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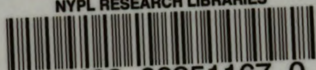
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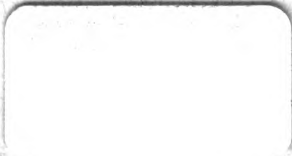
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A

PRACTICAL SYSTEM OF RHETORIC:

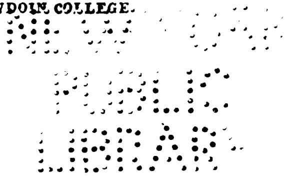
OR THE

PRINCIPLES & RULES OF STYLE,

INFERRED FROM

EXAMPLES OF WRITING.

BY SAMUEL P. NEWMAN,
PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC IN BOWDOIN COLLEGE.



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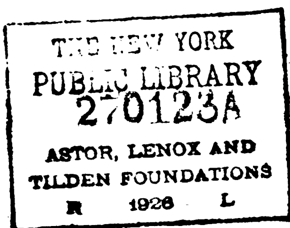
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BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the twenty-first day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, and the fifty-first year of the Independence of the United States of America,

SAMUEL P. NEWMAN,

of the said District, has deposited in this Office, the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the words following, to wit:

"A Practical System of Rhetoric; or the Principles and Rules of Style: inferred from Examples of Writing. By SAMUEL P. NEWMAN, Professor of Rhetoric in Bowdoin College."

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and also, to an act, entitled, "An Act supplementary to an act, entitled an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

JOHN MUSSEY,
Clerk of the District Court of Maine.

A true copy of record.
Attest,

JOHN MUSSEY,
Clerk D. C. Maine.

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PREFACE.

The complaint is often heard, that the study of Rhetoric is of little practical advantage. Many who have learned its rules, do not become good writers, or good critics ; and of those who are able to write well, and to judge correctly of the merit of literary productions, few acknowledge, that they have derived much assistance from the study of this art.

The experience of the author of the following pages, as an instructer, has satisfied him, that there is ground for this complaint. The advantages derived from the study of this branch of education, are not such as should be derived from it. It does not offer that exercise and improvement to the intellectual powers, which it should offer. It does not give that assistance towards forming a good style, which it ought to afford. And it is believed, that these defects have arisen in part from the manner in which it is studied.

The instructions of Rhetoric are twofold;—those which point out the excellencies of style, and those which give cautions against its most frequent faults. In either case, the reason of what is said should be seen, and its justness felt and acknowledged by the pupil. This can be effected only by the exhibition of these excellencies and defects, as they are found in the productions of writers. Hence then the best mode of acquiring a knowledge of the principles and rules of Rhetoric, is by the study of different styles.

But it is necessary that there be some system of study.

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—that there be some order in directing the attention to the most prominent excellencies of style and its most common faults. At the same time, it requires a degree of investigation which every instructer cannot give to the subject, to discover the reasons of the approbation and censure which are bestowed.

The following work has been prepared, that it may offer a regular system of study, and at the same time furnish such explanations and reasons of the rules of the art as are needed. It will not effect its purpose, unless in connexion with its study the attention of students be directed to examples. They should also be frequently required to write criticisms, that may lead them to apply the principles and rules which are stated. With this design, whenever the plan of this work is fully accomplished, it will be accompanied with selections from different authors, for the study of style. In the present edition, the author has occasionally referred to Pierpont's American First Class Book, which is in use in the Seminary with which he is connected. An instructer may easily adapt the work to Greenwood & Emerson's Classical Reader, to Frost's Class Book, or to any other book of the same nature.

It has been the object of the writer, to direct the attention to those rules and principles which are of most practical advantage—to make the reason of every principle and rule fully understood—to substitute for the useless manner of studying the art by committing to memory answers to proposed questions, the more rational method of studying examples. A work on Rhetoric which shall effect these objects, he knows will be valuable.

Bowdoin College, May, 1827.

ERRATA.—Page 62—line 21, for *with a* read *in its*.

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INTRODUCTION.

Should we read a production of one who is justly accounted a good writer, we should be conscious that our attention had been engaged,—that we had been pleased, and if the subject was one which could interest the feelings, that we had been moved. If from being conscious of these effects we are led to search for their causes, we shall find that our attention has been engaged by the valuable thoughts and just reasonings that have been exhibited; we have been pleased by what has given exercise to our imagination,—by happy turns of expression—by well introduced and well supported illustrations. We have been moved, because the writer, whose productions we have read, was moved, and our feelings of sympathy have caused us to be borne along on the same current by which he was carried forward. But we now ask, what may be hence inferred on the part of the writer? Do we not discover, that his mind has been stored with knowledge?—that his imagination is active and well regulated, and his heart alive to emotion? And is it not from his possessing these resources,—these intellectual and moral habits, that he has been able to engage our attention, to please and to move us, and consequently has acquired the reputation of a good writer?

Now if this view be just, we may infer, that the foundations of good writing are laid in the acquisition of the stores of knowledge,—in the cultivation of the reasoning powers,—in the exercise and proper regulation of the imagination, and in the sensibilities of the heart.

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But let us now suppose, that two writers, who possess those qualities, which I have called the foundations of good writing, in equal degrees, should write on the same subject. There still might be important differences between them. One might use words with correctness and skill, selecting always the best term;—the writings of the other might shew improprieties and want of skill. The sentences of the one might be smooth in their flow, perspicuous in their meaning, gratefully diversified in their length, and well suited to the thought that is conveyed; those of the other might be rough, obscure, ambiguous, and tiresome from their uniformity; and while we are engaged and pleased in reading the production of the former writer, we soon become wearied and disgusted with that of the latter. Here then we have a new cause in operation, and this obviously is the different degrees of skill in the use of language, possessed by these two writers.

From this statement we may learn, what are the objects of attention to the critic in examining a literary production. He would judge of the value of the thoughts, of the correctness of the reasoning, especially of the method observed in the discussion of the subject. He would next apply the principles of good taste, and notice what is addressed to the imagination, and judge of its fitness to excite emotions of beauty, or grandeur, or other emotions of the same class. He might then direct his attention more immediately to the style, and examine its correctness, perspicuity, smoothness, adaptation to the subject, and the various qualities of a good style.

The course here marked out, as that of the critic in the examination of a literary production, suggests the objects of attention and the method pursued in the following work. In the first part, a writer is regarded as addressing himself to the understanding of his readers,

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and the importance of being able to think well, as including the number and value of our thoughts and the proper arrangement of them, is considered. The writer is then regarded as addressing himself more immediately to the imagination, with the design of interesting or pleasing his readers. Here the nature of taste, which directs in what is addressed to the imagination, is explained, the proper objects of its attention in a literary work are pointed out, and some directions given, to aid in the cultivation of a good taste. Skill in the use of language is next made the object of attention, so far as this is necessary for the accurate and perspicuous conveyance of the thoughts. In the remaining part of the work, the qualities of a good style are enumerated, and the different circumstances on which they depend, are mentioned. Through the whole work the inductive method is observed as far as practicable. Examples are given, and rules and principles are inferred from these examples. To some chapters also many examples are subjoined, the analysis of which may exercise the skill of the learner, and make him familiar with the rules which are stated.

It will at once occur, that in each of the particulars mentioned, Rhetoric is connected, in a greater or less degree, with other departments of instruction. The Grammarian gives us rules for the attainment of correctness in the use of language; and Logic informs us of the different modes of conducting an argument. The intellectual philosopher also explains to us the phenomena of mind, particularly of those emotions with which taste is connected. This connexion has been borne in mind, and hence it is, that on some parts comparatively little has been said, and that of a general nature. Other parts, which are thought to belong more appropriately to Rhetoric, have been more fully treated.

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CHAPTER I.

ON THOUGHT AS THE FOUNDATION OF GOOD WRITING.

It is a received maxim, that to write well we must think well. To think well, implies extensive knowledge, and well disciplined intellectual powers. To think well on any particular subject, implies, that we have a full knowledge of that subject, and are able to understand its relation to other subjects, and to reason upon it.

In saying that extensive knowledge is essential to the good writer, the word knowledge is meant to include both an acquaintance with the events and the opinions of the day, and with what is taught in the schools. That this knowledge is necessary to the good writer, may be inferred from the intimate connexion between the different objects of our thoughts. It is impossible for a writer to state and explain his opinions on one subject, without shewing a knowledge of many others. And if in the communication of his opinions he endeavours to illustrate and recommend them by the ornaments of style, the extent of his knowledge will be shewn by his illustrations and allusions. Were it necessary to establish this position, it might be done by analysing a passage of some able writer, and shewing, even from the words that he uses, the knowledge which its composition implies.

He then who would become a good writer, must possess a rich fund of thoughts. The storehouse of

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the mind must be well filled; and he must have that command over his treasures, which will enable him to bring forward, whenever the occasion may require, what has here been accumulated for future use. To make these acquisitions, is not the work of a month, or of a year. He, who would gain much knowledge, must acquire habits of diligence and attention. He must be always and everywhere a learner. Especially must he seek after a knowledge of facts, and distinct views of received opinions on important subjects. He will be mindful, that the extent of his knowledge will depend more on the manner of his reading, than on the amount read, and on his attention to those facts which fall under his observation, more than on the number of these facts.

In saying that the discipline of the mind is essential to the good writer, particular reference is had to the reasoning powers. In other words, the good writer must have sound sense. He must be able to examine subjects, and pursue a connected train of thought with power and correctness. That this is essential, may be inferred from the rank, which is held by the understanding among the different faculties of the mind. A man may have invention, memory and imagination, but if he cannot reason accurately and with power, he will not interest and inform his readers, and thus acquire the reputation of a good writer. It is also well known, that many of the faults of style arise from indistinctness in the thoughts, and an inability to discern their relations to each other. Both of these causes of defects in writing, are removed by the discipline of the mind.

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This improvement of the reasoning powers, is the appropriate object of the study of the exact sciences. The ability to reason justly and ably, must be acquired by practice. There may be physical strength of mind as of body, but the strength of the giant will not avail him in rearing a stately edifice, unless his strength be combined with skill, and no better can the giant mind rear its structure without the guidance of skill, acquired either from instruction or practice. And where can this skill be better acquired than in the study of those sciences, which are made up of abstract reasonings, and which furnish instances of close and long continued trains of argumentation. Here all is pure reasoning. There is nothing to divert the attention, nothing to bias the mind. It is an arena purposely designed to furnish exercise, which may strengthen the intellectual powers. Hence the fondness for the exact sciences, which is ever felt by those who have excelled as sound reasoners. And the student, who in the course of his education is called to confine his mind to lines and figures, and to toil in the wearisome study of the long and intricate solutions of Mathematical principles, is acquiring that discipline of the mind, which fits him to distinguish himself as the interesting writer.

From these general remarks on what is essential to the good writer, I proceed to some observations on the selection and treatment of a particular subject. It is a direction of Horace,

> Sumite materiam vestris, qui scribitis, æquam
> Viribus.*

* Examine well, ye writers, weigh with care,
What suits your genius; what your strength can bear.—FRANCIS.

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The meaning of this maxim evidently is, that we should not attempt to write on subjects which are beyond the reach of our intellect, and to the treatment of which, from our habits of thought, we are not fitted. Rightly to understand and discuss some subjects, requires a previous knowledge and powers of reasoning, which are not commonly possessed ; and where these necessary preparatory steps have not been taken, our labor must be in vain.

The expression of Horace, as thus explained, should not discourage the scholar in his efforts to excel. The student, with his relaxed and enfeebled system, could not expect to vie with the hardy laborer in a trial of strength. But let him leave his study—let him inure himself to toil, and he may gradually acquire an equal hardiness of constitution, and strength of muscle. Neither should the scholar in the greenness of his powers, attempt those feats, which he only can perform who is accustomed to strong mental exertion. Let him go on from strength to strength, exercise his powers, and inure himself to toil, and by and by he will heave the stone, at which, in a more immature period, he would have tugged in vain.

Having then selected a subject to the treatment of which his powers are adequate, the next business of the writer is to dwell upon his subject with persevering reflection. And here let him remember the important injunction, *Never attempt to write on any subject, until you fully understand it.* The reason of this rule may be simply stated. We write to convey knowledge to others. But the attempt must be vain

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and absurd, if we do not understand what we wish to convey.

A habit of patient reflection should be enjoined, especially upon the young writer. Let him remember, that his danger is from a slight and superficial acquaintance with his subject, and not enter too hastily on its treatment. He sits down to reflect, and finds that he has some floating thoughts on what he intends to discuss. This is not enough. He must direct his thoughts to some definite object, and find out all that may be made useful or advantageous to what he proposes to establish. Neither let him be discouraged, if difficulties offer themselves, and first efforts are vain. Often is it the case, that in the course of such investigations and patient examination of a subject, new views and valuable thoughts will present themselves. We make new discoveries. Our minds become filled with the subject, and our thoughts flow forth in order and abundance.

It is by thus carefully and patiently reflecting on his subject, that the writer prepares himself to read with advantage what has been written by others. Having his own veiws and opinions, which are the result of patient thought and thorough examination, he is enabled to make comparisons between the opinions he has formed and those of other men. Wherein the opinions of others coincide with his own, he feels strengthened and supported. Wherein they differ, he is led to a more careful examination, and thus the danger of falling into error himself, and of leading others astray, is diminished. Often, also, in reading the

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productions of others, some new views will be brought before the mind, or some aid derived for illustrating and enforcing what is designed to be communicated. In this way too the writer is less liable to be biassed by the authority of a name, and become the retailer of the opinions of other men. These remarks are designed to answer the enquiry, how far we ought to read what others have written on a subject before attempting to write ourselves. We should read, not so much with the design of furnishing our minds with ideas, as to test the value of our own thoughts, and receive hints which may be dwelt upon, and thus suggest new views and thoughts.

There can be no doubt, that the practice of most young writers is contrary to what is here recommended. Immediately upon selecting a subject on which to write, they read what others have written, and thus, instead of trusting to the resources of their own minds, they look to books for their thoughts and opinions. The injurious effect of this habit is seen in the want of originality and vigor of thought, which, inlater periods, characterises the efforts of these servile minds.

The persevering thought, that has now been enjoined, has done more towards enlightening and improving men, than all the brilliant sallies and sudden efforts of genius. It is indeed this ability to think, joined with a favorable constitution of mind, which gives its possessor a claim to the name of genius. It is said, that when the great Newton was asked, how he was enabled to make the greatest discoveries that a mortal has ever communicated to his fellow men; he answered, *by thinking*.

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When by patient reflection on a subject many and valuable thoughts have been acquired, the attention should next be directed to their arrangement. A good method, or the right arrangement of the thoughts, is of vital importance to the successful communication of them to others.

The first direction for the attainment of a good method, or the right arrangement of the thoughts, is, *to fix definitely in the mind the precise object in view.* The writer should ask himself, What do I wish to establish? What is the point at which I aim? and when this is seen, it should never be lost sight of. The necessity of this direction will at once be perceived. Unless the writer have some object, at which he aims, as the goal he would reach, he will ever be liable to go astray, lose himself and his readers. In this way also, he learns what importance to attach to every thought that is introduced, and determines from its bearing on the principal object of his discourse, the value of every part, and how long it should be dwelt upon.

Having fixed definitely in the mind the precise object of discussion, the next part of the work of arrangement is to mark the outlines of the discourse, or in other words, to determine the grand divisions. In making this division, as has been already intimated, particular regard should be had to the object in view, and it should be evident, that the division has been made in that manner, which may best aid the design of the writer. The division also should be natural, such as obviously suggests itself to the mind of the reader, and may be easily remembered. There should

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also be a distinctness of the parts; one part should not include another, but each should have its proper place and be of importance in that place, and all the parts well fitted together and united, should present a whole.

To be able in this way "to look a subject into shape," is highly conducive to success as a writer. It results from a habit of consecutive thinking. Some men are constantly collecting and arranging their scattered thoughts. There is a principle of order in their minds, which is imparted to every subject on which they look. The forming of this habit is aided by the study of the exact sciences, as has already been mentioned. Much depends also upon practice, and upon reading the productions of those, who are wont to think with order and ability.

The question may arise, Is it of importance distinctly to state the plan which is pursued? Should there be the formal divisions of discourse? To this I answer, that in the treatment of intricate subjects, where there are many divisions, and where it is of importance, that the order and connexion of each part should be carefully observed, to state the divisions is the better course. But it is far from being always essential. Though we never should write without forming a distinct plan for our own use, yet it may often be best to let others gather this plan from reading our productions. The forming of a plan is a species of scaffolding to aid us in erecting the building. When the edifice is finished, we may let the scaffolding fall.

Having made the divisions of his subject, the next labor of the writer is to fill up the outlines that have

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been marked out. The attention is now more immediately directed to each part in succession, and whatever can illustrate, establish and enforce these different parts, is brought to view. In the treatment of each of these divisions, as in the management of the whole subject, there should be method. Not an unnecessary thought or illustration should be introduced. Every remark should have its design in agreement with the grand object, and should effect this design.

The following story of the Greek poet Menander, shews how large a part of the work of composition is done, when the plan is well formed and digested. He was preparing a performance for some public occasion. When the time of its delivery drew nigh, he was asked by one of his friends, if he had finished it. He answered, *The work is done all but making the verses.*

In ancient systems of Rhetoric, many rules are given to aid the writer in forming his plan; but it is believed that these rules are but of little value. No directions of general application can be given. The plan must vary with the nature of the subject discussed. Each writer must be guided by his own judgment, and form his divisions with the particular object of his discourse in full view.

But though no rules of general application can be given, the following remarks on this subject may be of service.

Whether a performance should have a formal introduction or not, must be determined by the good sense of the writer. In short essays, it is generally best to commence with a statement of the object in

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view, and enter at once on its discussion. A huge portico before a small building always appears out of place. When an introduction is used, it should be striking and appropriate. First impressions, it is well known, are important, and much skill may here be shewn. A happy turn of expression, or a well-timed allusion, may arrest the attention of readers and conciliate their good will. Introductions should at least always be written with great care. Before the minds of readers become engaged in the discussion of the subject, their attention is at liberty to fix itself on the skill discovered in the choice of words, and in the modelling of the expression.

Whether there be a formal introduction or not, the particular object of the writer should early be brought to view. It is not always necessary, that this object should be stated in the form of a proposition. Often it is elegantly implied, or left to be inferred from the introductory remarks. Where however any doubt can exist as to the object proposed, or there is any danger that the reader may mistake the design of the writer, the precise object of discussion cannot be too distinctly and formally stated. In the plan, as in the expression of the thoughts, elegance should always be sacrificed to perspicuity. Half the controversies and differences of opinion among men, arise from their not distinctly understanding the questions, on which they write and converse.

In the discussion of a subject, which is of an argumentative nature, the direction is generally given that the arguments should rise in importance. In this

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way the attention, excited by novelty at first, may continue to be held, and a full and strong conviction left on the mind at the conclusion of the reasoning. This as a general rule may be observed, but the most obvious connexion between one argument and another, or some other cause, will often require the skilful writer to depart from it.

If it be of importance, that the attention be arrested at first by a well written introduction, and sustained by well connected and increasingly important arguments, it will be readily allowed, that a happy conclusion is no less desirable. It is then that a decision is about to be made, and the mind of the reader should be left impressed with a favorable opinion of the writer, and with the justness and truth of what has been told him. Here then the writer should exert all his skill, and put forth all his powers.

Transitions from one part of a discourse to another, are also important objects of attention. The general direction is often given, that transitions be natural and easy. By this it is meant, that they be in agreement with the common modes of associating the thoughts. In argumentative writings, where the different parts are connected together by a common reference to some particular point, which they are designed to establish, this common relationship will be sufficient to prevent the transition from one argument to another from appearing unnatural and abrupt. Still, as has been intimated, there may be skill shewn in the arrangement of the arguments, and one may happily appear to arise from another. But in those species

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of writing which are not argumentative, much skill may be shewn in the transition. With the design of exhibiting some happy instances of transitions, and thus shewing what is meant by their being natural and easy, I shall notice those in Goldsmith's Traveller, to which these epithets are often applied. His description of Italy closes with the mention of its inhabitants, feeble and degraded, pleased with low delights and the sports of children. The transition to the Swiss is thus made;

> My soul turn from them;—turn we to survey
> Where rougher climes a nobler race display.

The principle on which the transition is here made, is that of contrast. And since the mind is often wont to look at objects as opposed to each other, it naturally, in this way, passes from the Italians to the Swiss.

The transition from Switzerland to France is thus made;

> Some sterner virtues o'er the mountain's breast
> May sit like falcons, cowering on the nest;
> But all the gentler morals, such as play
> Through life's more cultured walks and charm the way,
> These far dispersed, on timorous pinions fly,
> To sport and flutter in a kinder sky.
>
> To kinder skies, where gentler manners reign,
> I turn—and France displays her bright domain.

In this instance, the transition, like that before mentioned, depends in part on the principle of contrast, but seems more immediately to rest on the accidental mention of the words *kinder sky*. Such accidental associations are frequent, especially in familiar

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intercourse, and in the easy flow of the thoughts; and though they would not be approved in the grave discussion of a subject, in a descriptive epistle, which is the nature of the production we are examining, they strike us favorably.

The next transition from France to Holland is also founded on contrast and need not be stated.

The transition from Holland to Britain is in the following lines,

—— how unlike their Belgic sires of old!
Rough, poor, content, ungovernably bold;
War in each breast, and freedom on each brow;
How much unlike the sons of Britain now.
Fired at the sound my genius spreads her wing,
And flies where Britain courts the western spring.

Here the principle of transition is that of resemblance. The tracing of a relation of this kind between its thoughts, is a favorite employment of the mind. Hence this principle of resemblance is often made the ground of transitions, and such transitions always appear natural and easy.

The remarks on the treatment of a subject which have been made in this chapter, are general in their nature. That they may be fully understood, and their importance felt, the student should be led to see them exemplified in the productions of good writers. To aid in the application of them with this view, I shall now direct the attention to examples of several different kinds of writing, as the didactic, the argumentative, the narrative and the descriptive.

The professed design of didactic writing is to con-

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vey instruction. This may be done in a preceptive manner, as when a superior gives his directions to those under his authority, or in a persuasive manner, when appeals are made to the good sense and feelings of those who are addressed. Great simplicity and clearness in the plan are essential to this kind of writing. The attention of the reader should be distinctly fixed on the primary object of the writer; he should be made fully to understand every part, to see its importance and connexion with the whole. In good examples of the preceptive kind, each part, though suggesting another, is in itself separate and distinct, and the writer seeks rather to be fully understood, than to assign the reasons of what he says. In examples of didactic writing of the persuasive kind, the writer dwells longer on the different parts of his discourse, and at the same time that he is careful to be fully and rightly understood, he makes such statements and appeals as are suited to interest the feelings, convince the understanding, and influence the will of the reader.

For an example of didactic writing of the preceptive kind, let the attention of the student be directed to that part of the second lesson in the American First Class Book, which contains the advice of a father to his son; and let him be required to give an abstract of what is there said, stating the object and the plan, and also noticing the transitions and manner of enlarging upon the different parts. Lessons 104 and 105 furnish examples of persuasive didactic writing. Let these be examined in the same manner.

As a model of what is here required of the student,

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the following abstract and analysis of the 13th lesson, which is of the persuasive didactic kind, is given.

The design of the writer is to enforce upon his readers the instability of objects around him. With this view he directs the attention successively to those things, which seem to give the highest promise of stability. Such are 1. The prominent parts of creation —the heavens and the earth, the mountains and the rocks. 2. The firmest works of man—those stately monuments and buildings, which have been reared by human skill and power, and, as connected with them, those who reared and inhabited these works of art. 3. The friends and fellow-beings around us, on whom we are prone to lean for support. 4. Our own existence, which is dear to us, and which we desire should be permanent. This is his plan.

The transition from the works of nature to those of art, is founded on resemblance, and is easily made. The second transition from the inhabitants of the world at a former period to those who now dwell upon it, is an instance of contrast. The transition from our friends and fellow-beings as mortal and perishing to ourselves, alike frail, is that of resemblance. The manner of enlarging under the first head, is to enumerate different facts in proof of what is asserted. In the second part, where it is designed to shew the instability of works of art, the attention is directed to these works as they are seen in a state of decay, and then, on the principle of contrast, the perishing nature of these works and of their founders, is most fully shewn. In the third, the conviction of the transitory nature of

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our friends is enforced, by directing the attention to circumstances, which result from this fact. And in the fourth, that our own fading perishing nature may be felt, we are told to look back upon the past, from which we learn, that the time of our continuance has been short, and to look forward to the future, when not only the places which have known us shall know us no more, but we shall cease to live in the memory of our friends, and even the monumental stone shall no longer tell where we lie.

In this production, then, there is unity of object, a good division, easy transitions, and happy amplifications of the different parts.

Argumentative writings are addressed to the understanding with the design of producing conviction. It must be obvious, that unity of design, with a clear statement of this design, and a distinct and full exhibition of every argument which is brought to bear upon it, must be essential to the success of the writer. The transition from one argument to another may be abrupt without injury to the performance, since a common relation to the main object of discourse, forms a chain which binds the different parts together. As to the enlargement, or amplification on different arguments, this must depend on their need of explanation, and their importance in relation to the general subject.

The attention of the student may be directed to Lessons 53, 54 and 55, as the best examples of argumentative writing found in the Class Book.

It is the purpose of narrative writings, to relate past

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occurrencies. We are not to expect in writings of this kind the regular divisions of a discourse, as in didactic and argumentative productions. Still there will be some prominent or leading event, and the different parts of the narrative will tend to exhibit it fully and clearly. These facts will be the circumstances of the event, such as led to it, such as accompanied it, or such as follow from it; and the writer will dwell upon them in proportion to their importance and connexion with his main design. Occasional reflections may also be made, and inferences drawn, and whatever can illustrate, or throw an interest around the principal event, will be introduced. As to transitions, they will often depend on the order of occurrencies in the succession of time, or as one occurrence is accounted to be the cause of another.

Lessons 21 and 60 afford examples of narrative writing, and may be examined by the student.

In descriptive writing, it is the purpose of the writer to place before the view of his readers some object or scene. In its design it nearly resembles both historical and landscape painting, and there is a resemblance too in the particulars on which the successful exertion of each depends. A happy selection of circumstances is of importance. A few prominent traits, well chosen, and strongly exhibited, will produce a much better effect, than the enumeration of many particulars. In this kind of writing, much is found which is designed to assist the distinctness of the mind's conception, and when the writer dwells on different parts, it is with this purpose. The transitions, as in the ar-

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gumentative manner of writing, are often abrupt, and it is thought sufficient connexion, that the different parts tend to the same end. The narrative and descriptive are often found united.

As examples of descriptive writing, Lessons 19 and 156 may be mentioned.

CHAPTER II.

ON TASTE.

Were men simply intellectual beings, and were it the only design of the writer to convey instruction to his readers, what has been said in the preceding chapter would be all that is required, preparatory to the consideration of the qualities of a good style. But men have imagination, and are susceptible of emotions; and it is often the purpose of the writer, to cause the imagination to be exercised, and emotions of various kinds to be excited. To give pleasure in this way, may be the immediate object of the writer, or he may seek to please his readers, merely to arrest their attention, increase the distinctness of their views, and favorably incline them to the reception of the opinions he communicates.

From this statement, the definite object of this and the following chapter may be learnt. It is to aid in judging of whatever is thus addressed to the imagination in connexion with certain emotions of which men

are susceptible. To direct in all that thus pertains to the imagination and these emotions, is regarded as the office of Taste. Hence the nature of taste in general will first be considered. This will be followed by some account of what is implied by a literary taste, including an enumeration of those different properties in a literary production which are objects of its attention, with such remarks and directions as may aid in its acquisition and improvement.

Taste may be defined as judgment of what is fitted to excite emotions of beauty, grandeur and sublimity, founded on the experience of past emotions. By judgment, as the word is here used, I mean the determining of the fitness of particular causes for producing certain effects. The chemist would produce a mixture having certain properties, a certain degree of hardness, a required colour or taste. With this view he unites several simples, and in selecting the simples that are to be united together for producing the required mixture, and in determining the quantity of each to be used, there is judgment. In the same manner, where taste is exercised, there is a certain effect to be produced, and in determining the fitness of means for producing this effect, there is judgment.

For a full account of the emotions here mentioned, the student must be referred to the Philosophy of the Mind. But it is necessary, that a short statement of what is meant by them should here be given.

If we reflect on the different emotions, of which we are conscious in the notice of actions and objects around us, we find that some of them are of a moral

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nature, and we speak of the actions which excite them as virtuous or vicious. Other emotions are included under what is called the passions, and we speak of the objects which excite them as objects of desire or aversion, of fear or remorse, or of some other passion. We think also of such objects as affecting our happiness. But distinct, both from emotions of a moral nature, and from those included under the passions, there is a third class, which is particularly referred to in the definition which has been given of taste, and these will now be exhibited.

When the sun goes down in the west, the surrounding clouds reflect to our view a rich variety of colours. We gaze on the splendid scene, and there is a pleasant emotion excited in our minds.

In reading the story of the two friends, Damon and Pythias, who were the objects of the cruelty of Dionysius, we are struck with the closeness of their friendship; and while we think on the fidelity of the returning friend, and on their mutual contest for death, a pleasing emotion rises in the mind.

When examining Dr. Paley's reasoning in proof of the existence of the Deity, and observing how every part is brought to bear on the particular object in view, while one example after another gives additional strength to the argument, we admire the skill of the reasoner and the perfection of his work, and in view of this skill and this finished work, a grateful emotion arises in the mind.

It will be observed in these examples, that the emotion excited is not strong,—that it is of a grateful kind;

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and that it may continue for some time. This is called an emotion of beauty.

The traveller, when he stands on the banks of the Mississippi, and looks upon that noble river, flowing on with the power of collected waters, and bearing on its bosom the wealth of the surrounding region, stops to gaze on the scene before him, and regards it with admiration.

Burke has given the following biographical notice of Howard, the celebrated philanthropist.

"He has visited all Europe,—not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples; not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur; not to form a scale of the curiosity of modern art; not to collect medals, or collate manuscripts;—but to dive into the depths of dungeons; to plunge into the infection of hospitals; to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain; to take the guage and dimensions of misery, depression and contempt; to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, and to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries. His plan is original; and it is as full of genius, as it is of humanity. It was a voyage of discovery, a circumnavigation of charity."

No one can read this passage, and not feel a high degree of admiration in view of the devotedness and elevation of purpose it describes.

When the orator stands up before collected thousands, and for an hour sways them at his will by the powers of his eloquence, who in that vast throng can regard the speaker before him, and feel no admiration of his genius.

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The emotions excited in these and similar instances, have been called emotions of grandeur. They differ from those of beauty, as being more elevating and nnobling.

Byron in his description of a thunder storm in the Alps, has the following passage.

> "Far along,
> From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
> Leaps the live thunder!—not from one lone cloud,
> But every mountain now hath found a tongue;
> And Jura answers through her misty shroud,
> Back to the joyous Alps who call to her aloud."

Who in the midst of Alpine scenery could thus listen to the voice of the leaping thunder, and not start with strong emotion?

It is related in one of our biographies, that a fond mother, who stood by the bedside of her dying child, exclaimed, when the spirit left its earthly abode, "I wish you joy my darling." No one can bring around himself the circumstances of this scene, and be unmoved in view of the christian faith and resignation it implies.

We are told, that when Newton drew near to the close of those calculations which confirmed his discovery of the laws, by which the planets are bound in their courses, he was so overwhelmed with emotion, that he could not proceed, and was obliged to ask the assistance of a friend. No one can think of the mighty intellectual work that was then accomplished, and not feel, as he did, an overpowering emotion.

To the emotions excited in these last mentioned

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examples, is applied the epithet sublime. They are less permanent than those of grandeur, but more thrilling and exalting.

In these examples, the emotions which are excited do not arise either from a moral approbation of the objects or actions as virtuous, or from a personal interest in them as affecting our happiness. How is it then that they are excited ?

The answers to these enquiries have been numerous. Some have said, that there is a distinct sense, which enables the mind to discern in objects something which is fitted to excite emotions of this kind, and which is suited to this purpose, in the same manner as the sense of hearing is suited to sounds. Others have attempted to resolve the whole into the principle of the association of ideas, and have said, that in every instance where an emotion of the kind mentioned is excited, some associated thoughts, connected with our happiness, are brought before the mind. In the second of the examples given, they would say, that the grateful emotion arises from the thought of our own past friendships, or of how much we should enjoy in the possession of a faithful friend. Others account for these emotions by referring them to what is called a primary law of our natures. They say, that our Creator has so formed us and adapted us to the world in which we live, that the view of certain objects and scenes is fitted to excite in the mind certain corresponding emotions. At the same time they allow, that much influence is to be ascribed to the principle of association. The last mentioned opinion is that of Brown,

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and is the one now generally received. For a full explanation of it, the student is referred to his work on Intellectual Philosophy. It is enough for my present purpose, to have pointed out the class of emotions which comes under the cognizance of taste, and to have referred to some of the attempts to explain them.

It will be observed, that the examples which are given, are drawn from three different classes of objects, natural, moral, and intellectual. But since, in the classification of emotions, as those of beauty, grandeur and sublimity, we obviously refer to the emotions as they exist in the mind, and not to the objects by which they are excited, this diversity in the exciting objects is not regarded. Neither is it of importance, that these different classes of emotions should here be separately considered. They are alike objects of the attention of taste, and the principles and rules, established in reference to one class, admit of application to the others. Hence the attention is principally directed to emotions of beauty, and emotions of each class are sometimes called emotions of taste.

I return now to the definition of taste. Every instance of judgment implies knowledge of those subjects, on which it is exercised. The chemist cannot form his mixture, that shall possess certain required properties, without a knowledge of the properties of the several simples which are ingredients. In those instances of judgment also, which are included under taste, there is in the same manner knowledge implied; but as this is the knowledge of emotions, and can be acquired only by experience, taste is said

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to be founded on the experience of past emotions.

Though taste, in the definition which has now been explained, is called judgment, it is not meant, that in the exercise of taste, the mind is ordinarily conscious of deliberation, or of the balancing of reasons, as in some other instances of judgment. It is true, that this deliberation may be rapidly passed through in all instances, and in some, as in the case of the artist employed in designing and executing his work, there may be a consciousness of the process. But most frequently, judgment on objects of taste seems to be passed instantaneously. As the result of past experience of emotions, certain principles seem fixed in the mind, and where taste is called into exercise, it is the immediate application of these principles to particular instances. The analogy is close between the exercise of taste in works of the fine arts, and of taste, as the word is literally applied to the sense of taste. Take for example the case of wines. The wine merchant is able at once to decide as to the quality of the wine presented to him, and to detect any foreign ingredient. He has acquired his ability to do this by his past experience, and he brings the results of this past experience, which seem to exist as certain fixed principles, to the particular instance in which his judgment is required.

From the definition that has been given of taste, we may learn in what way sensibility is connected with its attainment. By sensibility is meant a high degree of susceptibility of the emotions of beauty. And since taste is founded on the experience of these emotions,

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sensibility, as thus defined, must aid in the formation of a good taste. It must be supposed, that so far as the emotions of beauty result from original tendencies of the mind to be pleased in view of certain objects, they are in some degree common to all men in their earliest years. But it is a well known fact respecting all our emotions, that if neglected, they lose their strength, and if entirely disregarded, they will soon cease to be felt. On the contrary, they are strengthened by being regarded and cherished. Hence it is, that while some men are susceptible of emotions of beauty in view of objects and scenes around them, others, the circumstances of whose life have been different, look upon the same objects and scenes without any emotion of this nature. So far too as these emotions result from associated thoughts and feelings, there is equal cause of diversity between different individuals. One, from the scenes and events that have fallen under his observation, may have many associations connected with a particular object, which another may have never formed. We may expect then, that to the former individual, those objects and scenes, either in nature or art, will be constantly presenting themselves, which will excite emotions of beauty. He will be continually experiencing these emotions, and though this experience alone will not constitute a good taste, it is to be regarded as the basis on which it is founded. That something more than this experience of an individual is requisite, is evident from the fact, that some who have a great degree of sensibility, are very destitute of good taste.

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Taste, then, as founded on the experience of past emotions, does not rest so much on the experience of an individual, as on the united experience of many. This brings to view what is called the STANDARD OF TASTE. It is the case, as we have seen, that from the peculiar circumstances of individuals, their original tendencies to emotions of beauty, may be perverted and blunted, or strengthened and increased. The associations also connected with the same objects and scenes may be very different in different minds. From both of these causes, and from others not mentioned, the emotions, excited in the minds of different individuals in the view of the same objects, will differ. But amidst all these diversities, there are some objects and scenes, which do uniformly excite emotions of beauty in the great majority of those, who have any degree of sensibility. And where there are cases of exception, some sufficient reason may generally be assigned. The standard of taste, then, is the agreeing voice of such as are susceptible of emotions of beauty, both of those who have lived in past ages, and of those now existing.

Hence we learn one object and use of models of excellence in the fine arts. It is principally by means of these, that we obtain a knowledge of the standard of taste, or rather they are the standard, since in them the decisions of men in different periods and portions of the world are found embodied. To illustrate this by an example, I will refer to West's painting of Christ in the exercise of the charities. We know, that this painting was universally admired in

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England. It has been regarded with like admiration in this country. All those, who are susceptible of emotions of beauty, have felt these emotions, when looking upon this production of art. Here then is found the united voice of men of the present age, and the artist knows, that so far as his production exhibits what excites emotions of beauty in this painting, it is in agreement with the general opinion of men now living, or the standard of the taste of the age. Had this picture existed through successive ages, and been uniformly admired, this would give it higher authority, and the artist, in conforming his work to it, would know, that what he produced, is in agreement with the opinions of men of different ages of the world. He might then hope, that his work, being conformed to this general standard of taste, would please all men, every where and of every age, who are susceptible of emotions of beauty, and whose minds are not under the influence of some particular bias. In models of excellence in the fine arts, we have, then, the experience of mankind respecting emotions of beauty expressed, and in studying these models, the man of sensibility learns to correct any peculiar influence which circumstances may have had on his own emotions, and thus acquires a taste which is in conformity with the general standard of taste.

But though the foundation of taste is sensibility, and its cultivation is dependent on familiarity with models of excellence in the fine arts, it is also closely connected with the intellectual habits of individuals. This might be expected from the fact, that taste implies the exer-

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cise of a discriminating power; since the individual will bring to the judgments, which he forms of what is fitted to excite emotions of taste, the same intellectual habits and acquisitions, which he brings to cases, where judgments are formed on other subjects. It is in this way, that we may in part account for the diversities of taste in different individuals. He whose mind is enriched with various knowledge, and whose intellectual powers have been strengthened and improved, and who is wont to take large and comprehensive views, of subjects, will discover the greatness of his mind and the liberality of his views in his judgment of what is fitted to excite an emotion of taste. He whose attention has been restricted to philosophical speculations, and who has been accustomed to reason with the precision of mathematical accuracy, will in like manner bring his habits of reasoning into subjects of taste, and will be less bold and more severe in his judgment of what is fitted to excite emotions of this kind.

Taste, as thus explained, employs itself in judging both of the objects and scenes in Nature, and of works in the Fine Arts, and in both cases it determines as to the fitness of what is presented before it to produce emotions of beauty. Suppose several individuals, who are susceptible of emotions of beauty, to be travelling through some region of our country which presents a rich variety of natural scenery. One of them, in advance of the others, upon rising an eminence, is struck with the view opening before him, and is led to exclaim as to the beauty of the prospect. The others,

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upon coming up, are impressed in the same manner. They declare the scene before them beautiful, and they unite in pronouncing him, who first pointed it out, a man of taste. All that is meant by this expression is, that the individual to whom it is applied, is able, from his experience of past emotions, to form a judgment respecting the fitness of objects to produce emotions of beauty, which is in agreement with the general judgment of mankind.

Suppose further, that these same individuals in the course of their journey, stop to examine a gallery of paintings. One of them, in looking round on the different pictures, selects a painting which he pronounces beautiful. The attention of the others being called to it, they express the same opinion, and again they unite in calling the individual who has pointed out the painting, a man of taste. Here, as in the former case, all that is implied is, that the individual called a man of taste, is able to judge of the fitness of works of art to produce emotions of beauty.

But let us now suppose, that instead of speaking of the individual who pointed out the painting to their notice, they are led to speak of the work itself, and to call it a work of taste. This might be said of a work of art, though not of a scene in nature; for in this expression, reference is evidently had to the artist by whom the work was executed, and we never think of the Creator as guided by taste in the work of creation. All that is here implied also is, that the artist has shewn by the design and execution of his work, that he is able to judge correctly as to the fitness of ob-

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jects and scenes to produce emotions of beauty. But to shew more fully the nature of taste, and to point out its connexion with the imagination, I shall here describe the manner in which it guides the artist in designing and executing his work; and in doing this, I shall confine the attention to works in the art of Painting, since the mind conceives most easily and distinctly objects of sense.

Let us first suppose, that the scene or object represented by the painter, is an exact imitation of some scene or object in nature. In this case, we might be pleased with the work, and say that it discovers good taste. We might be pleased, because the original scene is one fitted to excite emotions of beauty, and we might ascribe good taste to the painter, from his having selected a scene of this kind to be represented. Besides, we might be gratified with the skill that is shewn in the execution of the work. Emotions of beauty might be excited in view of the closeness of the imitation, the justness of the colouring, and the truth of the perspective; and we might say, that taste has guided the artist in his exhibition of what are usually called secondary beauties of painting.

But the most admired works in the art of painting are not exact imitations. They are the creations of the painter, and have no archetype in nature. And it is in designing these original works, that the presence of taste is most needed, and her influence felt.

With the purpose of shewing in what way taste guides the artist in designing his work, I shall here introduce an account given by Cicero, of the course

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pursued by Zeuxis, when employed by the Crotonians to paint the picture of a beautiful female. The city of Crotonia was celebrated for the beauty of its females. Zeuxis requested, that those esteemed most beautiful might be assembled at the same place. From these he selected five, whom he esteemed as excelling in beauty, and by combining in his picture the most striking traits of beauty in each of these five, he executed the task assigned to him.

Now in the whole of this process, taste was evidently the guide of the artist. The selection of the five most beautiful virgins, the choice of the most beautiful traits in each, are both instances of judgment, founded on the experience of past emotions. But this is only the preparation for his work. What has been thus selected must now be combined together, and so combined, as to produce one harmonious effect. Instead of an assemblage of beautiful limbs and features, an air and proportion must be given to the form, and a cast to the countenance. Here is exercise for the designing powers of the artist, and over this part of the work also taste must preside. Different modes of combination present themselves before his "mind's eye" and of these different combinations, one is to be selected as most beautiful. The making of this selection is evidently an instance of judgment, and it is judgment, founded on the experience of past emotions of beauty. Zeuxis was familiar with forms of beauty, and had fixed in his mind those principles of judging, which enabled him to decide with readiness

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and correctness. Hence, no doubt, his celebrity as a painter of the female form.

From this example, it may be learnt, how it is, that the most admired productions of the painter are not exact representations of objects and scenes in nature. In natural objects and scenes, that which is suited to excite emotions of beauty, is mingled with objects of indifference and disgust. The artist, under the guidance of taste, collects together those scattered fragments of beauty, and combining them together in one view, with one harmonious effect, presents to us objects and scenes more beautiful than those which can be found in nature.

But it is by no means the case, that the artist is confined to objects and scenes of nature for the materials of these new combinations. It is here that the office of imagination, and its connexion with taste, may be seen. By this faculty of the mind, the objects of past sensations are modified and combined anew, and images of objects and scenes, that exist only in this airy creation, rise up before our view. But while gazing on these visionary things, the same grateful emotions of beauty are excited, as when the objects before us have more of reality. Hence, when the artist would represent to us a scene, which shall strongly excite our emotions of beauty, he calls in imagination to his aid. She brings to his view a bright assemblage of forms of beauty. She presents them in different lights, combines and modifies them variously. And while these shifting scenes are flitting before him, he selects, under the guidance of taste, the most beautiful forms and happiest combi-

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nations, and fixes them on the canvass for our view.

From these united efforts of imagination and taste, the artist presents to us models of excellence, superior to what can be found in the works of nature, or in the productions of artists that have preceded him. By the efforts of genius, he is enabled to make such combinations as others have never made, and taste, by exercising itself in the study of these visions of the mind, reaches a degree of perfection, to which it never could have attained in the study of existing models, or of the scenes of nature. But if imagination thus assists in the cultivation and improvement of taste, taste in return repays the assistance of imagination by acting as director in the new creations which she forms. Imagination might be furnished with a thousand different forms of beauty, as the materials of her work, and unite them in ten-thousand different combinations; but without taste to preside and direct, she could never reach that harmoniousness of effect, that unity of expression, to which nature often attains.

From this analysis of the manner in which works in the fine arts are produced, may be learnt the assistance, which the artist must derive from the study of models of excellence in the arts. Here he sees presented before him, the representations of those beautiful forms of nature, the knowledge of which, without this assistance, he could have obtained only by frequent and tedious processes of observation and analysis. The *beau ideal* is delineated to his view, and he forms his taste from the contemplation of perfect forms of beauty, instead of those imperfect forms,

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where beauty is mingled with deformity. He sees also the most happy combinations of these forms. He has before him the results which others have made, and is thus placed in advance of those, who are not favoured with similar means of improvement.

The man, who is thus permitted to form his taste from models of excellence around him, may be said to exist in a new creation. He lives, where the sun sheds a brighter day, where the clouds are skirted by more brilliant colours, and where nature's carpet shows a richer green. Angelic forms are about him. He ever stands on some chosen spot, and each new scene gives but a varied expression to the emotions of beauty that he feels.

On the principles which have been stated in this chapter, the revolutions of taste may be easily explained. As peculiar circumstances have their influence on the tastes of different individuals, so the manners and customs and peculiar circumstances of different ages exert their influence on the tastes of these ages. The power of these adventitious circumstances is so great, that what in one age is esteemed and pronounced beautiful, in a succeeding age of more refinement, is regarded with disgust. Still it is true, that in this case, as in the diversities of the tastes of individuals, there are some works of art, which rise superior to the influence of these accidental causes, and, wherever they are known, excite emotions of beauty.

I shall close this account of taste in general with a short explanation of the qualities, which are most

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frequently ascribed to it. These are three, Refinement, Delicacy and Correctness.

We speak of Refinement of taste in reference to different ages and different periods in the life of an individual. It implies a progress, so that what is pleasing in one age, or in one period of life, is not so in another. The sculptured monument, which in the early ages of a country is regarded with admiration and called beautiful, at a later period is unheeded, or considered rude and unsightly. The pictures, which in our childish years we gazed upon with pleasure, at a more mature time of life are passed by with neglect. This difference in the feelings with which the same object is regarded at different periods, is found connected with different advances that have been made in knowledge, and in the cultivation and refinement of the intellectual powers. The emotion of pleasure, felt by the ignorant and half civilized man, when gazing on some rude monument, or unsightly picture, is of the same nature, as that felt by the man of knowledge and refinement, while viewing a finished work of sculpture, or painting. But the latter has become habituated to the exhibition of skill in the works of art. He has become familiar with monuments and paintings, that are better in their design and execution, than those that have been seen by the former, and hence it is, that what at an earlier period of life would have excited emotions of beauty, is now disregarded. Refinement in taste, then, denotes a progress in the knowledge of what is excellent in works of art, and results from the study of models of excellence.

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Delicacy of taste implies a quick and nice perception of whatever is fitted to excite emotions of beauty. He who possesses it will detect beauties both of design and execution, which pass unnoticed by common men; and when others pronounce a scene beautiful from the general effect on their minds, he will discover and point out all that tends to the production of this effect. This quality of taste results from a habit of careful and minute observation, joined with a strong susceptibility of emotions of beauty. It is also most frequently found in connexion with a moral purity of feeling, and in its common acceptation, is sometimes used as opposed to what is indelicate.

Correctness of taste, evidently refers to an agreement with some standard. What this standard is has been already shewn. It is the agreeing voice of those, who from their experience of past emotions, are able to form a judgment on what is fitted to excite emotions of beauty. He, then, who has correctness of taste, feels and judges, in reference to objects which come under the cognizance of taste, in agreement with the only true standard of taste.

It will at once be seen, that in the preceding account of taste, the word is used in a sense, different from that often applied to it in its common acceptation. We speak of a taste for some particular occupation, for some amusement or study, when all that is meant to be expressed is, that there is a fondness, or inclination of the mind, for the pursuit, and the word fondness or inclination would better convey our meaning. It must be obvious to all, that the rhetorical use of the word is quite different. 5

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The definition here given of taste, is also different from that found in Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric, which, as a text-book, is in most frequent use. He defines taste to be the power of receiving pleasure or pain from the beauties or deformities of nature and art. The definition which has been given of it in this chapter, makes it more of a discriminating principle. It implies, that the man of taste is able to discern what in nature and art is fitted to excite this feeling of pleasure and pain, while the power of receiving this pleasure is called sensibility. It is a well known fact, which is in direct opposition to the definition given by Dr. Blair, that as the taste of an individual becomes more refined and perfect, his power of receiving pleasure or pain from the beauties and deformities of nature and art is diminished, or, in other words, his sensibility is less.

Neither is it the case, that in all instances where the word taste is used, reference is had to the standard, which has been stated in this chapter to be the true standard of taste. A man is sometimes called a man of taste, when his judgment extends no farther than to a decision, whet her in any particular production, or performance, the rules of the art have been observed. This may be illustrated in the case of an epic poem. Aristotle has fully and with precision laid down the rules, according to which this species of writing should be composed, deriving them from Homer, the great master of the art. It is evident, that one, who has made himself familiar with these rules, may sit in judgment on the Æneid of Virgil, and the

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Paradise Lost of Milton. With his line and his compass, he may take the dimensions of an Epic Poem, as readily and easily as of a building. In fact, he does nothing more than apply to the work he examines, the measures which have been taken from some other work that has been admired, and in this way decide as to the merits of the poem. This is the lowest kind of criticism, and he who exercises it, may be called a man of technical taste.

It is also sometimes the case, that the productions of some admired author, or artist, are the standard, to which all attempts of the same nature must be brought. The admirer of Byron, whose mind is filled with his delightful horrors, and who is wont to admire his master-strokes of passion, in examining the productions of other poets, will pronounce on their excellence, from their comparative effect on his own mind, and will approve or condemn, as they agree with those of this great master of the art. This may be distinguished as the taste of comparison. It is often found among those, who devote their time to visiting galleries of paintings, and other collections of works in the fine arts. This kind of taste is a source of enjoyment to its possessor, and is often found united with merit as an author or artist. Some men succeed better, when they take the taste of another for their guide, than when they rely on their own.—"*Velles eum suo ingenio dixisse, alieno judicio.*"*

* You commend the genius of the writer, but prefer, that it should be guided by another's taste, rather than by his own.

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But the man of taste, in the true use of the word, does not, like the mere critic of technical skill, only apply the rules of his art. Neither, in forming his decisions, does he bring every object of which he judges, to some favourite standard of excellence. Truth and nature are the models which he has studied, and he has found them alike in the objects of creation around him, in the scenes of real life, and in the creations of genius. Like Numa of old, he has his Egeria in the woods, and after holding high converse with this mysterious revealer of the secrets of nature, he comes forth to the world, and discloses, as if by inspiration, the principles of the empire of taste, and the laws of her dominion. To him belongs the prophetic eye of taste. He can not only decide with correctness on the scene spread out before him, but surveying the visions of his own mind, the scenes that exist only in the world of imagination, he can anticipate with unerring certainty their beauty and effect. There is also an unchanging uniformity in the decisions of philosophical taste. On this principle Quinctilian has said, "*Ille se profecisse sciat, cui Cicero valde placebit.*"* On this principle, Homer, and Virgil, and Demosthenes, and Cicero have been admired, wherever they have been known. Here also is the only foundation of hope to the aspirant after literary immortality.

The Fine Arts are so closely connected with the subject of taste, that I subjoin to this chapter a short account of what is meant by them.

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* Whoever can discern the excellencies of Cicero, may hence learn, that he has himself made proficiency as an orator.

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The Fine, Elegant, or Polite Arts, for these epithets are synonymous, are so called in distinction from the Useful Arts. The former are designed to please; the latter aim at the supply of human wants. It is true, that works in the useful arts may be so constructed as to please, at the same time that they subserve our necessities. And on the other hand, works that please, and that are designed to please, may be useful. Hence it may be difficult in regard to some productions in the arts, to say to which they belong, the Useful, or the Elegant; still there is ground for the distinction that has been made, and according to the design, to please, or to be useful, we say that some arts are elegant and others useful.

Of the Fine Arts, some are imitative, and others symbolical. Some exhibit an exact representation of the object or scene they would present before the mind; such are Painting and Sculpture. These are called imitative fine arts. Others make use of signs which have been agreed upon among men for the representation of objects; such are Music and Poetry. These, in distinction from the former, may be called symbolical fine arts.

It has been stated, that the design of works in the fine arts is to please. This may be effected in two different ways. The object or scene brought before the mind, may be such as is suited to excite grateful emotions, or the mind may be pleased with the skill that is shewn in the execution of the work. In the former case, when the object or scene represented has no original in nature, but is a creation of

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the artist's mind, while we regard the object of the work, and notice how the different parts of it tend to the promotion of this object, we are said to observe the primary beauties, or the beauties of design. But whether the scene or object represented be an exact copy of some original in nature, or a creation of the artist's mind, if the attention be directed only to the skill shewn in the execution of the work, we are said to observe secondary beauties, or the beauties of execution.

The art of writing or composition, whether elegant or useful, is one of the symbolical arts. There is no exact imitation of what is designed to be brought before the mind, but objects and scenes are represented by words as symbols. This must evidently increase the difficulty of the artist, or writer; for though he may have in his own mind distinct views of what is fitted to excite emotions of taste, and may connect these views with the signs which he uses, yet, if the reader do not attach the same views to the signs used, they will fail to excite in his mind the emotions designed to be produced. Much then will depend upon the skill with which these signs are used, and hence it is, that in literary productions so much attention is paid with the design of pleasing, to the execution of the work.

We may here also see a reason, why the beauties of design in literary productions may be said to be addressed to the imagination of the readers. As we have seen in the last chapter, it is by the aid of the imagination that the artist is able to design those objects and scenes which are the creations of his own mind.

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When these creations have been formed, they are represented by the signs that are used. Now it is obviously the imagination of the reader which must interpret these signs. They are designed to set his imagination in exercise, and to cause, it to present before the mind an object or scene similar to that which the writer had in his view when using these signs ; and if the reader have no powers of imagination, the attempt of the writer to place before him a scene fitted to excite emotions of pleasure, will be vain.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE NATURE AND OBJECTS OF A LITERARY TASTE.

Literature, as the word is most extensively used, includes whatever is committed to letters. In this sense of the term we sometimes speak of the literature of an age, and say, perhaps, that it is of a scientific kind. But a more appropriate use of the term may be learnt from considering it in a degree opposed to science. Used in this manner, it is evidently designed to include certain classes of writing, and may be still further considered as extending to the style of every class. Thus it would be said, that Poetry in its various branches, and fictitious writing in prose, whether of the narrative or descriptive kind, are included under the literature of a nation. We should say also, that Historical, Biographical, Epistolary and Essay writing, are included under the same head. We might

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also speak of a philosophical treatise as a literary production, viewing it simply in relation to its style. This distinction between science and literature evidently has its foundation in the manner in which the work of a writer is regarded. If viewed as designed to elucidate and establish principles in any branch of knowledge, and to give exercise to the reasoning powers, it is science. But if regarded simply as the record of knowledge, or a mode of exhibiting objects and scenes to the mind, it is literature.

From this definition of literature, the nature and office of a literary taste may be seen. As taste in general has been defined, judgment of what is fitted to excite emotions of beauty, grandeur and sublimity, founded on the experience of past emotions; so a literary taste may be defined, as judgment of whatever of a literary nature is designed to produce emotions of beauty, grandeur and sublimity, founded on the experience of past emotions. Now we have seen, that writings of any class, when regarded as records of knowledge, or modes of exhibiting objects and scenes to the mind, are included under the head of literature Evidently then, whatever fitted to excite emotions of beauty, grandeur or sublimity, is found in this mode of recording knowledge, and exhibiting objects and scenes, will receive the attention of a literary taste, and this, whether these writings are ultimately designed to give pleasure or instruction.

What has here been said, is evidently in agreement with the distinction which is made between different kinds of taste, according as a judgment is pass-

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ed on works in the different fine arts. The same object or scene might be represented by the writer and painter, and though in judging of this object or scene as one fitted to excite an emotion of beauty, we should call the judgment, which is passed, taste ; yet it would be only in judging of the object or scene, as represented by the writer or the painter, that we should speak of a literary taste or of a taste for painting. That this distinction may be more clearly seen, and the foundation on which it rests more fully understood, some illustrations will be given.

The Sketch Book of Irving, is made up of narratives and descriptions of objects and scenes for the most part fictitious. How far is this work, and are others of a similar kind, objects of the attention of a literary taste? It will at once be said, that since it is the ultimate design of the writer to exhibit what is fitted to excite emotions of beauty, it is taste which must judge of what is presented with this view. But it should be remembered, that taste as thus exercised is not literary taste. So far, the Sketch Book resembles a collection of paintings, which represent objects and scenes fitted to excite emotions of beauty, and there is no more propriety in speaking of the judgment passed on what is thus represented by letters as literary taste, than in calling the judgment of the same scenes and objects when represented by the painter, literary taste. But let the attention be directed to the mode of exhibiting these objects and scenes, as they are brought before our view in the Sketch Book, and here is opportunity for the exercise of a

literary taste. And since it is a principal design of works of this class, to excite emotions of beauty by the mode of exhibiting what is presented before the view of the readers, such productions become in a high degree objects of the attention of a literary taste.

Let now the same inquiry be made respecting the Biography of Fisher Ames by President Kirkland. The ultimate design of this work is to give us knowledge, to inform us of the events in the life and of the character of an illustrious individual. No one will pretend, that it is the province of literary taste to judge of the fidelity with which the account is given, whether it places before us a just view of the individual described. But though the ultimate design of this work is to convey knowledge, it is still the purpose of the writer, to convey this knowledge in a manner which may afford pleasure to the reader. Hence the illustrations and allusions that he introduces, and the various ornaments of his style. From this example then we learn, how far works of this class, and others similar in their nature, come under the cognizance of literary taste. Though they convey knowledge, it is in a manner designed to excite emotions of beauty, and of their success in these attempts to afford pleasure, literary taste must judge.

The proposed inquiry might be extended to writings of a philosophical kind. In some of these, as in Brown's Philosophy of the Human Mind, there is much for the exercise of a literary taste. In others, as in Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, there is comparatively little. The conveying of his

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thoughts by letters is with the latter an useful art, and there is no attempt to make use of it with the design of giving pleasure, distinct from the conveyance of valuable knowledge.

If the account, which has now been given of literary taste in distinction from taste in general, be correct, it may be seen, what, with the view of the improvement of a literary taste, should be objects of attention in works on Rhetoric. Such evidently are all attempts of the writer to represent objects in a manner suited to excite emotions of taste, including illustrations, allusions, and the various ornaments of style. In the remaining part of this chapter, therefore, the nature of all attempts of this kind will be considered, and such directions and cautions given, as may aid in their correct use, and consequently tend to the improvement of a literary taste.

The attempts to please which are here referred to, are founded on different principles in the nature of man. It will therefore be of advantage, before entering on the examination of these attempts, to state the most prominent of these principles, and these are inferred from the following examples of description.

Example 1. The following description of the rising sun is taken from one of Gray's Letters.

I set out one morning before five o'clock, the moon shining through a dark and misty autumnal air, and got to the sea-coast, time to be at the sun's levee. I saw the clouds and dark vapours open gradually to the right and left, rolling over one another in great smoky wreaths, and the tide (as it flowed in on the sands) first whiten-

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ing, and then slightly tinged with gold and bluê, and all at once a little line of insufferable brightness, that before I can write these five words is grown to half an orb, and now to a whole one too glorious to be distinctly seen.

This is intended to be an exact representation of a scene in nature. The writer in looking upon the original had felt emotions of grandeur, and he sought to give such a representation of it, as might excite similar emotions in the mind of his friend, to whom this letter was addressed. Should it now be asked, on what principle in the nature of man does the representation of this scene excite an emotion of grandeur, it may be answered, on the original tendency of the mind to be pleased in view of certain objects and scenes. The same also is true in reference to those representations, which are fitted to excite emotions of beauty or sublimity. From this statement then we may learn, that all illustrations, allusions, or ornaments of style of any kind, which bring up before the mind such objects and scenes, as the mind from an original tendency regards with an emotion of beauty, grandeur or sublimity, will, if rightly introduced, be grateful.

Example 2. The following description of Spring is from the Sketch Book.

It was inspiring and animating to witness the first awakening of Spring; to feel its warm breath stealing over the senses; to see the moist mellow earth beginning to put forth the green sprout and tender blade; and the trees and shrubs, in their reviving tints and bursting buds, giving promise of returning foliage and flower. The cold snow-drop, that little borderer on the skirts

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of winter, was to be seen with its chaste white blossoms in the small gardens before the cottages. The bleating of the new-born lambs was faintly heard from the fields. The sparrow twittered about the thatched eaves and budding hedges; the robin threw a livelier note into his late querulous wintry strain; and the lark, springing from the reeking bosom of the meadow, towered away into the fleecy cloud, pouring forth torrents of melody.

This, like the preceding example, is a description of natural scenery, but it is not like that a representation of some particular scene. We are not to suppose, that the writer has stood on the favored spot, where all the circumstances here mentioned have come within his observation. It is a scene which has no original in nature, and is a creation of the author's mind. Should it here be asked, why it is that what is thus represented is regarded with pleasure, it may be answered, partly because of the original tendency of the mind to be pleased with the objects here brought before its view, and partly because these objects are associated with thoughts and feelings that are grateful. This proneness of the mind to associate its ideas, may then be mentioned as a second principle, on which attempts to please are founded. Whenever a writer can contrive by his mode of exhibiting objects, to throw around them on the principle of association, an interest which they do not in themselves possess, it is an attempt, which if rightly made, good literary taste will approve.

Example 3. The following description of the anxious merchant is from Shakspeare.

The wind cooling my broth,

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Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
I should not see the sandy hour glass run,
But I should think of shallows and of flats,
And see my wealthy Andrew docked in sand,
Vailing her high top lower than her ribs,
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church,
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks?
Which touching my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all the spices to the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
And in a word, but now worth this,
And now worth nothing.

The state of feeling here exhibited is not one fitted to excite emotions of beauty or sublimity, either from any original tendencies of the mind, or from any associated thoughts or feelings. Still the description pleases us. Upon enquiring for the reason of the pleasure which is given to us, we learn, that it is because the mind is gratified with a proneness to trace out unexpected resemblances. The discovery of unlooked for relations between objects, especially of the relation of resemblance, is ever grateful. Here then is a new principle on which attempts to please are founded. Whenever a writer, in the communication of his thoughts, or in his representation of objects, leads the mind to trace out unexpected relations, it is an attempt on his part to please, which, if rightly introduced, is approved by literary taste.

Example 4. The following description of Care is from Cowper's imitation of Horace.

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Care follows hard, and soon o'ertakes
The well rigged ship, the warlike steed;
Her destined quarry ne'er forsakes,
Not the wind flies with half the speed.

This example is introduced to bring to view another principle, to which the writer often adresses himself with the design of exciting an emotion of taste. The principle referred to is the fondness for life and animated objects, in preference to those which are inanimate. It is to qualify this fondness, that the writer here represents that which has existence only in the mind, as having the properties and exhibiting the actions of a real and animated being. From this example then, the inference may be drawn, that a writer may often give pleasure to his readers, in a manner approved by literary taste, when in the conveyance of his thoughts, or in his representation of objects, he gives to inanimate objects, or such as have an existence only in the mind, the properties of animated beings.

Example 5. The following description of the rivers and forests of America is from the Forest Sanctuary.

Mighty rivers! ye that meet the main
As deep meets deep; and forests, whose dim shade
The flood's voice and the wind's by spells pervade.

The objects here described are such as are fitted to excite an emotion of grandeur. But it is believed, that much of the admiration felt in reading this short description, arises from the manner in which the objects are represented. But few circumstances are

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selected, and these are such as are most prominent. The writer, like an able painter, effects his object by a few bold strokes. Here then is another principle on which attempts to excite emotions of taste are often founded, and the writer, who by his illustrations or allusions, or by any manner of representing objects, places before his readers distinct and striking views of what he communicates, may hope in this way to give pleasure, and receive the approbation of literary taste.

Example 6. The following description of a country inn is from Goldsmith's Deserted Village.

Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlour splendours of that festive place;
The white washed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnished clock that ticked behind the door;
The chest, contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose;
The hearth, except when winter chilled the day,
With aspin boughs, and flowers and fennel gay;
While broken teacups, wisely kept for show,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.

In examining this description, the mind is struck with the fitness of the several parts. In the selection of circumstances, there is an evident reference to the character of the beholder. He is a man of refinement, and his imagination "*stoops* to trace—the *parlour* splendours of this festive place." Hence too the mention of the "white washed wall,"—the "nicely sanded floor,"—the "varnished clock,"—the "tea cups

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kept for show." There is also a consistency in the whole picture. All the parts are in agreement with each other, and tend to the design of the writer. But besides this fitness and agreement of the several parts, there is a justness and truth in the scene itself, whether real or imaginary, which commends the description to the mind of every one.

This example then brings to view another principle in the nature of man, on which attempts to please are founded. It is an approbation of what is often called a fitness of things, or a truth to nature. And wherever the skill and ingenuity of the writer enable him to convey his thoughts and views, in a manner which exhibits to a high degree this fitness and truth, he may hope to excite an emotion of beauty, and to receive the approbation of a refined literary taste.

In looking back on the examples of description that have been stated, it will be seen, that the attempts of writers to excite emotions of taste by the manner in which they convey their thoughts and represent objects, are founded on the following principles in the nature of man—an original tendency of the mind to regard certain objects and scenes with emotions of beauty, grandeur and sublimity—associated thoughts and feelings—a fondness of the mind for tracing unexpected relations between the objects of its thoughts, especially the relation of resemblance—a proneness to be pleased with life and animated beings in preference to inanimate objects—a love of distinctness and vividness in our views—an approbation of fitness in things, or of truth to nature.

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Of the attempts to please founded on these principles, some are of more frequent occurrence than others. Such are Similies, Metaphors, Allusions, Personifications, Apostrophes, Hyperboles, and some others. These therefore, with a view to the improvement of literary taste, will now be examined. I begin with the Simile or formal Comparison.

In the SIMILE or FORMAL COMPARISON the writer places two different objects before the mind, and traces out the resemblance between them. The principle on which this attempt to please is founded, is the fondness of the mind for discerning unexpected relations. But in many instances where the Comparison is used, there is evidently a design to gratify other propensities of the mind. It may be the effect of the Comparison, to give distinctness and vividness to the view, or there may be a peculiar fitness in the illustration it affords. The object too, to which the resemblance is traced, may be one suited to excite emotions of beauty, grandeur or sublimity; or it may be an object, with which thoughts and feelings that are grateful, are associated. That such is the nature of the Comparison may be learnt from the following examples, in the examination of which such rules and cautions will be given, as may aid the writer in attempts of this kind to excite emotions of taste.

EXAMPLE 1.—The Allegro and Penseroso of Milton differ from other poems, as ottar of roses differs from ordinary rose water, the close-packed essence, from the thin diluted mixture.

This Comparison is happily illustrative. It is de-

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signed to exhibit the superior excellence of the poems mentioned, in comparison with others; and this design is fully answered. The object to which the resemblance is traced, is one regarded with indifference, so that the pleasure we derive from the comparison, separate from the skill discovered in the clear exhibition of the author's thought, results from our discovery of an unexpected resemblance. Suppose the writer had said, that these poems of Milton differ from other poems, as the essays of Bacon differ from common Newspaper essays. This comparison might have aided the understanding, but the man of taste does not regard it with the same pleasure, as he does that in the example as first stated. The resemblance between poems and another class of literary productions is so obvious, that the mind derives but little pleasure from having it pointed out to its view. Hence then we infer the direction, that in Comparisons the resemblance traced out should not be too obvious.

EXAMPLE 2.—The minds of the aged are like the tombs to which they are approaching; where, though the brass and the marble remain, yet the inscriptions are effaced by time, and the imagery has mouldered away.

This beautiful passage is introduced to shew, that it is a trait of a good Comparison, that the object, to which a resemblance is traced, be naturally suggested. We say that the object is in this case suggested naturally, because the transition is easy from the minds of the aged to the tombs, to which they are approaching. The image brought to our view is in con-

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sonance with the feelings, which the thought to be illustrated had excited. Suppose now, that the object of resemblance, instead of mouldering tombs, had been the canvass on which images had been drawn in fading colours. This would have been illustrative, but what man of taste would not say, that the beauty of the Comparison is impaired. While then, as before stated, we guard against drawing our Comparisons from objects, to which the resemblance is too close, it should be remembered, that it heightens the beauty of the Comparison, to discover that the object is naturally suggested. This is but another form of the direction, that the object of resemblance be suited to the subject and occasion.

Example 3.—The style of Canning is like the convex mirror, which scatters every ray of light which falls upon it, and shines and sparkles in whatever position it is viewed ; that of Brougham is like the concave speculum, scattering no indiscriminate radiance, but having its light concentrated into one intense and tremendous focus.

It is one design of the Comparison to increase the distinctness of our views, and for this purpose the object of resemblance should always be more familiarly known, or such as to be more distinctly conceived by us, than the object to be illustrated. In the example given, an object of thought is compared to an object of sense, and since objects of sense are generally more distinct to the mind than objects of thought, the effect of the comparison is favourable. Hence, in good illustrative Comparisons it will generally be the

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case, that when objects of thought and sense are brought to view, the former is illustrated by the latter. In those exceptions to this principle which strike us favourably, some reason may generally be assigned, as in the following example. Scott describing Loch Katrine says,

The mountain shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to fancy's eye.

In this instance it may be said, that our consciousness of the uncertainty of those future joys which fancy presents, is so strong, that our conceptions of the wavering of the mountain shadows on the lake, is aided by the comparison.

In determining whether an object be familiarly known, regard must be had to those who are addressed. In a production on a literary subject, addressed to literary men, it would be proper to bring to view objects of resemblance, which should not be referred to in writings addressed to children, or to the unlearned. The object of resemblance in the example we are now considering, is sufficiently familiar to all who are capable of understanding the production in which it is found, and this is all that is required.

EXAMPLE 4.—There are subjects which as little grow clearer by the comparison of many opinions in respect to them, as the waters of a turbid lake grow clearer, by being frequently dashed together; when all that can be effected by the agitation is, to darken them the more. In such cases, the plan most prudent is, to let the waters rest, before we attempt to discover what is at the bottom.

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This is what is called an analogical Comparison, and if analysed, it will be found to contain an argument from analogy. We all know, that to discern what is at the bottom of troubled water, we must let it rest, and reasoning analogically, we are led to the conclusion, that by suffering agitated questions to rest, we may hope to discern truth at the bottom. Comparisons of this kind strike us forcibly, and no doubt part of the pleasure we derive from them, arises from the skill with which they are conducted.

Example 5.—The poetry of Milton, exhibiting the most sublime conceptions and elevated language, intermingled with passages of uncommon delicacy of thought and beauty of expression, reminds us of the miracles of Alpine scenery. Nooks and dells, beautiful as fairy land, are embosomed in its most rugged and gigantic elevations. The roses and myrtles bloom unchilled on the verge of the avalanche.

This Comparison every man of taste will be ready to admire. It is happily illustrative. The object of resemblance is not too obvious, is familiarly known, is distinctly conceived and in the elevated state of mind, produced by the reading of Milton's works, is naturally suggested. But there are two traits of the Comparison, which are sometimes found, that have not yet been mentioned. The first is, that it brings before the mind an object or scene, which is fitted to excite an emotion of beauty, or grandeur, or sublimity. This must evidently increase our admiration of the Comparison; for besides the pleasure de-

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rived from our discovery of skill and of an unexpected resemblance, and from the increased distinctness of our view, we have that brought before the mind, which in itself, separate from all regard to the comparison, is looked upon with pleasure. This is evidently the case in the example we are considering. Who can look upon the miracles of Alpine scenery, and feel no emotion of sublimity. The other trait of this comparison which I would mention, is the effect which it has in magnifying the thought that is illustrated. In the example before us, the thought which is illustrated is noble, but how much is it elevated by the resemblance which is traced to a sublime scene in Nature. The word *magnifying* is used, because, whatever be the nature of the thought, its effect on the mind is increased by the comparison. If the thought be of a tender nature, the comparison will cause the soft emotions to be more deeply felt,—if it be of a satirical or ridiculous kind, the comparison will be such as to give greater force to the shaft. With the view of more fully illustrating this magnifying quality of the Comparison, I introduce another example. It is from Irving's description of the effect of the disappointment of woman's love.

She is like some tender tree, the pride and beauty of the grove ; graceful in its form, bright in its foliage, but with the worm preying at its heart. We find it suddenly withering, when it should be most fresh and luxuriant. We see it drooping its branches to the earth, and shedding leaf by leaf; until, wasted and perished away, it falls even in the stillness of the forest ; and as we muse over the beautiful ruin, we strive in vain to recollect the

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blast or thunderbolt that could have smitten it with decay.

In dwelling on the several circumstances mentioned in this Comparison, we discern a scene before us of the same nature as to its effect on the mind, as that to be illustrated; and while we view it, our commiseration of the wretchedness of disappointed love is increased.

From these examples it has been inferred, 1. That the resemblance brought to view by the Comparison should not be too obvious. 2. That it should be naturally suggested, or such as is suited to the subject and occasion. 3. That the object to which the resemblance is traced should be one familiarly known.

We have seen also, that the value of a Comparison may be increased, from its implying an argument from analogy,—from its bringing before the mind an object or scene in itself fitted to excite an emotion of taste, and from its heightening the effect of that which is illustrated. From the consideration of the Formal Comparison, I proceed to the Implied Comparison or Metaphor.

Let us suppose, that a writer wishes to shew his readers, how soon the effect of sorrow on the minds of the young is done away. While this thought has possession of the mind, imagination brings up to his view a young and vigorous tree, in the bark of which an incision has been made, but the wound, from the rapidity of the growth of the tree, is fast closing over. The resemblance between the thought in his mind and the object thus presented, his taste approves as illustrative and striking, and he wishes to place it before the view of others. The most obvious method

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of doing this is as follows. "As the wound made in the bark of the young and healthy tree, soon closes over, so sorrows in the minds of the young, are but of short duration." By this formal Comparison, the object of the writer would be effected. His readers would perceive the resemblance, and their good taste would approve this attempt to aid the distinctness of their view. But let us suppose, that instead of this formal Comparison he expresses himself as follows. "What are the sorrows of the young! Their growing minds soon close above the wound." This expression brings before the mind the same objects as are brought by the comparison; the same resemblance is traced, and the same aid is given to the distinctness of our view. But the resemblance, instead of being distinctly stated, is implied. Upon reading the passage, it at once occurs to us, that some of the words used are applied to objects, to which they are not usually applied. We are not wont to speak of the mind as growing, and of the wounds of the mind as closing over. From this unusual application of words, the imagination is set in action, and brings up to view the resemblance, just as the writer designed it should be seen. This then, is what is called an IMPLIED COMPARISON or a METAPHOR.

So far as the Comparison and Metaphor are the same, it is unnecessary to repeat the principles and rules stated with reference to the former, since they apply alike to both. But in thus implying a resemblance by the unusual application of language, there is an exertion of skill, which is not found in its

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more formal statement. There is also need of cautions which are not required in the use of the Comparison. Some happy instances of the Metaphor will therefore be pointed out, and such cautions given, as may guard us from faults in the unusual application of language.

EXAMPLE 1.—She had been the pupil of the village pastor, the favorite lamb of his little flock.

The latter part of this sentence is a metaphor. We are at once aware, that the fair maiden here referred to, is not meant to be called a lamb of the flock in the literal application of the words. The implied comparison is readily suggested. The imagination brings before us the lamb of a little flock, and we think of the tenderness and care with which it is nurtured, and the strong interest which from its youth and simplicity it excites; and we trace out the resemblance to this pupil of the village pastor. We are pleased with the comparison as one easily and naturally suggested, as illustrative, and bringing before the mind an object which it regards with an emotion of beauty

Example 2. Burke in his description of Atheists says,

They abhor the author of their being. He never presents himself to their thoughts, but to menace and alarm them. They cannot strike the sun out of the Heavens, but they are able to raise a smouldering smoke that obscures him from their eyes.

From the connexion, we learn, that this last sentence is not meant to convey what is expressed by the

words, as they are usually applied. This leads us to enquire, in what way they are designed to be understood, and imagination at once traces out a resemblance between the sun in the heavens, and that glorious Being, who shines forth in the brightness of his perfections; and we continue to trace the resemblance between the attempt of mortals, to obscure the brightness of the sun to their own view by raising a smouldering smoke, and the attempt of Atheists, to obscure to their own minds, the existence of the Deity by their darkening speculations. As this is a representation of objects of thought by objects of sense, the effect in giving increased distinctness of view is favorable.

Example 3. Irving while wandering amidst the silent and gloomy scenes of Westminster Abbey, hears the sound of busy existence without. He thus describes the effect on his feelings.

The contrast is striking; and it has a strange effect, thus to hear the surges of active life hurrying along and beating against the very walls of the sepulchre.

"The surges hurrying along and beating," at once suggests to the imagination the comparison here implied, and there is a sublime emotion which takes possession of the mind, as the resemblance is traced.

These examples are sufficient fully to shew the nature of the Metaphor, or implied Comparison. With the design of exhibiting the skill which is requisite when language is thus used figuratively, a few more examples will now be given.

Example 4. Of Mr. Roscoe it is said in the Sketch Book,

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He found the tide of wealth flowing merely in the channels of traffick; he has diverted from it invigorating rills to refresh the gardens of literature.

This is an example of a well supported metaphor. If we notice the different words, by the unusual application of which the metaphor is here implied, we shall find, that they are in agreement with each other, and all tend to aid the imagination in bringing up the object of comparison, and tracing out the resemblance. We have before our view the "tide flowing in channels," and then the "rills are diverted to refresh the gardens." In saying that these words are in agreement with each other, reference is had to the use of them in their common application, and this is necessary, that the metaphor be well supported. Let us suppose, that the writer had said, "He found the tide of wealth flowing merely in the channels of traffick, and took out large sums to support and encourage literature." We might in this case have made out his meaning, but what confusion is there in the attempt of the imagination to trace out the comparison which is implied. The reason of this confusion is obvious. In the former part of the sentence, the words are applied figuratively, and in the latter literally. Hence then we derive the following rule. That in metaphors we guard against uniting together language applied figuratively and literally.

Example 5. A writer in the Edinburgh Review, with the design of shewing in what way the early state of society is favourable to poetical excellence. says,

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Poetry produces an illusion on the eye of the mind, as a magic lantern produces an illusion on the eye of the body. And as a magic lantern acts best in a dark room, poetry effects its purpose best in a dark age. As the light of knowledge breaks in upon its exhibitions, as the outlines of certainty become more and more definite, and the shades of probability more and more distinct, the lines and lineaments of the phantoms which it calls up, grow fainter and fainter.

This example commences with a formal comparison, and afterwards changes into a metaphor. It is introduced to shew the admirable skill which is displayed in the application of words. The "breaking in of light," the "outlines becoming more and more definite," the "shades more and more distinct," and the "lines and lineaments of the phantoms growing fainter and fainter," are expressions, which may be literally applied to the objects presented by the magic lantern, and at the same time, as applied by the imagination to the creations of poetry, they present a distinct and complete view. There can be no doubt, that part of the pleasure derived from reading this passage, results from the skill displayed in this happy application of language, continued as it is through several clauses. Suppose that the latter part of this example had read, "As the light of knowledge breaks in upon its exhibitions, as the outlines of certainty become more and more definite, as the weight of probability increases, the lines and lineaments of the phantoms which it calls up grow fainter and fainter." Here would be what is called a confusion of metaphor. The imagination in its attempt to trace out the resemblance, and bring a

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distinct image before the mind, when it came to the clause—"the increasing weight of probability," would be led astray, and the whole image would be confused. This then suggests the caution, that in continued metaphors, we should guard against applying words in such a manner, as to bring up two or more different resemblances, and thus produce confusion in the view presented by the imagination.

Example 6. The same writer, in describing the sophistry and unfair statements of those, who tell us to judge of Civil Liberty from the outrages and violent acts which attend revolutions, says,

> It is just at this crisis of revolution that its enemies love to exhibit it. They pull down the scaffolding from the half finished edifice; they point to the flying dust, the falling bricks, the comfortless rooms, the frightful irregularity of the whole appearance; and then ask in scorn, where the promised splendour and comfort is to be found.

This example is different from the preceding. It is only in the first part of it, that the words are designed to be figuratively applied to the system of government, by which civil liberty is secured. We may speak of civil government as an edifice, and of the helps used in rearing it, as scaffolding. But if we try to trace out that which may correspond to the flying dust, the falling bricks, the comfortless rooms, and other circumstances mentioned, it is without success. Still the comparison striks us favourably, for though the imagination cannot trace out the particulars, it is aided in bringing to the mind a general view of the ef-

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fect. Let us now suppose that the comparison had read, "They pull down the scaffolding from the half finished edifice, they point to the dust of dispute, the falling bricks of contention, the comfortless rooms of an exhausted treasury, the frightful irregularity of the whole appearance of government; and then ask in scorn, where the promised splendour and comfort is to be found." This would have been pursuing the metaphor too far; it would have been called forced, and good taste would condemn it. Hence then we derive the caution, not to pursue the figurative application of language too far.

Example 7. The celebrated metaphor of Burke, in which he describes the fall from power of Lord Chatham, and the rise of Clarles Townsend, unites in it all the excellencies of the most perfect metaphor.

Even then, before this splendid orb was entirely set, and while the western horizon was in a blaze with his descending glory, on the opposite quarter of the heavens arose another luminary, and for his hour became lord of the ascendant.

In this fine passage, the resemblance implied is such as to be highly illustrative; there is a grandeur in the object presented which elevates the mind, and the language in its figurative application, is skilfully and happily managed.

In the examples of the Metaphor which have now been given, it has been shewn, that it is in its nature the same as the Comparison—that it differs from it, in that the resemblance is not formally stated, but sim-

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ply implied—that the mode of implying it is by the application of language in an unusual manner, which is called applying it figuratively, and that several cautions are to be observed in this figurative application of words.

It has been common to mark a distinction between the Metaphor and the Allegory, the latter being defined a continued metaphor. But as both are founded on the same principles, and require the same cautions and directions in their use, the distinction is regarded as one of little practical importance.

There is a mode of illustration and embellishment, often found in the productions of good writers, which though of the nature of the comparison, is worthy of separate attention. I refer to what is included under the name of ALLUSIONS. It will at once be seen, that though they differ in form from the comparison, they are of the same nature, and their introduction depends on similar principles. Like comparisons they are illustrative, and give us pleasure from the discovery of unexpected resemblances, or coincidences of thought, or expression. If too the comparison when drawn from some fair scene in nature, or some finished work of art, gives us pleasure by directing the mind to that which causes a grateful emotion, the same is true of the allusion. Our attention is directed to some classical writer, or to some well known popular writer of the day, or to some recent event—the imagination is set in exercise—grateful associations are excited, and the effect is happy. Some examples of the allusion will now be given.

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Example 1. Burke in his character of Lord Chatham, has the following passage.

His is a great and celebrated name; a name which keeps the name of this country respectable over every other on the globe. It may be truly called,

Clarum et venerabile nomen
Gentibus, et multum nostræ quod proderit urbi.

This is called a classical allusion; to those who have classical associations, such allusions are always pleasing. They are connected with the days of our youth, and with scenes, the memory of which is grateful to us. They refer us also to those pages, where our tastes have been formed, and our minds disciplined and furnished with knowledge.

It will at once occur, that allusions in the form of the example given, should never be made, except in productions which are primarily addressed to those who are familiar with the language of the quotation. Should a preacher of the present day imitate in this respect the sermons of Jeremy Taylor, he would justly incur the charge of pedantry. But in addresses to deliberative assemblies, or to literary associations, or on public national celebrations, where classical scholars are found, allusions of this kind may occasionally be introduced with a happy effect.

Example 2. In some instances of classical allusions, there is a reference to facts found in classical writers, without a quotation in a foreign language. Of this an example is given by Burke in his speech on the Carnatic war.

Every day you are fatigued and disgusted with this

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cant, the Carnatic is a country that will soon recover, and become instantly as prosperous as ever. They think they are talking to innocents who believe that by the sowing of dragon's teeth, men may come up ready grown and ready armed.

In classical allusions of this form, the writer is not confined within so narrow limits, as in those of the preceding. Still care should be had, that what is thus alluded to should be generally known. Miss H. Moore is a writer, who has not sufficiently observed this caution. It is not unfrequent to find classical allusions in her writings, of which even to the classical student it is no shame to be ignorant.

Example 3. The next example is closely allied to those already given. A writer in the Edinburgh Review in his description of the melancholy of Dante says,

It was not the effect of external circumstances. It was from within. It turned every consolation and every pleasure into its own nature. It resembled that noxious Sardinian soil, of which the intense bitterness is said to have been perceptible, even in its honey.

This is an historical allusion. In most instances of this kind the design is to illustrate. The caution then is peculiarly necessary, that in historical allusions the facts alluded to be such as are generally known. Otherwise such allusions will only throw a deeper shade on those objects, which they were designed to illuminate.

Example 4. There are some instances in which historical allusions are designed not only to illustrate,

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but to awaken grateful emotions. Such is the following from Everett's Address.

Lincoln, and Greene, and Knox, and Hamilton, are gone; the heroes of Saratoga and Yorktown have fallen before the only foe they could not meet.

Historical allusions of this kind, which bring to view important events or characters in the history of a nation, are ever grateful to the people of that nation. Hence they are so often found in addressess on occasions of national celebrations, and serve to gratify the pride of national feeling. One caution may well be given respecting allusions of this kind—that they be not worn out, or such as are too commonly made.

Example 5. The following is an English classical allusion. Milton, who was a contemporary with Cromwell, was a zealous republican. He wrote much and ably against the monarchical and aristocratical institutions of his time; and in so doing condemned many of those elegant amusements which were congenial to his own feelings.

He sacrifices his private tastes and feelings, that he might do what he considered his duty to mankind. It is the very struggle of the noble Othello. His heart relents, but his hand is firm. He does nought in hate, but all in honour. He kisses the beautiful deceiver before he destroys her.

This allusion is to the Othello of Shakspeare; and such is the rank and antiquity of his writings, that allusions to passages found in them, are regarded much in the same manner as classical allusions. We have in fact our English classical writers, who have out-

lived their century, and who from their preeminence, may be supposed to be familiarly known by every English scholar. From such writers it is lawful to draw allusions as those whose works should be known, and such allusions, when happily introduced, will please us in the same manner and degree, as those derived from the ancient classics.

Example 6. The following example is from Irving, and is taken from his account of James, of Scotland, the "Royal Poet."

James is evidently worthy of being enrolled in that little constellation of remote, but never failing luminaries, who shine in the highest firmament of literature, and who, like morning stars, sang together at the bright dawning of British poetry.

This beautiful passage affords an example of a Scriptural allusion, and is highly pleasing. Allusions drawn from this source, will always be well understood, and often from their elevated nature, add much to the beauty of writings. But there is need of caution in their use.

With the example that has been given no fault can be found. It is rather to be commended as an embellishment. But too frequently is it the case, that the same innocency cannot be affirmed of allusions drawn from the same source. This remark is not meant to imply, that allusions should never be made to Scripture, except when the subject of discourse is of a serious or religious nature. It is enough that the subject be one of importance, that it have some dignity attached to it, and that there be in it nothing lu-

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dicrous or trifling. Let ludicrous or trifling associations be connected with a passage of Scripture, and whenever this passage meets our attention, even in our most sober hours, there will be danger that these associations will come with it, and exert an unfavourable influence on the state of our feelings. Besides, there is something which savours much of profanity in such allusions to Scripture; it shews, that that reverence is not felt for it, which, as God's word, it should command.

These remarks are intended to be applied with most strictness to the introduction of the language of Scripture. There may be instances, in which we may innocently make use, in the way of allusion, of historical facts found in Scripture, when there would at the same time be impropriety in introducing an expression from the same source. The reason of this distinction is obvious. Our associations with particular forms of expression are close and strong, with facts, much less so. There is more need of caution also, because the temptations in one case are much more frequent than in the other. From the antiquity of our translation of the Bible, there is often a quaintness in its expressions, and their introduction may give a point to some satirical remark, or furnish a striking form for some sally of wit. But we should beware. Scripture is a pure stream, flowing forth from the throne of God, and it should never be made to reflect the fantastic images of human folly.

In the productions of writers of taste, there are many allusions drawn from the literature of the times.

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When any literary production gains celebrity, it is supposed to be known to literary men; and allusions may be drawn from such writings without incurring the charge of obscurity, and often with a favourable effect. Such allusions form a kind of bond between literary men. They are the language of the fraternity, and one cause of the pleasure which they afford, is found in the complacency and pride which is felt in being able to understand them. It is unnecessary to give many examples of this class of allusions. Two only will be brought forward which furnish opportunity for some additional remark.

Example 7. The following passage is from Greenwood on the eternity of God.

A stone perhaps may tell some wanderer where we lie, when we came here, and when we went away; but even that will soon refuse to bear us record: "time's effacing fingers" will be busy on its surface, and at length will wear it smooth.

The quotation in this passage is from one of the popular poets of the day. The allusion to the admirable description, where it is originally found, will be perceived and relished by every man of taste who is familiar with the writings of Byron; and the pleasure with which the passage that has been cited will be read, is much greater, than if the same thought had been expressed without the allusion.

We have in this instance an example of a method often resorted to by writers in prose to embellish their productions. Poetry is the language of the imagination. Its aim is to please, and hence the happy in-

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troduction of poetical language, is justly considered an ornament of prose.

Example 8. As another example I quote the following passage.—A writer in describing the power of Milton in the use of language says,

His words are words of enchantment. Change the structure of the sentence, substitute one synonyme for another, and the whole effect is destroyed. The spell loses its power, and he who should hope to conjure with it, would find himself as much mistaken as Cassim in the Arabian Tale, when he cried, Open Wheat, Open Barley to the door, which obeyed no sound but Open Sesame.

Here the allusion is to one of the popular plays of the day, and hence it is understood, and is pleasing.

Example 9. The following example is from a review of the works of Milton. The author is stating the fact, that while in the time of the English rebellion, others were desirous only of reforming some prevalent abuses, it was Milton's aim to attain the freedom of the human mind—to deliver men from moral and intellectual slavery.

Milton was desirous that the people should think for themselves, as well as tax themselves, and be delivered from the dominion of prejudice, as well as from that of Charles. He knew, that those, who with the best intentions overlooked these schemes of reform, and contented themselves with pulling down the king and imprisoning the malignants, acted like the heedless brothers in his own poems, who, in their eagerness to disperse the train of the sorcerer, neglected the means of liberating the captive. They thought only of conquering, when they should have thought of disenchantiug.

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Oh ye mistook. Ye should have snatched the wand.
Without the rod reversed,
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the lady that sits there,
Bound in strong fetters, fixed and motionless.

To reverse this rod, to spell the charm backwards, to break the ties that bound a stupified people to the seat of enchantment, was the noble aim of Milton.

In this example, a striking passage selected from the works which the reviewer is examining, is used as an illustration,and the effect is good. The pleasure which it affords us, is similar to that derived from a sprightly turn in conversation. We all know, that it adds much to the point of a witty remark, when its author has founded it on an expression just dropped by another. There is a suddenness about it, which is an evidence that it is not premeditated, and which is pleasing to us. There is, without doubt, something of the same kind of pleasure, in meeting with allusions of the class to which the preceding example belongs.

Example 10. I shall give but one example more of the allusion, and that is worthy of notice from the manner of its introduction. It is sometimes the case, that a writer meets with a suitable object of allusion in the productions of some author, whose writings are either in a language unknown to most of his readers, or not of sufficient reputation to be regarded as classical. In such instances, the only way is, to state the fact or story, and then on this statement found the allusion. One caution in such cases should always be remembered. Be sure that the allusion is of sufficient

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importance to justify so formal an introduction. And if ever this is the case, it surely is so in the following example.

Ariosto tells a pretty story of a fairy, who, by some mysterious law of her nature, was condemned to appear at certain seasons in the form of a foul and poisonous snake. Those who injured her during this period of her disguise, were forever excluded from participation in the blessings she bestowed. But to those, who in spite of her loathsome aspect, pitied and protected her, she afterwards revealed herself in the beautiful and celestial form which was natural to her; accompanied their footsteps, granted all their wishes, filled their houses with wealth, made them happy in love and victorious in war. Such a spirit is Liberty. At times she takes the form of a hateful reptile. She grovels, she hisses, she stings. But woe to those who in disgust shall venture to crush her. And happy are those, who having dared to receive her in her degraded and frightful shape, shall at length be rewarded by her in the time of her beauty and glory.

In the arrangement of the preceding examples of allusion, reference is had to the division of our associations into Universal and Arbitrary, which has been made by intellectual philosophers. Classical allusions, whether to standard authors in our own or foreign languages, Historical allusions, and Scriptural allusions, come under the head of those of universal associations. Other instances are those of arbitrary associations. From noticing this distinction it may be seen, why, in the writings of our best authors—those who write with the hope of being read when other writers of the age are forgotten, allusions of the former class

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are much more frequent, than of the latter. The passing events of the day, and the ephemeral productions of the age, will soon be forgotten; and though an allusion to them may at first cast some light on the passages where they are found, at a later time, and in a different place, such allusions will only tend to darken what before they illuminated. Not so with allusions founded on associations that are universal. While the works from which they are derived go down to posterity, gathering new admiration in their progress, these allusions are understood, and constitute a bond of connexion between the literary men of different ages, being drawn from the same common storehouse of imagery and facts.

The Comparison, Metaphor, and Allusion, are founded on the fondness of the mind for tracing unexpected resemblances. There are other relations which give rise to other attempts to please. One thing is the cause of another, here is the relation of cause and effect. One thing is the symbol of another; here is the relation of the sign to the thing signified. We look on the goblet, and we think of the generous wine with which it is wont to be filled; here is the relation of the container to the thing contained. Again, one thing is part of another; here is the relation of a part to the whole. One thing is a species in relation to another which is its genus; here is the relation of the species to the genus.

The relations which have now been stated, are not often formally referred to with the design of illustration or ornament; but instances frequently occur, in

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which they are implied and suggested to the mind by the peculiar use of a word. The manner in which this is done, has been already shewn in the case of the Metaphor.

To give examples of the different tropes, or figures, founded on these several relations, would be of little practical advantage. Besides, in these instances, the writer does not found his attempts to please solely on the fondness of the mind for discovering unexpected relations. Most frequently it is his wish to increase the distinctness of the reader's view, or in some other way to excite an emotion of taste. Instead then of making these different figures, as the Metonomy, Synecdoche, Metalepsis and others, distinct objects of attention, I shall more fully explain the nature of the figurative use of language, and in another chapter, when treating of vivacity, as a quality of style, give examples of the most important of these figures.

A word is said to be used literally, when it is used in a manner, which is authorised by the general consent of those who speak and write with correctness the language, in which it is found. A word is used figuratively, when, though it retains its usual signification, it is applied in a manner different from its common application. When I speak of the pillar which supports the edifice, I use the word *pillar* literally, or as it is usually applied by those who speak the English language. If I say of a man, that he is the pillar of the state, I still use the word *pillar* in its common signification, as denoting that which firmly fixed gives a solid support, but I apply the word to an object differ-

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ent from those to which it is usually applied. Instead of a solid mass of wood, or stone, the object to which it is applied, is an intelligent being; and instead of supporting a material edifice, it is the support of the state. This then is an example of the figurative use of language.

From this account of the figurative use of words, it might be expected, that being often used in a manner different from their common literal use, the significations of this class of words would in time be subject to change. And this, in examining the history of a language, is often found to be the case. In our own language, there are many words, which were at first literally applied to material objects only, and figuratively used to denote those which are intellectual. Many of these have now altogether lost their original meaning, and retain only that derived from their figurative use. Who would now speak of the *apprehension of a chair*, or of the *ardour of his fire*? But such in their original signification, was the common use of these words. In other instances, where the signification of the word in its literal use has not become obsolete, the meaning derived from its figurative use is more readily suggested.

It may be said, if this change is progressive, and the meaning of a word as used figuratively, supersedes the original literal signification, how are we to determine in respect to a word thus changing, whether it be used figuratively or literally. The answer is this, that whenever a word of this class ceases to have any influence on the imagination, in leading it to trace out an unex-

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pected relation, it is no longer used figuratively, but its figurative meaning has become its literal.

A fondness for life and animated beings in preference to inanimate objects, has been stated as one of the principles in man, on which attempts to excite emotions of taste are founded. Whenever therefore a writer causes the imagination of his readers to regard inanimate objects, or such as have an existence in the mind only, as living and acting, or having the properties of a living being, such attempts, if authorized by the subject and occasion, are approved by literary taste. This is called PERSONIFICATION.

There are different ways in which the imagination is led to give life to inanimate objects. Sometimes it is by a direct address to them as listening, sometimes by a description of them as acting, and sometimes by merely ascribing to them the properties of intelligent or animated beings. Examples of these different methods will be given, accompanied with such remarks as may fully shew the nature of such attempts and the cautions to be observed in their use.

Example 1. The following much admired instance of Personification is from Milton. It is the language of Eve on leaving Paradise.

Must I leave thee, Paradise? thus leave
Thee, native soil, these happy walks and shades,
Fit haunts of Gods! where I had hoped to spend,
Quiet though sad, the respite of that day
That must be mortal to us both. O flowers,
That never will in other climates grow,
My early visitation, and my last

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At even, which I bred up with tender hand
From the first opening bud, and gave you names,
Who now shall rear you to the sun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount?

In this example, the garden with the different objects it contains, are addressed as having life and intelligence. Eve parts from them, as from friends with whom she had long been familiar, and whom she fondly loves. What is most prominent in all instances of this kind of personification is, that they result from strong emotion; and this suggests one important rule respecting them. Personifications of the bolder kind should never be introduced, except when there is strong excitement.

Personifications both of inanimate objects, and of such as have an existence only in the mind, are frequently found in the commencement of poetical effusions. The poet struck with them as objects of beauty, or grandeur, or sublimity, becomes highly excited, and breaks forth in an address to them, as if they could hear his strains, and receive his praises.

Example 2. The following example of this kind is from Akenside.

Indulgent Fancy! from the fruitful banks
Of Avon, whence thy rosy fingers cull
Fresh flowers and dews, to sprinkle on the turf
Where Shakspeare lies, be present.

In this example, there is a personification of a faculty of the mind—that which exists only as an object of thought or consciousness. Instances of this kind are common, and from their frequency do not ap-

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pear so bold, as those of inanimate material objects; but they are often justly regarded as happy attempts to excite emotions of taste. Like comparisons in which intellectual are illustrated by material things, they assist the mind in the distinctness of its views. They also often bring before the mind an object or scene, in the view of which, from some original tendency of the mind, or from some association, an emotion of beauty is excited. In the instance just stated, imagination causes a fair form to rise before us, whose occupation it is to "cull fresh flowers from the banks of rivers," and "sprinkle dews on poets' graves," and we regard the image presented with an emotion of beauty.

The most important caution to be observed in the introduction of Personifications of the kind we are considering is, that the object addressed be one of sufficient dignity and importance. Should a writer address his inkstand, or his paper, as beings of life and intelligence, the effect would be unfavourable.

It will be noticed, that in the examples of Personification which have been cited, inanimate objects and objects of thought are addressed as living agents. The writer calls upon them as beings that can hear and act. Examples will now be given, in which inanimate objects and objects of thought, are described as acting and possessing the qualities of living beings. These instances form a second class of Personifications, being less bold than those before stated.

Example 3. The following example is from Milton.

So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she eat.

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Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe
That all was lost.

In this example Earth, an inanimate material object, is described as feeling, and Nature, an object of thought, as acting. Though so high an excitement of the mind is not required to justify the introduction of a descriptive Personification, such as is here given, as is necessary to authorize a Personification of the preceding class, still that excitement must exist in a considerable degree. Had not the occasion been one of great importance, and the event one regarded with deep interest, the Personifications of the earth and of nature here found, would not be approved. But so important was the occasion, and so momentous the event, that the method of description here adopted, is in agreement with our excited feelings. Hence, then, the caution given in reference to the former class of Personifications, is applicable in some degree to this.

Instances, in which objects of thought are represented as acting and exhibiting the qualities of active and intelligent beings, are frequent. One principal design of such Personifications, as before remarked, is to aid the mind in the distinctness of its conceptions.

Example 4. The following example of this kind is from Hooker.

Of law, there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world. All things in heaven and earth do her homage; the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power. Both angels and men

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and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy.

No one can read this passage without a consciousness, that the personification gives a unity and distinctness to his conception of the nature and offices of law; and this advantage is in addition to the pleasure, which is felt in the view of the venerated form of an intelligent being.

In connexion with this example, one caution may be given, as applicable to descriptive Personifications. There should be consistency between the different parts; the language used throughout the whole description, should be such as can be applied to an active, intelligent being; and the traits of character ascribed to it, should harmonize with each other. This is admirably exemplified in the instance before us. An intelligent being may have her seat, she may utter her voice, she may receive homage, and be called a mother. The traits of character are also consistent. Well may she, whose resting place is the bosom of God, and whose voice is the harmony of the world, receive the homage of all things in heaven and earth, and be admired as the mother of peace and joy.

It may here be remarked, that Personifications are often found united with Metaphors. Of this, the following passage from Thompson is an example.

> The mountain thunders; and its sturdy sons
> Stoop to the bottom of the rocks they shade.

Here the trees are called the sons of the mountain. This will at once be recognised as the Metaphor, and

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it happily introduces the Personification, by which the trees are represented as stooping. That the author speaks of the trees as acting, and not of the sons, is evident from the latter part of the sentence, in which mention is made of the shade. Instances of this kind are frequent, and upon examination of them, it will generally be found, that they occur where inanimate objects are wont to have some motion imparted to them from an external cause, or where some other similar circumstance connected with them, gives ground for the Personification. This is seen in the following examples.

"Low the woods
Bow their hoar heads."
"The sky saddens with the gathered storm."
"the cherished fields
Put on their winter robe of purest white."

All these instances of Personification are evidently founded on a resemblance, between what is literally true of the object presented to our notice, and an imagined animated being. Hence such instances are said to partake both of the nature of the Metaphor and Personification. Personifications of this kind are naturally suggested, and do not imply so high a state of excitement as those before mentioned. Hence they are frequently found.

Instances, in which some of the properties of intelligent and animated beings are ascribed to inanimate objects, are very frequent, especially in poetical productions. Our language, from its philosophical distinction of gender, is well suited to personifications of

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this kind. We have only to apply to an object one of our pronouns, thus giving to it a gender, and it "becomes a thing of life." The same is also effected, by connecting, as a predicate, with an inanimate object, a verb, which in its received use implies life and action, or by joining to an inanimate object some epithet expressive of life. Thus, when we say of a ship, that she sails; of a book, that it speaks to us; or when we call the wind, the whispering wind, we afford examples of this class of Personification; instances of this kind of Personification are common and conduce much to the animation and beauty of writing.

On the principle, that the mind is pleased with animated beings in preference to those which are inanimate, a writer sometimes calls on the dead, or absent, as if living, or present. This is termed Apostrophe.

The following example is from Webster's Address on Bunker Hill.

Him! cut off by Providence in the hour of overwhelming anxiety and thick gloom; falling, ere he saw the star of his country rise; pouring out his generous blood, like water, before he knew whether it would fertilize a land of freedom or of bondage! how shall I struggle with the emotions that stifle the utterance of thy name! Our poor work may perish; but thine shall endure! This monument may moulder away; the solid ground it rests upon may sink down to a level with the sea; but thy memory shall not fail!

It will be observed in reading this passage, that the Orator, after speaking of the "first great Martyr in the cause of Independence" as of one absent or dead, suddenly changes the train of his thought, and addresses

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himself directly to the same personage as one present and listening. It is this sudden turn from one manner of speaking of a subject to another, that gives rise to the word Apostrophe, which etymologically signifies a breaking off, or turning from one object to another.

Attempts of this kind to excite emotions of taste are but seldom made. They are evidence of strong excitement, and are found in prose, only in high flights of oratory. In poetical writings, they are more frequent. The same cautions and directions may be applied to them as to Personifications of the bolder kind.

It may be remarked, that the word Apostrophe is often used in a more general signification, than that here ascribed to it. Thus we have in Byron an Apostrophe to the Ocean, and also to Mount Parnassus. All that is meant in this use of the word is, that the author turns himself to these objects with a direct address to them. So far as these instances come under the examination of literary taste, it is as examples of Personification of the bolder kind.

Writers under the influence of strong excitement, sometimes break forth in exaggerated and extravagant expressions, which will not bear the examination of common sense, and which, unless viewed as the language of passion, would be condemned by good taste as unnatural and inconsistent. Such expressions however are allowed as the language of passion, and to instances of this kind the name of Hyperbole is applied. But as such instances are of rare occurrence, and are not subject to rule, one example only will be given. It is extracted from the Siege of Valencia.

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Flow forth thou noble blood!
Bathe the land,
But there thou shalt not sink! our very air
Shall take thy colouring, and our loaded skies
O'er the infidel hang dark and ominous,
With battle hues of thee! And thy deep voice,
Rising above them to the judgment-seat
Shall call a burst of gathered vengeance down,
To sweep the oppressor from us! For thy wave
Hath made his guilt run o'er.

To call upon the blood of a youth to "bathe the land," or to speak of it as "tinging the skies," and "uttering a voice," is an extravagance, to be excused only on the ground of the wildness of passion; but when the character of the individual by whom these expressions are uttered, and the circumstances in which he was placed, are known, the language used is not only allowed but approved.

But there is another form of the Hyperbole, which comes more strictly under the cognizance of a literary tase. It is when a writer, with the design of producing a strong impression on the mind, and thus gratifying a fondness for distinct and vivid views of objects, exaggerates what he relates. Instances of this kind are frequent in common conversation; but such instances, from their frequency, lose their influence on the imagination, and are regarded as the common forms of speech. Of instances less common, a few examples will now be given. The following is from the Siege of Valencia.

A rescued land
Sent up a shout of victory from the field,

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That rocked her ancient mountains.

This is evidently exaggeration, and it is the language of an excited mind; but since the occasion authorizes this excitement, and the effect of the strong expression used, is to produce a clear and vivid conception of the event described, it is approved by good taste. It will be noticed in examining examples of this kind, that there is some apparent foundation for the exaggeration used. What is asserted does not at once strike the mind as improbable, though upon reflection it is seen to be impossible. Hence, when an exaggeration appears at first view both improbable and impossible, the effect is unfavourable. Such is the example given by Dr. Blair.

I found her on the floor
In all the storm of grief, yet beautiful,
Pouring out tears at such a lavish rate,
That were the world on fire, they might have drowned
The wrath of Heaven, and quenched the mighty ruin.

The following is from Milman's Belshazzar.

Oh maid! thou art so beauteous
That yon bright moon is rising, all in haste,
To gaze on thee.

This example evidently differs from the preceding, since it is rather the language of adulation than of passion. In the use of Hyperboles of this kind, much skill is necessary. They should appear to be naturally suggested, and not be too bold, nor pursued too far. This last caution is one of general application to all instances of exaggeration; for even to the extravagance of passion there is a limit, and if this limit be

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passed, the effect must be to disgust. What this limit is in any particular case, the good sense of every one must determine.

It has been my object in this chapter, to direct the attention of the student to those attempts to please by exciting emotions of taste, which are of most frequent occurrence. At the same time such cautions and directions have been given, as are of most practical importance. There are besides certain nameless graces which are the objects of the attention of literary taste. But these, except such as may be mentioned in describing the qualities of a good style, must be left to be pointed out by the instructer.

In concluding this chapter, I would recommend to the student the study of models of excellence in literature. The value of these models to the learner, and the manner in which the study of them tends to the improvement of a literary taste, may be inferred from what was said in a preceding chapter. It is not enough that the productions of good writers be read. They must be studied as models of style. Let the student in literature imitate in this respect the course pursued by the artist in the acquisition of skill in his profession. The painter does not rest satisfied with a single look at a fine picture. He emphatically studies it, both as to its design and execution. Knowing that it is fitted to give pleasure, he would discover wherein its excellency consists; and thus derives from the study of it, rules which may guide him in his own efforts, and assist in his judgment of the works of others. At the same time, from his familiarity with works of ex-

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cellence, his taste becomes in a manner assimilated to the tastes of those who are masters of the art. The same is true in literature, and hence it is, that familiarity with the best literary productions, both of our own language and of other languages, is so highly conducive to excellence as a writer. The remark is often made, that the best writers are almost uniformly the best classical scholars. The connexion here stated, may easily be explained. The models of fine writing which have come down to us from former periods of the world, furnish ample opportunity for the exercise of the imagination, and the improvement of the taste. To him then who aspires to become a good writer, I would recommend the study of those ancient models, with all the earnestness of Horace, *Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.*

The following miscellaneous examples afford opportunity for illustrating the principles and rules stated in the preceding chapter. The student may with advantage be required to give to each one a minute examination.

Example 1. President Kirkland, after mentioning the excitement which attended the public efforts of the late Fisher Ames as a speaker, says,

> This excitement continued when the cause had ceased to operate. After debate his mind was agitated, like the ocean after a storm, and his nerves were like the shrouds of a ship, torn by the tempest.

Example 2. The attentions of a respectful and affectionate son to his mother are thus described by an anonymous writer;

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They are the native courtesies of a feeling mind, shewing themselves amidst stern virtues and masculine energies, like gleams of light on points of rocks.

Example 3. Say, in his Political Economy, when describing the condition of the labourer in a Manufacturing establishment, whose only occupation has been to fabricate a part of some article—the head of a pin perhaps, uses the following expression,

He is, when separated from his fellow labourers, a mere adjective, without individual capacity or substantive importance.

EXAMPLE 4.—Prayer must be animated. The arrow that would pierce the clouds, must part from the bent bow and the strained arm.

Example 5. The following passage is from W. Irving.

I recollect hearing a traveller of poetical temperament, expressing the kind of horrour which he felt in beholding, on the banks of the Missouri, an oak of prodigious size, which had been in a manner overpowered by an enormous wild grape vine. The vine had clasped its huge folds round the trunk, and from thence had wound about every branch and twig, until the mighty tree had withered in its embrace. It seemed like Laocoon struggling ineffecually in the hideous coils of the monster Python. It was the lion of trees perishing in the embraces of a vegetable Boa.

Example 6. Webster in his Address to General La Fayette has the following passage;

Sir, we have become reluctant to grant monuments and eulogies—our highest and best honours, further. We

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would gladly hold them yet back from the little remnant of that immortal band. *Serus in cœlum redeas.*

EXAMPLE 7.—Mind is the great lever of all things.

Example 8. The following passage is addressed to time.

> Go, bind thine ivy o'er the oak,
> And spread thy rich embroidered cloak
> Around his trunk the while;
> Or deck with moss the abbey wall,
> And paint grotesque the Gothic hall,
> And sculpture with thy chissel small
> The monumental pile.

EXAMPLE 9.—Natural language neither redolent of the lamp nor of the kennel, is to be preferred to ragfair finery.

Example 10. Ferguson, the Scotch poet, was in poverty and distress. A friend sent relief, but it did not arrive till after his death. Of this generous act it is said,

> It fell a sun-beam on the blasted blossom.

EXAMPLE 11.—The husbandman sees all his fields and gardens covered with the beauteous creations of his own industry; and sees like God, that all his works are good.

Example 12. The following is from Goldsmith's Traveller.

> Hence ostentation here with tawdry art,
> Pants for the vulgar praise which fools impart;
> Here vanity assumes her pert grimace,
> And trims her robes of frieze with copper lace.

Example 13. Buckminster, in his description of the Swiss Alps, has the following sentence;

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Here Nature had thrown off the veil and appeared in all her sublimity.

Example 14. Goldsmith says of the Swiss,

> No vernal blooms their torpid rocks array,
> But winter lingering, chills the lap of May.

Example 15. The following is from the inaugural address of Professor Frisbie.

Mrs. Edgeworth has stretched forth a powerful hand to the impotent in virtue; and had she added, with the apostle, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, we should almost have expected miracles from its touch.

Example 16. The same writer describing the influence of the poems of Byron says,

They are the scene of a Summer evening, where all is tender and beautiful and grand; but the damps of disease descend with the dews of heaven, and the pestilent vapours of night are breathed in with the fragrance and balm, and the delicate and fair are the surest victims of the exposure.

Example 17. In Mrs. Hemans' Voice of Spring is the following passage;

> The young leaves are dancing in breezy mirth,
> Their light stems thrill to the wild-wood strains,
> And youth is abroad in my green domains.

Example 18. In a poem of Haley's the following lines are addressed to Mr. Gibbon,

> Humility herself, divinely mild,
> Sublime religion's meek and modest child,
> Like the dumb son of Crœsus, in the strife
> When force assailed his father's sacred life,
> Breaks silence, and with filial duty warm,

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Bids thee revere his parent's hallowed form.

Example 19. The following is from Kennilworth;

The mind of England's Elizabeth was like one of those ancient Druidical monuments, called Rocking-stones. The finger of Cupid, boy as he is painted, could put her feelings in motion, but the power of Hercules could not have destroyed their equilibrium.

Example 20. Another from the same author.

The language of Scripture gave to Macbriar's exhortation, a rich and solemn effect, like that which is produced by the beams of the sun, streaming through the storied representation of saints and martyrs on the Gothic window of some ancient cathedral.

Example 21. The following is from Percival;

The quiet sea,
That like a giant resting from his toil,
Sleeps in the morning sun.

EXAMPLE 22.—Yon row of bleak and visionary pines,
By twilight glympse discovered; mark! how they flee
From the fierce sea blast, all their tresses wild
Streaming before them.

Example 23. The following is from Smollet's History;

The bill underwent a great variety of alterations and amendments, which were not effected without violent contests. At length, however, it was floated through both houses on the tide of a great majority, and steered into the safe harbour of royal approbation.

Example 24. Harvey in his Meditations says;

Let the pear tree suckle her juicy progeny, till they drop into our hands and dissolve in our mouths. Let the

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plum hang unmolested upon her boughs, till she fatten her delicious flesh, and cloud her polished skin with blue.

Example 25. The following is from the same author.

Why does the parsley, with frizzled locks, shag the border; or why the cellery, with her whitening arms, perforate the mould, but to render his soups savory? The tendrils of the cucumber creep into the sun, and though basking in its hottest rays, they secrete for their master and barrel up for his use, the most cooling juices of the soil.

Example 26. The following is from Weems' Life of Washington;

The fire of civil discord now broke out a roaring flame; and with equal ardour, both parties hastened to clap on the kettle of war.

Example 27. The following is from Sampson's Discourse on the Common Law.

When we go forth, it (law) walks silent and unobtrusive by our side, covering us with its invisible shield from violence and wrong. Beneath our own roof, or by our own fireside, it makes our home our castle. All ages, sexes, and conditions, share its protecting influence. It shadows with its wing the infant's cradle, and with its arm upholds the tottering steps of age.

Example 28. Flint gives the following description of the steam boat passing up the Mississippi.

The foam bursts in a sheet quite over the deck. She quivers for a moment with the concussion; and then, as though she had collected her energy and vanquished her enemy, she resumes her stately march, and mounts against the current, five or six miles an hour.

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Example 29. The same author concludes a contrast of the comfort and splendour of the steam boat, with the wildness and desolation of the region through which it passes, with the following sentence;

——this strong contrast produces, in me at least, something of the same pleasant sensation, that is produced by lying down to sleep with the rain pouring on the roof, immediately over head.

CHAPTER IV.

ON SKILL IN THE USE OF LANGUAGE.

Valuable thoughts, extensive knowledge, the ability to reason justly, and good literary taste, are essential to form the good writer, in whatever language he may compose. They are therefore rightly called the foundations of a good style. But it was stated in the Introduction, that in addition to these requisites for good writing, there must be skill in the use of language. This then is the next object of attention.

To use the English language skilfully, implies that the writer selects his words and composes his sentences, in a manner, which accurately and clearly conveys to those able to read this language, the thoughts existing in his own mind. With the design then of aiding the young writer in the acquisition of this skill, I shall first treat of the nature and principles of Verbal

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Criticism, and afterwards state the rules and cautions to be observed in the composition of sentences.

SECTION I.—ON VERBAL CRITICISM.

Nature and necessity of Verbal Criticism.

When Cortez landed on the coasts of South America, information was immediately given to the king of Mexico of his arrival and of the appearance of his troops. The dispatches which were sent, consisted of pictures representing the appearance of the ships, the disembarking of the men, their arms and equipments and military array. Had Montezuma with a company of his subjects, arrived at the same period of the world on the coasts of England, an account of his arrival and appearance would have been sent to the king of that country; but in this case, instead of pictures, words would have been used in conveying the information; and the king of England, upon looking on these words, would have had as correct and distinct information of the arrival and appearance of Montezuma and his troops, as was obtained in the former instance from looking on the pictures. Hence we infer, that words answer the same purpose as pictures; they bring up to the mind subjects and thoughts which they are designed to represent.

Suppose next, that Montezuma with his troops, after leaving the coasts of England had visited those of Spain. Information of his arrival and appearance would have been sent to the monarch of that country; and in sending this information, as in the case of the king of England, words would have been used. But

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though the words used for conveying this intelligence, would in this case have been different from those before used, still they would represent the same objects, and be as readily understood. Different words then in different languages, represent the same objects. Hence we infer, that there is no natural connexion between words and the objects which they represent.

Suppose next, that the event of Montezuma's arrival on the English coast had occurred during the thirteenth century, instead of the sixteenth. In this case, an account might have been sent to the king of England in writing, as before, but the words used, would not be intelligible to those who speak and write the English language at the present day. This we infer from the fact, that some fragments of writings of that period in the English language, which now remain, are not intelligible. Hence we learn, not only that different words are used to express the same thoughts in different languages, but that at different periods different words are used in the same language, as the symbols of the same object.

Now from these facts, that words are but signs—that there is no natural connexion between them and the objects which they represent—and that the words of a language are changing, some becoming obsolete, and others gaining admission, arises the necessity of Verbal criticism; the object of which is to establish those principles, and lay down those rules, which may direct writers in the selection of right words for expressing their thoughts. If words, like pictures, were the exact representatives of objects, or the same word

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always, in every period in the history of a language, and whenever used, had the same thought attached to it by all who speak or write the language, there would evidently be no necessity for verbal criticism. In learning a language, we should acquire the knowlede of the correct and uniform use of each word, and we should then be in no danger of using it incorrectly.

Good use the standard of appeal in all decisions of Verbal Criticism.

In reading a late publication, I met with the following expression ; "When the trial came on, he improved this man as a witness." I at once say, that the word *improve*, is here incorrectly used. Should any one ask me, on what authority I make this assertion, I should answer, that the signification given to it, is different from that which it has in the writings of those, who are esteemed good authors in the English language. I should turn to several passages in the writings of Addison, Swift, Jeremy Taylor, and perhaps others of the same repute, and shew him, that the common meaning of the word, is *to bring towards perfection—to advance in goodness*, and I would then challenge him to shew me the word, as used in the passage in dispute in the writings of these authors, or of any author who is reputed a good writer.

Suppose now, that my opponent should say, that he had found the word *improve*, used in the sense *to make use of*, in the writings of Sir Thomas More, who wrote at the close of the fifteenth, or near the commencement of the sixteenth century ; and at the same

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time acknowledge, that he could not find it thus used in any writer, since that period, I should tell him in reply, that this is no authority for its being used in this sense at the present time. If for three centuries the word has ceased to be thus used by English writers, it is not now a part of the English language. It has become obsolete, and to English readers is no longer the sign, or symbol, with which the idea *to make use of* is connected.

Suppose next, that my opponent should assert, that he found the word thus used in some newspaper, and that he considered the editor of that newspaper a good writer. I should answer him, that it is not enough, that one individual esteems the editor of the newspaper a good writer. He must generally be reputed as such. And even if he were so reputed, it is not enough that one good writer has thus used the word in dispute. This will not make the word as thus used, a part of the English language, and cause it to be generally understood in this sense.

Suppose once more, that my opponent, who resided in some retired part of the country, should assert, that the word *improve* is thus used in his own neighbourhood, acknowledging at the same time, that he had not heard it so used in other parts of the country. I should answer him again, that this local use of it does not make it a part of the English language. It may be a part of the language of the town where he resides, but it would not be right to use it in this signification, in a work intended to be read by all those who read the English language. It would not convey

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a right meaning, or be intelligible to any, excepting those of a single town or village in the country.

The case would be similar, supposing my opponent should assert, that lawyers or those of any particular profession, are wont to use the word in the sense for which he contends. I might still say, this is not authority for its being thus used in works addressed to all who read the English language. Lawyers, and those of other professions, have many terms in use, which are peculiar to the profession, and which are not expected to be understood by those, unacquainted with its mysteries.

From these statements, we learn in what manner each word in a language, becomes the symbol of a particular object. It is by conventional agreement. All who speak the language, are supposed to have entered into an agreement, to use and understand the word in this sense. When therefore, we would know in what sense to use or understand a word, it mut be our object, to ascertain in what sense, those who speak the language, have agreed to use and to understand it. The manner in which this is to be done, is also learnt from the preceding statements. We are to see, how the word is used in the writings of those, who, at the present day, are esteemed by those speaking the language, writers of reputation. It must be obvious, that in this way we do receive an answer to the proposed inquiry; for the fact, that a writer is esteemed by the public a good author, is evidence, that he uses words correctly, or as those speaking the language have agreed to use them. I would say then,

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that the standard to which we must appeal in all cases of Verbal criticism, is Good Usage.

Nature and design of a Dictionary.

From this view of the standard in verbal criticism, may be well learnt the nature and design of a Dictionary. When wishing to shew my opponent, that the word *improve* is used by authors of reputation, in a different sense from that which he defends, instead of seeking for passages, in which the word is used by different authors, I should have turned to the word in my Dictionary, and there have found the result, to which the compiler of the Dictionary had been led from an examination, such as I proposed. Hence it may be seen, why Johnson's Dictionary is sometimes called the standard of the English language. He has carefully investigated the meaning of words, as used by authors of reputation, and has given us the results, to which from these investigations, he has been led; and confiding in his fidelity and good judgment, we appeal to him as to a standard.

Manner in which changes in a language are effected.

From this view also, may be learnt the manner, in which old and long established words become obsolete, and new ones are introduced. When a word, from the harshness of its sound, from any indefiniteness in its meaning, from its being no longer needed, or from any other cause, ceases to be in use by writers of reputation, for a considerable time, it is said to become obsolete, and is no longer considered a part of the language.

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On the other hand, every new word that is introduced into a language, must be first proposed by some author of reputation. If it is thought necessary—if it expresses the meaning attached to it better than any other word, or is more harmonious than another word before used in the same sense, it is adopted by other writers of reputation, and thus becomes a part of the language. If it is thought unnecessary, it is not adopted, and the attempt to introduce it, fails. While then inconvenience is experienced from the changes of language, in that it renders the authors of one period unintelligible at another, this evil is balanced by the introduction of more significant and harmonious words. No new word however should ever be admitted, which is not decidedly an improvement. On the other hand, a word which is unharmonious in its sound, or which from any newly associated idea becomes unfit for the use formerly made of it, though its use be supported by the authority of good writers, should be objected to by critics, and be suffered by writers to become obsolete. These remarks hold true, whether the word in question be entirely of new formation, whether it be made of two or more words compounded together, or be introduced with or without modification from some other language.

Greater liberty however is given to poetical writers in the use of ancient words, and to scientific writers in the invention of new terms, than to those who are authors in other kinds of writing. The same word, which in a prose writer would be objected to as an obsolete term, might in poetry be received as supported

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by good authority. This indulgence is granted to poetry, in consideration of the embarrassments of rhyme and of measure, which require a copiousness of language. On the other hand, science is progressive. New terms must be found to express new discoveries and inventions. The use of old words in new significations, would obviously create obscurity and mistake, and it is thought better, that new words should be introduced when new objects are to be represented. It is also common for writers on scientific subjects, to define the most important words in their works, especially those which are new or peculiar to the science. This liberty is given them, and it is expected in return, that they be uniform in the use of the word in the sense defined.

In connexion with these remarks, the influence of criticism on language, may be mentioned. Its object is the improvement of the language—the avoiding of all harsh, inharmonious words, those also which from their etymology, or any other cause are peculiarly liable to be misunderstood. This object is effected, not by the exercise of any authority, but by pointing out the offensive word to the notice of the public, and dissuading from its use.

Good use not always uniform in her decisions; rules which should guide us where these decisions are at variance with each other.

Suppose that I should meet with the following sentence. " Beside he was a cotemporary writer of great delicateness of expression, and highly approved of."

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I might object to it, and say that *besides* would be better than *beside*—*contemporary* than *cotemporary*—*delicacy* than *delicateness*, and *approved* than *approved of*. Should I in support of my criticisms, appeal to good usage, and mention several authors of reputation, in whose writings the forms of these words which I prefer, are uniformly used, it might be said in reply, that those forms which I condemn, are also as frequently found in the writings of authors of equally good reputation; and this could not be denied. In these instances then good use is not uniform in her decisions; and it is necessary that some other principles should be referred to, in determining which of these forms of words is preferable. I might say then, that the word *beside* is used often as a preposition, and that where there are two forms of a word, each of which is supported by the authority of good authors, but one of these forms is sometimes differently used, it should be restricted to this peculiar use, and the other form alone used in that sense which has hitherto been common to both. Both perspicuity and variety evidently require this.

In preferring *contemporary* to *cotemporary*, I might plead the analogy of the language. Whenever the inseparable preposition *con* precedes a consonant in composition, the *n* is retained; we say *conglomerate*, *conglutinate*, *concomitant*. To this *copartner* is the only exception. But if this particle in composition, precedes a vowel, we use the form *co*; as *coequal*, *coeternal*. Hence in the present case, the analogy of the language requires that we say *contemporary*.

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For preferring delicacy to delicateness, supposing the authorities on either side equal, I can give no other reason, than that it is more agreeable to the ear. Here then harmony of sound is the ground of choice.

In the other instance of criticism, where I prefer *approved* to *approved of*, simplicity of expression is the ground of choice. It is well known, that the use of numerous particles is a defect of our language. It weakens the strength of expression. The more simple and brief the form which is used, the better.

In instances then where good use is not uniform in her decisions, perspicuity and variety as leading to appropriate words to one uniform signification,—the analogy of the language,—harmony of sound, an dsimplicity of expression, are the principles to which we should refer.

These principles are stated in the following rules, which may be applied to the examination of the examples at the close of the chapter.

Rule 1. When two forms of a word have been used with the same signification, but one of them is sometimes found used in a different sense, the latter form should be restricted in its use to this latter meaning, and the other form used in that sense which has hitherto been common to both.

Rule 2. Of two forms of a word which are each supported by good use, we should prefer that which is agreeable to the analogy of the language.

Rule 3. If two forms of a word are supported by equal authority, and in other respects equal, the sound may determine us in our choice.

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Rule 4. In doubtful cases, when no one of the preceding rules will apply, simplicity should be the ground of preference.

Cautions against the most frequent violations of the principles of Verbal Criticism.

From the statements that have now been made, we learn, that to use words with propriety, is to use them in that manner which is authorised by writers of reputation. The most important of those rules, by which we are to be governed in cases where authorities are divided, have also been stated. Some of the most frequent violations of the principles of Verbal Criticism will now be enumerated, and those cautions given which are most needed on this subject.

"The lamb is tame in its disposition."—Here the word *tame* is incorrectly used for *gentle*—*tameness* is superinduced by discipline—*gentleness* belongs to the natural disposition.

"Herschel discovered the telescope."—In this sentence the word *discover* is incorrectly used for *invent*. We discover what was before hidden; we invent what is new.

"Caius Mucius displayed courage, when he stood unmoved with his hand in the fire."

Here *courage* is incorrectly used for *fortitude*. It is courage that enables us to meet danger; but fortitude gives us strength to endure pain.

In these instances, the words which are substituted, resemble in meaning those which are displaced. Such words are said to be synonymous. They agree in ex-

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pressing the same principal idea, but some accessory circumstance produces a shade of difference in their meaning. As the English language is characterized by copiousness, there is great danger of confounding terms which are synonymous. *Hence, in the use of words, care should be had, lest we confound those which are synonymous.*

"The observation of days of Thanksgiving, is common in New England." Here the word *observation*, is evidently used instead of observance, which it resembles in sound.

"The endurance of his speech was for an hour." Here the word *endurance*, which signifies suffering, s used for *duration*, which implies length of time. It is true, that if a speech be dull and continue for an hour, we may speak of the endurance of those who listen to it. But in the example which is given, the word is wrongly used for duration.

In these instances, a similarity of sound has led to mistake. *Hence, in the use of words, we should avoid confounding those which are similar in sound.*

"Meanwhile the Britons, left to shift for themselves, were forced to call in the Saxons to their aid."

"He passed his time at the court of St. James, currying favour with the minister."

"In these sentences, the expressions *felt to shift for themselves*, and *currying favour*, arethose which are usually heard only in the conversation of men destitute of refinement and information. They are beneath the dignity of the historical style. Like clowns when admitted to the society of polite, well informed men, they appear out of place. Other expressions

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equally significant, and better suited to the subject, might be substituted. *Hence then we learn, that low words and phrases, or such as are usually termed vulgarisms, are to be avoided.*

We are liable to err in violation of this rule, from the circumstance, that many words are used in common conversation, which are not suited to the dignity of a written discourse. I might hence infer the importance of keeping good company, and being choice in the selection of our words. Evil communications not only corrupt good manners, but good language.

"I have considered the subject in its integrity."

The writer here means, that he has considered the whole of the subject; but in expressing this idea, he uses a word in its Latin signification. *Integrity*, in the sense of *wholeness*, is not in common use by those who correctly write and speak the English language. Other instances might be cited, in which words have ascribed to them a meaning derived from the Greek, French, or some other language. Hence such instances are called Latinisms, Grecisms, &c. Besides the obscurity, which must thus be caused to those who are ignorant of the meaning of the word in its native language, there is an air of pedantry about expressions of this kind, which renders them disgusting. Hence then the caution may be given, *Avoid using words in foreign significations.*

The most frequent instances of the violation of the principles of Verbal Criticism, are in the introduction of new words. So much however has been said on this point, that it is unnecessary to give either examples or rules.

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The inquiry may here arise, whether Johnson's Dictionary, or any other, is to be regarded as a standard, to which we may in all cases refer for the decisions of Verbal Criticism? To this inquiry I answer, that since the words of a language are ever changing, some becoming obsolete, and others coming into use, it is impossible from the nature of the case, that any Dictionary can continue for a length of time, to be a standard of good usage. In regard to Johnson's, there are many words now in good use, which are not found in his Dictionary, and many there found, have become obsolete in the sense he has ascribed to them. Where then is the standard? The principles stated in this chapter give the answer. There is none, except that which the finished scholar forms for himself, from his familiarity with good models of writing. And if he possesses this familiarity, he may conclude, that if a word strikes him as new or strange, it should be considered a word used without good authority, and which, unless some necessity for its use exist, should be avoided.

Section II.—On the Composition of Sentences.

The design of this section is to treat of the composition of sentences, so far as the clear conveyance of the author's meaning, depends on skill in the use of language.

Sentences are either simple or complex. A simple sentence consists of a single member. A complex sentence consists of several members, and these members are sometimes subdivided into clauses. "The

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sun shines." This is a simple sentence. "The sun, that rises in the morning and sets at night, gives light to all those who dwell on the face of the earth." This is a complex sentence, and consists of two members, each of which is made up of two clauses.

The principle by which the writer is guided in dividing a discourse into sentences, is, that when he makes this division, he considers the exhibition of his thought as complete. Sometimes in making this exhibition several members are necessary; and where these members are so closely connected, that the reader cannot stop before the conclusion of the sentence with any distinct thought in his mind, the sentence is called a period. If there is one or more places, where he may stop, a distinct thought having been stated, the sentence is called a loose sentence. This distinction will be clearly seen in the following examples. "If in America, as some of England's writers are endeavouring to convince her, she is hereafter to find an invidious rival, and a gigantic foe, she may thank those very writers, for having provoked that rivalship and irritated that hostility." This is a period; and it will be noticed, that though there are several members and clauses, there is no place before the close, where the reader may stop with a distinct view in his mind. This account of the period is in agreement with the etymology of the word. It signifies a circuit, and the thought winds around, as it were, among the different members and clauses, till it is brought out full at the close. The following is a loose sentence. "These minor comforts are all important in the estimation of

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narrow minds; and they either do not perceive, or will not acknowledge, that they are more than counterbalanced among us by great and generally diffused blessings." Here it is evident, that we might stop at the word *minds*, and the thought would be complete; but had a full stop been placed there, what follows, would not, in its present form, constitute a distinct sentence.

Since sentences are made up of many words, and of clauses and members, it will readily occur, that the forms which they assume, will be many and various, and some of these forms will be but suited to one subject and occasion, and others to a different. Vain then would be the attempt, to prescribe rules which should govern the writer in the composition of his sentences. Instead of this, those instances have been noticed, in which perspicuity is most frequently violated from want of skill in the use of language, and from the examples given, such cautions have been inferred, as may guard against similar violations of perspicuity.

The examples first given are of simple sentences and of the members and clauses which make up complex sentences. These are classed under the following heads: 1. Equivocal words and phrases. 2. Ambiguous constructions. 3. Wrong arrangement of adverbs and adverbial phrases. The composition of complex sentences is next examined with reference to the same object. Connectives are afterwards separately considered.

1. Equivocal words and phrases.

A word or phrase is called equivocal, when on the

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authority of good usage two different significations are at different times applied to it. The true meaning of such words is to be determined from their connexion with other parts of the sentence. Hence the danger of obscurity in their use.

Example of the preposition.

"I am persuaded that neither death nor life—shall be able to separate us from the love of God."

In this sentence, *the love of God*, may signify *God's love to us*, or *our love to him*. This equivocation may be avoided by changing the last clause into the following form—*from our love to God; of* being more correctly used before the subject, and *to* before the object of a passion. The design of prepositions is to express the relations between different words, and since many of the prepositions express different relations, there is much need of caution lest they be used equivocally.

Example of the conjunction.

"They were much more ancient among the Persians than Zoroaster or Zerdusht."

In this example, the *or* is equivocal. It may either be understood as coupling together Zoroaster and Zerdusht, as two synonymous words, or, as a disjunctive conjunction, it may imply that Zoroaster and Zerdusht are two different things. Were the latter the meaning of the writer, the word *either* should be inserted before Zoroaster. But if he design to use the word as a copulative, when the words thus connected are not generally known to be synonymous, some clause may be thrown in, to denote that they are thus

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used. In the example given, it might have read—*than Zoroaster, or as he is also called, Zerdusht.* When, in such instances, the first noun follows an article, or preposition, or both, the equivocation may be avoided, by repeating the article, or preposition, or both, before the second noun, if the conjunction be used disjunctively, and omitting to repeat it, if it be used copulatively.

Example of the noun.

" Your majesty has lost all hopes of future excises by their consumption."

The word *consumption*, may be either passive or active. It may mean, either by their being consumed, or by their consuming. The equivocation in this sentence results from the double use of the word *consumption*. Words of this kind are not to be avoided, when the connexion plainly determines which of the meanings is intended, but when this is not the case, some other word, or some other form of expression, should be selected. In the example given, it should read, *on what they may consume.*

Example of the adjective.

" As for such animals as are mortal, or noxious, we have a right to destroy them."

It is the design of the writer to use the word *mortal* as signifying destructive, or causing death, whereas the meaning most obviously suggested, is, liable to death. This may rather be called an impropriety than an equivocation; since it results from the application of a qualifying word in a sense different from that, which is authorised by good usage. We speak of a

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mortal poison, or of a mortal disease, meaning a destructive poison or disease; but when we speak of a mortal animal, it is always in the sense of an animal liable to death. This example suggests the need of caution in the use of adjectives, when usage has given them different significations as applied to different nouns.

Example of verbs.

"The next refuge was to say, it was overlooked by one man, and many passages wholly written by another."

The word *overlooked* may here signify *revised*, or it may signify *neglected*. The equivocation in this example, like that in the example of the noun, results from the use of a word to which usage has given a double meaning. It may here then be said, as in that instance, that if the connexion does not readily suggest which of these meanings is intended, some other word or form of expression should be chosen. In this example, the meaning of the author would be expressed without equivocation, by the word *revised*.

Of equivocal phrases, the following may be mentioned, *not the least—not the smallest*. These phrases may signify in direct opposition, *not any*, or *very great*. But it is unnecessary to give examples of the use of these and similar phrases as they are made the subjects of grammatical criticism. It may be said generally, that such equivocal phrases, should be avoided.

2. Ambiguous constructions.

By construction, as the word is applied to sentences, is meant the forming of the sentence in such a

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manner, as that the relations and connexion between the different parts of the sentence, may be made known. The standard of correctness in the construction of sentences, as of propriety in the use of words, is good usage. Every language has certain forms of construction, either peculiar to itself, or common with other languages. What these forms are, may be learnt from the conversation and writings of men of refinement and knowledge, who speak and write the language. But as the Lexicographer has given us in his Dictionary, the result of his inquiries after the proper signification of words, in the same manner, the Grammarian gives us in his grammar, the results of his investigations as to what are the correct forms of construction. Correctness then in the construction of sentences, is to be learnt from the rules and principles of syntax.

But a sentence may be correct in its construction, and still may carry to the reader a meaning different from that designed to be conveyed by the writer. In such instances, since the sentence is so constructed that two different meanings may be received from it, the construction is said to be ambiguous. Ambiguous constructions most frequently arise from the use of those words which are called connectives, and these, it will be remembered, are to be separately considered. Some instances in the use of other parts of speech will now be given.

Examples of the adjective.

"God heapeth favours on his servants ever liberal and faithful."

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Is it God, or his servants, that are ever liberal and faithful? It is obvious, that the construction would bear either meaning, and of course, it is ambiguous. The ambiguity may be removed by altering the arrangement of the words. God, ever liberal and faithful, heapeth favours on his servants; or God heapeth favours on his ever liberal and faithful servants. This altering of the arrangement of the words, is in our language a change in the construction of the sentence. In languages where adjectives and substantives have correspondent changes of termination, the reader may in this way most generally determine to which noun the adjective belongs; but in languages, as in the English, where adjectives have no change in their terminations, it is their arrangement, which must determine the nouns, with which they are to be connected. Hence then the caution may be given, *To avoid ambiguity in the construction of the adjective, let it be placed as near as practicable to the noun it is intended to qualify.*

There is another case, in which there is danger of ambiguity in the use of adjectives. Sometimes, when two adjectives are used in connexion with the same noun, it is difficult to determine, whether they are designed to express different qualities belonging to the same thing, or qualities belonging to different things, but which are included under the noun as a generic term. This is illustrated in the following example. "The ecclesiastic and secular powers concurred in those measures." Is it meant, that the powers which coucurred, had both the qualities expressed by the adjectives, *ecclesiastic and secular?* or that one class of

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these powers was ecclesiastic, and the other secular? The latter meaning is no doubt that of the writer; and it should have been expressed, "The ecclesiastic powers, and the secular, concurred in those measures."

In cases of this kind, the following rule should be observed, When the adjectives are designed to qualify the noun as expressing one thing, the noun should either precede or follow both adjectives; but when the adjectives are to be understood as qualifying different things included under the noun, the noun should follow the first adjective, and may be repeated or not, after the second, as the harmony of the sentence may require; and in this latter case, when an article or preposition precedes the first adjective, it should be repeated before the second.

On the observance of this rule, the following version of a passage in sacred writ, is to be censured. "Every scribe, instructed into the kingdom of heaven, is like an householder, who bringeth out of his treasure things new and old." It should read *new things and old.*

Instead of saying, "Death is the common lot of all, of good men and bad," the passage should read, "of good men and of bad."

Instead of saying, "How immense the difference between the pious and profane," it should read, "between the pious and the profane."

Examples of nouns.

"You will seldom find a dull fellow of good education, but (if he happen to have any leisure on his hands) will turn his head to one of those two amusements for all fools of eminence, politics or poetry."

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On first reading this sentence, we are led to connect *politics* and *poetry* with *eminence*, and make them all the objects of the preposition *of*. But the true meaning of the writer is expressed, by inserting *to* before the words politics and poetry. The ambiguity in this case arises then from the omission of the preposition, which leads the mind to supply the copulative conjunction, and thus causes mistake. In connexion with this example, the general remark may be made, that clearness in the construction of a sentence, is often secured by the repetition of a preposition; and the writer may be cautioned against its omission in such instances. I give another example.

"The rising tomb a lofty column bore."

Did the tomb bear the column, or the column bear the tomb? Ambiguities of this kind result from the construction of our language, which makes no distinction in termination between the nominative and objective case, but leaves the construction to be determined by the arrangement of the words. In prose, therefore, such ambiguities will rarely occur, because the nominative will be placed before the verb, and the objective will follow it. But in poetry, where inversions are allowed, they will occur; and the danger of mistake can be guarded against only by the connexion, except in instances, where, the possessive pronoun being used, it may determine the nominative by referring to it, as its antecedent; as in the following example;

"And thus the son his fervent sire addressed."

Here the pronoun *his* most naturally refers to son, as

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its antecedent, and thus determines, which is designed as the nominative, and which as the object of the verb.

3. I proceed now to mention the wrong position of adverbs, and of adverbial phrases, as affecting the clearness of the sentence. Faults of this kind, it may be thought, are included under the solecism or grammatical blunders, since the rules of Syntax require, that adverbs should be placed near the words they are designed to qualify. But instances of this kind are of so frequent occurrence, that a few will be mentioned.

"The Romans understood liberty, at least as well as we."

In hearing this sentence read aloud, with the emphasis upon liberty, we should be led to connect the adverb with this word. But should the emphasis be placed on the adverb itself, we should connect it with the concluding part of the sentence. It is better to change the position of the adverb, so that there can be no danger of mistaking the true meaning of the writer. The sentence is then more correctly constructed as follows, "The Romans understood liberty, as well at least as we."

"Theism can only be opposed to polytheism, or atheism."

"Theism can be opposed only to polytheism or atheism."

"There is not perhaps any real beauty or deformity, more in one piece of matter, than in another."

"There is not perhaps any real beauty or deformity

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in one piece of matter, more than in another."

"Not only Jesuits can equivocate."

"Jesuits can not only equivocate."

My design in stating this last example, is to shew, that the same word, according to its position in a sentence, may be either an adverb or an adjective, and consequently an essential difference in the sense be made. The meaning of the sentence, as first given, is, that Jesuits are not the only persons who can equivocate. In the second form of the sentence, the meaning is, Jesuits can not only equivocate, but they can do other things in addition. Hence then may be inferred the need of additional caution in the use of those words, which may be regarded as adverbs, or adjectives, according to their position in the sentence.

Adverbial phrases are to be considered to all intents as adverbs, so far as their position in a sentence affects its perspicuity. They should be placed near the words whose meaning they are designed to affect. Much skill is often requisite in so placing them, that the sentence may be easy and harmonious in its sound, and still retain its perspicuity. They are well compared to unsightly stones, which try the skill of the builder. As several examples will be given, while treating of complex sentences, the farther notice of them is here omitted.

I proceed now to consider complex sentences in reference to perspicuity, so far as this quality depends on skill in the use of language ; and without arraying the faults which are mentioned under distinct heads, I shall give instances of sentences that are deficient in

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perspicuity, and infer from the examination of such instances several cautions.

Example 1.—After we came to anchor, they put me on shore, where I was welcomed by all my friends, who received me with the greatest kindness.

Having come to anchor, I was put on shore, where I was welcomed by my friends and received with the greatest kindness.

Should the question arise, who, or what, is the predominant subject of discourse in the first form of this sentence, it might be difficult at first view to answer. *We*, *they*, *I*, and *you*, referring to friends, are in different parts of this short complex sentence, made the governing or leading words. In the corrected form, there is one leading word, and all the parts are constructed with reference to this. In this way, the sentence is made more simple, and the meaning is more obvious. Hence then we infer, that there should be one leading word in every sentence, and that the different members and clauses, should be so constructed and connected, as to be made subservient to this leading word.

Example 2.—He had been guilty of a fault, for which his master would have put him to death, had he not found an opportunity to escape out of his hands, and fled into the deserts of Numidia.

———and to flee into the deserts of Numidia.

In the first form of this sentence, are found two clauses, "to escape out of his hands" and "fled into the deserts of Numidia," which have the same relation to the other part of the sentence, and are con-

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structed differently. In one, the form is that of the infinitive; in the other, of the past participle. In the sentence as corrected, this diversity is not found, and the meaning is more obvious. From this and similar examples may be inferred the following direction, when two or more clauses have the same relation to other parts of the sentence, they should, if possible, be made similar in their construction.

The two directions, that have now been given, should be particularly regarded in the composition of long sentences. It is generally supposed, that in long sentences there is always danger of obscurity, and that they should be avoided. But let the two directions that have been given be observed—let there be a leading word or phrase in the sentence, and all the parts be similarly constructed, and have a common reference to this leading part, and the sentence may be long without becoming obscure. This is seen in the following example,

"He can render essential service to his country, by assisting in the disinterested administration of the laws; by watching over the principles and opinions of the lower classes around him; by diffusing among them those lights which may be important to their welfare; by mingling frankly among them, gaining their confidence, and becoming the immediate auditor of their complaints; by informing himself of their wants, and making himself a channel through which their grievances may be quietly communicated to the proper sources of mitigation; or by becoming, if need be, the intrepid and incorruptible guardian of their liberties, the enlightened champion of their wants."

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Most of the faults in the composition of complex sentences, are connected with those clauses, which express some circumstances of the actions or objects mentioned. Some of these clauses are less intimately connected with the main thought expressed in the sentence than others, and the writer should always avoid crowding into one sentence, more clauses expressing circumstances than are absolutely necessary. But writers, sometimes, instead of observing this rule, bring into the same sentence circumstances, which are but very remotely connected with the leading thought of the sentence. On this ground the following passage has been censured. "Archbishop Tillotson died this year. He was exceedingly beloved, both by King William and Queen Mary, who nominated Dr. Tennison, Bishop of Lincoln to succeed him." This last circumstance has obviously no connexion with the love of the king and queen for Archbishop Tillotson.

But since there is difficulty in the right position of clauses, some directions will now be given, which may aid in their arrangement.

EXAMPLE 3.—"The moon was casting a pale light on the numerous graves that were scattered before me, as it peered above the horizon, when I opened the small gate of the church yard."

"When I opened the small gate of the church yard, the moon, as it peered above the horizon, was casting a pale light on the numerous graves that lay scattered before me."

Any one will allow, that the image brought before the mind in the second form of this sentence, is more

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distinct and vivid, than that presented in the first. Upon comparing the two forms of the sentence, it will be seen, that all that has been done, is to alter the position of clauses expressing the circumstances of the action. Instead of being introduced near the close of the sentence, they are placed at its commencement. From this and similar instances it is inferred, that clauses expressing circumstances, must be placed as near as practicable to the beginning of a sentence. It is obvious that this direction will apply principally to those clauses expressing time or place, and not to those which are designed to affect the meaning of particular parts of the sentence.

Example 4.—" What I had the opportunity of mentioning to my friend sometime ago in conversation, was not a new thought."

" What I had the opportunity, sometime ago, of mentioning to my friend in conversation, was not a new thought."

In the first form of this sentence, the two circumstances " sometime ago" and " in conversation" are placed together. In the latter form, they are separated, and each is placed near the word whose meaning it is designed to affect. This is an improvement in the composition of the sentence. From such instances the following rule may be inferred, Avoid placing phrases expressing circumstances, in immediate connexion with each other.

Example 5—" There will therefore be two trials in this town at that time, which are punishable with death if a full court should attend."

" At that time, therefore, if a full court should attend,

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there will be two trials which are punishable by death."

The first form of this sentence conveys a meaning different from that intended to be conveyed by the writer. According to this statement, the criminals might earnestly wish, that a full court should not attend. This wrong meaning is given, by connecting the clause "if a full court should attend" with the wrong part of the sentence. In the corrected form, the place of this clause is changed, and the meaning of the writer is clearly conveyed. Hence then the rule may be inferred, that clauses expressing circumstances, should be placed near that part of the sentence the meaning of which they are designed to affect.

EXAMPLE 6.—" The Knight seeing his habitation reduced to so small a compass, and himself in a manner shut out of his own house, upon the death of his mother, ordered all the apartments to be flung open and exorcised by his chaplain."

" The knight seeing his habitation reduced to so small a compass, and himself in a manner shut out of his own house, ordered, upon the death of his mother, all the apartments to be flung open and exorcised by the chaplain."

This sentence consists of two members, the former ending at *house*, and the latter commencing with *ordered*. The phrase " upon the death of his mother" is in the first form thrown in between the two members, and may be connected with either. By changing its position, and connecting it with the latter member of the sentence, all ambiguity is removed. Hence we may infer the following rule. A clause or

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phrase expressing a circumstance, ought never to be placed between two capital members of a sentence.

Under the head of CONNECTIVES, are included those words, which are used to connect different sentences together, or to connect different clauses and members of the same sentence. Much of the clearness and finish of style, will depend upon the skilful use of this class of words. It is true, they are the articulations, or joints of a discourse; but in a well written production, like the joints in the human frame, they shew forth the skill of the Maker, and are essential to the perfection of his work.

A connective may be defined, as that word in a sentence or clause, which being neither expressed nor implied, it could not be discovered, that what is said in the sentence, or clause, has any connection with what precedes. To shew more fully the nature of a connective, the following examples are given.

It is difficult for the most wise and upright government to correct the abuses of remote delegated power, productive of unmeasured wealth, and protected by the boldness and strength of the same ill-got riches. These abuses full of their own wild native vigor, will grow and flourish under mere neglect.

The connexion between the latter sentence and the preceding in this example, is denoted by the demonstrative pronoun "these," followed by the word "abuses," which expresses the subject of the former sentence. That the connexion is expressed in the pronoun, is evident from the fact, that if the pronoun be omitted, what remains of the sentence, expresses

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a distinct proposition without any connexion with what precedes. In some instances the noun is not repeated after the demonstrative pronoun, and in others, some synonymous word, or some word which brings to view the object of the preceding sentence, is joined to the pronoun. Sometimes also the definite article, or possessive pronoun, is used for the demonstrative pronoun. But in all instances of this nature, the connexion is in the pronoun itself.

A true aristocracy is not a separate interest in the state, or separable from it. It is an essential integrant part of any large body rightly constituted.

Here the personal pronoun *it* is the connective. Examples of this kind are frequent and need no comment.

The air, the earth and the water, teem with delighted existence. In a Spring noon or a Summer's evening, on whichever side we turn our eyes, myriads of happy beings crowd upon our view.

This latter sentence in this example is intended to be illustrative of the former, and though no connective is expressed, there is one easily supplied. Instances of this kind are also frequent.

Let not the passions blight the intellect in the Spring of its advancement, nor indolence nor vice canker the promise of the heart in the blossom. Then shall the summer of life be adorned with moral beauty.

In this instance, the connecting word is *then*, which is a particle usually called an adverb, though by some grammarians considered as a conjunction when used, as in this instance, to connect sentences. But by whatever name it be called, it is evidently one of

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those words, which in the improvement of language, are inserted to save circumlocution, and is here equivalent to the phrase, *let this be done*. Instances in which adverbs are used as connectives, may be resolved in this way into a phrase containing a demonstrative pronoun.

I certainly have very good wishes for the place of my birth. But the sphere of my duties is my true country.

The connective in this example is the particle *but*, which is a conjunction. Should this be resolved, as in the last example, into what it is designed to express, it would be found equivalent to some phrase like the following; *To this superadd*. Of this mode of resolving conjunctions, I shall presently speak, and endeavour to shew, that where the conjunction is used as a connective, a pronoun is implied.

The examples which have been given, are instances shewing the manner of connecting different sentences. The same means together with relative pronouns, are used for connecting the different members and clauses of the same sentence. Of this common use of the relative pronoun no example need be given. From this short view of the nature of connectives, I now proceed to give some caution to guard against their wrong use.

1. Of demonstrative and other pronouns except the relative.

It has been already remarked, that when pronouns of this class are used as connectives, it is generally the case, that either the noun which expresses the subject of the preceeding sentence, is repeated, or some sy-

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nonymous word is used. When this is done, there can be little danger of mistake. The only caution then which need be given, is the general one, that whenever adjective pronouns are used as connectives, and the noun to which they belong is left to be supplied by the reader, care should be had, that this noun be obvious. To effect this, the word to be supplied should be, 1. A word which the mind is accustomed to supply in similar cases. 2. The leading word of the discourse. 3. A word that has just been mentioned, and is thus fully in the view of the reader. An example of each kind is subjoined.

The citizens of a free government must be enlightened and virtuous. To effect this, schools and the institutions for religious instruction must be supported.

Here the mind readily supplies the word *object*, referring to what is mentioned in the preceding sentence.

This was not the triumph of France.

The subject of the discourse, from which this sentence is taken, is the removal of Louis 16 from Versailles to Paris. The mind in reading the passage readily supplies a word or phrase expressing this subject.

He received the papers from the Secretary. These he is now unwilling to return.

In this example the word paper, having been recently mentioned, is easily supplied after the pronoun.

Except in cases similar to those now mentioned, there is danger of obscurity in omitting the noun, which is designed to be connected with the pronoun.

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2. Of the relative pronoun. Under this head are included relative pronouns properly so called, and other pronouns used as relatives. The danger of obscurity in the use of this class of pronouns as connectives, arises from uncertainty as to the antecedent. To prevent this in the construction of sentences, some cautions will now be given.

It is folly to pretend to arm ourselves against the accidents of life by heaping up treasures, which nothing can protect us against, but the good providence of God.
It is folly to pretend by heaping up treasures, to arm ourselves against the accidents of life, which nothing can protect us against, but the good providence of God.

In the first form of this example, the mind is led to refer the relative *which* to the word treasures immediately preceding it. This makes nonsense of the expression. Upon examining the sentence, we perceive that the relative is designed to refer to *accidents*, and that we have been led astray by the intervention of a clause between the antecedent and relative. The position of this clause is different in the corrected form of the sentence, and the true sense is then evident. Hence we infer the following rule, That in arranging the members and clauses of a sentence, the relative should be placed as near as possible to its antecedent.

But I shall leave this subject to your management, and question not, but that you will throw it into such light, as shall at once entertain and improve your readers.

In this sentence the personal pronoun it, which is here a relative, is removed to some distance from the noun to which it refers. It would be difficult to make

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any alteration of the sentence, which would place it nearer. Neither is this necessary for the attainment of perspicuity, since we are in no danger of mistaking the right antecedent. Here then we are governed by a different principle from that which has just been mentioned; and this principle is, the rank which different words hold in a sentence. The nominative and accusative, as the agent and object, are of more importance in a sentence, than other nouns which are dependent upon them. In the example given, the word *subject* is the accusative, and of higher rank in the sentence, than the word *management*, which is connected with the accusative by a preposition, and thus in a degree dependent upon it. Hence then we infer the following rule, That when the sentence cannot be so modelled, that the relative may be placed in close connexion with the antecedent, it should be made to refer to the leading noun of the sentence.

One may have an air, which proceeds from a just sufficiency and knowledge of the matter before him, which may naturally produce some motions of his head and body, which might become the bench better than the bar.

One may have an air, which proceeds from a just sufficiency and knowledge of the matter before him, A consciousness of this sufficiency and knowledge, may naturally produce some motions of the head and body, which might become the bench better than the bar.

In the first form of this example, the relative is used three different times, and in each instance with a different antecedent. This causes a want of perspicuity in the sentence. The pronoun is a substitute for the noun, and the effect of using the relative with differ-

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ent antecedents in the same sentence, is much the same, as if the same word were used in different senses. The difficulty is removed in the second form of the example by a division of the sentence. Hence then we derive the direction, Avoid using the same relative twice or oftener in the same sentence with different antecedents.

The preceding rules are designed to assist in so constructing the sentence, that no doubt may exist as to the right antecedent of the relative. But cases will occur, when it is impossible to prevent all ambiguity in the use of the relative pronoun. In such cases the noun itself may be repeated, or a division be made of the sentence, or in some other way the use of the pronoun may be avoided. Sometimes ambiguity in the use of the relative, may arise from a different source, as is seen in the following example.

"I know that all words which are signs of complex ideas, furnish matter of mistake and cavil."

I know that all those words which are signs of complex ideas, furnish matter of mistake and cavil.

In the first form of this example, though the relative is rightly placed in reference to the antecedent, still the true meaning of the author is not conveyed. He did not mean to say, "that all words are signs of complex ideas," which is expressed by the words used but his design is, to affirm something of those words which are signs of complex ideas. Here then is ambiguity arising from a cause which has not been mentioned. To state this cause, it is necessary to mention a distinction between clauses introduced by the

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relative as explicative of the meaning of the antecedent, and those introduced as determinative of its meaning. "Man, who is born of a woman, is of few days and full of trouble." "The man that endureth to the end, shall be saved." In the former of these sentences, the clause introduced by the relative is explicative. It merely points out some property of the antecedent, but does not affect its meaning as used in the given instance. It might be said of man, that he is of few days and full of trouble, though he were not born of woman. In the other example, the relative introduces a determinative clause, which affects the meaning of the antecedent. It is not said, that all men shall be saved, but only "he that endureth to the end;" and the clause introduced by the relative, cannot be removed without changing entirely the meaning of the sentence. Now the clause introduced by the relative in the example at the head of this paragraph, is designed to be determinative in its effect on the antecedent. It has this force in the corrected form of the example, and it is given to it by the insertion of the demonstrative pronoun *those* before *words*. The same effect would have been produced by the insertion of the definite article. Hence then we infer the rule, That whenever a clause which is designed to be determinative in its effects on the antecedent, is introduced by the relative, the antecedent should be preceded by the demonstrative pronoun, or the definite article.

3. Of conjunctions, and other particles.

Every one acquainted with grammar, knows that

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adverbs are not essential parts of language, but that they might be dismissed, and the same meaning expressed by circumlocutions. It has been shewn by a late eminent philologist, that conjunctions are of the same nature. They are obsolete forms of verbs, and in the use of them an ellipsis is implied, in supplying which, where they serve the purpose of connectives, a pronoun is used. This is shewn in the following example; "Faith cannot be perfect unless there be good works." Here, *unless* is to be considered as the imperative of the obsolete verb *onlessan*, the signification of which is *to dismiss*. In supplying the implied ellipsis, the sentence will read; "Faith cannot be perfect *to this dismiss* there be good works." In this then, as in the preceding examples, the real connective is a pronoun.

In agreement with this account of conjunctions, it is found, that besides implying connexion, they express the manner of connexion, or the relation of one clause or member to another, or of one sentence to another. In doing this, they retain their original meaning, and hence the different classes into which they are divided; as the copulative, disjunctive, casual, illative, &c. all of which names are intended to shew the nature of the relation expressed by the conjunctions included under them.

Skill in the use of conjunctions, both as connectives and as shewing the relation between parts connected, is to be acquired from practice in writing, and from familiarity with good writers. It is also most frequently found united with clearness of thought, and

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accurate habits of reasoning. Hence no directions are here given to guide the writer in their use, but simply a few remarks offered, the reason and propriety of which, sound sense and good taste must perceive.

1. Long conjunctions are to be avoided. Such are the words *nevertheless*, *notwithstanding*, *furthermore*, *for as much as* The improvement of our language has caused most of these conjunctions to give place to others, which are shorter, and as such words are but secondary parts of sentences, it is desirable that they should not occupy more room and become more conspicuous, than is absolutely necessary.

2. The frequent recurrence of the same conjunction is to be avoided; especially if that conjunction consist of more than one syllable. The reason of this direction, as of the preceding, is to prevent conjunctions from appearing too prominent.

3. The accumulating of several conjunctions in the same clause is to be avoided, unless their coalition be absolutely necessary. To aid in forming a judgment of what propriety and the idiom of the language allow in such cases, the following remarks are made;

Two conjunctions may follow each other, when one of them serves to connect the sentence with what precedes, and the other to connect one clause in the sentence with another clause. "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself." *And* is the connective of the sentences, and *if* of the clauses.

Conjunctions of the same class may be connected

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together, but such coalitions are often unnecessary and should be avoided. Examples of this kind; are *but however, and further, yet nevertheless*, &c. In each of these instances, one of the conjunctions used is unnecessary.

Conjunctions of different classes are often found united, and sometimes necessarily, but at others, when more care in the construction of the sentence would have rendered their union unnecessary. Of the propriety of such coalitions, a knowledge of the usage of the best writers, and of the original meaning of the conjunction, will enable us to judge.

Conjunctions are often to be left to be supplied by the reader.

To use a conjunction wherever the sense would allow of one, would render a style heavy, and conduce but little to its perspicuity. Hence, as in the former instance, the usage of good writers must decide. On the one hand, we are to guard against the omission of connectives to that degree, which might render the style defective and obscure. On the other, we are to avoid the too frequent use of them, which would render our manner of writing awkward and diffuse.

In connexion with these remarks on connectives, it may be stated, that the abbreviations i. e.—e. g. and viz. are in dignified composition to be avoided.

Examples, in the correction of which the rules and principles stated in the preceding chapter are illustrated.

1. You stand to him in the relation of a son; of consequence you should obey him.

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2. He came toward me and immediately fell backward.
3. His sermon was an extempore performance.
4. It is exceeding dear and scarce to be obtained.
5. He came afterward and apologized.
6. He dare not do it at present, and he need not.
7. Whether he will or no, I care not.
8. He is vindicative in his disposition.
9. These conditions were accepted of by the conquerors.
10. I have followed the habit of rising early in the morning, till it has become a custom with me.
11. Do not rise, Sir, but keep your sediment.
12. They hold their own fortunes synonymous with those of their country.
13. Though some men reach the regions of wisdom by this path, it is not the most patent rout.
14. He succeeded by dint of application, though he is not now a whit the better.
15. I cannot prevent the hatred of Alexander.
16. He aimed at nothing less than the crown.
17. I will have mercy and not sacrifice.
18. An eloquent speaker may give more, but cannot give more convincing arguments, than this plain man afforded.
19. We do those things frequently, that we repent of afterwards.
20. By greatness, I do not only mean the bulk of any single object, but the largeness of a whole view.
21. The emperor refused to convert at once the truce into a definitive treaty.
22. He who performs every employment in its due place and season, suffers no part of time to escape without profit; and thus his days become multiplied; and much of life is enjoyed in little space.

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23. The notions of Sunderland were always good; but he was a man of great expense.

24. I have settled the meaning of those pleasures of imagination, which are the subject of my present undertaking, by way of introduction in this paper.

25. As it is necessary to have the head clear as well as the complexion, to be perfect in this part of learning, I rarely mingle with the men, but frequent the tea-tables of the ladies.

26. Many act so directly contrary to this method, that from a habit of saving time and paper, which they acquired at the university, they write in so diminutive a manner, that they can hardly read what they have written.

27. Dr. Prideaux used to relate, that when he brought the copy of his "Connexion of the Old and New Testament" to the Bookseller, he told him it was a dry subject, and the printing could not be safely ventured upon, unless he could enliven the work with a little humour.

That the student may perceive, how much the clear conveyance of the thoughts of the writer, depends upon skill in the use of language as shewn in the composition of sentences, let him compare the following passage with Lesson 10 in the Class Book.

In a spring noon, or summer evening, on whichever side we turn our eyes, we see the insect youth on the wing, swarms of new born flies trying their pinions in the air, and myriads of happy beings crowding upon our view, while their sportive motions, their gratuitous activity, their continual change of place without use or purpose, testify their joy, and the exultation which they feel in their lately discovered faculties; and who can doubt that the air, the earth and the water, teem with delighted existence?

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The life of a bee appears to be all enjoyment; so busy and so pleased, and if seen among the flowers of spring, he is one of the most cheerful objects that can be looked upon, yet this is only a specimen of insect life, since the whole winged insect tribe, it is probable, are equally intent upon their proper employments, and under every variety of constitution gratified, and perhaps equally gratified by the offices which the Author of their nature has assigned to them, but we happen to be better acquainted with the bee, by reason of its being half domiciliated, than we are with others.

But while plants are covered with little insects, greedily sucking their juices, and constantly, it would seem, in the act of sucking, which it cannot be doubted is a state of gratification, since what else, while others are running about with an alacrity in their motions, which carries with it every mark of pleasure, and even large patches of ground are sometimes half covered with these brisk and sprightly natures, should fix them so closely to the operation and so long; and hence the atmosphere is not the only scene of enjoyment.

When the student, from comparing the preceding passage with the manner, in which the same thoughts are expressed by Dr. Paley, is led to notice the difference between long involved sentences, and those which are shorter and more clear in their composition, let him be required to express in a more simple and perspicuous manner, passages selected from those writers whose style is involved.

The following extract is from the sermons of Bishop Taylor. The writer is shewing the effect of a troubled and discomposed spirit on attempts to offer prayers to God.

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For so have I seen a lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, sighing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven, and climb above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest, than it could recover by the libration and frequent weighing of his wings; till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over, and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing as if it had learned musick and motion from an angel, as he passed sometimes through the air about his ministeries here below: so is the prayer of a good man; when his affairs have required business, and his business was matter of discipline, and his discipline was to pass upon a sinning person, or had a design of charity, his duty met with the infirmities of a man, and anger was its instrument, and the instrument became stronger than the prime agent, and raised a tempest and overruled the man; and then his prayer was broken, and his thoughts were troubled, and his words went up towards a cloud, and his thoughts pulled them back again, and made them without intention; and the good man sighs for his infirmity, but must be content to lose the prayer, and he must recover it, when his anger is removed, and his spirit is becalmed, made even as the brow of Jesus, and smooth like the heart of God; and then it ascends to heaven upon the wings of the holy dove, and dwells with God, till it returns like the useful bee, loaden with a blessing and the dew of heaven.

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CHAPTER V. On Style.

Style is defined by Dr. Blair, to be "the peculiar manner in which a writer expresses his thoughts by words. It is a picture of the ideas in the mind, and of the order in which they exist there." Buffon has more boldly and happily said, "Style is the man himself." Let two individuals write on the same subject. We see in their productions their peculiar modes of thinking—the extent of their knowledge—their tastes and their feelings. The portrait executed by the most skilful painter, does not more fully represent the countenance, than the productions of the pen exhibit the characteristics of the mind.

Consistently with this account of what is meant by style, the attention has been directed to thought as the foundation of good writing—to the nature and objects of literary taste, and to skill in the use of language. From what has been said on these different heads, it may easily be inferred, that there are some qualities of style, which are common in a greater or less degree to all good writers. But it must be obvious, that if style depend on the intellectual habits and acquirements—on the taste, and on skill in the use of language, each of which is possessed by different individuals in different degrees, there will be different modes of writing, which will characterize different individuals. Besides, there will be diversities in style arising from the subject and occasion. I purpose therefore in this chapter, to consider in three different sections, 1. The qualities of style common in some degree to all good writers; 2. The different

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modes of writing which characterize different individuals; 3. The kinds of style suited to some of the most common classes of writing. To this will be added some general directions for improvement in style.

SECTION 1. *On the qualities of a good style.*

CORRECTNESS as a quality of style, implies the use of words that are purely English in their true and proper sense, and the construction of phrases and sentences according to the rules of Grammar. Thus it is opposed to the Barbarism, or the use of foreign words; the Impropriety, or the use of English words in a wrong sense; and the Solecism, or Grammatical blunders. Enough has been said in the section on Verbal Criticism, to guard the writer against the two former of these; to prevent the latter, is the appropriate object of Syntax, and does not come within the limits of Rhetoric.

Attention to this quality of style, should be urged upon all those who would become good writers. It is equally necessary in all kinds of writing, and though it is not regarded as a high excellence, the absence of it is ever thought disgraceful. Incorrectness in the use of words and in the construction of sentences, like inaccuracies of pronunciation, is considered as evidence of careless intellectual habits and an unfinished education. There is also something of the nature of incivility, when a writer asks us for our attention, and addresses us in a language we cannot understand. Hence it is, that the faults which are opposed to correctness, are pardoned with least willingness, and furnish occasions to critics for raillery at the expense of guilty writers.

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The different feelings with which we regard an instance of incorrectness in conversation and in writing, are worth our attention. If in the ardour of conversation a word is improperly used, or a sentence wrongly constructed, we are ready to ascribe the incorrectness to the impetuosity and hurry of the thoughts, or to the rapidity of the expression, and we overlook it. Not so in writing. Here is time for reflection, for the due arrangement of the thoughts and the right modelling of the expression, and though one or two instances of incorrectness may be forgiven, yet if they are of frequent occurrence, their effect on our opinion of the writer is unfavourable.

It is unnecessary to repeat here what was said at the close of the section on Verbal Criticism, on the importance of familiarity with authors of reputation, that we may attain propriety in the use of words. But it is not amiss to urge the necessity of a critical knowledge of the rules and principles of syntax.

These rules, it is true, like those which direct in the choice of words, derive their authority from good usage, and the principles which they enjoin, may be learnt from the study of good models in writing; still they are valuable, since they direct the attention to those cases where there is most danger of errour, and give us the results to which those have been led who have carefully studied the subject. Let then an intimate knowledge of the principles and rules of syntax, be considered essential towards forming a good style.

Perspicuity is the next quality of a good style to be considered. It implies that the expressions used,

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be such as to convey, and clearly convey, the true meaning of the writer. Thus defined, it is opposed to ambiguity and obscurities of every kind, from whatever source they may arise.

In every system of Rhetoric, Perspicuity is dwelt upon as an essential quality of a good style. The argument by which its observance is enforced, is simple and unanswerable. We write to communicate to others our thoughts; and if we do not make ourselves understood, we fail of our object in writing. Neither is it enough, that by study, a meaning may be made out of the expressions that we use. The meaning of a passage should be so obvious, as not only to prevent mistake, but to become evident at the first glance —so evident, that we cannot help discerning it. On this point Quinctilian has happily observed, "Oratio in animum audientis, sicut sol in oculos, etiamsi in eum non intendatur, occurrat*" Perspicuity is a word of similar import with transparency, which is applied to air, to glass and to water, or to any substance, through which as a medium we are wont to look at objects. Now it is well known, that if there be any defect in the medium through which we look, so that we do but imperfectly discern the object of our survey, we are liable to be deceived in our estimation of it, our attention is also taken off from the object itself, and we are led to notice the want of perfect transparency—to account for it, and to judge of its effect on our view of the object before us. But on the other hand, if the medium be perfectly transparent, our un-

*The meaning of a discourse should strike the mind, as the light of the sun does the eyes, though they are not intently fixed upon it.

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divided attention is directed to the object itself; and while we see it distinctly and judge of it correctly, we think not of the medium through which it is viewed. This illustration admits of close application to style.

But the question may be asked; do not instances sometimes occur, in which a degree of obscurity is desirable? Are there not some delicate turns, or bold forms of expression, which lose nothing of their pertinency from the degree of obscurity which characterizes them? and may not a regard for delicacy, or even decency, sometimes prevent a distinct enunciation of a thought? To these inquiries it must be answered in the affirmative. Still such instances are but of rare occurrence, and upon examination of them it will generally be seen, that the thought intended to be conveyed, is rather left to be inferred from what is said, than obscurely expressed in the words themselves. The expression itself perspicuously conveys what it was designed to convey.

The following instance of a delicate turn of expression, happily illustrates this remark. Fontenelle in his address to Dubois, who was guardian to Louis xv. in his minority, says to him, "You will freely communicate to our young monarch that knowledge, which will fit him one day to govern for himself. You will strive with all your efforts to make yourself useless." This last phrase may be considered obscure. Fontenelle designed to say, "You will labour to impart so much knowledge to your ward, that your services will no longer be needed by him." But this is

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rather an inference from what is said, than what is conveyed in the words themselves. There is no obscurity as to the meaning of the expression itself. It is a singular fact, that a critic in remarking on this passage, asserted that no doubt Fontenelle said, or designed to say, useful instead of useless, and that the present reading is probably a typographical error. From such critics may we be delivered!

But another inquiry on this subject has arisen, May not a writer be too perspicuous, and not leave enough to exercise the ingenuity and reflection of his readers? This question has arisen from ascribing the weariness and disgust, which are felt in reading some productions, to a wrong cause. Some writers are minute to a fault. They mention every little circumstance in a narrative—state with formality common and trivial thoughts—supply every step of an argument, and dwell upon what the ingenuity of their readers could better have supplied; and such writers are always tedious. But our ennui and disgust in reading their works, do not arise from the perspicuity of their expressions, but from their saying what had better have been omitted. The fault is not so much in the manner of saying, as in what they say. Often also is it the case, that these prolix and minute writers add to their other faults that of obscurity, and leave us to labour and search after that, which when attained does not reward our exertions. When then a writer is complained of as too perspicuous, we may safely ascribe the fault to futility of thought, and not to excessive clearness of expression. We never com-

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plain that glass is too transparent, and no more can style be too perspicuous.

For the attainment of perspicuity as thus explained, distinctness and order in the thoughts, united with skill in the use of language, are essentially necessary. Let a writer's view of a subject be indistinct—let him but imperfectly understand what he would communicate to others, or let his thoughts be without method, and there will necessarily be indistinctness and confusion in his productions. This confusion of thought will betray itself in long involved sentences, made up of loose and redundant expressions, the meaning of which it is difficult and often impossible to divine. It sometimes seems as if the writer, aware of the indistinctness of his thoughts, would conceal it by the use of many words, thus hoping to throw the blame of obscurity either on his subject or on the discerning powers of his readers. Against violations of perspicuity arising from this source, the observance of what was enjoined in the first chapter of this work, will be a sufficient security. Let habits of patient, persevering and connected thinking be acquired, and it will seldom be the case, that a want of perspicuity will arise from confusion of thought. The violations of perspicuity which result from want of skill in the use of language, are either improprieties in the use of words, or faults in the composition of sentences. Rules and cautions to secure the writer against these, were fully stated in the chapter on that subject.

It was stated, when treating of the illustrations and ornaments of style, that when heterogeneous objects

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are brought together, a confused and disproportionate image will rise to the view of the mind. Here is another source of obscurity. Such attempts at illustration and ornament are called an affectation of excellence, and tend to darken and deform those objects, around which they are designed to throw light and beauty. It is unnecessary here to give examples of faults of this kind or to repeat what was before said. The remedy for such violations of perspicuity is improvement of the taste.

A good style, in addition to Correctness and Perspicuity, will be characterized by VIVACITY. This quality of style implies, that the thoughts are exhibited with distinctness before the mind of the reader, and in a manner which arrests and fixes his attention. It gives evidence that the writer is interested in the subject on which he treats, and springs from a desire to awaken the same interest in the minds of his readers. Viewed in this light, it is an effort on the part of the writer to supply in a written discourse, what is effected in conversation by the tones of the voice and the expression of the countenance. As it is a quality of high excellence, and conduces much to the success of the writer, the different circumstances which are conducive to its attainment, will be distinctly considered.

Vivacity is promoted by the happy choice of words. Under this head I mention,

1. The use of specific and appropriate terms in preference to those which are more general and extensive in their meaning, and of well chosen epithets.

The following passage, found in one of the Waverly

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Novels, affords opportunity for illustrating and establishing what is here stated.

The moon, which was now high and twinkled with all the vivacity of a frosty atmosphere, silvered the windings of the river, and the peaks and precipices which the mist left visible, while her beams seemed, as it were, absorbed bv the fleecy whiteness of the mist, where it lay thick and condensed; and gave to the more light and vapoury specks, which were elsewhere visible, a sort of filmy transparency resembling the lightest veil of silver gauze.

An inferior writer, describing the same scene, might have said,

The moon, which was now high and shone with all the brightness of a frosty atmosphere, lighted the windings of the river, and the tops and steep sides of the mountains which the mist left visible—while her beams seemed, as it were, absorbed by the whiteness of the mist, where it lay thick and condensed, and gave to the more light and vapoury little collections of mist, which were elsewhere visible, a sort of transparency resembling a veil of gauze.

In directing the attention to the diversities in the two forms of the preceding sentence, that we may discover wherein the superiority of the former consists, the use of the word *twinkled* for *shone* first occurs. Every one will allow, that the word *twinkled*, as here used, is more expressive than the word *shone;* since it not only conveys what is conveyed by the word *shone*, but something more. It informs us of the manner in which the moon gave forth her rays. The next instance is of the use of the word *vivacity* for *brightness*. The reason of our preference of the former, is the same as in the preceding case, though not so obvi-

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ous;—the word *vivacity* conveys to us more than the word *brightness.* There is a cheerfulness and animation in a wintry scene, lighted up by the rays of moonlight, which is well expressed by the word *vivacity*, but not brought to view in speaking of its *brightness.* In the same way, *silvered* instead of *lighted,* informs us of the manner in which the rays were reflected from the river. *Peaks and precipices,* mean the same as the *tops and steep sides of the mountains,* but they are preferred as terms appropriated to these objects. *Specks* also has the same meaning, since the connexion determines that specks of clouds are referred to, as the phrase *little collections of vapours,* but it is preferred, not only as shorter, but as exhibiting more distinctly the appearance of the clouds. It will be still further noticed, that in the second form of the passage, the epithets *fleecy*—applied to the whiteness of the mist—*filmy,* applied to transparency, and *silver* applied to gauze, are omitted. The effect of this omission, in each case, is to take away something, which, when expressed, added much to the distinctness of the view.

From the preceding examination of the different forms of the passage used for illustration, the following inferences may be made.

1. That specific terms and phrases, are to be preferred to those more general in their signification. By a specific word or phrase, is meant a word or phrase used in comparatively a definite and limited sense. This distinction between specific and generic terms, is fully explained in books on Logic. It is also there

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stated, that a specific term conveys a more full and distinct meaning to the mind, than that conveyed by a generic term; and hence the use of such terms conduces to vivacity of expression. Of the instances mentioned, *shone* is the generic term and *twinkled* the specific. *Vivacity*, as expressing the appearance of a scene, is a specific term in relation to *brightness*. *Silvered* is specific in relation to *lighted*.

2. That when words have been appropriated to particular objects, as their signs, it is better to use such words, than to convey the same meaning in more general terms. It gives a more definite view to the mind to speak of *peaks and precipices* than of *the tops and steep sides of mountains*, and of *specks* than of *little collections of mist*.

3. That the use of well chosen epithets contributes much to the vivacity of style. So much depends on the successful use of this class of words, that I shall bring forward several examples, illustrating the different ways, in which they produce the effect here ascribed to them.

Epithets increase the distinctness of the view,

1. By directing the attention to some striking and characteristic quality of the object, with which they are connected.

EXAMPLE. The wheeling plover ceased
Her plaint.

In this example, the epithet *wheeling*, directs our attention to that kind of motion, which is characteristic of the species of bird which is mentioned. By thus bringing before our minds a characteristic property

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of an object, the distinctness of our conception of that object is aided.

2. By directing the attention to those qualities of objects, which are most obvious in the view taken of them.

Example.—Happiness is found in the arm chair of dozing age, as well as either in the sprightliness of the dance, or the animation of the chase.

In this example, the epithet *dozing*, brings before the mind that characteristic of age, which the writer designed should be prominent, when speaking of the happiness found at this period of life. In this way, it increases the distinctness of the reader's view, and leads him more fully to feel the force of what is asserted.

3. By leading the mind to trace out illustrative comparisons.

Example.—I have felt the bitter satire of his pen.

The epithet *bitter* is literally applied to that which is an object of the sense of taste. By its application to an object of a different kind, the mind is led to trace out an illustrative comparison. Consequently in this way the distinctness of the reader's conception of the object, to which the epithet is applied, is increased.

4. By affording a more full description of an object.

Example.—The rays of the setting sun were just gilding the grey spire of the church.

The epithet *grey* in this example, might have been omitted, or a different word, as dark or blue, might

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have been substituted for it, and the proposition would have been true. Still the effect of its use is favourable, since the mind has more definitiveness in its view of the object, on which it fixes its attention. Every spire must have some colour, and the mention of this colour, whatever it may be, aids the mind in the distinct conception of the object to which it belongs. It is in this way then, that an epithet, by a more full description, aids the distinctness of the view.

Under the head of a happy choice of words as conducive to vivacity, I mention,

2. The use of language in a figurative manner. While giving examples in illustration of this position, I shall direct the attention to what are called tropes or figures of language.

An ambition to have a place in the registers of fame, is the Eurystheus, which imposes heroic labours on mankind.

In this example, Eurystheus, the name of an individual, is put for a class of men. The same idea would have been expressed, had the word *taskmaster* been used. But by introducing the word *Eurystheus*, besides the pleasure derived from the classical allusion, a more distinct idea of what is imposed by ambition on its slaves, is given to the mind. This is an instance, where the individual is put for the species, and is a form of the synecdoche.

When we go out into the fields in the evening of the year, a different voice approaches us.

The word *evening*, which is properly applied only to the close of the day, is here used in a more ex-

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tended signification. Instead of being a specific, it becomes a general term. In the same manner, we speak of the evening of life. In this example, besides the increased distinctness of view, there are pleasing images and associations connected with the close of the day, which are brought before the mind. This example may be classed under either the metaphor or synecdoche.

In the two examples now given, we have instances, where greater distinctness is given to the view, by using a word in a more general sense than that usually applied to it.

> O! 'tis a thought sublime, that man can force
> A path upon the waste.

In this passage, the word *waste* is used for *ocean*, a quality for a subject to which it belongs. This is called Synecdoche. From the connexion is seen at once the design and effect of the change. What is it that makes it difficult for man to force a path upon the ocean? Is it not because it is a vast desert—a wide spread waste, where all is trackless? How much then does it add to the vividness of our conception of what the author here says, that he fixes our attention on that quality, which he designs should be immediately in view, and on which his assertion is founded.

We wish, that labour may look up here, and be proud, in the midst of its toil.

In this example, the abstract is used for the concrete—labour for the labourer. This is called Synecdoche, and its tendency is to increase the distinctness of our view. In reading the word labourer, there

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are many circumstances which rise to the view of the mind. We think of the man, his station in life, and the relations he sustains; but in the use of the abstract term, our attention is directed to the humble and wearisome occupation.

All hands engaged the royal work grows warm.

The word *hands* in this example is used to signify men. It may be considered either as a synecdoche, when a part is put for the whole, or a metonymy, when the instrument is put for the agent. In either case, it directs the attention to what the writer designed should be a prominent circumstance.

Many other examples might be given, in which the attention is in different ways directed to the most prominent circumstance. One caution is necessary in all attempts of this kind—that the whole form of the expression be suited to the design of the writer. If it had been said, that the waste dashes and foams, that we wish labour may regain its health, and that all hands walked out, the expressions would at once strike us as faulty.

The last fond look of the glazing eye, turning to us even from the threshold of existence.

In this example, the word *threshold*, which is usually applied to the extreme part of the passage to a building, is applied to the close of life. As the foundation of this change in its application is resemblance, the figure will at once be recognized as the metaphor. It is an instance, where that which is an object of thought, is represented to the mind by that which is an object of sense. This, as was remarked when treat-

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ing of the metaphor, aids the distinctness of the view, and what was there said need not be repeated.

It is curious to get at the history of a monarch's heart, and to find the simple affections of human nature throbbing under the ermine.

The word *ermine*, is here used for majesty, or royal estate. The ermine is the dress of royalty—it is the symbol which indicates its presence. Here then the sign is put for the thing signified. This is an instance of the metonymy. We notice also, that it is of the same nature as the preceding example—that which is an object of thought, is represented by that which is an object of sense. The same favourable effect on the distinctness of our conception, is also exerted.

2. Vivacity is often attained by a departure from the common arrangement of the words in a sentence.

Every language has some manner of arranging the words of a sentence, which, from the frequency of its occurrence, may be called its common mode of arrangement. Especially is this true of the English language, in which the grammatical construction is often made to depend on the juxtaposition of the words. That vivacity of expression is caused by departing from this common arrangement, is learnt from the following examples.

Peter, observing the grammatical order, would have said to the lame man who asked alms, "I have no silver nor gold to give thee." But how much more vivacity is there in the expression, "Silver and gold I have none." In the same manner, our Saviour following the common order would have said, "The pure in

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heart are blessed." But by departing from this order, he has conveyed the same thought with increased force and vivacity—"Blessed are the pure in heart".

In these and other expressions of the same kind, it is not difficult to account for the effect of the change in the order of the words on the vivacity of the expression. What is most prominent in the mind, is thus made to occupy the first place in what calls forth the attention. The imploring look of the beggar had asked for silver and gold, and Peter in his answer discovers, that he fully knew the meaning of that look, and lets the attention first rest on that, which is first in the mind's view. In the same manner, it is to the blessedness of the pure in heart, that the Saviour would direct the attention, and this is effected by the arrangement of the words in his declaration.

The alteration of the arrangement of the words for the attainment of vivacity of expression, is not confined to words of primary importance in a sentence. It is extended to adverbs and conjunctions, and the whole class of secondary words. It is on the same principle also, that in the arrangement of the clauses and members of complex sentences, that clause or member, which is most prominent in the view of the mind, is made to hold a conspicuous place.

3. Vivacity is promoted by the omission of unnecessary words and phrases.

This is what is called Precision, and is opposed both to Tautology, or the repetition of the same sense in different words, and to Pleonasm, or the use of superfluous words. The nature of precision may be learnt from the following examples.

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It is clear and obvious, that religious worship and adoration, should be regarded with pleasure and satisfaction by all men.

It is obvious, that religious worship should be regarded with pleasure by all men.

He sat on the verdant green, in the umbrageous shade of the woody forest.

He sat on the green in the shade of the forest.

He succeeded in gaining the universal love of all men.

He succeeded in gaining the love of all men.

They returned back again to the same city from whence they came forth.

They returned to the city whence they came.

In the corrected forms of these examples, those words are omitted, which are redundant, or add nothing to the meaning of the sentence. That the effect of these alterations on the vivacity of the style is favorable, will be readily allowed. As a general rule it may be said, that the fewer the words used, provided perspicuity be not violated, the greater will be the vivacity of the sentence.

It may occur, that there are instances, where the repetition of words nearly synonymous in their meaning, adds force and strength to the expression. Of this many examples are to be found in tragedies, and wherever exhibitions of strong feelings are made. Such is the following passage;

Oh Austria!
Thou slave, thou wretch—thou coward,
Thou little valiant, great in villainy,
Thou ever strong upon the strongest side.

This and similar expressions, are the language of

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passion. The mind is full—the feelings too strong to find utterance, and we may truly say, that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. These passionate expressions are of course free from the laws, by which in more sober compositions we should be governed.

It is important here to remark, that in reviewing our writings for the purpose of striking out redundant words and phrases, we should remember, that every expletive is not to be struck out. There are some, which, instead of impairing, increase the vivacity of an expression ; and others, the meaning of which we can hardly define, that cannot be omitted without giving an air of stiffness and awkwardness to the sentence. Of the former *do* in the following declaration of Othello is an example ;

Perdition seize thee, but I *do* love thee.

Of the same nature are the redundant forms of speech which are found in ancient writers ;—" I have seen with mine eyes." " I have heard with mine ears."

Of an example, where the removal of an expletive endangers the smoothness of the style, the many sentences in which the expletive *there* is found, may be mentioned.

4. Vivacity is sometimes attained by the omission of conjunctions and the consequent division of the discourse into short sentences.

A single example will shew what is intended by this remark.

As the storm increased with the night, the sea was lashed into tremendous confusion, and there was a fear-

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ful sullen sound of rushing waves and broken surges, while deep called unto deep.

The storm increased with the night. The sea was lashed into tremendous confusion. There was a fearful sullen sound of rushing waves and broken surges. Deep called unto deep.

In the second form of this example, the conjunctions are omitted; and instead of one long sentence, as in the first form, we have several short sentences. The effect on the vivacity of the passage will be perceived by every one. The reason of the increased vivacity is also obvious. What is thus expressed in short sentences, stands out more prominent and distinct to the view. There is also more of conciseness, since all unnecessary words are omitted, especially those which are injurious to vivacity. But it is not here meant, that short sentences are always to be preferred to long ones. The most general direction that can be given on this subject is, that there should be variety. Long and short sentences should be intermingled, since the continuance of either for a length of time is tedious and disgusting. Besides, it is sometimes the case, that conjunctions cannot be omitted without danger to perspicuity, which as a quality of a good style ranks higher than vivacity. But when conjunctions may be better omitted than expressed, as in the example given, and when the division into short sentences is not continued too far, such a division of a discourse is to be recommended as conducive to vivacity.

5. Vivacity is sometimes attained by the use of certain forms of sentences, which might in distinction be

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called figures of sentences. Of these I mention the Climax, Antithesis, Exclamation, and Interrogation. Some examples with accompanying remarks will be given.

The following instance of the Climax is from a writer against infidelity.

Impose upon me whatever hardships you please; give me nothing but the bread of sorrow to eat; take from me the friends in whom I had placed my confidence; lay me in the cold hut of poverty and on the thorny bed of disease; set death before me in all its terrors; do all this, only let me trust in my Saviour and I will fear no evil—I will rise superiour to affliction—I will rejoice in my tribulation.

In this example, and in other sentences of a similar construction, one clause is accumulated upon another, each surpassing in importance and power the preceding, till it seems as if nothing could resist their united force. As an illustration, I would refer to a deep and full flowing river, opposed to whose current some obstacle has been placed. The resisted waters are heaped on each other, and each successive wave brings an addition to their power, till the collected mass can no longer be withstood—the obstacle is swept away, and the river resumes its course with the rapidity and momentum of a torrent.

There can be no doubt, that this form of sentence is highly conducive to vivacity. It should however be but rarely introduced, and never except when it seems required by the occasion and subject. It is evidence of an excited mind, and should seem to result from this excitement. If the subject do not require it

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—if the form of sentence do not have its foundation in the thought itself, it will have the air of something artificial; and instead of exerting an influence favourable to vivacity, it will have a different effect.

Of the Antithesis, I give the following examples. The subject is the steam engine.

It can engrave a seal, and crush masses of obdurate metal before it; draw out without breaking a thread as fine as gossamer, and lift up a ship of war like a bauble in the air. It can embroider muslin and forge anchors —cut steel into ribands, and impel loaded vessels against the fury of the winds and waves.

A second example, more finished in its composition, is from Beattie on poetry.

In the crowded city and howling wilderness; in the cultivated province and solitary isle; in the flowery lawn and cragged mountain; in the murmur of the rivulet and in the uproar of the ocean; in the radiance of summer and gloom of winter; in the thunder of heaven and in the whisper of the breeze; he still finds something to rouse or sooth his imagination, to draw forth his affection and employ his understanding.

This form of sentence is founded on the principle of opposition or contrast. A figure in black is never more distinctly seen, than when placed upon a white ground-work. Campbell has very happily illustrated the effect of Antithesis, by an allusion to a picture, where the different objects of the group are not all on one side, with their faces turned the same way, but in which they are made to confront each other, by their opposite position. He says, that in such instances, there is not only the original light which is suited to

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each object, but that also which is reciprocally reflected from the opposed members. In the examples of the Antithesis that have been given, it will be noticed, that there is a balancing of the clauses: Not only is there opposition in the thought, but in the form and length of the clauses in which this opposition is expressed. In connexion with this remark, the caution against the appearance of an artificial construction, which was given in reference to the Climax, may be repeated. Let the form of the sentence always arise from the thought itself, and not be the result of an attempt after vivacity. Of the two examples given, though the latter is more perfect and finished, the former is to be preferred as more natural and easy.

The Interrogation and Exclamation are the language of passion. At least, they give evidence of an excited mind. Where the former is used, the writer seems so impressed with the truth of what he asserts, that he is not content to state it in the cold form of a proposition, but utters it in a manner, that challenges any one to regard it with doubt. The Exclamation is to be regarded as the mere burst of feeling.

Examples of these two forms of sentences will rarely be found in the productions of good writers. And when they do occur, their introduction will appear natural and easy. Writers of inferior order sometimes attempt to give an air of animation and feeling to their style by the use of them, but such artificial means must fail of success, and by the man of good taste will ever be regarded with disgust.

Though several circumstances have thus been men-

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tioned as conducive to vivacity of style, it should be remembered, that the foundation of this quality of style is in the mind of the writer. What has been mentioned as conducive to its attainment, are but the different ways in which the excited feelings manifest themselves. The best direction then, which can be given for the attainment of vivacity of style, is to become interested in the discussion of the subject itself.

Euphony, or smoothness of sound, is the next quality of a good style to be considered. This is attained by the use of such words, as in themselves, and in their succession in the sentence, are grateful to the ear.

There can be no doubt, that this quality of style is acquired more by imitation, than by the observance of rules. Hence any directions for its attainment, are but of little practical importance. Still it may be useful for the writer to remember, that the intermingling of long and short syllables, the frequent occurrence of open vowel sounds, and the avoiding of those successions of consonants which are difficult of utterance, are favourable to smoothness of style. He should know also, that certain successions of syllables are well suited to that cadence, or falling of the voice, which marks the close of a sentence. And as a general remark it may be said, that what it is easy to read, is smooth in its sound to the ear. But the best and most simple practical direction which can be given is, to attune the ear by the frequent reading aloud of those writings in which this quality of style is found.

It should make no difference with respect to the attention paid to the smoothness of style, that our wri-

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tings are designed to be silently read, and not pronounced aloud. So closely is the sound of words associated with their appearance to the eye, that though no voice is uttered in reading them, they are mentally pronounced, and the ear passes its judgment on the smoothness of their sound.

The attention of writers is rarely directed to this quality of style any further, than to the avoiding of faults. But it is sometimes found to that extent, that it becomes a positive excellence and a high recommendation. The following sentence of Sterne, has been pronounced one of the most musical in our language.

The accusing spirit, which flew up to Heaven's chancery with the oath, blushed as he gave it in, and the recording angel, as he wrote it down, dropped a tear upon the word, and blotted it out forever.

The epithet natural, is frequently applied to style. Our language wants a noun to express the quality here implied. Simplicity is sometimes used, but as this word is more frequently found in a different sense, I shall introduce the term naturalness.

NATURALNESS, as a quality of style, implies that a writer in the choice of his words—in the form of his sentences—in the ornaments he uses, and in his turns of thought and expression, commends himself to every man of good sense and good taste, as having pursued the course best suited to his subject and occasion. In this way it is opposed to affectation of every kind. But the following illustrations will aid in more fully stating in what sense the word is used.

When we look on some of the beautiful remains of

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ancient statuary, we pronounce them natural in their appearance. By this expression we mean nothing more, than that their appearance is such as, in our opinion, it should be—such as is in consonance with our experience and observation. There is no violent contortion of the features, no forced attitude with the design of producing effect, but the image stands and appears as a man should do, in the circumstances and situation in which it is placed. In the same manner, we say of a graceful dancer, who from long practice has learned to move gracefully and apparently without effort or rule, that he moves naturally, and we mean the same as in the former instance. Now should we say of the image, that there is naturalness in its appearance, and of the dancer, that there is much naturalness in his movements, we should use the word in the same sense in which it is here applied to style. The writer who has naturalness of style, expresses himself in that easy, unlaboured manner, which commends itself to our favour. He selects and uses his words, and forms and connects his sentences, just as we should suppose any man might do, who should write on the same subject—just as we think perhaps we could and should do, unless we attempt to imitate him. We seem to hear him thinking aloud, and his thoughts flow forth to us in the same order, and with the same clearness, with which they have sprung up in his own mind. He appears never to stop for a moment, to consider in what way he shall express himself, but thinks only of what he shall say. Let but one far-fetched expression, one forced com-

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parison, or one extravagant thought be found, and the charm is gone.

The inquiry may here be made, whether by naturalness of style may not be meant that mode of writing, which is suited to the intellectual habits and attainments of an author—a style in which a writer shews himself, whatever his intellectual character may be. To this it may be answered, that if this were the correct use of the term, naturalness, instead of denoting the highest excellencies of style, would often express its greatest deformities and faults. The word is here used as referring to a common standard, which is found in the mind of every man whose taste is not perverted and vitiated. This may be clearly shewn by referring to the illustration before introduced. Every one while looking on the performance of a graceful dancer, would say that his movements are easy and natural. But should one unacquainted with the rules and practice of the art attempt to dance, his movements might be natural to him, but no one would think of applying to them the word natural, in the same sense as in the former instance. In the same way, a manner of writing may be natural to a writer, when we should not think of ascribing to him the merit of naturalness of style.

This illustration may be still further continued, with the view of shewing in what way this quality may be obtained. Were it asked, in what way the awkward dancer may attain the easy and graceful movements of the other, it would be answered, by pursuing a similar course of instruction and practice.

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Some, either from the form of their bodies, or their previous habits, would acquire these easy and natural movements more readily than others, and a few perhaps might need but little practice, and little aid from the rules of the art. But these would be regarded as exceptions from what is more generally the case. In the same manner, to acquire naturalness of style, there is need of instruction and practice. A few, either from the original constitution of their minds, or their previous habits of thought and conversation, fall into it easily. Others, in their first attempts, are far from it, and it is with them the fruit of long practice in writing and a careful observance of rules. It may appear paradoxical, that what is called natural should be the result of art and labour. But this difficulty is removed, if we remember, that the object of this art and labour is to bring us back to nature.

Naturalness of style is not confined to any species of writing. It is found alike in the most artless narrations, and in the most elevated descriptions—in the story that is open to the understanding of a child, and in the sublime raptures of Milton. The best examples of it are among ancient writers. This is the spell which binds us to the page of Homer, of Sophocles and Theocritus, of Xenophon and Herodotus. And a reason may easily be assigned, why naturalness of style should be found in these ancient writers. They lived, as it were, near to nature. With them all is originality. Their thoughts and expressions are their own. With most modern writers it is otherwise. It

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is often remarked, that in modern times there are few original ideas. We tell in different words what has often been told before, and, that we may avoid a coincidence of expression, we leave the natural, and seek after the more laboured forms of speech. Hence it is, that less of naturalness of style is found in modern writings.

SECTION 2. *On the modes of writing, which characterize the productions of different individuals.*

It is the design of this section to treat of the different modes of writing, which characterize the productions of different authors. These, it has been stated, arise from diversities in their intellectual habits, in their tastes, and in their skill in the use of language. They are denoted by different epithets, which are applied to style; and while the meaning of these epithets is explained, the attention should be directed by the instructer to such examples as furnish illustrations.

It is sometimes said of a style, that it is IDIOMATIC AND EASY. These epithets are generally found in connexion, and where the former is justly applied, the latter denotes what is a natural consequence. A style which is idiomatic, will appear to have been easily written, and will be easily understood; and this is all that is meant by ease as a quality of style. By an idiomatic style, is meant a manner of writing, in which, in addition to purity in the use of words, the phrases, forms of sentences, and arrangement of the words and clauses, are such as belong to the English language. Every language, as has been already stated, has peculiarities of this kind by which it is characterized;

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and the style in which they abound, is said to be idiomatic.

Dr. Paley's style may be mentioned as idiomatic. The following sentence is from his writings; "A bee amidst the flowers of spring is one of the most cheerful objects that can be looked upon." This expression is just what we should have used in conversation for conveying the same thought. A writer whose style is less idiomatic, would have said, "Of the different objects, which amongst the flowers of spring, arrest the attention, the bee is the most cheerful that can be looked upon." This mode of stating the thought is more formal and stately, but less easy and idiomatic. In another place, when speaking of the fry of fish that frequent the margins of our rivers and lakes, he says, "They are so happy, that they do not know what to do with themselves." Every English reader fully knows, and I may say feels, what is here expressed. It is a form of expression of every day's occurrence, and its introduction shews the style of the author to be idiomatic.

It is not meant, that expressions like the last, would be proper on all occasions and subjects. We vary the forms of expression in conversation. In conversing on grave subjects, we should not use the lively and familiar forms of expression, which are suited to an hour of gaiety; and we should be equally far from imitating the stately and involved modes of expression, which characterize some other language. There are idiomatic expressions in English which are suited to the grave style, as well as those which are suited

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to the lively, and in the writings of Dr. Paley those of either kind are to be found when required by his subject.

There is danger, lest a writer, in seeking to be idiomatic, become careless in his style. We often use expressions in conversation, which are incorrect in construction, and obscure in their meaning. But they are understood from the accompanying look, or some attending circumstance, and the incorrectness is forgiven, because of the hurry of the moment. But when the same expressions are found in a written discourse, they are justly censured. An idiomatic style is most strictly correct in construction, and perspicuous in its meaning.

It has been said, that an idiomatic style is the style of conversation. Still it must be confessed, that there is hardly any one, who has not more formality in his writings, than in his familiar, oral intercourse. The distinction may be illustrated by referring to reading aloud. A good reader will, on the one hand, be far removed from artificial, or as they are called "reading tones;" and on the other, though his tones are natural, they will differ in some respects from the familiar tones of conversation. In the same manner, a style may be idiomatic, and rise in some degree above the most common forms of conversational intercourse.

An idiomatic style is always grateful to the reader. It requires no labour to understand a writer of this class. His forms of expression are those with which we are familiar—those which we use in the most art-

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less, free communication of our thoughts, and we collect his meaning from a glance at the sentence.

Lesson 10 of the Class Book is a good specimen of the idiomatic and easy style.

Opposed to the easy and idiomatic manner of writing, which has now been described, is the laboured style. This, as the epithet imports, appears to have been written with much pains on the part of the writer, and requires close attention and effort that it may be understood. The arrangement of the words and clauses is often inverted, and the whole composition of the sentence is artificial. A laboured style, when carried to excess, will be highly faulty. It will want perspicuity, smoothness, and naturalness. But it is often the case, that a style, which is in some degree laboured, has redeeming qualities which recommend it, and give some degree of reputation to a writer. The style of Dugald Stewart may be mentioned as an instance of this kind. His manner of writing is evidently laboured, but there are qualities to be found in it which save it from censure.

The epithets CONCISE AND DIFFUSE are often applied to style. It may be said generally, that these qualifying terms refer to the number of words used by a writer for conveying his thoughts; but these different kinds of style merit a more particular description.

A writer whose style is concise, expresses his thoughts in few words. There is a vividness and distinctness in his views, and he endeavours by a single and sudden effort to exhibit these views to others.

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His words are well chosen, and his turns of expression short and bold. No unnecessary expletive, no redundant phrase is found. Grammatical ellipses are common, and his sentences are usually short. The thought is presented in but one light, and much is left to be inferred. As to ornament, there is no room for it. Sometimes a short, plain comparison, or a bold metaphor is found. These however are always highly illustrative, and seem designed to save the necessity of a fuller statement.

A diffuse style is the opposite of the concise. The thought is expressed in comparatively many words. It is not meant by this, that a diffuse writer employs more words, than are of use in conveying his thoughts. A writer may be diffuse, and be free from the charge of Tautology and Pleonasm. But he does not, as in the former case, leave any thing to be supplied. The statement is not only clear, but full. He dwells on the thought presented, exhibits it in different lights, and enforces it by repetition in different language, with many and varied illustrations. His words are poured forth in a full uninterrupted stream, and his sentences, though long, are usually harmonious and flowing.

These different kinds of style are respectively suited to different subjects and occasions. The concise style is often used in short biographical notices, or what is sometimes called character-painting—in the detail of facts, and in proverbs and sententious remarks. The diffuse, on the contrary, is used in the statement and discussion of novel opinions, especially

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if on subjects that are uncommon. It is also well suited to discourses, which are designed to be delivered, and not to be read.

Lesson 6, in the Class Book, affords an example of the concise style, and Lesson 71 of the diffuse.

Forcible and vehement. We apply the epithet forcible, to a style of writing, which in a plain, distinct and irresistible manner, urges upon us the opinions and views of the writer. It is an evidence of excitement. The writer is interested in his subject, and is desirous that others may have the same feelings with himself. But it more especially implies a full persuasion of the truth and importance of what is said, and such an exhibition of the reasons of this persuasion, as cannot fail to produce conviction on the part of the reader. Hence it is dependent in a great degree on the intellectual habits, and implies a well disciplined mind—a mind accustomed to comprehensive, methodical and strong views of subjects. It requires also skill in the use of language, but derives little aid from what are called the ornaments of style.

When to sound and convincing arguments clearly and forcibly exhibited, is added a highly excited state of feeling, vehemence of style is the result. It is from this deeper current of feeling, implied by the latter term, that the shade of difference between a forcible and vehement style arises. This excitement of feeling may spring from the greater importance of the subject, or from the more intense interest felt in it by the writer. An able, political writer, in a production on an electioneering question, might be forcible in

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his style. But let this same writer be called to treat on some subject, deeply affecting the welfare of his country, and he becomes vehement.

These qualities of style are well suited to the discussion of political subjects; and in the past history of our country, especially about the time of our revolution, many examples are to be found. Among others the writings of Patrick Henry, of James Otis, and of the late President Adams, may be mentioned. Controversial writings on other subjects are also often forcible, and our age has furnished some good examples of the vehement style among divines. Chalmers may be mentioned as a writer of this class.

Opposed to the forcible and the vehement style, is that manner of writing which is called feeble and languid. A distinction may be made between these epithets, similar to that made between forcible and vehement. The former has reference to strength of reasoning, and energy of thought; the latter to the degree of excitement which is manifested. Hence it is, that a feeble and languid manner of writing is indicative of the whole character of the writer. The man whose style is feeble and languid, is usually slothful in his habits, and inefficient in his plans and conduct. His view of his subject is cold and indistinct. His words are general, and destitute of that vivacity which results from the use of more specific terms. His sentences are often long, and the clauses and members loosely connected. The parenthesis is much used; and not unfrequently we find at the close of a sentence an appendage, which is evidently designed to

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save the author the trouble of forming a new sentence.

Attempts after force and vehemence of style, when unsupported by strength of thought and real feeling, become rant and declamation. In such instances, instead of strong reasoning, we have confident assertions; and for clear impressive views of the subject, we have frequent repetitions and bold declarations of its clearness. Instead of being left ourselves to discern the depth of the writer's feelings, we are told how deeply he feels; and all the artificial helps of vivacity, as exclamation, interrogation, antithesis and climax, are called to his aid. But while force and vehemence of style, like a deep and powerful current, sweep every obstacle before them, rant and declamation are fitly represented by the broad and shallow stream, specious and noisy, but powerless.

Lesson 174 is an example of the forcible style, and the concluding part of Lesson 78 of the vehement.

Elevated and dignified. The foundations of an elevated style are laid in the thoughts. And these have more of originality and sublimity about them, than those which flow through the minds of less gifted men. There is also a fervour by which the writer seems to be urged onwards—not an impetuous and violent feeling, but calm and powerful.

Ordinarily in reading a production in an elevated style, our attention is too much engrossed by the thoughts to permit us to regard the language in which they are conveyed; and if at any time we stop with this object in view, it is but to feel and express

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our admiration. The words used, are those, which from the associations connected with them, are well suited to the feelings and thoughts that have possession of our minds. But the selection of these words seems not the result of effort and care. They have sprung up in the mind simultaneously with the thoughts themselves, and we regard them as the language in which the author ordinarily thinks and converses. The sentences are full and flowing, but at the same time unlaboured, and simple in their composition. There is also a uniformity about them, which is characteristic of an elevated style. In more common styles you will find here and there a striking thought, or a bold expression, while other parts are thrown in as subsidiary, or as connecting the more prominent thoughts. But in the elevated style, every sentence has its meaning and its importance. The whole abounds in thought, and there is a majesty and grandeur in the quiet but resistless power, with which it holds its undisturbed and even way.

We can hardly with propriety speak of the ornaments of an elevated style. This word implies something put on with the design of pleasing; but in the kind of style I am describing, figurative language, and all that is included under the head of ornament, seems rather to arise from a kind of inspiration, than from any design of pleasing; and the effect produced on the mind of the reader is a grateful exaltation of feeling. The definition which Longinus has given of sublimity, is in such instances happily exemplified. We seem to put ourselves in the place of the author, and

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as if the thought were our own, we glory in the grandeur and nobleness of the conception.

In applying the epithet *dignified* to style, there is a reference to true dignity, in distinction from the air of importance which sometimes assumes this name. Considered in this light, it is allied to the elevated style, but differs from it, in that there is less of ease and naturalness in its character. The attitudes and movements of dignified men, are often the results of design and study, and similar art and labour are found in the style of the dignified writer. He seems conscious, that he is treating of weighty matters, and laying down important conclusions, and there is something in his very air, which tells us it is a great work he is carrying on. Hence uncommon and learned words are chosen, and there is a stateliness and formality in his sentences. The phrase, which the idiomatic writer would select as most happily expressive of his meaning, the dignified writer rejects as beneath his style. Instead of distinctness and ease of expression, there are inversions and involutions of clauses. Many circumstances are introduced, which give preciseness to the meaning, but which break up the continuous flow of the sentence. A tiresome uniformity in the length and form of the sentence, is also found, giving to the whole production the appearance of the enunciation of successive distinct propositions.

The dignified style admits of ornament, and that of a high kind. But there is something of parade in its introduction. Instead of the sprightly metaphor, or well timed allusion, we have the protracted allegory,

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or the formal comparison. But then the images which are brought to view, are not only illustrative, but often ennobling and exalting. It is not a common pageant that passes before the mind, but one of those splendid scenes that can give pleasure to the great.

For examples of the elevated style, I may refer to the writings of Robert Hall of England, and of Dr. Channing of Boston. Of the dignified style, the philosophical writings of Dugald Stewart may be mentioned.

Unsuccessful attempts after the elevated or dignified manner of writing, result in what is called the pedantic or pompous style. A pedant is one fond of shewing book-knowledge; and a pedantic style is characterized by the use of such terms and phrases, as are obsolete, uncommon, or derived from the dead languages. The pompous style is usually associated with the pedantic, and is characterized by the use of long and sonorous words, by circumlocutions, by the frequent use of synonymes, and by the repetition of the same thought in different words. Instead of any further description of these kinds of style, it may be sufficient to refer to Weems' Life of Washington. There are plants, which in the language of husbandmen, grow rank in certain soils. They spread wide their branches, and are covered with thick foliage. But it is only after long and weary search, that any fruit can be found, and then it is not of sufficient value to repay the toil. These plants are apt emblems of the productions of pompous writers.

Neat and elegant. These epithets are applied

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to style with particular reference to what is called the turn of the expression. They denote also, especially the latter, the nature of the ornament used. We well understand their force, as they are applied to a production in the arts. By the application of the former to any article of ornament or use, we declare, that it is not only free from faults, but that it is executed in a manner that pleases us, and shows skill on the part of the artist. In applying the other epithet, we express admiration. The work is not only faithfully and skilfully executed, but in a manner which excels. They have the same meaning when applied to style. In saying that a style is neat, we mean that the turns of expression are such as happily convey the thoughts, and are well suited to the object and occasion. In saying that a style is elegant, we declare that there is the same happy and well adapted mode of conveying the thoughts, and to a degree that is uncommon.

The turn of the expression must necessarily depend, both on the choice of the words, and the composition of the sentence. It is also closely connected with the thought that is conveyed. Thus in the forcible and vehement style, we have bold turns of expression;—in the elevated and dignified, we have sublime and grand turns of expression. In the turns of expression in the neat style, there is a sprightliness and justness in the thoughts, and a vivacity and finish in the mode of conveying them. At the same time, the writer is careful to avoid every fault. The neat style, as thus explained, is ever pleasing, and to some classes of writing peculiarly well suited. But it dif-

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fers essentially from the easy and idiomatic style before described, in that it gives evidence of labour in its construction. It seems the result, to which mediocrity of talent has attained, by patient and praiseworthy exertions.

Elegance, as it has been stated, implies that which is choice and select. In this sense it may be applied to words, forms of sentences, and the various ornaments of style. In a more common use of the term as applied to style, it refers only to its ornaments, and in this use it will be more fully explained hereafter. A single passage, extracted from the writings of Buckminster, will enable the instructer to explain, and the student to perceive, what is meant by an elegant style, as the epithet is more extensively used, better than any description which can be given.

In the regions of the Swiss Alps, summits of bare granite rose all around us. The snow clad tops of distant Alps seemed to chill the moonbeams, that lighted on them; and we felt all the charms of the picturesque, mingled with the awe inspired by unchangeable grandeur. We seemed to have reached the original elevations of the globe, o'ertopping forever the tumults, the vices, and the miseries of ordinary existence, far out of the hearing of the murmurs of a busy world, which discord ravages and luxury corrupts.

The different kinds of style which have been described, have for the most part received their names from qualities dependent on the language and thoughts. In considering an author's manner of writing as addressed to the imagination, or as designed to please, we say that his style is PLAIN, or that it is

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ORNAMENTED. As the words obviously imply, the former of these epithets refers to a destitution of ornament, and the latter to its presence. But between an absolutely plain style and one highly ornamented, there are various degrees, and different epithets have been applied to different kinds of writing, according to the nature and amount of ornament used.

Instead however of attempting to explain these different epithets, I shall direct the attention to different authors, in whose writings the ornaments of style abound.

W. Irving, to whom his literary productions have given a deserved celebrity, may be first mentioned. Most of his works are addressed to the imagination, with the design of pleasing, rather than of instructing. This kind of writing, it has been stated, admits of much ornament, and the reader of the Sketch Book and of Bracebridge Hall, will find that his expectations of pleasure from this source, are not disappointed. But though in these writings there is a profusion of ornament, it is of that modest, chaste, unobtrusive kind, that never cloys. It does not dazzle the mind, nor fill it with admiration, but excites emotions more calm and permanent. It is either the unstudied metaphor, or the embellishing and illustrative comparison, which are always welcome, as they cast new light and beauty on the objects of our view. Sometimes also a metonymy, or a synecdoche, or a personification of the humbler kind, gives incrcased vivacity to the expression. In reading his works, we seem not to be passing through a region, where gorgeous pala-

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ces, artificial parks, and lakes, and shrubbery, are successively meeting our attention, till we are wearied by their uniform splendour; but it is rather a land of rural elegance, and we look upon the neat villas—the highly cultivated fields, with their hawthorn hedges, while over the whole country is spread in rich profusion, those simple but grateful ornaments, with which nature knows how to deck her own fields. I would then call the style of Irving, in reference to its ornament, simple and elegant;—simple, as free from all that is affected—elegant, as being choice in its selection of ornament. This is one of the most grateful forms of the ornamented style, and denotes both delicacy and refinement of taste.

As an example of an ornamented style, in which elegance is found, but not in connexion with simplicity, that of Alison may be mentioned. In his writings, as in those of Irving, there is profusion of ornament, and it must be said, that this is less acceptable in Sermons and Philosophical treatises, than in fictitious writings. There is also manifestly something of art in the ornaments of Alison's style. They have been put on, and are not a part of what they adorn. They are flowers that have been planted, and not those that have sprung up spontaneously. Still no one will deny, that Alison excels in the figurative use of language, and that the ornamental figures of style that he introduces, are often beautiful and striking; and he justly bears the name of an elegant writer.

The style of Phillips, the orator, affords an example of an ornamented style differing from those which

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have been mentioned. From the nature of his productions, we should expect to find in them figures of the bolder kind; and many splendid passages are found. But too often is it the case, that it is all splendour, mere shew without solidity. Many of his figures are figures of words, and nothing more. If we attempt to bring up before the mind the image he presents, and to see whether it be distinct and perfect, we too often find that we have something glittering before us, but it is without form or comeliness. His style may be called brilliant, but specious. We are ready to apply to it the common proverb, "It is not all gold that shines."

Hervey, the author of Meditations, is often mentioned as a florid writer. This epithet denotes a superabundance of ornament, and not of the choicest kind. His work is a mass of metaphors and comparisons. There is evidence of an active imagination, but it wants the guidance of taste. There is also ingenuity, but it manifests itself in strange conceits and far-fetched illustrations.

From these instances we learn what is meant by the epithets, simple, elegant, specious, and florid, as applied to style; and these epithets denote the most common qualities of those styles in which ornament abounds.

SECTION 3. *On modes of writing suited to different subjects and occasions.*

It has been the design of the preceding chapters to treat of the principles and rules of good writing. An examination of the different classes of literary produc-

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tions and of the style suited to them might form a second part of this work. All that will now be attempted is to give in a short section some practical directions, which may aid the writer in those kinds of composition which are most common. Such are Epistolary writings, Essays, Biographies, Argumentative Discussions, and Orations.

Epistolary writings are communications between individuals, and they serve as a medium both of friendly intercourse and of transacting the business of life. They hold a middle rank between the unrestrained flow and carelessness of conversation, and the preciseness and formality of dignified composition, approaching however nearer to the former, than to the latter.

Authors sometimes assume the form of letters in their publications, when nothing more than the form is designed to be used. Such letters, though addressed to individuals, are in fact written for the public, and dropping the address prefixed to them, differ in no respect from the essay or dissertation. These are not included in the class of writings I am now describing.

Letters of friendly intercourse should be written in an easy, artless style. Sprightliness of thought and vivacity of expression, are often well introduced; but the more formal ornaments of style, are not suited to this class of writings. At least it may be said, that such ornaments must be managed with uncommon skill, not to injure the simplicity that is required. In the conversation of the man of taste and intelligence,

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we look for a correct use and happy choice of words, and for an easy, idiomatic and simple phraseology, avoiding alike the cant of the vulgar, the verbosity of the pedant, and the sickening refinement of the sentimentalist. The same propriety in words, the same artlessness in expression, are required in his letters, with the additional care which must always be caused by the thought *manent scripta.*

The letter of business should have strictness of method and perspicuity of style. The objects of the letter should be prominently stated, and nothing unnecessary be introduced.

It is not sufficient to insist upon a simple and artless style, and to caution the writer against a stiff and laboured manner of composition. There is danger of negligence and carelessness. Some, presuming on the good nature of their friends, write their letters in a hasty, disconnected manner as to the thoughts, while their words are often incorrectly used, and their expressions are slovenly. Such may be called rattlers. They run on from one subject to another—their words and sentences but half written out, and their letter, from its beginning to its close, is a perplexing enigma. To such a letter, the lines of Cowper may be applied,

> "One had need
> Be very much his friend indeed,
> To pardon or to bear it."

It may be added, that the man who can write better, is thus doing injustice to himself. An improper expression in conversation may be forgotten, an awk-

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ward movement may be overlooked, but a carelessly written letter is an abiding witness against us.

English literature furnishes many good models of this species of composition. Cowper may be mentioned as a writer who excels. His solid common sense, his judicious reflections, his lively wit, his playful poetical fancy, his warm affections, his melancholy but deeply interesting feelings of piety, all conspire to give a charm to his letters. Add to this a style chaste, simple, and sometimes elegant, and it is no wonder, that his productions of this kind are ever read with interest.

Essays are writings, which are usually addressed to the public periodically, and which are brief in their extent and humble in their pretensions. The Essayist does not promise a full view of his subject; nor does he seek to exert a strong influence over the minds of his readers. His arrangement is professedly desultory; his arguments are probabilities and inferences from facts that are stated. He makes no appeal to the passions, but tells his story and leaves his reader to his own feelings and reflexions. The characteristics which recommend writings of this kind to public attention, are the following.

1. The thoughts should have novelty and importance. It can hardly be expected, that readers will direct their attention to so humble a class of writings as the Essay, unless they are to be compensated, either by the pleasure of novelty or an increase of valuable knowledge. Hence the difficulty of ably conducting periodical publications. To do this success-

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fully, requires a mind well furnished with rich and varied stores of knowledge. Mr. Addison has said, that it is more difficult to write a series of periodical essays, than to compose a book on some definite subject; and he spoke from experience. He is said to have spent much time in preparation, and to have collected three manuscript volumes of interesting facts and references, before he commenced the writing of the Spectator. The issuers of proposals for publishing periodical essays, who with limited resources are wont to make ample promises, should know this anecdote of Addison.

2. The flow of thought in the essay should be discursive and animated. To writings of this kind, the maxim *ars est celare artem*, may well be applied. Every well disciplined mind will form its plan, but as it has been already remarked, it is not necessary that this plan be formally stated. Much skill is also required in the frequent transition from one thought and view of the subject to another. By dwelling too long on one part the production becomes tedious, by passing too rapidly from one to another, it appears sterile and abrupt. Wit and sprightliness are also expected in the essay. We look for the efforts of the active, playful mind, rather than for the deep-laid and well matured reflections of the philosopher. Sprightliness and discursiveness are so essential to productions of this kind, that those, who from their intellectual habits, or from the constitution of their minds, are destitute of these qualities, should abstain from all attempts in this species of writing.

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3. The style of the essay may be easy and idiomatic, or more laboured and neat. I have already explained, what is denoted by these qualifying terms.

The absence of those adventitious causes, which excite a strong interest and rouse the attention, is a reason, why writings of this class should in some degree be addressed to the imagination. There are few minds willing to seek after knowledge, unless some peculiar interest in the subject of inquiry, or some striking charms in its representation, allure them to the task. Hence, so far as is consistent with the calm and simple manner of the essay, the allusions should be frequent and happy, the illustrations pertinent, and the figurative expressions profuse and pleasing.

In the literature of no country, do we find more perfect and numerous specimens of essay writing, than in that of England. From some favourable circumstances, this species of composition early became popular in that country. The minds of those who devoted to it their time and talents, were well suited to the employment, while the state of morals, manners, and literature, afforded fit and copious subjects. Hence the Spectator was well received, had a wide circulation, and became a part of the literature of the country. Numerous, and some of them able periodical publications of this class, have since been issued and well received.

Biography is a branch of Historical writing, being designed to place before us the characters and important events in the lives of distinguished individuals. It is a kind of writing, which from the subjects on which

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it is employed, excites much interest. The reader expects to see how one has conducted in scenes the same perhaps, or similar to those, with which he himself is conversant. At least, he is to have exhibited before him the workings of the human mind, the views and feelings of one of like passions with himself. He is to learn something of the private character, and of the retired hours of one, who as an actor in the more public scenes of life, or as an author and a scholar, has been the object of his admiration. The following practical directions may be given, to aid those who attempt compositions in this class of writings.

1. In the selection of incidents to be narrated, the writer of Biography should restrain himself to what is closely connected with the subject of his memoirs. In this way, the expectations of the intelligent reader will be met. He does not take up a biography, that he may read a collection of anecdotes, or that he may acquaint himself with the history of a particular period. He expects to learn the history and views of an individual, and to acquaint himself with the history of the times, so far only as this individual is concerned.

The effect of neglecting the caution now given, and of introducing notices of other individuals, merely because they lived at the same time, and narrations of other events, because they happened at the same period, is to render a biography tedious and uninteresting.

2. A second direction is, to present a just statement of facts, and a fair view of character—

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it is a production addressed both to the understanding and the imagination. Instead then of selecting a subject, which may afford opportunity for contesting some disputed point, it should be one which requires a statement and elucidation of interesting facts and principles—a course of calm, dignified and persuasive reasoning. At the same time, it should allow of fine writing. There should be opportunity for description and pathos; for historical and classical allusions and illustrations, and for comprehensive and ennobling views. It should require also unity of plan. The style of orations should be elevated and elegant. The forms of expression should be manly and dignified, and at the same time characterized by force and vivacity. The ornament should be of a high kind—such as ennobles and exalts the subject. Diffuseness, as has been before remarked, is also desirable.

In concluding the attempt, that has now been made, to state the principles and rules of composition in English, I would enforce the following general directions for forming a good style;

1. Be familiar with the best models of style.

In observing this injunction, the attention should no doubt be principally directed to the best writers of the present day. There are peculiarities of style, which characterize the productions of different periods, no less than of different individuals, and to be esteemed a good writer, some regard must be paid to the literary taste of the age. The enquiries may here arise, what is the character of the prevalent style of our times, and where may the best models of writing be

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found? With the view of more fully answering these enquiries, I shall here introduce a short account of some prominent changes in the style of English writers.

If we go back to the time of Hooker and Barrow and Taylor, we find prevalent an energetic, rough and plain manner of writing. The few literary men of that period, were men of thought. Having but few books and those difficult of access, they relied chiefly on the resources of their own minds. Hence their conceptions were distinct, and their expressions are marked by the freshness and strength of originality of thought. At the same time, from their familiarity with Greek and Latin literature, and from their occasionally composing in the latter of these languages, they acquired a harshness and stiffness of expression. Hence the style of the period may be characterized as forcible and often elevated, but at the same time harsh and labored.

Another period in the history of English style, worthy of our particular notice, is the reign of Queen Ann. The writers of that golden age were finished scholars—men of knowledge, wit and refinement, and we admire their skill in the use of words, their rich figurative language, and the smoothness and harmony of their periods. We are pleased also with the thoughts which they convey to us, and with the allusions and happy illustrations, by which these thoughts are embellished. At the same time, we discern a marked difference between these writers and those before mentioned, in their intellectual resources and energies. There is less of boldness of conception, less of com-

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prehensiveness and exaltation of view, less of freedom of expression. The style of this latter period seems formed on one uniform model, and the different writers exhibit not so much the characteristic marks of their own peculiar manner of thinking, as they do a conformity to some established standard.

That the influence of the polish and refinement of this period was most favourable, cannot be doubted. English style acquired an ease and elegance, which it had never possessed. Its forms of expression were idiomatic, its ornament had simplicity and beauty. The permanent influence of this progress, has been felt in the improvement of our language itself.

But if we allow that the improvements in our language, made at this period, and the ease and beauty of expression introduced, compensate for want of boldness and vigour of thought and expression, it must still be allowed, that the effect of the close imitation of these polished writers was injurious. For many years following the period of which we have last spoken, there was manifestly too great ambition among writers, to form their style on the model of Addisonian ease and simplicity. Hence freedom from faults, a negative sort of excellence, was the object at which they aimed; and in their painful efforts for polish and refinement of style, they forgot to think for themselves, and nobly speak their thoughts. Such, with few exceptions, was the character of English writers, for many years following the time of Addison.

Within the last twenty years, another change in English style has been gradually making progress.

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The nerveless polish and excessive refinement of the former period, have been giving place to directness and manliness and strength of expression. In these traits of style, we seem to be going back to the times of Hooker and Barrow. But the improvements of the intervening periods, have not been lost. Our language has become more definite in the use of words, more harmonious in its sounds, and more copious in its terms.

The good writer of the present day, seems ever to write under a degree of excitement. He is full of his subject, and his attention is directed to what he shall say, rather than to the manner of conveying his thoughts. His expressions have an air of originality about them. There is no toilsome selection of words, no labored composition of sentences, no high wrought ornament, but the words, and sentences, and ornaments, are such as most naturally and obviously present themselves to the excited mind. If a word is more expressive of his meaning than any other, he uses it, though it may never have been introduced to so good company before. If a form of a sentence occurs to him, which is more easy and idiomatic than any other, he adopts it, and stops not to enquire whether it end in a trisyllable, or a monosyllable. If a figurative expression strikes him as pertinent and happy, he uses it, and leaves it for others to examine, whether it be found in the numbers of the Spectator, and have the authority of classical writers for its support. In short, instead of imitating the style of any other writer as his guide, he has a

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style of his own, and observes the maxim of Horace in the literal use of the term,

Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri.

The most characteristic faults of the prevalent style of the present day, are incorrectness and affectation of strength. Though we would not condemn the writer, who, borne along by the rapid and impetuous flow of his thoughts, disdains the restraints of minor rhetorical rules, yet there are certain limits, beyond which no one can pass without censure. No one can be esteemed a good writer, whose manner of writing is not perspicuous. Hence no rule, the observance of which is essential to perspicuity, can be violated, without the charge of incorrectness. If a writer uses words in a foreign or improper signification, no excellence can atone for these defects. If in the composition of his sentences, he neglects to observe those rules, which require unity and a right arrangement of the several clauses and parts to that degree which produces obscurity, he cannot receive the name of a good writer. It is too often the case, that modern writers, in the haste and ardour with which they compose, are guilty of violation of these rules.

The other fault which has been mentioned, is an affectation of strength of expression. This arises from the propensity, so natural to man, of going to extremes. Because strength is a characteristic of the style of the good writer of the present day, many are evidently laboring hard, through their whole composition, for its attainment. They are ever seeking after new and forcible forms of expression, and searching for striking

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and dazzling illustrations. What is thus unnatural and forced, must ever be disgusting.

In answer to the enquiry, where those models of writing are to be found, the study of which may aid in acquiring the style of the present day, I would first direct the attention to the literary Reviews of the time. This class of writings not only contains the best part of the literature of the age, but has done much towards the improvement of our style. Especially has the Edinburgh Review contributed much to this object. It was the first to lead the way in that fearlessness and boldness of thought and expression, which have succeeded to the tameness and excessive polish of a former period. The Orations and popular Addresses of the day, may be mentioned as another class of writings furnishing models of good writing. But I would recommend to him who would acquire a good style, that instead of confining the attention to models of good writing of the present day, he go back to an earlier period in English literature. Let him study the works of those great men of former days, who conscious of an intellectual supremacy, stood forth with a noble spirit of independence and self-reliance, as the guides and instructers of their times; and who, feeling the responsibility attached to their high gifts and attainments, sought not the praises of their contemporaries only, but, to use the noble language of Milton, "that lasting fame and perpetuity of praise, which God and good men have consented, shall be the reward of those, whose published labours advance the good of mankind." He will indeed find in these writings inele-

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gancies, and harshnesses of expression ;—he will meet words and phrases which will appear to him strange and uncouth; but these deficiencies are amply compensated by a noble freedom and strength of thought, and a richness and directness of expression. Let him then study these models, that his mind may become assimilated to theirs,—that he may be actuated by the same spirit, and shew forth the same energy.

2. Compose frequently and with care.

It should be remembered by all those who would attain a good style, that every good writer has made himself such. Instructers and works on Rhetoric may point out excellencies, and give cautions, but they can never make good writers. A good style can be attained only by writing frequently and with care.

But it is not enough that efforts be made; they should be well-directed. The first object of attention should be to acquire a distinct and well matured view of the subject. In this way a degree of interest in it will be excited, and the words and expressions which offer themselves to the excited mind, in conveying what it distinctly sees, will ordinarily be the best. There will, it is true, in the efforts of the young writer, be inaccuracies and violations of rules, but these may be removed in a revisal. There is danger however, lest in this revisal, an attempt to refine and polish, destroy the force and originality of the expressions. It is better merely to correct inaccuracies, and to leave a higher degree of polish to be attained by an improvement of the task, resulting from the study of good models. Let not then the young writer direct his ef-

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forts for improvement solely to the choice of his words, or the composition of his sentences, or waste them in a search after figurative expressions or the ornaments of style. Let him rather aim at the attainment of distinct views of his subject, and the clear and forcible conveyance of these views to others.

When a good style has been formed, it is still of importance to compose occasionally with care and attention. The style of an individual in some respects resembles the hand writing. If he acquires the ability of writing a fair and legible hand, and afterwards in the hurry of business is led to write rapidly and carelessly, his hand writing will deteriorate. If he continue to bestow on it a usual share of attention, it will remain the same. If occasionally he writes with attention, and labours to improve it, he will improve it. The same is true of style; and since in the discharge of the common duties of a profession it, may be difficult to devote attention to the manner of composition, it may be well occasionally to discuss and exhibit some subject with more than usual care.

A good style is an attainment, which amply repays all the effort that has here been enjoined. It is to the scholar, a consummation of his intellectual discipline and acquirements. He, who in this land of free institutions holds an able pen, has a weapon of powerful efficacy both for defence and attack; and if this weapon be wielded with honest and patriotic motives, he who wields it may become a public benefactor.

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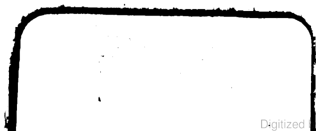

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