that farewell of which it was the pledge. Alas! see the tender flower. It has withered upon my bosom. My hot tears have dried it up, like the rage of the scorching day-star. Ungrateful Alexis! Thou hast destroyed my hyacinth. Thou art the cause of my lamentation.

Depart, ye dryads! Listen no longer to my mournful song. My voice is extinguished. My tears have slackened the cords of my lyre. They have drowned my complaints. O, Venus! it is thee whom I implore. Hear my prayer. Tear Alexis from my heart. Efface his image from it for ever. Alexis! like thee I have at length forgotten our love—farewell! But thee, O tender flower, I will never forget. Thou shalt be ever dear to me. I will always prefer thee to the flowers of the immortals—to the early flowers of the spring—to the flower whose praises were sung by the shepherds of the woods—thou sweet and modest hyacinth!

If we except Milton's *Lycidas*, we have no English Pastoral of note from the Shepherd's



Calendar of Spencer to the rival productions of Phillips and Pope. "Neither Mr. Pope's nor Mr. Phillips's Pastorals, says Dr. Blair, do any great honour to the English Poetry. Mr. Pope's were composed in his youth; which may be an apology for other faults, but cannot well excuse the barrenness that appears in them. They are written in remarkably smooth and flowing numbers: and this is their chief merit; for there is scarcely any thought in them which can be called his own; scarcely any description, or any image of nature, which has the marks of being original, or copied from nature herself; but a repetition of the common images that are to be found in Virgil, and in all poets who write of rural themes. Phillips attempted to be more simple and natural than Pope; but he wanted genius to support his attempt, or to write agreeably. He, too, runs on the common and beaten topics; and, endeavouring to be simple, he becomes flat and insipid."

Shenstone's Ballad is the most popular of all the English Pastorals. Dr. Johnson's criticism applies to the species in general rather than to this particular poem. "I cannot but regret," says he, "that it is Pastoral: an intelligent reader, *acquainted with the scenes of real life*, sickens at the mention of the *crook*, the *pipe*, the *sheep*, and the

*kids*, which it is not necessary to bring forward to notice ; for the poet's art is selection, and he ought to shew the beauties without the *grossness* of the country life." The Doctor here, as on other occasions, is certainly too cynical. Pastoral Poetry was never intended to pourtray the "scenes of real life." The poet's art is to feign rather than to select ; to place an imaginary Eden in the wild ; and to people it with the gentle beings of his own creation. Notwithstanding his fastidious remarks, Johnson cannot refuse the tribute of approbation to many passages of the poem of which we speak. "In the first part (the Ballad is divided into four) are two passages, to which if any mind denies its sympathy, it has no acquaintance with love or nature :

I priz'd every hour that went by,  
 Beyond all that had pleas'd me before ;  
 But now they are past, and I sigh,  
 And I grieve that I priz'd them no more.

\* \* \* \* \*

When forc'd the fair nymph to forego,  
 What anguish I felt in my heart !  
 Yet I thought,—but it might not be so,—  
 'Twas with pain that she saw me depart.

She gaz'd as I slowly withdrew,  
 My path I could hardly discern ;  
 So sweetly she bade me adieu,  
 I thought that she bade me return.

In the second, this passage has its prettiness, though it be not equal to the former :

I have found out a gift for my fair ;  
 I have found where the wood-pigeons breed :  
 But let me that plunder forbear,  
 She will say 'twas a barbarous deed :

For he ne'er could be true, she averr'd,  
 Who could rob a poor bird of its young ;  
 And I lov'd her the more, when I heard  
 Such tenderness fall from her tongue."

Pastorals appear under various forms. We have Pastoral Songs, Pastoral Elegies, Pastoral Dramas, &c.

ELEGY (Greek *elegeia* and Latin *elegia*) is, primarily, a plaintive poem, although some have assumed that name in which sorrow was not the only ingredient. It is thus characterized by Boileau :

La plaintive Elégie, en longs habits de deuil, .  
 Sait les cheveux épars, gémir sur un cercueil :  
 Elle peint des amans la joie et la tristesse,  
 Flatte, menace, irrite, apaise une maitresse.

" In mourning weeds sad Elegy appears,  
 Her hair dishevell'd, and her eyes in tears :  
 Her theme the lover's joys, but more his pains ;  
 By turns she sings, soothes, threatens, and complains."

The early Greek Elegies were chanted at funerals, —being what we should now call DIRGES. They were frequently venal like the hired mourners of the present day; and, hence, *The Tears of Simonides* became a proverbial expression for such Elegies, in praise of the departed, as could be purchased with money. In all ages, poets, like itinerant musicians, have been accused of *letting out* their talents for hire. The death of every king calls forth the lamentations of the Muse; while, almost in the same breath, and by the same bards, the voice of the nation is demanded, with trumpet tongue, to celebrate the latent virtues of his successor. True to the throne, whoever may be its occupant, even the change of dynasty is disregarded by many of the sons of song. It was the smoke of an incense, offered indiscriminately to the wise and the worthless, which tarnished the laurels of Waller and of Dryden.

Among the funeral Elegies which have not been prostituted to the shrine of power, we should particularly refer to that of Pope "On an unfortunate Lady," as an example of animated and tender feeling. Collins's Poem (which he calls an Ode) on the Grave of Thomson, is a pastoral Dirge of genuine pathos and unaffected simplicity. The stanza, a quatrain of eight-syl-

lable lines, differs from the usual Elegiac, which has adopted the heroic measure, either in couplets, or in alternate rhymes.

EPITAPHS (Greek *epi*, upon, and *taphos*, a sepulchre, are, literally, inscriptions on tombs, in memory of the dead. These, when written in verse, and expressing the sorrow of the survivors, are short Elegies; and many such pieces are composed with the title of Epitaphs, which were never meant to be engraved on a monument.

Dr. Johnson has written a dissertation on Epitaphs, at the end of his life of Pope, in which there is much of judicious remark, along with some hypercriticism. That Essay is so easily to be got at, that we shall content ourselves with the general reference. Thirteen of Pope's Epitaphs are there minutely examined.

There are whole volumes of collected Epigrams, in different languages; and particularly in Latin, in which at one time all those on great men were written. The following is a fine example, in which a deceased wife is supposed to address her living husband :

Immatura peri: sed tu, felicior, annos  
Vive tuos, conjux optime, vive meos.

It may be thus imitated :

Too short my life! more favour'd be thy fate!  
(Beloved by thee 'twas painful to resign : )  
Thou best of Husbands! live thy utmost date;  
Then add those years which death has torn from mine!

A very elegant inscription, under the statue of a sleeping Nymph, is still extant at Rome, which Mr. Pope has transcribed and translated in one of his letters, when speaking of his garden at Twickenham.

*Hujus Nympha loci, sacri custodia fontis,  
Dormio, dum blandæ sentio murmur aquæ:  
Parce meum, quisquis tangis cava marmora, somnum  
Rumpere; si bibas, sive lavere, tace.*

Nymph of the grot, these sacred springs I keep,  
And to the murmur of these waters sleep,  
Ah, spare my slumbers, gently tread the cave!  
And drink in silence, or in silence lave!

Ben Jonson's celebrated Epitaph on the sister of Sir Philip Sidney is distinguished by the Epigrammatic point in which it terminates:

Underneath this marble hearse,  
Lies the subject of all verse,  
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother:  
Death, ere thou hast kill'd another  
Fair, and learn'd, and good as she,  
Time shall throw a dart at thee.

We cannot resist adding another, written about the same period, which will probably amuse our readers:

*On William Shakespeare, 1616.*

Renowned Spencer, lye a thought more nigh  
To learned Chaucer; and rare Beaumont, lye  
A little nearer Spencer; to make roome  
For Shakespeare in your threefold, fourfold tombe.  
To lodge all four in one bed make a shift,  
Until Doom's-day; for hardly will a fifth  
Between this day and that by Fates be slaine,  
For whom your curtaines may be drawn again.

For Love Elegies we are chiefly indebted to Hammond; and he, again, to Tibullus. Johnson has treated Hammond with the most caustic severity; forgetting, or affecting to forget, that the English Elegies are almost wholly translations, or paraphrases, of those of the Roman poet. If the criticism is just, it applies not to Hammond alone, but to many of the finest poems of antiquity.

“The truth is, says the Doctor, these Elegies have neither passion, nature, nor manners. Where there is fiction, there is no passion; he that describes himself as a shepherd, and his *Nemra*, or *Delia*, as a shepherdess, and talks of goats and lambs, feels no passion. He that courts his mistress with Roman imagery deserves to

lose her; for she may with good reason suspect his sincerity. Hammond has few sentiments drawn from Nature, and few images from modern life. He produces nothing but frigid pedantry. It would be hard to find in all his productions three stanzas that deserve to be remembered."

"Like other lovers, he threatens the lady with dying; and what then shall follow?

Wilt thou in tears thy lover's corse attend;  
With eyes averted light the solemn pyre;  
Till all around the doleful flames ascend,  
Then, slowly sinking, by degrees expire?

To soothe the hovering soul be thine the care,  
With plaintive cries to lead the mournful band;  
In sable weeds the golden vase to bear,  
And cull my ashes with thy trembling hand:

Panchaia's odours be their costly feast,  
And all the pride of Asia's fragrant year;  
Give them the treasures of the farthest East,  
And, what is still more precious, give thy tear.

"Surely no blame can fall upon a nymph who rejected a swain of so little meaning."

To be sure, Miss Emma and Miss Caroline (not being nymphs) would smile, were they addressed by their sweethearts in similar verses. It is certainly not the custom, now-a-days, for gallants to commit suicide, when their suits are



rejected; nor for their relenting mistresses to set fire to the pile which shall reduce to ashes the dead bodies of their lovers. The Doctor was right. It is all a fiction. The very meaning of the word Poetry is "a lie." Ladies of rank and taste never tended sheep, even on the delightful pastures of Sicily, except in the fabulous strains of Theocritus; neither, with all our admiration of classical antiquity, can we seriously believe that the Gods held their assemblies on Mount Olympus, or that Apollo, with all his Muses, ever inspired a single votary. The truth is, that the Poet lives in a region of his own creation. He takes his fictions for realities and his imaginations for truths. The train of his thoughts are the illusions of his fancy; but they are powerful illusions which lead his auditors spell-bound through enchanted ground, forgetful, for the moment, of that world to which they must return. The true Poet, like the Pythian Priestess, is in a state of phrenzy while under the inspiration of the god; and it is only in the shortness of the fits of his delirium that he differs from the insane. Whatever may have been the previous stores of his mind, the reverie of the maniac is too long continued to be coherent; and his lucid intervals are too few to enable him to mould his tale and correct its incongruities; in consequence of

which his flights of fancy are lost to the world. The following Stanzas, "written at the York Retreat, by a Young Woman who, when composing them, was labouring under a very considerable degree of active mania" are strikingly illustrative of what we have here advanced :

TO MELANCHOLY.

Spirit of Darkness! from yon lonely shade  
Where fade the virgin roses of the spring,  
Spirit of Darkness! hear thy favourite maid  
To sorrow's harp her wildest anthem sing.

Ah! how has love despoil'd my earliest bloom,  
And flung my charms as to the wintery wind!  
Ah! how has love hung o'er my trophied tomb  
The spoils of genius and the wreck of mind!

High rides the moon the silent heavens along;  
Thick fall the dews of midnight o'er the ground;  
Soft steals the lover, when the morning song  
Of waken'd warblers through the woods resound:

Then I with thee my solemn vigils keep,  
And, at thine altar, take my lonely stand;  
Again my lyre unstrung I sadly sweep,  
While Love leads up the dance with harp in hand.

High, o'er the woodlands, Hope's gay meteors shone,  
And thronging thousands bless'd the ardent ray;  
I turn'd,—but found Despair on his wild roam,  
And with the demon bent my hither way:

Soft, o'er the vale, she blew her bugle horn,—  
“Oh! where, Maria,—whither dost thou stray?  
Return, thou false maid, to the echoing sound!”  
I flew, nor heeded the sweet Syren's lay.

Hail, Melancholy! to your lonely towers  
I turn, and hail their time-worn turrets mine;  
Where flourish fair the nightshade's deadly flowers,  
And dark and blue the wasting tapers shine.

There, Oh, my Edwin, does thy spirit greet,  
In Fancy's maze, thy lov'd and wandering maid;  
Soft, through the bower, thy shade Maria meets,  
And leads thee onward through the myrtle glade.

Oh! come with me, and hear the song of eve,  
Far, sweeter far, than the loud shout of morn;  
List to the pantings of the whispering breeze,—  
Dwell on past woes, or sorrows yet unborn.

We have a tale and song will charm these shades,  
Which cannot rouse to life Maria's mind,  
Where Sorrow's captives hail thy once lov'd maid,  
To joy a stranger, and to grief resign'd.

Edwin, farewell!—go take my last adieu;  
Ah! could my bursting bosom tell thee more!  
Here, parted here, from love, from life, and you,  
I pour my song as on a foreign shore.—

But stay, rash youth! the sun has climb'd on high,  
The night is past, the shadows all are gone;  
For lost Maria, breathe the parting sigh,  
And waft thy sorrows to the gales of morn.

The inaccuracy of some of the rhymes of the preceding poem might easily be amended; but, what is more to our present purpose, the confusion of ideas is apparent: nevertheless, a poetical enthusiasm breathes through every stanza which, probably, was never felt by this unfortunate lady in her better days. Wildness of manner, however, is not inconsistent with the occasional flights of the soundest intellect; for Mr. Day's *Elegy*, beginning with,

Yet once again, in yonder myrtle bowers,  
Whence rose-lipp'd zephyrs, hovering, shed perfume,  
I weave the painted radiance of the flowers,  
And press coy Nature in her days of bloom,

might serve as a counterpart to that which we have last quoted.

We believe that, ever since it was published, no one has either spoken, or written, concerning English *Elegies*, without adverting to Gray's on a Country Church-yard. It would be vanity in us to attempt adding to its praise:—it has already received the stamp of immortality.

Warton, in a dissertation prefixed to his edition of *Theocritus*, labours hard to prove that pastoral poetry arose out of ancient Comedy, which latter, he says, had its origin in the free games that were celebrated by the inhabitants of the country,

on their festivals, after they had finished their labours. "The sum, says he, of what we have advanced, and desire to establish is this. In the infancy of Comedy, the persons were rustics, prone to throw out mutual reproaches. Among the rest, shepherds were sometimes introduced upon the stage, and Pastorals were acted. In process of time, mean characters were entirely banished from the theatre. Pastoral dialogues, however, remained. The poets observed the delights and graces which the country had to boast; and it was discovered that, by clear description and happy imagery, a poem perfectly in character might be composed, representing the actions and manners of pastoral life."

This supposition of a pastoral stage's having preceded pastoral poetry, is supported by no direct evidence. Pastoral dramas do exist; but they are few, and all of modern invention. The Italians boast of two, the *Aminta* of Tasso and the *Pastor Fido* of Guarini; and Gay's forgotten Tragedy of *Dione* is the only Drama of the kind in English. Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd* is a Pastoral Comedy, in the Scotch language, which would do honour to any age or country. To those who understand the Doric dialect in which it is written, and are acquainted with the rural manners of the nation, this Drama gives universal

delight; and, what can scarcely be said of any other work, it is equally the favourite of the young and of the old; of the learned and of the illiterate; of the peer and of the peasant. We could point out many passages of simple tenderness and exquisite beauty; but we despair of imparting the sentiments, in the words in which they are written, to an English ear. The following lines, extracted from Peggy's sorrowing farewell to her lover, will probably remind the classical reader of the *Galatea* of Virgil; but we can assure him that the *lasciva puella* is no where to be found in the Gentle Shepherd:

Nae mair again we'll on the meadows play,  
Nor rin, half breathless, round the rucks of hay;  
Where aftentimes I've fled frae thee, right fain,  
And fa'en, on purpose that I might be ta'en.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

## OF THE HIGHER SPECIES OF POETRY.

We have hitherto spoken only of such simple poetical effusions as, being each directed to a single object, keep that object invariably in view. But the subject of a poem may be of a compound nature, embracing many separate acts, persons, and circumstances combined into one whole; and these are the compositions which we here designate by the title of *the higher species*, although they are not always of a higher worth. A composite poem (if really poetical) may be compared to a string of jewels, connected by links of baser materials; while a simple and smaller production may exhibit only a single pearl,—but “more precious than all the tribe.”

The class of poems, now under consideration, may be conveniently viewed under three distinct heads:

1. Tales and Romances;
2. Epic and Dramatic Poetry;
3. Didactic and Descriptive.

All of which may be either satirical or encomiastic;—grave or gay.

In the minor poems, the merit consists in the interest and congruity of the thoughts, and the elegance of the language in which those thoughts are expressed. The higher class are more lengthened and varied; and, much of them being necessarily narrative, they require to be strewed over with flowers and studded with gems, which, by their odours and sparkling, may keep up the attention of the auditors during the duller recitations of the tale. The direct means employed for this purpose are,—in the first place, the due use and admixture of those figures of speech which we have already described; and, secondly, a sort of Religion, (or rather Superstition) which, in different forms, but in every nation, has always been peculiar to the bard.

The untutored observer ascribes the various phenomena of nature to the will of invisible powers, endowed like himself with conscious existence. The thunder rolls over his head; and he supplicates the god of the thunder. The rivers overflow their banks and fertilize, or lay waste, the plains; and he creates, in imagination, the naiads and the demons of the streams. Thus were formed the numerous deities of every savage nation; and the conflicts of the elements were



ignorantly believed to arise from the wars of their gods. The mythologies (or fabulous religions) of all countries have had a like origin; and, it was probably after the lapse of many ages that the philosophers of Egypt (or possibly of a still more ancient nation) succeeded in classifying the discordant multitude of the popular divinities; the chief of whom, fixing their abodes among the stars, still, occasionally, visited the earth; and, (according to the subsequent fictions) held their synods on Mount Olympus. The Greek poets and their Roman imitators, extended the empire of imagination. They peopled every fountain, every hill, and every grove with beings of celestial origin; and, in addition, those immortals of mortal creation played a splendid part in all the pursuits of human life. The petty affairs of families were influenced by their Lares, or household gods; while the more momentous transactions of nations were directed by the hierarchy of the heavens. It is hence that the poems of Greece and Rome are as much the histories of the gods as of men; the actions being intermingled in the same manner as the fairies, ghosts, and witches of the north are interwoven in the tales and ballads of our ruder ancestors. The learning of modern Europe, however, following that of the Greeks and Romans, has

familiarized us with the classic mythology, which has become the creed of the poets of the present time, to the exclusion of the equally fabulous legends of the Celts and the Scandinavians.

A Tale (from *to tell*) is, literally, any thing *told*, and may relate events that are either real, or feigned. When those events are *believed* to have really happened, the Tale is termed a History. A Romance is a Tale of interesting or wonderful adventures, and has its name from those that were recited by the Troubadours, (*inventors*) or wandering minstrels, who, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, enlivened the warlike courts of the greater portion of Europe, with stories of the military achievements of crusading knights; of their gallantry and the unshaken fidelity of each to the lady whom he loved. A corrupted Latin dialect, called Provençal, or Provincial, by the inhabitants of Rome, and *Romanzo*, or Romish, by the Gothic nations, was, at that period, spoken along the northern coast of the Mediterranean, from Murcia, in Spain, through the whole of the south of France to Pisa in Italy; and extending inland along the Ebro, the Rhone and the Po. It was in this language that the Troubadours spoke, or sung; and hence their Tales were termed Romances. Some of those pieces were spoken in prose;—oftener in

rhyme;—and, occasionally, in a miscellaneous union of prose-narrative and song: but in neither form were they, in all cases, worthy of the name of poems as this term is applied by the taste of our age and country.

Interesting stories have been recounted, from time immemorial,—in every stage and class of society. Persian, Arabian, and Turkish Tales have, long ago, found their way into the remotest corners of Europe; and, by introducing their airy mythologies, have softened the ruder superstitions of the Gothic tribes. The indigenous inhabitants of the North had long listened only to tales of strong excitement. War was the occupation of their chiefs. The lives of men were put to peril, or sacrificed, in every line of their blood-stained ballads; and even the humble abodes of rural life were haunted by the ghosts of the murdered and alarmed by the yells of fiends. The infernal demons ranged uncontrouled over the earth; and stimulated their human agents,—the Sorcerers and Witches,—in wreaking their vengeance upon mankind. The Elves and Fairies (or Fays) were of later origin, and shew, by their gentler manners and moonlight gambols, that they have been imported from a warmer clime. They are identical with the Persian

*Peri* and the Arabian *Ginn*, the latter of which have their dwellings in an imaginary country called *Ginnistan*, the same which we term Fairy Land. The *Genies* of the Arabians (of which *Genie* is the singular) have not, like the Fairies, been naturalized in Europe. Those were divided into good and evil; and, in so far, they bore some resemblance to the Angels and Devils of the Christian world. The magicians, male or female, were able to call forth one or other of those genies to obey their will; but they did so by the power of their art, and by certain incantations: not, as the Sorcerers and Witches of the early ages of Christianity, by previously pawning their souls, for the acquisition of the power.

The Romances of Knight-errantry, so admirably ridiculed by Cervantes in his *Don Quixote*, originated in Spain, which, at a certain period, was imbued with the superstitions of the Moors. The wild prose legends of *Amadis de Gaul* were the groundwork of the fine poetical fictions of Ariosto and Tasso. "A lady shut up in durance and distress was commonly to be relieved by the prowess of some redoubted knight. Her champion had not only to encounter every natural and human opposer: his antagonists were giants of

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the most incredible size and strength, hippogryphs and dragons, animals whose breath was fire and whose scales were iron: he was beleaguered with every species of enchantment and magical delusion; rocks were to be scaled, walls to be penetrated, and lakes to be swum; and at the same time these rocks, walls, and lakes, were the mere production of necromacy, brought forth on the pressure of the instant by the art of some mighty wizard. Adventures of this sort were interwoven with miraculous feats of Christian warriors contending with their impious Saracen adversaries, who were also magicians."\* Such was the form and structure of the chivalrous Romances of the middle ages; which were the delight of our forefathers, but are now generally superseded by Novels, that is, Adventures of imaginary persons, in which supernatural beings are not admitted to share. Whenever a power is introduced superior to that of mortals, the Novel is properly a Romance: Moore's *Epicurean* is one of the latest examples of the kind.

Whatever system of superstition the poet chuses to employ, that system is termed the *Machinery* of his Poem. It is that by which he

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\* Godwin's *Life of Chaucer*.

works, so as to bring about events that mere human agency could not accomplish. The choice of this machinery, provided it be well understood, is immaterial. All systems of superstition appear equally absurd when calmly contemplated by the philosopher; and all are equally probable in the eyes of the poetical enthusiast. They form fantastic day-dreams in which the mind is willingly led captive. The imagination, when once launched upon the boundless ocean of an invisible world, finds no landmark to direct its erratic course. It is surrounded with mists and covered with clouds, that are easily moulded into any spectred forms, which the magic power of the poet shall command them to assume. We wander amid the enchanted scenes of the "Thousand and one Tales" as we do in the visions of the night, without the wish to awake or even the suspicion that we are asleep.

An Epic Poem is a poetical Romantic Tale, embracing many personages and many incidents. The first model is the *Iliad* of Homer, to which the learned have decided that every future Epic must bear a resemblance. One general and important design must be apparent in its construction; to which every separate actor and action must be subservient. The accounts of these subordinate actions are termed Episodes, which

ought never to be extended to such a length as to make us lose sight of the main subject. The Machinery should be well chosen, and conformable to what we conceive as consistent with the creed of the sublunary actors ; for which purpose it ought to be a local Mythology, unmixed with the superstition of any other people than those among whom the scene is laid. In addition to all this, every scene should be embellished by the fairy pencil of the poet, until the whole, unlike the sober abode of history, shall become a palace of enchantment.

In an elementary work like the present, it is impracticable to enter into a minute examination of any particular poem of this nature and extent. Extracts are calculated only to exhibit passages of individual beauty ; but an Epic must be viewed as a whole, before an opinion can be formed of its excellence. Besides, we are, unfortunately, unassisted by that best of means for directing the judgment,—comparison ; for scarcely any nation possesses more than one Epic Poem, and many have not even one. Homer suffices for the ancient Greeks, and Virgil and Lucan for the Latins. The Portuguese have Camöens ; the Italians Tasso ; and, more recently, but with doubtful merit, the Germans have boasted of Klopstock. The French, with the earliest polished

language of Europe, waited, to receive their Epic, from the genius of Voltaire.

Under these circumstances, then, those who are not intimately acquainted with more than one language, have no means of estimating the comparative value of different Epic poems, except by the assistance of translations: and these pass through a medium which is seldom transparent, and frequently distorts the objects that are transmitted to our view. The famous English *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are beautiful poems; and preserve the undivided attention of the reader, notwithstanding their great length. They have, however, been truly, as well as emphatically, termed *Pope's Homer*. "I suppose," says Johnson, "that many readers of the English '*Iliad*,' when they have been touched with some unexpected beauty of the lighter kind, have tried to enjoy it in the original, where, alas! it was not to be found. Homer doubtless owes to his translator many Ovidian graces not exactly suitable to his character; but to have added can be no great crime, if nothing be taken away. Elegance is surely to be desired, if it be not gained at the expence of dignity. A hero would wish to be loved, as well as to be revered. To a thousand cavils one answer is sufficient; the purpose of a writer is to be read, and the criticism which would destroy



the power of pleasing must be blown aside. Pope wrote for his own age and his own nation; he knew that it was necessary to colour the images and point the sentiments of his author; he therefore made him graceful, but lost him some of his sublimity."

It has been strangely asserted that the ancients intended their Epics to accomplish one great moral object, and that their machinery contained a sublime allegory. With respect to the morality of the *Iliad*, it is no where to be found. Homer's principal heroes are either cruel, vindictive, or treacherous; and his divinities are described as exhibiting such weaknesses, passions, and crimes as would be disgraceful in human nature. Homer ought to be considered solely as a poet, and not as a writer of homilies.

"It is, says an anonymous writer, the reproach of the ancient Epic poems, that the gods are generally introduced where their agency is superfluous, and where human agency is fully sufficient: but perhaps this reproach is no better founded than if we were to accuse the moderns of ascribing to the superintendence of Providence, those events which appear to be accomplished by ordinary means." The Rev. Mr. Walker has thus compared the poems of Homer and Milton, with respect to their display of preternatural

agency : "They are not unlike in several respects. As Homer's has been observed to be the history of gods, Milton's may be said to be that of devils. The gods of the one and the devils of the other are nearly of equal credit; the former altogether, and the latter for the greater part, being the creatures of a popular and fabulous superstition. Homer had his Pantheon, and Milton his Pandæmonium; each their courts and counsels, and each a supreme regent. But wherein they differ, the difference is immense in the estimation of the two poems, with respect to their supernatural machinery. Willing or unwilling, man was subject to the caprice and violence of Homer's gods, and these gods usurped over the whole field of human action. While only by the consent of his own will could man be subjected to the influence of Milton's devils; and, if suffering under this influence, had still his refuge in an Almighty, wise and beneficent being. From the tyranny of Homer's gods, man had no refuge whatever. In the court of Homer's heaven, all was discord and misrule: god was opposed to god; and all the pretended power of Jove was impotent to reconcile the contending deities, or, by awe, to reduce them to submission. Milton's Satan was truly sovereign, and an union of sentiment and design pervaded the whole of his

gloomy domain. Milton's devils, though wicked beyond the style of Homer's gods, are uniformly grand: they exhibit that sublime of the terrific which the Epic aspires to. Homer's gods, though wicked enough, are as foolish and freakish as they are wicked: they are not superior to what we may conceive of the lowest rabble in Milton's hell. I enter not into the heaven of Milton, and, perhaps, it would have been as well, if he had not so familiarly unveiled that sacred region. But there Homer presents no parallel, and the comparison fails."\* "All the Christian poets," says Chateaubriand, "have failed in delineating the Christian heaven. Some have erred through timidity, as Tasso and Milton; some through philosophy, as Voltaire; and some through exuberance, as Klopstock.†"

It would exceed the limits of our work to enter into a formal criticism of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or of any of the imported and Anglicized Epics of other nations. The former has been minutely discussed and sufficiently praised by Addison in the *Spectator*; and still more discriminately examined by Johnson. "The want of human in-

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\* *Memoirs of the Manchester Philosophical Society*, vol. i.

† *Genie du Christianisme*.

terest," says the latter," is always felt. *Paradise Lost* is one of the books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take up again. None ever wished it longer than it is. Its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure. We read Milton for instruction, retire harassed and overburthened, and look elsewhere for recreation : we desert our master, and look for companions."

Among many other valuable remarks of Dr. Johnson on the *Paradise Lost*, the following, relative to the conduct of its machinery, is peculiarly instructive to the student in English Composition. "After the operation of immaterial agents, which cannot be explained, may be considered that of allegorical persons, which have no real existence. To exalt causes into agents, to invest abstract ideas with form, and animate them with activity, has always been the right of poetry. But such airy beings are, for the most part, suffered only to do their natural office, and retire. Thus Fame tells a tale, and Victory hovers over a general, or perches on a standard ; but Fame and Victory can do no more. To give them any real employment, or ascribe to them any material agency, is to make them allegorical no longer, but to shock the mind by ascribing effects to nonentity. In the *Prometheus* of *Æschylus*, we see *Violence* and *Strength*, and in the

*Alcestis* of Euripides, we see *Death*, brought upon the stage, all as active persons of the drama; but no precedents can justify absurdity. Milton's allegory of Sin and Death is undoubtedly faulty. Sin is indeed the mother of death, and may be allowed to be the portress of hell; but when they stop the journey of Satan, a journey described as real, and when Death offers him battle, the allegory is broken. That Sin and Death should have shewn the way to hell, might have been allowed; but they cannot facilitate the passage by building a bridge, because the difficulty of Satan's passage is described as real and sensible, and the bridge ought to be only figurative."

The two Latin Epics (the *Æneid* of Virgil and the *Pharsalia* of Lucan) are advantageously known to the English reader, by the translations of Dryden and of Rowe. The *Æneid* is an obvious imitation of Homer. It relates the Wanderings of *Æneas* as the *Odyssey* does those of *Ulysses*; and much of the former is merely a translation of the latter. Homer is the original and his style is more simple and sublime. Virgil might almost be termed a plagiarist; but he has adorned his thefts, and polished the diamonds which he stole from the mine.

The pictures of Virgil are more elegantly

finished, and his versification is more harmonious; but the bold enthusiasm of Lucan electrifies his readers by frequent bursts of the sublime. Virgil was a courtier, but Lucan was a republican; and the moral character of their heroes corresponded with the opposing principles of sycophancy and independence. The stern virtue of Cato is represented as braving the decrees of Fate; but Æneas is a miscreant who commits every crime, under the real, or pretended, belief that such is the will of heaven. His desertion of Dido is cruel and deceitful. He lands in Italy, and trembles at the sight of danger. Jupiter decides the combat in his favour, and Turnus, wounded and disarmed supplicates for life; but the pious hero, deaf to every entreaty, plunges a dagger into the heart of his victim, in revenge for the death of Pallas, on whose funeral pile, he had already sacrificed, in cold blood, his prisoners of war. "If," says the Abbe Cartaut, "Æneas was truly devout, he was a dangerous madman, whose frightful superstition induced him to commit the most horrible excesses. If he was only a hypocrite who shielded his actions under the ægis of the gods, he was a monster. However this may be, the enthusiasm of Virgil appears to have been excited by the smoke of the incense, amidst the grimaces of the temple,

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while that of Lucan must have been lighted at the flash of the thunder-bolt. Such are the effects of servility. Virgil, become a courtier, was fitted only to burn incense at the shrine of power; for

Jove fix'd it certain, that whatever day  
Makes man a slave, takes half his worth away."

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## CHAPTER XIX.

HIGHER SPECIES OF POETRY—*continued.*

The adjective **Epic** is derived from the Greek *epo*, I relate, and when used as a substantive, signifies literally nothing more than a tale. It is, however, a tale concerning a hero or heroes, and hence that sort of writing has also the denomination of **Heroic**. *Epopea*, or *Epopœia*, is merely a learned name for Epic poem, being a compound from *epo* and *poieo*, I make, that is, *invent*. Such are the literal significations, but custom, as we have shown, has given a more determinate meaning to the words ‘An Epic Poem:’ which by the regularity of its construction, its extent, episodes, machinery, and the complicacy of means all directed so as to produce one momentous result, has come at last to occupy a splendid palace, instead of the humble roof of the simple heroic Ballad in which it was first reared.

A Drama, on the other hand (Greek *drao*, I



act,) is a poem of the Epic kind; but so compressed and adapted that the whole tale, instead of requiring to be read or recited at intervals, by an individual, may be exhibited as actually passing before our eyes. Every actor in the poem has his representative on the stage, who speaks the language of the poet as if it were his own; and every action is literally performed (or rather imitated) as if it were of natural occurrence, and as if there had been no poet to prompt the persons of the drama.

History is a record of transactions that are supposed to have existed; and, in the early times, was often written in verse. Those records were, then, intermingled with traditional tales of miraculous events and supernatural agents, which we, of a less credulous age, have termed superstitions. Such superstitions, however, constituted the creed of our ancestors; and in new-modelling the accounts of *the olden time*, it costs the modern historian no little trouble to separate the false from the true; or, in other words, the portions which he disbelieves from those to which he grants his faith. Nevertheless, it is of no consequence to the present race of mankind, whether the tales that are dignified by the name of History are real, or imaginary. Milton compared them to the narratives of the battles of the

crows and kites; and either are equally fitted for that species of amusement which is calculated to enable the idle and the mindless to glide to the grave in peace, by beguiling the *tædium* of life.

Seizing the prominent parts of traditional story as a foundation, the poet built his Epic, in which he introduced the divinities of the age in which he lived, as well as imaginary human beings, whose actions, as he judged, would give additional interest to the tale. Amusement (neither instruction nor any other moral motive) was the sole object of the bard. He wrote for the sake of nobles and of princes; because they only could enable him to spend his life in greater comfort than that of "the hewers of wood and drawers of water." It is probable that such tales were recited before writing was invented; but, even when the latter mode of communication was resorted to, the work could only be read (or at any rate purchased) by the rich and powerful. Hence, arose the trade of an author; and hence, his almost proverbial subservience to the great.

As the Epic tale is a chosen fabulous history, so the Dramatic (which is a practical Epic) is a representation of an interesting series of events which, we are led to suppose, is passing before us. "All the world's a stage," says Shakspeare,

“and all the men and women merely players”; but there are many things in the world which few would like to see, and he who caters for the mimic scene chuses only what he believes will be interesting to the spectators; these, however, have eyes as well as ears, and of this many writers are not sufficiently aware. It should never be forgotten that a play is a show; and that the audience, of whatever class they may be composed, have their attention often necessarily diverted from the thoughts of the poet, by the manner in which those thoughts are delivered, and by the attraction of the scenery with which the actor is surrounded. Inattention to these circumstances is the chief cause of the failure of many, otherwise excellent, authors, when they attempt to write for the stage. Of this, Addison’s *Cato* is a splendid example. Notwithstanding its first extraordinary success (an uninterrupted run of thirty-five nights, besides being extolled by the learned, and translated into most of the languages of Europe) it soon ceased to be a *Stock-play*; and, though attempts have been made, it has never recovered its former rank in the theatre. Still it is a favourite in the closet, and preserves, undisputedly, an enviable station among English Tragedies.

The object of the poet is to please his readers,

to captivate their attention; to move their passions; and to lead them, spell-bound, by the attraction of his song. But the feelings and passions of men, differ with the individuals; and, in the same person, they do not always remain unvaried. Some love merely to be amused, others to be instructed; some to laugh, and others to shed tears. It is, therefore, that Poetry has been divided into classes: into the grave and the gay. The reader takes up the volume that is most consistent with the feelings in which he has been accustomed to indulge; or that which is suggested by the transient humour of the hour. He enjoys the Witch-revels of Tam O'Shanter, or he muses over the tomb of Gray. His patriotism glows anew with the strains of Lucan; or his piety is elevated by the daring fictions of Milton. He loses his way, amid chilling mists, with the heroes of Ossian; or he is lulled into pensive reverie, by the never-ceasing lamentations of Young.

Although the Dramatist has exactly the same object in view as the poet, it is here that his difficulties begin. The audience, whom he would lead through the mazes of his tale, is made up of individuals of the most discordant characters,—the flippant and the ignorant,—the serious and the wise. Sentiments, the most pathetic, or

sublime, excite nothing but languor or laughter in the former; while they are rendered unpalatable to the latter, in consequence of their being either mumbled into sillabubs, or torn to tatters, by the mouthing of the actors. Instead of a sober house of entertainment, frequented by guests, who meet together from similarity of taste, the Theatre is a caravansera: a motley assemblage of every tribe and every tongue, in which the master of the inn has a hundred forms of ceremony to assume, and a hundred different tastes to gratify.

A single piece, in order to satisfy such an audience would require to be a medley; and, accordingly, it is only with something of the kind, (or by a succedaneum to the same effect) that a manager can hope to please. Tragedy, Pantomime, and Farce, must all be represented in a single evening; and lest the first should tire the spectators, it must be enlivened, between the acts, by humorous songs, accompanied by the tumultuous tones of an Orchestra where the Goddess of Noise sits enthroned. Neither are our Theatres the best schools of morality, for they have scarcely improved, in that respect, beyond their prototypes of Bartholomew fair. Scenes are introduced, not more wise, and much less delicate, than the pranks of Punch and Judy;

while, to keep such ribaldry in countenance and to add to the attractions of the house, the boxes, the lobby, and the saloon, are filled up by the *gratis admission* of ladies of easy virtue. Was it always thus? We know not; but we suspect that those prurient passages, which deform many, otherwise excellent, plays, and which even stain the pages of the immortal Shakspeare, had been introduced solely to please the Gods of the Gallery, and the Demireps of fashion.

Considering a Drama, not as it usually is but as it ought to be, Critics have laid down rules for its construction. The chief of these respect the preservation of THE THREE UNITIES, of action, of time, and of place.

1. *The unity of action*, which demands, even more rigourously than the Epic, that a single object shall be invariably kept in view. Circumstances and events, all apparently tending to some single consequence, gradually thicken as the play advances; but the issue remains uncertain until the close of the last act, when the catastrophe is revealed, and the result of the plot is accomplished. No underplot, or *secondary* action, is allowable, unless it tend to the prominent purposes of the piece, lest, by division, the general interest should be weakened.

2. *The unity of time* is measured by the cre-

dulity of the audience, who must not be shocked by the lengthened period to which the action of the Drama is apparently protracted. The Chinese are said to continue the representation of a play for ten or twelve successive days, during which they may admit, with less improbability, of a more lengthened series of actions than we, with all our submission to the scene, could conceive to have taken place in the course of two or three hours. It is true that the pause between the Acts favours the illusion; but the intervention of a whole night gives much greater scope to the imagination. Even this, however, could scarcely cover the shocking absurdity of certain pieces that have lately been brought forward and applauded, on the English stage; in which the same person, who appears as a young gentleman, in the first Act, arrives at the middle age in the second; and, in the third Act, appears again before us as an old man!

3. *The unity of place*, was more necessarily observed in the ancient Greek Dramas than in those of our days. Between one Act and another we may imagine ourselves transported to a distant country, and the delusion is facilitated by the shifting of the Scene; but with them the Scene was never varied. Neither was the stage ever empty; for, in the intervals of the main

action, it was filled by the Chorus, who were understood to be spectators, and interested in the catastrophe. These gave information, to the real audience, such as we are now in the habit of receiving through the means of Soliloquies and Confidants.

Another Canon of Dramatic Criticism is termed *Poetical Justice*; by which it is understood that the personages shall, at the close of the play, be rewarded, or punished, according to their several deserts. This, as a general rule, has been objected to, on the principle that it is seldom consonant with what we see of human life; in which the wicked often flourish, while the virtuous are allowed to perish. There is, however, a better reason why this should be left to the judgment of the poet: the catastrophe would otherwise be always anticipated, and the interest would, in consequence, be lost.

In the Rules here given, it is always understood that the Drama is a compressed Epic: that, like the latter, it tends to some point of interest, and is susceptible of poetical embellishment. Such is the Tragedy of Macbeth, which might be expanded into an Epic Poem; having its machinery composed of ghosts and witches. Few, however, of the plays of this immortal author could be so treated, A Drama,



before we can conceive it to be capable of this expansion, must not only be regular, that is, free from incongruous episodes or double plots, but it must also contain the means of rousing the stronger feelings of the mind ; so as to enable the poet to dignify his scenes and descriptions with passages of the pathetic and the sublime. A mixture of Tragedy, Comedy and Farce may, and often does, succeed upon the stage ; because the several classes of the audience are pleased with the representation of individual and differing scenes ; but there is no unity ; the grave and the gay neutralize one another, and the performance ends without having produced any permanent impression. We are hurried through an ill-arranged gallery of paintings, so rapidly as to leave us no time to be either enraptured with beauty, or disgusted with deformity. A regular Drama, on the contrary, is an historical picture, in which we perceive unity of design, and compare every portion of the composition as harmonizing with the whole. The same observations do not apply to theatrical compositions when we read them in the closet. There, we have leisure to examine the painting in detail ; and to look upon every separate figure on the canvas, as if it had been portrayed by a different artist.

Notwithstanding the daring example of Shakespeare, who set at nought every rule of the critics on dramatic composition, Tragi-comedy is still considered as unfitted for the stage. The legitimate province of Tragedy is to exhibit a concatenated succession of scenes, tending to one grand object, which shall fill the minds of the spectators with pity and with terror; while that of Comedy is to represent some amusing and connected tale, which may be supposed to have happened among the ordinary events of human life. It is an interesting novel, in which the whole of the complication, as well as the unravelling, of the plot, is capable of being exhibited in the course of a few hours by means of dialogue and action. The Muse of Comedy, though not at variance with the tender and sentimental, is usually surrounded by the humourous, the witty, and the gay: successfully conspiring to thwart the sinister designs of an avaricious guardian, or to elude the jealous superintendence of some superannuated dowager, who is opposed to the union of the hero and heroine of the play. The Tragic Muse, on the contrary, dwells perpetually amid scenes of desolation and death; where courage strives in vain against oppression; where virtue bleeds under the knife of the assassin,—dies in a dungeon,—or perishes on the scaffold

of a tyrant. It is to Tragedy, on account of its deep-toned pathos, that we chiefly look for poetical embellishment: it is there only that we meet with the sublime. Accordingly it is, with few exceptions, still composed of measured lines; while Comedy is now written wholly in prose.

Although Comedy is thus deprived of those grand and sublime subjects that are so conspicuous in the history of the world, it still possesses an extensive range of operation. It has power not only over all the softer sensations of mankind, from the tear of sensibility to the smile of sportive innocence; but it is also capable of exciting the ruder passions, from the loud bursts of indignation to the half-suppressed sneers of contempt. The only requisites are that it shall exhibit an united train of events, tending to an agreeable and probable catastrophe; and, as the poet has the choice of his tale, he is expected to have a moral object in view: "to hold as 'twere the Mirrour up to Nature; to shew Vertue her owne Feature, scorn her owne Image, and the verie Age and Bodie of the Time, his forme and pressure."

FARCE begins at the lowest part of the scale of human amusement. It is the caricature of Comedy; and, provided it can excite mirth

and uproarious laughter, it disregards every law of the critics,—even those of probability and of Nature. It is often, too, contaminated with that worst fault of the stage,—personal satire. The theatre is properly employed when holding up the prominent vices of the age to public reprobation; but it is otherwise when, for the gratification of private malignity, an individual is *personated*, and brought forward, almost by name, to the ridicule of the crowd, on account of some harmless peculiarities in his manners or pursuits: or perhaps, what is still worse, merely from some unfortunate bodily imperfection, calculated to excite the laughter of none but the lowest of the vulgar.

The Italian *burlare*, to jeer, or mock, furnished us with the adjective *Burlesque*, whereby we designate those compositions in which the language is so little in unison with the subject, as to impress the mind with a feeling of the ridiculous. We possess, consequently, mock poems of various descriptions:—Elegies, Epics, and Dramas. From the same source, we have received the term *Burletta*, to denote a Comic Opera. The Burlesque is a species of composition, in which persons and actions of no value are made to assume an air of great importance; or, it is that by which things of real consequence are de-

graded, so as to seem objects of derision. Parodies and Travesties, which are ludicrous imitations of serious subjects, are species of the Burlesque. It is a style into which young poets are too apt, unintentionally, to fall: when the expression is too low for the subject, it forms the *Bathos*; and, when a mean idea is swelled up with high-sounding epithets, it has the name of *Bombast*. Both these modes of writing equally excite the risible faculties of the reader; but they are properly denominated Burlesque, only when executed with that design. Phillips's 'Splendid Shilling' clothes a trivial subject in the lofty style and pompous language of Milton.

Mock Heroics appear to have been as ancient and general as the regular Epic. The '*Batrachomyomachia*,' or 'Battle of the Frogs and Mice,' is ascribed to Homer; and most literary nations have one, or more, similar compositions of which they boast. Among the English, 'Hudibras' and 'The Rape of the Lock,' are most conspicuous. The plan of the Dunciad is buried amidst the mass of its personal criticisms.

Hudibras is an obvious imitation of the manner of Don Quixote; for, like that knight, he and his squire sally forth in search of adventures. The Satire, which is wholly directed against the Puritans, was well received by the dissolute

Court of Charles; but, nevertheless, the author was suffered to die in poverty. Much of the ridicule, and all the sting of this half-finished performance is now lost; because the party no longer exists against whom they were directed; but the wit and humour with which it overflows, will not soon be forgotten. The following lines, inscribed on a monument erected to the memory of Butler, in the church of St. Paul, Covent Garden, breathe the true spirit of independence :

A few plain men, to pomp and pride unknown,  
 O'er a poor bard have raised this humble stone,  
 Whose wants alone his genius could surpass,  
 Victim of zeal! the matchless Hudibras!  
 What! though fair freedom suffered in his page!  
 Reader! forgive the author—for the age—  
 How few, alas, disdain to cringe and cant,  
 When 'tis the mode to play the sycophant!  
 But oh! let all be taught from Butler's fate,  
 Who hope to make their fortune by the great,  
 That wit and pride are always dangerous things,  
 And little faith is due to courts and kings.

As a mock Epic 'The Rape of the Lock' is a poem of unrivalled excellence. The insignificance of its object contrasted with the magnificence of the description, and the splendour of the machinery, brought forward for the sake of such a petty result, constitutes the true bur-

lesque. It were useless to analyze, or to give extracts from, a production which almost every lover of genuine poetry has got by heart; and we shall, therefore, content ourselves with a few observations concerning the air-formed beings whom the poet has conjured forth to his aid.

The doctrines of Plato, as explained by his followers in after ages, filled every portion of the material universe with invisible spirits. The four elements have each its myriads of resident divinities. The *Gnomes*, spirits of the Earth, are equivalent to the Fairies and Elves of other superstitions; the *Sylphs* inhabit the Air; the *Salamanders*, or Spirits of Fire, dwell on the Light,—they reside in the stars, or ride on the sun-beams: and the *Nymphs* have their abodes in the Water, wander among dews, or sail upon the showers. All these Elements are, indeed, inhabited according to the Classic Mythology; but the Deities of the Greeks, though numerous, are not innumerable, whereas the pigmy people of Paracelsus and the other mystic Platonists pervade every portion of nature. They are disembodied spirits, ready to resume new stations in the succeeding organisations of matter. To the objection that Pope can claim no originality in his employment of this machinery, Johnson has given a triumphant answer: “This charge,” says

he, "might with more justice have been brought against the author of the 'Iliad,' who doubtless adopted the religious system of his country; for what is there but the names of his agents which Pope has not invented? Has he not assigned them characters and operations never heard of before? Has he not, at least, given them their first poetical existence? If this is not sufficient to denominate his work original, nothing original ever can be written."

DIDACTIC POETRY, (Greek *didasko*, I teach,) is that which is written, professedly, for the purpose of instruction. It were well if this could be said of every poem; but, unfortunately, there are many, to which we cannot refuse the name, that are merely amusing, without being fitted to make us either wiser or better. Indeed, whether it is that we prefer pleasure to profit, or that the poets of the didactic class generally are less capable of giving interest to their lines, it is but too true that to characterize a poem as *instructive* does not tempt us more strongly to the perusal. Even in the case of Virgil, (notwithstanding the beauty of his digressions,) had his works been always published in separate volumes, we should have had many more editions of the *Æneid* than of the *Georgics*. Poetry addresses herself to the Imagination, while Instruction



appeals to the Judgment; but Imagination and Judgment do not readily combine. It is on account of what is termed the *dryness* of naked precepts, that didactic poems are usually directed, more than any others, to be covered with flowers. "Not even the Epic demands such glowing and picturesque epithets,—such daring and forcible metaphors, such pomp of numbers and dignity of expression, as the Didactic: for, the lower or more familiar the object described is, the greater must be the power of language to preserve it from debasement." The same cause, too, has fostered that alliance which connects this class of poetry with the **DESCRIPTIVE**: an alliance so intimate that the two kinds can scarcely be conceived asunder; and we give a poem this or that denomination, according as the one or the other of those characteristics appears to be the most predominant.

The grand object of the poet is to rivet the attention of the reader, without which the wisest precepts and the most gorgeous descriptions are equally unavailing. The subjects of instruction should, therefore, be selected from those that are of most general interest; and the landscapes to be depicted ought to be *picturesque*,—that is,—worthy of the pencil of the artist: or, if the poet attempt to pourtray the feelings of the

mind, they should be those of a tender kind; for the rude and stormy passions are fitter attendants on the Epic, or on the Tragic Muse.

The English language possesses many poems of the class now under consideration; and not a few that are deservedly held in high estimation. Among these, Pope's 'Moral Essays' are models of their kind. They are almost purely didactic; but, as a counterpoise, his 'Windsor Forest' contains scarcely a line that is not descriptive. Milton's 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso' are, likewise, filled with description.

Akenside's 'Pleasures of Imagination' is a philosophical poem which is finely characterized by Johnson: "To his versification justice requires that praise should not be denied. In the general fabrication of his lines he is perhaps superior to any other writer of blank verse; his flow is smooth, and his pauses are musical; but the concatenation of his verses is commonly too long continued, and the full close does not recur with sufficient frequency."

Mr. Walker, in his work on Elocution, after objecting to 'The Pleasures of Imagination' that it is incomplete, because it says little or nothing of the immortality of the soul, recommends the subsequent perusal of Young's 'Night Thoughts'; and it must be acknowledged that, with this

succedaneum, the deficiency would be amply supplied. This long lugubrious poem is occupied with little else than continued complaints of the miseries of the present life of man; yet such is the talent of the author, that, in spite of its eternal sermonizing, the work continues to be read with pleasure. It cannot be denied that his composition is opposed to every rule of sound criticism: his metaphors are extravagant; his hyperboles are astounding; and his antitheses are never-ending;—but the interest is preserved by the numerous and brilliant corruscations of genius, and the frequent occurrence of passages of the pathetic and the sublime.

Darwin, in his ‘Temple of Nature,’ expatiates, like Young, on the evils of human life, and like him, too, he offers his ‘Consolation,’ although it is of a very different kind. ‘The Botanic Garden,’ of the same author, is the finest didactic poem in this, or perhaps any other language. The poet has completely succeeded in his object, which was “to enlist Imagination under the banners of Science.”

Thomson’s ‘Seasons’ can scarcely be termed didactic: they are almost purely descriptive. The descriptions are generally true to nature, and often splendid; but, having no chain of connexion, and every substantive being loaded with

epithets,—the mind gets bewildered amidst the multitude of words.

Satires are usually included under the head of didactic poems; but every class of poems may include the Satirical. ‘Hudibras’ is a satirical Epic, and ‘The Rehearsal’ is a satirical Drama. Johnson’s ‘London,’ and ‘The Vanity of Human Wishes,’ which, though professing to imitate Juvenal, may be considered as originals, are excellent models of what satire ought to be. It is the class, the crime, or the folly, which is the proper object of attack, and not the individual.

There is a class of didactic and descriptive poems which may be termed the sentimental. Such are ‘The Pleasures of Memory,’ ‘The Pleasures of Hops,’ and ‘The Scenes of Infancy:’ all three, deservedly, in high estimation.

‘The Deserted Village’ and ‘The Traveller’ preceded those now mentioned, and stand on too high an eminence to regard either our praise or our censure. Goldsmith was the poet of nature and of the poor. The cold-blooded doctrines of the modern political economists were to him unknown. The word country, in his vocabulary, included others besides the rich and the powerful. That compulsory emigration, which the ignorant and heartless statesmen of modern times would enforce by legal enactments, is feelingly described and deplored.

## THE EMPIRE OF POETRY.

*By Fontenelle.*

This empire is a very large and populous country. It is divided, like some of the countries on the continent, into the *higher* and *lower regions*.

The *upper region* is inhabited by grave, melancholy, and sullen people who, like other mountaineers, speak a language very different from that of the inhabitants of the valleys. The trees in this part of the country are very tall, having their tops among the clouds. Their horses are superior to those of Barbary, being fleetier than the winds. Their women are so beautiful as to eclipse the star of day.

The great city which you see in the maps, beyond the lofty mountains, is the capital of this province, and is called *Epic*. It is built on a sandy and ungrateful soil which few take the trouble to cultivate. The length of the city is many days journey, and it is otherwise of a tiresome extent. On leaving its gate we always meet with men who are killing one another; whereas, when we pass through *Romance* which forms the suburbs of *Epic*, and which is larger than the city itself, we meet with groups of happy people who are hastening to the shrine of Hymen.

The Mountains of *Tragedy* are also in the province of *Upper Poetry*. They are very steep, with dangerous precipices; and, in consequence, many of its people build their habitations at the bottom of the hills, and imagine themselves high enough. There have been found on these mountains some very beautiful ruins of ancient cities; and, from time to time, the materials are carried lower down to build new cities; for they now never

build nearly so high as they seem to have done in former times.

The *Lower Poetry* is very similar to the swamps of Holland. *Burlesque* is the capital, which is situated amidst stagnant pools. Princes speak there as if they had sprung from the dunghill, and all the inhabitants are buffoons from their birth.

*Comedy* is a city which is built on a pleasant spot: but it is too near to *Burlesque*, and its trade with this place has much degraded the manners of its citizens.

I beg that you will notice in the map, those vast solitudes which lie between *High* and *Low Poetry*. They are called the *Deserts of Common Sense*. There is not a single city in the whole of this extensive country, and only a few cottages scattered at a distance from one another. The interior of the country is beautiful and fertile, but you need not wonder that there are so few who chuse to reside in it; for the entrance is very rugged on all sides; the roads are narrow and difficult; and there are seldom any guides to be found who are capable of conducting strangers:—

Besides, this country borders on a province where every person prefers to remain, because it appears to be very agreeable, and saves the trouble of penetrating into the *Deserts of Common Sense*. It is the province of *False Thoughts*. Here we always tread on flowers,—every thing seems enchanting. But its greatest inconvenience is, that the ground is not solid: the foot is always sinking in the mire, however careful one may be. *Elegy* is the capital. Here the people do nothing but complain; but it is said that they find a pleasure in their complaints. The city is surrounded with woods and rocks, where the inhabitant walks alone, making them the confidants of

his secrets; of the discovery of which he is so much afraid, that he often conjures those woods and rocks never to betray them.

The *Empire of Poetry* is watered by two rivers. One is the *River Rhyme*, which has its source at the foot of the *Mountains of Reverie*. The tops of some of these mountains are so elevated that they pierce the clouds. Those are called the *Points of sublime Thought*. Many climb there by extraordinary efforts; but almost the whole tumble down again, and excite, by their fall, the ridicule of those who admired them at first without knowing why. There are large platforms almost at the bottom of these mountains, which are called the *Terraces of low thoughts*. There are always a great number of people walking upon them. At the end of these *Terraces* are the *Caverns of deep Reverie*. Those who descend into them do so insensibly; being so much enwrapt in their meditations that they enter the *caverns* before they are aware. These *caverns* are perfect labyrinths, and the difficulty of getting out again could scarcely be believed by those who have not been there. Above the *Terraces* we sometimes meet with men walking in easy paths which are termed the *Paths of natural thoughts*; and these gentlemen ridicule, equally, those who try to scale the *Points of sublime thoughts* as well as those who grovel on the *Terraces* below. They would be in the right if they could keep undeviatingly in the *Paths of natural thoughts*; but they fall almost instantly into a snare, by entering into a splendid palace which is at a very little distance. It is the *Palace of Badinage*. Scarcely have they entered when, in place of the natural thoughts which they formerly had, they dwell upon such only as are mean and vulgar. Those, however, who never abandon the *Paths*

*of natural thoughts* are the most rational of all. They aspire no higher than they ought, and their thoughts are never at variance with sound judgment.

Besides the *River Rhyme*, which I have described as issuing from the foot of the mountains, there is another, called the *River of Reason*. These two rivers are at a great distance from one another; and, as they have a very different course, they could not be made to communicate except by canals, which would cost a great deal of labour. For these canals of communication could not be formed at all places, because there is only one part of the *River Rhyme* which is in the neighbourhood of the *River Reason*; and hence, many cities situated on the *Rhyme*, such as *Roundelay* and *Ballad*, could have no commerce with *the Reason*, whatever pains might be taken for that purpose. Further, it would be necessary that these canals should cross the *Deserts of Common Sense*, as you will see by the map; and that is almost an unknown country. *The Rhyme* is a large river, whose course is crooked and unequal, and, on account of its numerous falls, it is extremely difficult to navigate. On the contrary *the Reason* is very straight and regular, but it does not carry vessels of every burthen.

There is, in the *Land of Poetry*, a very obscure forest, where the rays of the Sun never enter. It is the forest of *Bombast*. The trees are close, spreading and twined into each other. The forest is so ancient that it has become a sort of sacrilege to prune its trees, and there is no probability that the ground will ever be cleared. A few steps into this forest and we lose our road without dreaming that we have gone astray. It is full of imperceptible labyrinths, from which no one ever returns. *The Reason* is lost in this forest.



The extensive province of *Imitation* is very sterile—It produces nothing. The inhabitants are extremely poor, and are obliged to glean in the richer fields of the neighbouring provinces; and some even make fortunes by this beggarly occupation.

The *Empire of Poetry* is very cold towards the north; and, *consequently*, this quarter is the most populous. There are the cities of *Anagram* and *Acrostic*, with several others of a similar description.

Finally, in that sea which bounds the *States of Poetry*, there is the *Island of Satire*, surrounded with bitter waves. The salt from the water is very strong and dark coloured. The greater part of the brooks of this island resemble the Nile in this, that their sources are unknown; but it is particularly remarkable that there is not one of them whose waters are fresh. A part of the same sea is called the *Archipelago of Trifles*.—The French term it *L'Archipel des Bagatelles*; and their voyagers are well acquainted with those islands. Nature seems to have thrown them up in sport, as she did those of the *Ægean Sea*. The principal islands are the *Madrigal*, the *Song*, and the *Impromptu*. No lands can be lighter than those islands, for they float upon the waters.

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