excuſeable, for having forgotten the aſſumed dignity of his own character ſo far, as to retail thoſe wretched quibbles; which, whether we ſuppoſe them to be uttered by an angel, a devil, or an epic poet, are groſsly unnatural, becauſe totally unſuitable to the condition and character of the ſpeaker.—— A mind poſſeſſed with great ideas does not naturally attend to ſuch as are trifling *; and, while actuated by admiration, and other important emotions, will not be apt to turn its view to thoſe things that provoke contempt or laughter. Such we ſuppoſe the mind of every ſublime writer to be; and ſuch in fact it muſt be, as long at leaſt as he employs himſelf in ſublime compoſition.

* Who that, from Alpine heights, his labouring eye
Shoots round the wide horizon, to ſurvey
The Nile or Ganges roll his waſteful tide
Through mountains, plains, through empires black with ſhade,
And continents of ſand, will turn his gaze
To mark the windings of a ſcanty rill,
That murmurs at his feet?

Pleaſures of Imagination, book 1.

"The meditations," ſays a very ingenious writer, (ſpeaking of the view from Mount Etna), "are ever "elevated in proportion to the grandeur and ſublimity "of the objects that ſurround us; and here, where "you have all nature to rouſe your imagination, what "man can remain inactive?" See the whole paſſage; which, from its ſublimity, one would be tempted to think had been compoſed on the ſpot;

Brydon's Travels, letter 10.

Mean

Mean language, therefore, or ludicrous ſentiment, are unnatural in an Epic poem, for this reaſon, among others, that they do not naturally occur while one is compoſing it. And hence Milton's humorous deſcription of the *limbo of Vanity* *, however juſt as an allegory, however poignant as a ſatire, ought not to have obtained a place in Paradiſe Loſt. Such a thing might ſuit the volatile genius of Arioſto and his followers; but is quite unworthy of the ſober and well-principled diſciple of Homer and Virgil.

In Dramatic Poetry, the perſons act and ſpeak in their own character, and the author never appears at all. An elevated ſtyle may, however, be natural in tragedy, on account of the high rank of the perſons, and of the important affairs in which they are engaged. Even Comedy, who takes her characters from the middle and lower ranks of mankind, may occaſionally lift up her voice, as Horace ſays †, when ſhe means to give utterance to any important emotion, or happens to introduce a perſonage of more than ordinary dignity. —— But what if perſons of low condition ſhould make their appearance in Tragedy? And as the great muſt have attendants, how can this be guarded againſt? And if ſuch perſons appear,

* Paradiſe Loſt, book 3. verſ. 444.

† Hor. Ar. Poet. verſ. 92.

will not their language be unnatural, if raiſed to a level with that of their ſuperiors? Or, would it not give a motley caſt to the poem, if it were to fall below that level? ——No doubt, an uniform colour of language, though not eſſential to Tragi-comedy, or to the Hiſtoric drama, is indiſpenſable in a regular tragedy. But perſons of mean rank, if the tragic poet find it neceſſary to bring them in, may eaſily be ſuppoſed to have had advantages of education to qualify them for bearing a part in the dialogue, or for any other office in which he may think proper to employ them. —— Beſides, language admits of many degrees of elevation; and a particular turn of fancy, or temperature of the paſſions, will ſometimes give wonderful ſublimity to the ſtyle even of a peaſant or of a ſavage. So that the ſtyle of tragedy, notwithſtanding its elevation, may be as various as the characters and paſſions of men, and may yet in each variety be natural. —— Moreover, the ſubject, and conſequently the emotions, of tragedy, are always important; and important emotions prevailing in the mind of a peaſant will exalt and invigorate his language. When the old ſhepherd in *Douglas* exclaims, "Bleſt be the "day that made me a poor man; My po-"verty has ſaved my maſter's houſe;" the thought and the words, though ſufficiently tragical, have no greater elevation, than

we ſhould expect from any perſon of his character and circumſtances. Simplicity of ſtyle, for which none are diſqualified by the meanneſs of their condition, often enforces a ſublime or pathetic ſentiment with the happieſt effect.——Let it be obſerved further, that poetical language is an imitation of real language improved to a ſtate of perfection; and therefore, that the ſtyle of tragedy, though raiſed above that of common life, will never offend, ſo long as its elevations are at all conſiſtent with probability. In fact, when the paſſions are well expreſſed, and the characters well drawn, a tragic poet needs not fear, that he ſhall be found fault with for the elegance of his language: tho' no doubt a great maſter will always know how to proportion the degree of elegance to the character of the ſpeaker.

The dignity of a Tragic hero may be ſo great as to require an elevation of language equal to the pitch of Epic poetry itſelf. This might be exemplified from many of the ſpeeches of Lear, Othello, Hamlet, and Cato, and of Samſon in the Agoniſtes. But, in general, the Epic ſtyle is to be diſtinguiſhed from the Tragic, by a more uniform elevation, and more elaborate harmony: becauſe a poet, aſſuming the character of calm inſpiration, and rather relating the feelings of others, than expreſſing his own, would ſpeak with more compoſure, ſteadineſs, and

art,

art, than could reaſonably be expected from thoſe who deliver their thoughts according to the immediate impulſe of paſſion.

The language of Comedy is that of common life improved in point of correctneſs; but not much elevated; — both becauſe the ſpeakers are of the middle and lower ranks of mankind, and alſo becauſe the affairs they are engaged in give little ſcope to thoſe emotions that exalt the mind, and rouſe the imagination. —— As to the ſtyle of farce, which is frequently blended with comedy; — it is purpoſely degraded below that of common life; or rather, it is the ridiculous language of common life made more ridiculous. I have already remarked, that Farce is to Poetry, what Caricatura is to Painting: as in the laſt we look for no beauty of attitude or feature, ſo neither in the firſt do we expect elegance of diction. Abſurdity of thought produces abſurdity of words and behaviour: the true farcical character is more extravagantly and more uniformly abſurd, than the droll of real life; and his language, in order to be natural, muſt be exaggerated accordingly. Yet as nothing is eſteemed in the fine arts, but what diſplays the ingenuity of the artiſt, I ſhould imagine, that, even in a farce, one would not receive much pleaſure from mere incongruity of words or actions; becauſe that may be ſo eaſily invented. Studied abſurdity cannot be

entertaining, unleſs it be in ſome degree uncommon *.

We may therefore repeat, and lay it down as a maxim, That "language is natural, "when it is ſuited to the ſpeaker's condition, "character, and circumſtances." And as, for the moſt part, the images and ſentiments of ſerious poetry are copied from the images and ſentiments, not of real, but of improved, nature †; ſo the language of ſerious poetry muſt (as hinted already) be a tranſcript, not of the real language of nature, which is often diſſonant and rude, but of natural language improved as far as may be conſiſtent with probability, and with the ſuppoſed character of the ſpeaker. If this be not the caſe, if the language of poetry be ſuch only as we hear in converſation, or read in hiſtory, it will, inſtead of delight, bring diſappointment: becauſe it will fall ſhort of what we expect from an art which is recommended rather by its pleaſurable qualities, than by its intrinſic utility; and to which, in order to render it pleaſing, we grant higher privileges, than to any other kind of literary compoſition, or any other mode of human language.

The next inquiry muſt therefore be, "How "is the language of nature to be improved?" or rather, "What are thoſe improvements

* Eſſay on Laughter, chap. 3.

† See above, part 1. chap. 3. & 5.

"that

"that peculiarly belong to the language of "poetry?"

SECT. II.

Natural language is improved in poetry by the uſe of Poetical words.

ONE mode of improvement peculiar to poetical diction reſults from the uſe of thoſe words, and phraſes, which, becauſe they rarely occur in proſe, and frequently in verſe, are by the grammarian and lexicographer termed *Poetical*. In theſe ſome languages abound more than others: but no language I am acquainted with is altogether without them; and perhaps no language can be ſo, in which any number of good poems have been written. For poetry is better remembered than proſe, eſpecially by poetical authors; who will always be apt to imitate the phraſeology of thoſe they have been accuſtomed to read and admire; and thus, in the works of poets, down through ſucceſſive generations, certain phraſes may have been conveyed, which, though originally perhaps in common uſe, are now confined to poetical compoſition. Proſe-writers are not ſo apt to imitate one another, at leaſt in words and phraſes; both becauſe they do not

ſo

ſo well remember one another's phraſeology, and alſo becauſe their language is leſs artificial, and muſt not, if they would make it eaſy and flowing, (without which it cannot be elegant), depart eſſentially from the ſtyle of correct converſation. Poets too, on account of the greater difficulty of their numbers, have, both in the choice and in the arrangement of words, a better claim to indulgence, and ſtand more in need of a diſcretionary power.

The language of Homer differs materially from what was written and ſpoken in Greece in the days of Socrates. It differs in the mode of inflection, it differs in the ſyntax, it differs even in the words; ſo that one might read Homer with eaſe, who could not read Xenophon; or Xenophon, without being able to read Homer. Yet I cannot believe, that Homer, or the firſt Greek poet who wrote in his ſtyle, would make choice of a dialect quite different from what was intelligible in his own time; for poets have in all ages written with a view to be read, and to be read with pleaſure; which they could not be, if their diction were hard to be underſtood. It is more reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the language of Homer is according to ſome ancient dialect, which, though not perhaps in familiar uſe among the Greeks at the time he wrote, was however intelligible. From the Homeric to the Socratic age, a period had elapſed of no leſs than four hundred

dred years; during which the ſtyle both of diſcourſe and of writing muſt have undergone great alterations. Yet the Iliad continued the ſtandard of heroic poetry, and was conſidered as the very perfection of poetical language; notwithſtanding that ſome words in it were become ſo antiquated, or ſo ambiguous, that Ariſtotle himſelf ſeems to have been ſomewhat doubtful in regard to their meaning *. And if Chaucer's merit as a poet had been as great as Homer's, and the Engliſh tongue under Edward the Third, as perfect as the Greek was in the ſecond century after the Trojan war, the ſtyle of Chaucer would probably have been our model for poetical diction at this day; even as Petrarcha, his contemporary, is ſtill imitated by the beſt poets of Italy.

I have ſomewhere read, that the rudeneſs of the ſtyle of Ennius was imputed by the old critics to his having copied too cloſely the dialect of common life. But this, I preſume, muſt be a miſtake. For, if we compare the fragments of that author with the comedies of Plautus, who flouriſhed in the ſame age, and whoſe language was certainly copied from that of common life, we ſhall be ſtruck with an air of antiquity in the former, that is not in the latter. Ennius, no doubt, like moſt other ſublime poets, affected ſomething of the antique in his expreſſion: and many

* Ariſtot. Poet. cap. 25.

of

of his words and phraſes, not adopted by any proſe-writer now extant, are to be found in Lucretius and Virgil, and were by them tranſmitted to ſucceeding poets. Theſe form part of the Roman poetical dialect; which appears from the writings of Virgil, where we have it in perfection, to have been very copious. The ſtyle of this charming poet is indeed ſo different from proſe, and is altogether ſo peculiar, that it is perhaps impoſſible to analyſe it on the common principles of Latin grammar. And yet no author can be more perſpicuous or more expreſſive; notwithſtanding the frequency of Greciſm in his ſyntax, and his love of old words, which he, in the judgement of Quintilian, knew better than any other man how to improve into decoration *.

The poetical dialect of modern Italy is ſo different from the proſaic, that I have known perſons who read the hiſtorians, and even ſpoke with tolerable fluency the language of that country, but could not eaſily conſtrue a page of Petrarcha or Taſſo. Yet it is not probable, that Petrarcha, whoſe works are a ſtandard of the Italian poetical diction †, made any material innovations in his native tongue. I rather believe, that he wrote it nearly as it was ſpoken in his time, that is,

* Quintil. Inſtit. viii. 3. § 3. C.

† Vicende della literatura del Deruta, cap. 4.

in the fourteenth century; omitting only harſh combinations, and taking that liberty which Homer probably, and Virgil certainly, took before him, of reviving ſuch old, but not obſolete expreſſions, as ſeemed peculiarly ſignificant and melodious; and poliſhing his ſtyle to that degree of elegance which human ſpeech, without becoming unnatural, may admit of, and which the genius of poetry, as an art ſubſervient to pleaſure, may be thought to require.

The French poetry in general is diſtinguiſhed from proſe rather by the rhime and the meaſure, than by any old or uncommon phraſeology. Yet the French, on certain ſubjects, imitate the ſtyle of their old poets, of Marot in particular; and may therefore be ſaid to have ſomething of a poetical dialect, tho' far leſs extenſive than the Italian, or even than the Engliſh. And it may, I think, be preſumed, that in future ages they will have more of this dialect than they have at preſent. This I would infer from the very uncommon merit of ſome of their late poets, particularly Boileau and La Fontaine, who, in their reſpective departments, will continue to be imitated, when the preſent modes of French proſe are greatly changed: an event that, for all the pains they take to preſerve their language, muſt inevitably happen, and whereof there are not wanting ſome preſages already.

The Engliſh poetical dialect is not cha-

racteriſed by any peculiarities of inflection, nor by any great latitude in the uſe of foreign idioms. More copious it is, however, than one would at firſt imagine. I know of no author who has conſidered it in the way of detail *. —— What follows is but a very ſhort ſpecimen.

1. A few Greek and Latin idioms are

* Since writing the above, I have had the pleaſure to read the following judicious remarks on this ſubject. "The language of the age is never the language of "poetry, except among the French, whoſe verſe, where "the ſentiment or image does not ſupport it, differs in "nothing from proſe. Our poetry, on the contrary, "has a language peculiar to itſelf; to which almoſt every "one that has written has added ſomething, by enrich-"ing it with foreign idioms and derivatives; nay, ſome-"times words of their own compoſition or invention. "Shakeſpeare and Milton have been great creators this "way; and no one more licencious than Pope or Dry-"den, who perpetually borrow expreſſions from the "former. Let me give you ſome inſtances from Dryden, "whom every body reckons a great maſter of our poe-"tical tongue. Full of *muſeful mopings* — unlike the "*trim* of love — a pleaſant *beverage* — a *roundelay* of "love — ſtood ſilent in his *mood* — with knots and "*knares* deformed — his *ireful mood* — in proud *array* "— his *boon* was granted — and *diſarray* and ſhameful "rout — *wayward* but wife — *furbiſhed* for the field — "*dodder'd* oaks — *diſherited* — *ſmouldering* flames — *retch-"leſs* of laws — *crones* old and ugly — the *beldam* at his "ſide — the *grandam* — *hag* — *villanize* his father's fame. "—— But they are infinite: and our language not be-"ing a ſettled thing, (like the French), has an un-"doubted right to words of an hundred years old, pro-"vided antiquity have not rendered them unintelligible."

Mr Gray's Letters, ſect. 3. *letter* 4.

common

common in Engliſh poetry, which are ſeldom or never to be met with in proſe. QUENCHED OF HOPE. Shakeſpeare. SHORN OF HIS BEAMS. Milton. *Created thing* NOR VALUED HE NOR SHUN'D. Milton. *'Tis thus we riot, while* WHO SOW IT STARVE. Pope. *This day* BE BREAD AND PEACE MY LOT. Pope. INTO WHAT PIT THOU SEE'ST FROM WHAT HEIGHT FALLEN. Milton. *He deceived The mother of mankind,* WHAT TIME HIS PRIDE HAD CAST HIM *out of heaven.* Milton. Some of theſe, with others to be found in Milton, ſeem to have been adopted for the ſake of brevity, which in the poetical tongue is indiſpenſable. For the ſame reaſon, perhaps, the articles *a* and *the* are ſometimes omitted by our poets, though leſs frequently in ſerious than burleſque compoſition *. In Engliſh, the adjective generally goes before the ſubſtantive, the no-

* In the Greek poetry, the omiſſion of the article is more frequent than the uſe of it. The very learned and ingenious author of A Treatiſe *On the origin and progreſs of Language,* ſuppoſes, that in the time of Homer, who eſtabliſhed their poetical language, the article was little uſed by the Greeks: and this ſuppoſition appears highly probable, when we conſider, that in the Latin, which was derived from the Pelaſgic tongue, (a very ancient dialect of Greek), there is no article. Yet, though the article had been in uſe in Homer's age, I imagine, that he, and every other Greek poet who wrote hexameters, would have often found it *neceſſary* to leave it out.

minative before the verb, and the active verb before (what we call) the accuſative. Exceptions, however, to this rule, are not uncommon even in proſe. But in poetry they are more frequent. *Their homely joys, and* DESTINY OBSCURE. *Now fades the glimmering landſcape on the ſight; and all the air a ſolemn ſtillneſs holds.* In general, that verſification may be leſs difficult, and the cadence more uniformly pleaſing; and ſometimes, too, in order to give energy to expreſſion, or vivacity to an image, the Engliſh poet is permitted to take much greater liberties, than the proſe-writer, in arranging his words, and modulating his lines and periods. Examples may be ſeen in every page of Paradiſe Loſt.

2. Some of our poetical words take an additional ſyllable, that they may ſuit the verſe the better; as, *diſpart*, *diſtain*, *diſport*, *affright*, *enchain*, for part, ſtain, ſport, fright, chain. Others ſeem to be nothing elſe than common words made ſhorter, for the convenience of the verſifier. Such are *auxiliar*, *ſublunar*, *trump*, *vale*, *part*, *clime*, *ſubmiſs*, *frolic*, *plain*, *drear*, *dread*, *helm*, *morn*, *mead*, *eve* and *even*, *gan*, *illume* and *illumine*, *ope*, *hoar*, *bide*, *ſwage*, *ſcape*; for auxiliary, ſublunary, trumpet, valley, depart, climate, ſubmiſſive, frolicſome, complain, dreary, dreadful, helmet, morning, meadow, evening, began or began to, illuminate, open, hoary, abide, aſſuage, eſcape. —— Of ſome of theſe the

ſhort

ſhort form is the more ancient. In Scotland, *even*, *morn*, *bide*, *ſwage*, are ſtill in vulgar uſe; but *morn*, except when contradiſtinguiſhed to *even*, is ſynonymous, not with *morning*, (as in the Engliſh poetical dialect), but with *morrow*. —— The Latin poets, in a way ſomewhat ſimilar, and perhaps for a ſimilar reaſon, ſhortened *fundamentum*, *tutamentum*, *munimentum*, &c. into fundamen, tutamen, munimen *.

3. Of the following words, which are now almoſt peculiar to poetry, the greater part are ancient, and were once no doubt in common uſe in England, as many of them ſtill are in Scotland. *Aſield*, *amain*, *annoy* (a noun), *anon*, *aye* (ever), *beheſt*, *blithe*, *brand* (ſword), *bridal*, *carol*, *dame* (lady), *featly*, *fell* (an adjective), *gaude*, *gore*, *hoſt* (army), *lambkin*, *late* (of late), *lay* (poem), *lea*, *glade*, *gleam*, *hurl*, *lore*, *meed*, *oriſons*, *plod* (to travel laboriouſly), *ringlet*, *rue* (a verb), *ruth*, *ruthleſs*, *ſojourn* (a noun), *ſmite*, *ſpeed* (an active verb), *ſave* (except), *ſpray* (twig), *ſteed*, *ſtrain* (ſong), *ſtrand*, *ſwain*, *thrall*, *thrill*, *trail* (a verb), *troll*, *wail*, *welter*, *warble*, *wayward*, *woo*, *the while* (in the mean time), *yon*, *of yore*.

* —— Quod poetæ alligati ad certam pedum neceſſitatem, non ſemper propriis uti poſſint, ſed depulſi a recta via neceſſario ad eloquendi quædam diverticula confugiant; nec mutare quædam modo verba, ſed *extendere*, *corripere*, convertere, dividere, cogantur. *Quintilian.*

4. Theſe

4. Theſe that follow are alſo poetical; but, ſo far as I know, were never in common uſe. *Appal*, *arrowy*, *attune*, *battailous*, *breezy*, *car* (chariot), *clarion*, *cates*, *courſer*, *darkling*, *flicker*, *floweret*, *emblaze*, *gairiſh*, *circlet*, *impearl*, *nightly*, *noiſeleſs*, *pinion* (wing), *ſhadowy*, *ſlumberous*, *ſtreamy*, *troublous*, *wilder* (a verb), *ſtrill* (a verb), *ſhook* (ſhaken), *madding*, *viewleſs*.—I ſuſpect too, that the following, derived from the Greek and Latin, are peculiar to poetry. *Clang*, *clangor*, *choral*, *bland*, *boreal*, *dire*, *enſanguined*, *ire*, *ireful*, *lave* (to waſh), *nymph* (lady, girl), *orient*, *panoply*, *philomel*, *infuriate*, *jocund*, *radiant*, *rapt*, *redolent*, *refulgent*, *verdant*, *vernal*, *zypher*, *zone* (girdle), *ſylvan*, *ſuffuſe*.

5. In moſt languages, the rapidity of pronunciation abbreviates ſome of the commoneſt words, or even joins two, or perhaps more, of them, into one; and ſome of theſe abbreviated forms find admiſſion into writing. The Engliſh language was quite diſfigured by them in the end of the laſt century; but Swift, by his ſatire and example, brought them into diſrepute: and, though ſome of them be retained in converſation, as *don't*, *ſhan't*, *can't*, they are now avoided in ſolemn ſtyle; and by elegant writers in general, except where the colloquial dialect is imitated, as in comedy. *'Tis* and *'twas*, ſince the time of Shafteſbury, ſeem to have been daily loſing credit, at leaſt in proſe; but ſtill have a place in poetry; perhaps becauſe

cauſe they contribute to conciſeneſs. *'Twas on a lofty vaſe's ſide.* Gray. *'Tis true, 'tis certain, man though dead retains part of himſelf.* Pope. In verſe too, *over* may be ſhortened into *o'er*, (which is the Scotch, and probably was the old Engliſh, pronunciation), *ever* into *e'er*, and *never* into *ne'er*; and from *the* and *to*, when they go before a word beginning with a vowel, the final letter is ſometimes cut off. *O'er hills, o'er dales, o'er crags, o'er rocks they go.* Pope. *Where-e'er ſhe turns, the Graces homage pay. And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave. Rich with the ſpoils of time did ne'er unroll.* Gray. *T'alarm th' eternal midnight of the grave.* ——— Theſe abbreviations are now peculiar to the poetical tongue, but not neceſſary to it. They ſometimes promote brevity, and render verſification leſs difficult.

6. Thoſe words which are commonly called *compound epithets*, as *roſy-finger'd, roſy-boſom'd, many-twinkling, many-ſounding, moſs-grown, bright-eyed, ſtraw-built, ſpirit-ſtirring, incenſe-breathing, heaven-taught, love-whiſpering, lute-reſounding*, are alſo to be conſidered as part of our poetical dialect. It is true we have compounded adjectives in familiar uſe, as *high-ſeaſoned, well-natured, ill-bred*, and innumerable others. But I ſpeak of thoſe that are leſs common, that ſeldom occur except in poetry, and of which in proſe the uſe would appear affected. And that they ſometimes promote brevity and vivacity of expreſſion,

expreſſion, cannot be denied. But, as they give, when too frequent, a ſtiff and finical air to a performance; as they are not always explicit in the ſenſe, nor agreeable in the ſound; as they are apt to produce a confuſion, or too great a multiplicity of images; as they tend to diſfigure the language, and furniſh a pretext for endleſs innovation; I would have them uſed ſparingly; and thoſe only uſed, which the practice of popular authors has rendered familiar to the ear, and which are in themſelves peculiarly emphatical and harmonious. For I cannot think, with Dacier and Sanadon, that this well-known verſe in Horace's Art of Poetry,

> Dixeris egregie, notum ſi callida verbum
> Reddiderit junctura novum———

gives any warrant, even to a Latin poet, for the formation of theſe compound words; which, if I miſtake not, were more faſhionable in the days of Ennius, than of Horace and Virgil *.

7. In

* The critics are divided about the meaning of this paſſage. Horace is ſpeaking of *new words*; which he allows to be ſometimes neceſſary; but which, he ſays, ought to be *ſparingly* and *cautiouſly* introduced; In verbis etiam *tenuis cautuſque* ferendis; and then ſubjoins the words quoted in the text, Dixeris egregie, &c.

1. Some think, that this *callida junctura* refers to the formation of *compound epithets*, as velivolus, ſaxifragus,

7. In the transformation of nouns into verbs and participles, our poetical dialect admits

ſolivagus, &c.; and that the import of the precept is this; "Rather than by bringing in a word altogether new, "even when a new word is neceſſary, you ſhould ex- "preſs yourſelf by two known words artfully joined to- "gether into one, ſo as to aſſume a new appearance, "and to admit a new though analogical ſignification." This might no doubt be done with propriety in ſome caſes. But I cannot think, that Horace is here ſpeaking of compound words. — For, firſt, this ſort of words were much more ſuitable to the genius of the Greek than of the Latin tongue; as Quintilian ſomewhere inſinuates, and every body knows who is at all acquainted with theſe languages. — Secondly, we find in fact, that theſe words are leſs frequent in Horace and Virgil, than in the older poets; whence we may infer, that they became leſs faſhionable as the Latin tongue advanced nearer to perfection. — Thirdly, Virgil is known to have introduced three or four new words from the Greek, *Lychni*, *Spelæa*, *Thyas*, &c.; but it does not appear, that either Virgil or Horace ever fabricated one of theſe compound words; and it is not probable, that Horace would recommend a practice, which neither himſelf nor Virgil had ever warranted by his example. — Fourthly, our author, in his illuſtrations upon the precept in queſtion, affirms, that new words will more eaſily obtain currency if taken from the Greek tongue; and Virgil, if we may judge of his opinions by his practice, appears to have been of the ſame mind. And there was good reaſon for it. The Greek and Latin are kindred languages; and as the former was much ſtudied at Rome, there was no riſk of introducing any obſcurity into the Roman language by the introduction of a Greek word. — Laſtly, it may be doubted, whether *junctura*, though it often denotes the compoſition of words in a ſentence or clauſe (Quintil. ix. 4), and ſometimes arrangement or compoſition in general (Hor. Ar. Poet. verſe 242), is ever uſed to

mits of greater latitude than proſe. Hymn, pillow, curtain, ſtory, pillar, picture, peal, ſurge,

to expreſs the union of ſyllables in a word, or of ſimple words in a compound epithet.

2. Other interpreters ſuppoſe, that this *callida junctura* refers to the arrangement of words in the ſentence, and that the precept amounts to this: "When a new "expreſſion is neceſſary, you will acquit yourſelf well, "if by means of an artful arrangement you can to a "known word give a new ſignification." But one would think, that the obſervance of this precept muſt tend to the utter confuſion of language. To give new ſignifications to words in preſent uſe, muſt increaſe the ambiguity of language; which in every tongue is greater than it ought to be, and which would ſeem to be more detrimental to eloquence and even to literature, than the introduction of many new words of definite meaning. Thoſe who favour this interpretation give *comæ ſylvarum* for *folia*, as a phraſe to exemplify the precept. But the foliage of a tree is not a new idea, nor could there be any need of a new word or new phraſe to expreſs it: though a poet, no doubt, on account of his verſe, or on ſome other account, might chuſe to expreſs it by *a figure*, rather than by its *proper* name. *Comæ ſylvarum* for *folia*, is neither leſs nor more than a metaphor, or, if you pleaſe, a catachreſis; but Horace, is ſpeaking, not of figurative language, but of new words. — Both theſe interpretations ſuppoſe, that the words of our poet are to be conſtrued according to this order: Dixeris egregie, ſi callida junctura reddiderit *notum verbum novum*.

3. The beſt of all our poet's interpreters, the learned Dr Hurd, conſtrues the paſſage in the ſame manner, and explains it thus: "Inſtead of framing new words, "I recommend to you any kind of artful management, "by which you may be able to give a new air and caſt "to old ones." And this explication he illuſtrates moſt ingeniouſly by a variety of examples, that throw great light on the ſubject of poetical diction. See his notes on the *Ars Poetica*.

I

ſurge, cavern, honey, career, cincture, boſom, ſphere, are common nouns; but, *to hymn*, *to pillow*, *curtained*, *pillared*, *pictured*, *pealing*, *ſurging*, *cavern'd*, *honied*, *careering*, *cinctured*, *boſomed*, *ſphered*, would appear affected in proſe, though in verſe they are warranted by the very beſt authority.

Some late poets, particularly the imitators of Spenſer, have introduced a great variety of uncommon words, as certes, eftſoons, ne, whilom, tranſmew, moil, fone, loſel, albe, hight, dight, pight, thews, couthful, aſſöt,

I ſhould ill conſult my own credit, if I were to oppoſe my judgement to that of this able critic and excellent author. Yet I would beg leave to ſay, that to me the poet ſeems, through this whole paſſage, from verſ. 46. to verſ. 72. to be ſpeaking of the *formation of new words*; a practice whereof he allows the danger, but proves the neceſſity. And I find I cannot diveſt myſelf of an old prejudice in favour of another interpretation, which is more obvious and ſimple, and which I conſidered as the beſt, long before I knew it was authoriſed by that judicious annotator Joannes Bond, and by Dryden in his notes upon the Eneid, as well as by the Abbe Batteux in his commentary on Horace's *art of poetry*. "New "words (ſays the poet) are to be cautiouſly and ſparingly "introduced; but, when neceſſary, an author will do "well to give them ſuch a poſition in the ſentence, as "that the reader ſhall be at no loſs to diſcover their "meaning." For I would conſtrue the paſſage thus, Dixeris egregie, ſi callida junctura reddiderit *novum verbum notum*. But why, it may be ſaid, did not Horace, if this was really his meaning, put *novum* in the firſt line, and *notum* in the ſecond? The anſwer is eaſy. His verſe would not admit that order: for the firſt ſyllable of *novum* is ſhort, and the firſt ſyllable of *notum* long.

muchel, wend arrear, &c. Theſe were once poetical words, no doubt; but they are now obſolete, and to many readers unintelligible. No man of the preſent age, however converſant in this dialect, would naturally expreſs himſelf in it on any intereſting emergence; or, ſuppoſing this natural to the antiquarian, it would never appear ſo to the common hearer or reader. A mixture of theſe words, therefore, muſt ruin the pathos of modern language; and as they are not familiar to our ear, and plainly appear to be ſought after and affected, will generally give a ſtiffneſs to modern verſification. Yet in ſubjects approaching to the ludicrous they may have a good effect; as in the *Schoolmiſtreſs* of Shenſtone, Parnel's Fairy-tale, Thomſon's Caſtle of Indolence, and Pope's lines in the Dunciad upon Wormius. But this effect will be moſt pleaſing to thoſe who have leaſt occaſion to recur to the gloſſary.

But why, it may be aſked, ſhould theſe old words be more pathetic and pleaſing in Spenſer, than in his imitators? I anſwer, Becauſe in him they ſeem, or we believe them to be, natural; in them we are ſure that they are affected. In him there is an eaſe and uniformity of expreſſion, that ſhows he wrote a language not materially different from what was written by all the ſerious poets of his time; whereas the mixed dialect of theſe imitators is plainly artificial, and ſuch as would make any man ridiculous, if he were

now

now to adopt it in converſation. A long beard may give dignity to the portrait, or ſtatue of a hero, whom we know to have been two hundred years in his grave: but the chin of a modern European commander briſtling with that antique appendage, would appear awkward and ridiculous. — But did not Spenſer himſelf make uſe of words that are known to have been obſolete, or merely provincial, in his time? Yes; and thoſe words in Spenſer have the ſame bad effect, that words now obſolete have in his imitators; they are to moſt readers unintelligible, and to thoſe who underſtand them appear ludicrous or affected. Some of his Eclogues, and even ſome paſſages in the Fairy Queen, are liable to this cenſure. — But what if Spenſer had fixed the poetical language of England, as Homer did that of Greece? Would any of his old words in that caſe have appeared awkward in a modern poem? Perhaps they would not: but let it be obſerved, that, in that caſe, they would have been adopted by Milton, and Dryden, and Pope, and by all our ſerious poets ſince the age of Eliſabeth; and would therefore have been perfectly intelligible to every reader of Engliſh verſe; and, from our having been ſo long accuſtomed to meet with them in the moſt elegant compoſitions, would have acquired a dignity equal, or perhaps ſuperior, to that which now belongs to

to the poetical language of Pope and Milton.

I grant, it is not always eaſy to fix the boundary between poetical and obſolete expreſſions. To many readers, *lore*, *meed*, *beheſt*, *blithe*, *gaude*, *ſpray*, *thrall*, may already appear antiquated; and to ſome the ſtyle of Spenſer, or even of Chaucer, may be as intelligible as that of Dryden. This however we may venture to affirm, that a word, which the majority of readers cannot underſtand without a gloſſary, may with reaſon be conſidered as obſolete; and ought not to be uſed in modern compoſition, unleſs revived, and recommended to the public ear, by ſome very eminent writer. There are but few words in Milton, as *nathleſs*, *tine*, *frore*, *boſky*, &c.; there are but one or two in Dryden, as *falſify* *; and in Pope, there are none at all, which every reader of our poetry may not be ſuppoſed to underſtand: whereas in Shakeſpeare there are many, and in Spenſer many more, for which one who knows Engliſh very well may be obliged to conſult the dictionary. The practice of Milton, Dryden, or Pope, may therefore, in almoſt all caſes, be admitted as good authori-

* Dryden in one place (Eneid ix. verſ. 1095) uſes *Falſified* to denote *Pierced through and through*. He acknowledges, that this uſe of the word is an innovation; and has nothing to plead for it but his own authority, and that *Falſare* in Italian ſometimes means the ſame thing.

ty

ty for the uſe of a poetical word. And in them, all the words above enumerated, as poetical, and in preſent uſe, may actually be found. And of ſuch poets as may chuſe to obſerve this rule, it will not be ſaid, either that they reject the judgement of Quintilian, who recommends the neweſt of the old words, and the oldeſt of the new, or that they are unattentive to Pope's precept,

Be not the firſt by whom the new are tried,
Nor yet the laſt to lay the old aſide *.

We muſt not ſuppoſe, that theſe poetical words never occur at all, except in poetry. Even from converſation they are not excluded; and the ancient critics allow, that they may be admitted into proſe; where they occaſionally confer dignity upon a ſublime ſubject, or, for reaſons elſewhere hinted at †, heighten the ludicrous qualities of a mean one. But it is in poetry only, where the frequent uſe of them does not ſavour of affectation.

Nor muſt we ſuppoſe them eſſential to this art. Many paſſages there are of exquiſite poetry, wherein not a ſingle phraſe occurs, that might not be uſed in proſe. In fact the influence of theſe words in adorning Engliſh verſe is not very extenſive. Some in-

* Eſſay on Criticiſm, ver. 335.

† Eſſay on Laughter, chap. 2. ſect. 4.

fluence

fluence however they have. They ſerve to render the poetical ſtyle, firſt, more melodious; and, ſecondly, more ſolemn.

Firſt, They render the poetical ſtyle more melodious, and more eaſily reducible into meaſure. Words of unwieldy ſize, or difficult pronunciation, are never uſed by correct poets, where they can be avoided; unleſs in their ſound they have ſomething imitative of the ſenſe. Homer's poetical inflections contribute wonderfully to the ſweetneſs of his numbers: and if the reader is pleaſed to look back to the ſpecimen I gave of the Engliſh poetical dialect, he will find that the words are in general well-ſounding, and ſuch as may coaleſce with other words, without producing harſh combinations. Quintilian obſerves, that poets, for the ſake of their verſe, are indulged in many liberties, not granted to the orator, of lengthening, ſhortening, and dividing their words *: — and if the Greek and Roman poets claimed this indulgence from neceſſity, and obtained it, the Engliſh, thoſe of them eſpecially who write in rhime, may claim it with better reaſon; as the words of their language are leſs muſical, and far leſs ſuſceptible of variety in arrangement and ſyntax.

Secondly, Such poetical words as are known to be ancient have ſomething venerable in their appearance, and impart a ſo-

* Inſtit. Orat. lib. 10. cap. 1. § 3.

lemnity to all around them. This remark is from Quintilian; who adds, that they give to a compoſition that caſt and colour of antiquity, which in painting is ſo highly valued, but which art can never effectually imitate *. Poetical words that are either not ancient, or not known to be ſuch, have however a pleaſing effect from aſſociation. We are accuſtomed to meet with them in ſublime and elegant writing; and hence they come to acquire ſublimity and elegance:—even as the words we hear on familiar occaſions come to be accounted familiar; and as thoſe that take their riſe among pick-pockets, gamblers, and gypſies, are thought too indelicate to be uſed by any perſon of taſte or good manners. When one hears the following lines, which abound in poetical words,

The breezy call of incenſe-breathing morn,
The ſwallow twittering from the ſtraw-built ſhed,
The cock's ſhrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more ſhall rouſe them from their lowly bed:

—one is as ſenſible of the dignity of the language; as one would be of the vileneſs or vulgarity of that man's ſpeech, who ſhould prove his acquaintance with Bridewell, by interlarding his diſcourſe with ſuch

* Lib. 8. cap. 3. § 3.

terms as *mill-doll*, *queer cull*, or *nubbing cheat* *; or who, in imitation of fops and gamblers, ſhould, on the common occaſions of life, talk of being *beat hollow*, or *ſaving his diſtance* †. — What gives dignity to perſons gives dignity to language. A man of this character is one who has borne important employments, been connected with honourable aſſociates, and never degraded himſelf by levity, or immorality of conduct. Dignified phraſes are thoſe which have been uſed to expreſs elevated ſentiments, have always made their appearance in elegant compoſition, and have never been profaned by giving permanency or utterance to the paſſions of the vile, the giddy, or the worthleſs. And as by an active old age, the dignity of ſuch men is confirmed and heightened; ſo the dignity of ſuch words, if they be not ſuffered to fall into diſuſe, ſeldom fails to improve by length of time.

* See the Scoundrel's Dictionary.

† Language of Newmarket.

SECT

SECT. III.

Natural Language is improved in poetry, by means of Tropes and Figures.

SO much for the nature and uſe of thoſe words that are *poetical*, and yet not figurative. But from *Figurative Expreſſion* there ariſes a more copious and important ſource of Poetic Eloquence. Some ſorts of poetry are diſtinguiſhed by the beauty, boldneſs, and frequency of the Figures, as well as by the meaſure, or by any of the contrivances above mentioned. And in proſe we often meet with ſuch figures and words, as we expect only in poetry; in which caſe the language is called *Poetical:* and in verſe we ſometimes find a diction ſo tame, and ſo void of ornament, that we brand it with the appellation of *Proſaic*.

As my deſign in this diſcourſe is, not to deliver a ſyſtem of rhetoric, but to explain the peculiar effects of poetry upon the mind, by tracing out the characters that diſtinguiſh this from other literary arts; it would be improper to enter here, with any degree of minuteneſs, into the philoſophy of Tropes and Figures: theſe being ornamental, not to poetry only, but to human ſpeech in general.

All that the preſent occaſion requires will be performed, when it is ſhown, in what reſpects tropical and figurative language is more neceſſary to poetry than to any other ſort of compoſition.

If it appear, that, by means of Figures, Language may be made more *pleaſing*, and more *natural*, than it would be without them; it will follow, that to Poetic Language, whoſe end is to *pleaſe* by imitating *nature*, Figures muſt be not only ornamental, but neceſſary. I ſhall therefore, firſt, make a few remarks on the importance and utility of figurative language; ſecondly, ſhow, that Figures are more neceſſary to poetry in general, than to any other mode of writing; and, thirdly, aſſign a reaſon why they are more neceſſary in ſome kinds of poetry than in others.

I. I purpoſe to make a few remarks on the importance and utility of Figurative Expreſſion, in making language more pleaſing and more natural.

1. The firſt remark is, that Tropes and Figures are often neceſſary to ſupply the unavoidable defects of language. When *proper* words are wanting, or not recollected, or when we do not chuſe to be always repeating them, we muſt have recourſe to tropes and figures.—When philoſophers began to explain the operations of the mind, they found, that moſt of the words in common uſe, being framed to anſwer the more obvious exigencies of life, were in their proper

per ſignification applicable to matter only and its qualities. What was to be done in this caſe? Would they think of making a new language to expreſs the qualities of mind? No: that would have been difficult, or impracticable; and granting it both practicable and eaſy, they muſt have foreſeen, that nobody would read or liſten to what was thus ſpoken or written in a new, and, conſequently, in an unknown, tongue. They therefore took the language as they found it; and, where-ever they thought there was a ſimilarity or analogy between the qualities of mind and the qualities of matter, ſcrupled not to uſe the names of the material qualities tropically, by applying them to the mental qualities. Hence came the phraſes, *ſolidity* of judgement, *warmth* of imagination, *enlargement* of underſtanding, and many others; which, though figurative, expreſs the meaning juſt as well as *proper* words would have done. In fact, numerous as the words in every language are, they muſt always fall ſhort of the unbounded variety of human thoughts and perceptions. Taſtes and ſmells are almoſt as numerous as the ſpecies of bodies. Sounds admit of perceptible varieties that ſurpaſs all computation, and the ſeven primary colours may be diverſified without end. If each variety of external perception were to have a name, language would be inſurmountably difficult; nay, if men were to appropriate a claſs of names to each particular

ticular ſenſe, they would multiply words exceedingly, without adding any thing to the clearneſs of ſpeech. Thoſe words, therefore, that in their proper ſignification denote the objects of one ſenſe, they often apply tropically to the objects of another; and ſay, ſweet taſte, ſweet ſmell, ſweet ſound; ſharp point, ſharp taſte, ſharp ſound; harmony of ſounds, harmony of colours, harmony of parts; ſoft ſilk, ſoft colour, ſoft ſound, ſoft temper; and ſo in a thouſand inſtances; and yet theſe words, in their tropical ſignification, are not leſs intelligible than in their proper one; for ſharp taſte and ſharp ſound, are as expreſſive as ſharp ſword; and harmony of tones is not better underſtood by the muſician, than harmony of parts by the architect, and harmony of colours by the painter.

Savages, illiterate perſons, and children, have comparatively but few words in proportion to the things they may have occaſion to ſpeak of; and muſt therefore recur to tropes and figures more frequently, than perſons of copious elocution. A ſeaman, or mechanic, even when he talks of that which does not belong to his art, borrows his language from that which does; and this makes his diction figurative to a degree that is ſometimes entertaining enough. "Death (ſays a "ſeaman in one of Smollet's novels) has "not yet *boarded* my comrade; but they "have been *yard arm and yard arm* theſe

"*three*

"*three glaſſes*. His *ſtarboard* eye is open, "but faſt *jamm'd* in his head; and the "*haulyards* of his under jaw have given "way." Theſe phraſes are exaggerated; but we allow them to be natural, becauſe we know that illiterate people are apt to make uſe of tropes and figures taken from their own trade, even when they ſpeak of things that are very remote and incongruous. In thoſe poems, therefore, that imitate the converſation of illiterate perſons, as in comedy, farce, and paſtoral, ſuch figures judiciouſly applied may render the imitation more pleaſing, becauſe more exact and natural.

Words that are untuneable and harſh the poet is often obliged to avoid, when perhaps he has no other way to expreſs their meaning than by tropes and figures; and ſometimes the meaſure of his verſe may oblige him to reject a proper word that is not harſh, merely on account of its being too long, or too ſhort, or in any other way unſuitable to the rhythm, or to the rhime. And hence another uſe of figurative language, that it contributes to poetical harmony. Thus, *to preſs the plain* is frequently uſed to ſignify *to be ſlain in battle*; *liquid plain* is put for *ocean*, *blue ſerene* for *ſky*, and *ſylvan reign* for *country life*.

2. Tropes and figures are favourable to delicacy. When the proper name of a thing is in any reſpect unpleaſant, a well-choſen trope will convey the idea in ſuch a way as to

to give no offence. This is agreeable, and even neceſſary, in polite converſation, and cannot be diſpenſed with in elegant writing of any kind. Many words, from their being often applied to vulgar uſe, acquire a meanneſs that diſqualifies them for a place in ſerious poetry; while perhaps, under the influence of a different ſyſtem of manners, the correſponding words in another language may be elegant, or at leaſt not vulgar. When one reads Homer in the Greek, one takes no offence at his calling Eumeus by a name which, literally rendered, ſignifies *Swine-herd*; firſt, becauſe the Greek word is well-ſounding in itſelf; ſecondly, becauſe we have never heard it pronounced in converſation, nor conſequently debaſed by vulgar uſe; and, thirdly, becauſe we know, that the office denoted by it was, in the age of Eumeus, both important and honourable. But Pope would have been blamed, if a name ſo indelicate as *ſwine-herd* had in his tranſlation been applied to ſo eminent a perſonage; and therefore he judiciouſly makes uſe of the trope *ſynecdoche*, and calls him *Swain**; a word both elegant and poetical, and not likely to lead the reader into any miſtake about the perſon ſpoken of, as his employment had been deſcribed in a preceding paſſage. The ſame Eumeus is ſaid, in the ſimple, but melodious language of the ori-

* Pope's Homer's Odyſſey, book 14. verſ. 41.

ginal, to have been making his own ſhoes when Ulyſſes came to his door; a work which in thoſe days the greateſt heroes would often find neceſſary. This too the tranſlator ſoftens by a tropical expreſſion:

Here ſat Eumeus, and his cares applied
To form ſtrong *buſkins* of well-ſeaſon'd hide.

A hundred other examples might be quoted from this tranſlation; but theſe will explain my meaning.

There are other occaſions, on which the delicacy of figurative language is ſtill more needful: as in Virgil's account of the effects of animal love, and of the plague among the beaſts, in the third Georgic; where Dryden's ſtyle, by being leſs figurative than the original, is in one place exceedingly filthy, and in another ſhockingly obſcene.

Hobbes could conſtrue a Greek author; but his ſkill in words muſt have been all derived from the dictionary: for he ſeems not to have known, that any one articulate ſound could be more agreeable, or any one phraſe more dignified, than any other. In his Iliad and Odyſſey, even when he hits the author's ſenſe, (which is not always the caſe), he proves, by his choice of words, that of harmony, elegance, or energy of ſtyle, he had no manner of conception. And hence that work, tho' called a Tranſlation of Homer, does not even deſerve the name of

poem; becauſe it is in every reſpect *unpleaſing*, being nothing more than a fictitious narrative delivered in mean proſe, with the additional meanneſs of harſh rhyme, and untuneable meaſure.——Trapp underſtood Virgil well enough as a grammarian, and had a taſte for his beauties; yet his Tranſlation bears no reſemblance to Virgil; which is owing to the ſame cauſe, an imprudent choice of words and figures, and a total want of harmony.

I grant, that the delicacy we here contend for may, both in converſation and in writing, be carried too far. To call *killing an innocent man in a duel* an affair of honour, and *a violation of the rights of wedlock* an affair of gallantry, is a proſtitution of figurative language. Nor do I think it any credit to us, that we are ſaid to have upwards of forty figurative phraſes to denote exceſſive drinking. Language of this ſort generally implies, that the public abhorrence of ſuch crimes is not ſo ſtrong as it ought to be: and I am not certain, whether even our morals might not be improved, if we were to call theſe and ſuch like crimes by their proper names, murder, adultery, drunkenneſs, gluttony; names, that not only expreſs our meaning, but alſo betoken our diſapprobation.——As to writing, it cannot be denied, that even Pope himſelf, in the excellent verſion juſt now quoted, has ſometimes, for the ſake of his numbers, or for

fear

fear of giving offence by too cloſe an imitation of Homer's ſimplicity, employed tropes and figures too quaint or too ſolemn for the occaſion. And the finical ſtyle is in part characteriſed by the writer's diſlike to literal expreſſions, and affectedly ſubſtituting in their ſtead unneceſſary tropes and figures. With theſe authors, a man's only child muſt always be his *only hope*, a country-maid becomes a *rural beauty*, or perhaps a *nymph of the groves*; if flattery ſing at all, it muſt be a *ſyren ſong*; the ſhepherd's flute dwindles into an *oaten reed*, and his crook is exalted into a *ſcepter*; the *ſilver lillies* riſe from their *golden beds*, and *languiſh* to the *complaining* gale. A young woman, though a good Chriſtian, cannot make herſelf agreeable without *ſacrificing to the Graces*; nor hope to do any execution among the *gentle ſwains*, till a whole legion of *Cupids*, armed with *flames* and *darts*, and other weapons, begin to diſcharge from her eyes their formidable artillery. For the ſake of variety, or of the verſe, ſome of theſe figures may now and then find a place in a poem; but in proſe, unleſs very ſparingly uſed, they ſavour of affectation.

3. Tropes and Figures promote brevity; and brevity, united with perſpicuity, is always agreeable. An example or two will be given in the next paragraph. Sentiments thus delivered, and imagery thus painted, are readily apprehended by the mind, make

a ſtrong impreſſion upon the fancy, and remain long in the memory; whereas too many words, even when the meaning is good, never fail to bring diſguſt and wearineſs. They argue a debility of mind which hinders the author from ſeeing his thoughts in one diſtinct point of view; and they alſo encourage a ſuſpicion, that there is ſomething faulty or defective in the matter. In the poetic ſtyle, therefore, which is addreſſed to the fancy and paſſions, and intended to make a vivid, a pleaſing, and a permanent impreſſion, brevity, and conſequently tropes and figures, are indiſpenſable. And a language will always be the better ſuited to poetical purpoſes, the more it admits of this brevity; —a character which is more conſpicuous in the Greek and Latin than in any modern tongue, and much leſs in the French than in the Italian or Engliſh.

4. Tropes and Figures contribute to ſtrength or energy of language, not only by their conciſeneſs, but alſo by conveying to the fancy ideas that are eaſily comprehended, and make a ſtrong impreſſion. We are powerfully affected with what we ſee, or feel, or hear. When a ſentiment comes enforced or illuſtrated by figures taken from objects of ſight, or touch, or hearing, one thinks, as it were, that one ſees, or feels, or hears, the thing ſpoken of; and thus, what in itſelf would perhaps be obſcure, or is merely intellectual, may be made to ſeize our attention

tention and intereſt our paſſions almoſt as effectually as if it were an object of outward ſenſe. When Virgil calls the Scipios *thunderbolts of war*, he very ſtrongly expreſſes in one word, and by one image, the rapidity of their victories, the noiſe their atchievements made in the world, and the ruin and conſternation that attended their irreſiſtible career. —— When Homer calls Ajax *the bulwark of the Greeks*, he paints with equal brevity his vaſt ſize and ſtrength, the difficulty of prevailing againſt him, and the confidence wherewith his countrymen repoſed on his valour. —— When Solomon ſays of the ſtrange woman, or harlot, that "her feet go "*down* to death," he lets us know, not only that her path ends in deſtruction, but alſo, that they who accompany her will find it eaſy to go forwards to ruin, and difficult to return to their duty. —— Satan's enormous magnitude, and refulgent appearance, his perpendicular aſcent through a region of darkneſs, and the inconceivable rapidity of his motion, are all painted out to our fancy by Milton, in one very ſhort ſimilitude,

Sprung upward, like — a pyramid of fire *:

To take in the full meaning of which figure, we muſt imagine ourſelves in chaos, and a vaſt luminous body riſing upward, near the

* Par. Loſt, book 2. verſ. 1013.

place

place where we are, ſo ſwiftly as to appear a continued track of light, and leſſening to the view according to the increaſe of diſtance, till it end in a point, and then diſappear; and all this muſt be ſuppoſed to ſtrike our eye at one inſtant.——Equal to this in propriety, though not in magnificence, is that allegory of Gray,

The paths of glory lead but to the grave:

——

Which preſents to the imagination a wide plain, where ſeveral roads appear, crouded with glittering multitudes, and iſſuing from different quarters, but drawing nearer and nearer as they advance, till they terminate in the dark and narrow houſe, where all their glories enter in ſucceſſion, and diſappear for ever.——When it is ſaid in ſcripture, of a good man who died, that he *fell aſleep*, what a number of ideas are at once conveyed to our imagination, by this beautiful and expreſſive figure! As a labourer, at the cloſe of day, goes to ſleep, with the ſatisfaction of having performed his work, and with the agreeable hope of awaking in the morning of a new day, refreſhed and chearful; ſo a good man, at the end of life, reſigns himſelf calm and contented to the will of his Maker, with the ſweet reflection of having endeavoured to do his duty, and with the tranſporting hope of ſoon awaking in the regions of light, to life

and

and happineſs eternal. The figure alſo ſuggeſts, that to a good man the tranſition from life to death is even in the ſenſation no more painful, than when our faculties melt away into the pleaſing inſenſibility of ſleep.—— Satan flying among the ſtars is ſaid by Milton to "*Sail* between worlds and worlds;" which has an elegance and force far ſuperior to the proper word *Fly*. For by this alluſion to a ſhip, we are made to form a lively idea of his great ſize, and to conceive of his motion, that it was equable and majeſtic.—— Virgil uſes a happy figure to expreſs the ſize of the great wooden horſe, by means of which the Greeks were conveyed into Troy: "Equum divina Palladis arte *ædificant*."—— Milton is ſtill bolder when he ſays,

> Who would not ſing for Lycidas? he knew
> Himſelf to ſing, and *build the lofty rhime* *.

The phraſe, however, though bold, is emphatical; and gives a noble idea of the durability of poetry, as well as of the art and

* In the Latin phraſe *Condere carmen*, which Milton no doubt had in his view, the verb is of more general ſignification, than the Engliſh verb *to build*; and therefore the figure is bolder in Engliſh than Latin. It may even be doubted, whether *Condere carmen* be at all figurative; for *Condere* is reſolved by R. Stephanus into *Simul dare*. *Condere carmen, condere poema, condere hiſtoriam*, occur in Cicero and Pliny; but Milton's phraſe is much too daring for Engliſh proſe.

attention

attention requiſite to form a good poem.—— There are hundreds of tropical expreſſions in common uſe, incomparably more energetic than any proper words of equal brevity that could be put in their place. A cheek *burning* with bluſhes, is a trope which at once deſcribes the colour as it appears to the beholder, and the glowing heat as it is felt by the perſon bluſhing. *Chilled* with deſpondence, *petrefied* with aſtoniſhment, *thunderſtruck* with diſagreeable and unexpected intelligence, *melted* with love or pity, *diſſolved* in luxury, *hardened* in wickedneſs, *ſoftening* into remorſe, *inflamed* with deſire, *toſſed* with uncertainty, &c.—every one is ſenſible of the force of theſe and the like phraſes, and that they muſt contribute to the energy of compoſition.

51. Tropes and Figures promote ſtrength of expreſſion, and are in poetry peculiarly requiſite, becauſe they are often more *natural*, and more *imitative*, than proper words. In fact, this is ſo much the caſe, that it would be impoſſible to imitate the language of paſſion without them. It is true, that when the mind is agitated, one does not run out into allegories, or long-winded ſimilitudes, or any of the figures that require much attention and many words, or that tend to withdraw the fancy from the object of the paſſion. Yet the language of many paſſions muſt be figurative, notwithſtanding; becauſe they rouſe the fancy, and direct it to

objects congenial to their own nature, which diverſify the language of the ſpeaker with a multitude of alluſions. The fancy of a very angry man, for example, preſents to his view a train of diſagreeable ideas connected with the paſſion of anger, and tending to encourage it; and if he ſpeak without reſtraint during the paroxyſm of his rage, thoſe ideas will force themſelves upon him, and compel him to give them utterance. "Infernal "monſter! (he will ſay)—my blood boils "at him; he has uſed me like a dog; ne-"ver was man ſo injured as I have been by "this barbarian. He has no more ſenſe "of propriety than a ſtone. His counte-"nance is diabolical, and his ſoul as ugly "as his countenance. His heart is cold and "hard, and his reſolutions dark and bloody," &c. This ſpeech is wholly figurative. It is made up of *metaphors* and *hyperboles*, which, with the *proſopopœia* and *apoſtrophe*, are the moſt paſſionate of all the figures.——Lear, driven out of doors by his unnatural daughters, in the midſt of darkneſs, thunder, and tempeſt, naturally breaks forth (for his indignation is juſt now raiſed to the very higheſt pitch) into the following violent exclamation againſt the crimes of mankind, in which almoſt every word is figurative.

Tremble thou wretch,
That haſt within thee undivulged crimes
Unwhipt of juſtice. Hide thee, thou bloody hand,

Thou perjured, and thou ſimilar of virtue,
That art inceſtuous. Caitiff, to pieces ſhake,
That under covert, and convenient ſeeming,
Haſt practiſed on man's life. Cloſe pent-up guilts,
Rive your concealing continents, and cry
Theſe dreadful ſummoners grace.

—— The vehemence of maternal love, and ſorrow from the apprehenſion of loſing her child, make the Lady Conſtance utter a language that is ſtrongly figurative, tho' quite ſuitable to the condition and character of the ſpeaker. The paſſage is too long for a quotation, but concludes thus:

O Lord! my boy, my Arthur, my fair ſon,
My life, my joy, my food, my all the world,
My widow-comfort, and my ſorrow's cure *.

—— Similar to this, and equally expreſſive of conjugal love, is that beautiful hyperbole in Homer; where Andromache, to diſſuade her huſband from going out to the battle, tells him, that ſhe had now no mother, father, or brethren, all her kindred being dead, and her native country deſolate; and then tenderly adds,

But while my Hector yet ſurvives, I ſee
My father, mother, brethren, all in thee †.

* King John.

† Iliad, book 6.

As the paſſions that agitate the ſoul, and rouſe the fancy, are apt to vent themſelves in tropes and figures, ſo thoſe that depreſs the mind adopt for the moſt part a plain diction without any ornament. For to a dejected mind, wherein the imagination is generally inactive, it is not probable, that any great variety of ideas will preſent themſelves; and when theſe are few and familiar, the words that expreſs them muſt be ſimple. As no author equals Shakeſpeare in boldneſs or variety of figures, when he copies the ſtyle of thoſe violent paſſions that ſtimulate the fancy; ſo, when he would exhibit the human mind in a dejected ſtate, no uninſpired writer excels him in ſimplicity. The ſame Lear whoſe reſentment had impaired his underſtanding, while it broke out in the moſt boiſterous language, when, after ſome medical applications, he recovers his reaſon, his rage being now exhauſted, his pride humbled, and his ſpirits totally depreſſed, ſpeaks in a ſtyle than which nothing can be imagined more ſimple, or more affecting:

Pray, do not mock me;
I am a very fooliſh, fond old man,
Fourſcore and upward, and, to deal plainly with you,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks I ſhould know you, and know this man,
Yet I am doubtful; for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is, and all the ſkill I have
Remembers not theſe garments; nor I know not

Where I did lodge laſt night. ——*

—— Deſdemona, ever gentle, artleſs, and ſincere, ſhocked at the unkindneſs of her huſband, and overcome with melancholy, ſpeaks in a ſtyle ſo beautifully ſimple, and ſo perfectly natural, that one knows not what to ſay in commendation of it:

My mother had a maid call'd Barbara;
She was in love, and he ſhe loved proved mad,
And did forſake her. She had a ſong of willow;
An old thing it was, but it expreſs'd her fortune,
And ſhe died ſinging it. That ſong to-night
Will not go from my mind; I have much to do,
But to go hang my head all at one ſide,
And ſing it like poor Barbara †.

Sometimes

* King Lear, act 4. ſcene 7.

† Othello, act 4. ſcene 3. This charming paſſage, tranſlated into the *finical ſtyle*, which, whatever be the ſubject or ſpeaker, muſt always be deſcriptive, enigmatical, and full of figures, would perhaps run thus:

Even now, ſad Memory to my thought recals
The nymph Dione, who, with pious care,
My much-loved mother, in my vernal years,
Attended: blooming was the maiden's form,
And on her brow Diſcretion ſat, and on
Her roſy cheek a thouſand Graces play'd.
O luckleſs was the day, when Cupid's dart,
Shot from a gentle ſwain's alluring eye,
Firſt thrill'd with pleaſing pangs her throbbing breaſt!
That gentle ſwain, ah! gentle now no more,
(Horrid to tell!), by ſudden phrenſy driven,

Ran

Sometimes the imagination, even when exerted to the utmoſt, takes in but few ideas. This happens when the attention is totally engroſſed by ſome very great object; admiration being one of thoſe emotions that rather ſuſpend the exerciſe of the faculties, than puſh them into action. And here too the ſimpleſt language is the moſt natural; as when Milton ſays of the Deity, that he ſits "high-throned above all height." And as this ſimplicity is more ſuitable to that one great exertion which occupies the ſpeaker's mind, than a more elaborate imagery or lan-

Ran howling to the wild: blood-tinctured fire
Glared from his haggard eyeballs, and on high
The hand of Horror raiſed his ragged hair,
And cold ſweat bathed his agonizing frame.
What didſt thou then, Dione! ill-ſtar'd maid!
What couldſt thou do! — From morn to dewy eve,
From Eve till roſy-finger'd Morn appear'd,
In a ſad ſong, a ſong of ancient days,
Warbling her wild woe to the pitying winds,
She ſat; the weeping willow was her theme,
And well the theme accorded with her woe;
Till Fate ſuppreſs'd at length th' unfiniſh'd lay.
Thus on Meander's flowery mantled ſide
The dying cygnet ſings, and ſinging dies.

I hope my young readers are all wiſer; but I believe there was a time, when I ſhould have been tempted to prefer this flaſhy tinſel to Shakeſpeare's fine gold. I do not ſay, that in themſelves theſe lines are all bad, though ſeveral of them are; and in ſome ſorts of compoſition the greater part might perhaps be pardonable; but I ſay, that, conſidered in relation to the character and circumſtances of Deſdemona, they are all unnatural, and therefore not poetical.

guage

guage would have been; ſo has it alſo a more powerful effect in fixing and elevating the imagination of the hearer: for, to introduce other thoughts for the ſake of illuſtrating what cannot be illuſtrated, could anſwer no other purpoſe, than to draw off the attention from the principal idea. In theſe and the like caſes, the fancy left to itſelf will have more ſatisfaction in purſuing at leiſure its own ſpeculations, than in attending to thoſe of others; as they who ſee for the firſt time ſome admirable object, would chuſe rather to feaſt upon it in ſilence, than to have their thoughts interrupted by a long deſcription from another perſon, informing them of nothing but what they ſee before them, are already acquainted with, or may eaſily conceive. —— On theſe principles, I cannot but think, that Milton's elaborate account of the creation of light *, excellent as it is in many particulars, is yet far leſs ſtriking to the mind, than that famous paſſage of Moſes, ſo juſtly admired by Longinus for its ſublimity, "And God ſaid, Let "there be light; and there was light." When I contemplate the idea ſuggeſted by

* Let there be light, God ſaid; and forthwith light
Ethereal, firſt of things, quinteſſence pure,
Sprung from the deep, and from her native eaſt
To journey through the aery gloom began,
Sphered in a radiant cloud; for yet the ſun
Was not; ſhe in a cloudy tabernacle
Sojourn'd the while. *Parad. Loſt*, vii. 244.

theſe

theſe few ſimple words, I fancy myſelf encompaſſed with the darkneſs of chaos; that I hear the Almighty Word, and at the ſame inſtant ſee light diffuſed over all the immenſity of nature. Here an object, the greateſt ſurely that can be imagined, the whole illuminated univerſe ſtarts at once into view. And the fancy ſeems to be aſſiſted not a little by the ſhortneſs and ſimplicity of the phraſe, which hint the inſtantaneouſneſs of the effect, and the facility wherewith the Firſt Cauſe operates in producing a work ſo unutterably beautiful, and ſo aſtoniſhingly great.

But to return from this digreſſion, which was only intended to ſhow, that though ſome thoughts and emotions require a figurative, others as naturally adopt a ſimple, ſtyle: ——I remarked, that the *hyperbole*, *proſopopeia*, and *apoſtrophe*, are among the moſt paſſionate figures. This deſerves illuſtration.

1. A very angry man is apt to think the injury he has juſt received greater than it really is; and, if he proceed immediately to retaliate by word or deed, ſeldom fails to exceed the due bounds, and to become injurious in his turn. The fond parent looks upon his child as a prodigy of genius and beauty; and the romantic lover will not be perſuaded that his miſtreſs has nothing ſupernatural either in her mind or perſon. Fear, in like manner, not only magnifies its object when real, but even forms an object out of nothing, and miſtakes the fictions of

fancy

fancy for the intimations of ſenſe. — No wonder then, that they who ſpeak according to the impulſe of paſſion ſhould ſpeak *hyperbolically*: that the angry man ſhould exaggerate the injury he has received, and the vengeance he is going to inflict; that the ſorrowful ſhould magnify what they have loſt, and the joyful what they have obtained; that the lover ſhould ſpeak extravagantly of the beauty of his miſtreſs, the coward of the dangers he has encountered, and the credulous clown of the miracles performed by the juggler. In fact, theſe people would not do juſtice to what they feel, if they did not ſay more than the truth. The valiant man, on the other hand, as naturally adopts the diminiſhing hyberbole, when he ſpeaks of danger; and the man of ſenſe, when he is obliged to mention his own virtue or ability; becauſe it appears to him, or he is willing to conſider it, as leſs than the truth, or at beſt as inconſiderable. Contempt uſes the ſame figure; and therefore, Petruchio, affecting that paſſion, affects alſo the language of it:

> Thou lieſt, thou thread, thou thimble,
> Thou yard, three quarters, half yard, quarter, nail,
> Thou flea, thou nit, thou winter-cricket, thou!
> Braved in mine own houſe with a ſkein of thread!
> Away, thou rag, thou quantity, thou remnant *!

For ſome paſſions conſider their objects as

* Taming of the Shrew, act 4. ſcene 1.

important, and others as unimportant. Of the former ſort are anger, love, fear, admiration, joy, ſorrow, pride; of the latter are contempt and courage. Thoſe may be ſaid to ſubdue the mind to the object; and theſe, to ſubdue the object to the mind. And the former, when violent, always magnify their objects; whence the hyperbole called Amplification, or *Auxeſis*; and the latter as conſtantly diminiſh theirs; and give riſe to the hyperbole called *Meioſis*, or Diminution. — Even when the mind cannot be ſaid to be under the influence of any violent paſſion, we naturally employ the ſame figure, when we would impreſs another very ſtrongly with any idea. He is a walking ſhadow; he is worn to ſkin and bone; he has one foot in the grave, and the other following; — theſe and the like phraſes are proved to be natural by their frequency. — By introducing great ideas, the hyperbole is further uſeful in poetry, as a ſource of the ſublime; but, when employed injudiciouſly, is very apt to become ridiculous. Cowley makes Goliah as big as the hill down which he was marching *; and tells us, that when he came into the valley, he ſeemed to fill it, and to overtop the neighbouring mountains, (which, by the by, ſeems rather to leſſen the mountains and vallies, than to magnify

* Davideis, book 3.

the giant); nay, he adds, that the ſun ſtarted back when he ſaw the ſplendor of his arms. This poet ſeems to have thought, that the figure in queſtion could never be ſufficiently enormous; but Quintilian would have taught him, "Quamvis omnis hyperbole ultra fidem, non tamen eſſe debet ultra modum." The reaſon is, that this figure, when exceſſive, betokens, rather abſolute infatuation, than intenſe emotion; and reſembles the efforts of a ranting tragedian, or the ravings of an enthuſiaſtic declaimer, who, by putting on the geſtures and looks of a lunatic, ſatisfy the diſcerning part of their audience, that, inſtead of feeling ſtrongly, they have no rational feelings at all. In the wildeſt energies of nature there is a modeſty, which the imitative artiſt will be careful never to overſtep.

2. That figure, by which things are ſpoken of as if they were perſons, is called *Proſopopeia*, or Perſonification. It is a bold figure, and yet is often natural. Long acquaintance recommends to ſome ſhare in our affection even things inanimate, as a houſe, a tree, a rock, a mountain, a country; and were we to leave ſuch a thing, without hope of return, we ſhould be inclined to addreſs it with a farewell, as if it were a percipient creature. Nay, we find that ignorant nations have actually worſhipped ſuch things, or conſidered them as the haunt of certain powerful beings. Dryads and Hamadryads were

were by the Greeks and Romans ſuppoſed to preſide over trees and groves; river-gods and nymphs over ſtreams and fountains; little deities, called *Lares* and *Penates*, were believed to be the guardians of hearths and houſes. In Scotland there is hardly a hill remarkable for the beauty of its ſhape, that was not in former times thought to be the habitation of fairies. Nay modern as well as ancient ſuperſtition has appropriated the waters to a peculiar ſort of demon or goblin, and peopled the very regions of death, the tombs and charnel-houſes, with multitudes of ghoſts and phantoms.—Beſides, when things inanimate make a ſtrong impreſſion upon us, whether agreeable or otherwiſe, we are apt to addreſs them in terms of affection or diſlike. The ſailor bleſſes the plank that brought him aſhore from the ſhipwreck; and the paſſionate man, and ſometimes even the philoſopher, will ſay bitter words to the ſtumbling-block that gave him a fall.—Moreover, a man agitated with any intereſting paſſion, eſpecially of long continuance, is apt to fancy that all nature ſympathiſes with him. If he has loſt a beloved friend, he thinks the ſun leſs bright than at other times; and in the ſighing of the winds and groves, in the lowings of the herd, and in the murmurs of the ſtream, he ſeems to hear the voice of lamentation. But when joy or hope predominate, the whole world aſſumes a gay appearance. In the contempla-

tion of every part of nature, of every condition of mankind, of every form of human ſociety, the benevolent and the pious man, the moroſe and the chearful, the miſer and the miſanthrope, finds occaſion to indulge his favourite paſſion, and ſees, or thinks he ſees, his own temper reflected back in the actions, ſympathies, and tendencies of other things and perſons. Our affections are indeed the medium through which we may be ſaid to ſurvey ourſelves, and every thing elſe; and whatever be our inward frame, we are apt to perceive a wonderful congeniality in the world without us. And hence, the fancy, when rouſed by real emotions, or by the pathos of compoſition, is eaſily reconciled to thoſe figures of ſpeech that aſcribe ſympathy, perception, and the other attributes of animal life, to things inanimate, or even to notions merely intellectual. — Motion, too, bears a cloſe affinity to action, and affects our imagination nearly in the ſame manner; and we ſee a great part of nature in motion; and by their ſenſible effects are led to contemplate energies innumerable. Theſe conduct the rational mind to the Great Firſt Cauſe; and theſe, in times of ignorance, diſpoſed the vulgar to believe in a variety of ſubordinate agents employed in producing thoſe appearances that could not otherwiſe be accounted for. Hence an endleſs train of fabulous deities, and of witches, demons, fairies, genii;

genii; which, if they prove our reaſon weak and our fancy ſtrong, prove alſo, that Perſonification is natural to the human mind; and that a right uſe of this figure may have a powerful effect, in fabulous writing eſpecially, to engage our ſympathy in behalf of things as well as perſons, for nothing (as was before obſerved) can give laſting delight to a moral being, but that which awakens ſympathy, and touches the heart: and tho' it be true, that we ſympathiſe in ſome degree even with inanimate things, yet what has, or is ſuppoſed to have, life, calls forth a more ſincere and more permanent fellow-feeling — Let it be obſerved further, that to awaken our ſympathetic feelings, a lively conception of their object is neceſſary. This indeed is true of almoſt all our emotions; their keenneſs is in proportion to the vivacity of the perceptions that excite them. Diſtreſs that we ſee is more affecting than what we only hear of *; a peruſal of the gayeſt ſcenes in a comedy does not rouſe the mind ſo effectually, as the preſence of a chearful companion; and the death of a friend is of greater energy in producing ſerioufneſs, and the conſideration of our latter end, than all the pathos of Young. Of deſcriptions addreſſed to the fancy, thoſe that are moſt vivid and pictureſque will generally be found to have the moſt powerful influence over our affec-

* Hor. Ar. Poet. verſ. 180.

tions

tions *; and thoſe that exhibit perſons engaged in action, and adorned with viſible *inſignia*, give a briſker impulſe to the faculties, than ſuch as convey intellectual ideas only, or images taken from ſtill life. No abſtract notion of Time, or of Love, can be ſo ſtriking to the fancy, as the image of an old man accoutered with a ſcythe, or of a beautiful boy with wings and a bow and arrows: and no phyſiological account of Frenzy could ſuggeſt ſo vivid an idea, as the poet has given us in that exquiſite portrait,

> And moody Madneſs laughing wild, amid ſevereſt woe.

And for this reaſon partly it is, that the Epic poet, in order to work the more effectually upon our paſſions and imagination, refers the ſecret ſprings of human conduct, and the viciſſitudes of human affairs, to the agency of perſonified cauſes; that is, to the machinery of gods and goddeſſes, angels, demons, magicians, and other powerful beings. And hence, in all ſublime poetry, life and motion, with their ſeveral modes and attributes, are liberally beſtowed on thoſe

* I ſay *generally*; for it is not always ſo. Deſcriptions of very great or terrible objects have ſometimes a greater effect upon the mind, when expreſſed with ſome degree of obſcurity, where "more is meant than meets the ear," than if they had been pictured out in the moſt lively manner. See part 1. chap. 5. § 4.

objects

objects wherewith the author intends that we ſhould be ſtrongly impreſſed: ſcenes perfectly inanimate, and ſtill tending rather to diffuſe a languor over the mind, than to communicate to our internal powers thoſe lively energies, without which a being eſſentially active can never receive complete gratification. — Laſtly, ſome violent paſſions are peculiarly inclined to change things into perſons. The horrors of his mind haunted Oreſtes in the ſhape of furies. Conſcience in the form of the murdered perſon, ſtares the murderer in the face, and often terrifies him to diſtraction. The ſuperſtitious man, travelling alone in the dark, miſtakes a white ſtone for a ghoſt, a buſh for a demon, a tree waving with the wind for an enormous giant brandiſhing a hundred arms. The lunatic and enthuſiaſt converſe with perſons who exiſt only in their own diſtempered fancy: and the glutton, and the miſer, if they were to give utterance to all their thoughts, would often, I dare ſay, ſpeak, the one of his gold, the other of his belly, not only as a perſon, but as a god, — the object of his warmeſt love, and moſt devout regard. — More need not be ſaid to prove, that Perſonification is natural, and may frequently contribute to the pathos, energy, and beauty of poetic language.

3. *Apoſtrophe*, or a ſudden diverſion of ſpeech from one perſon to another perſon or thing, is a figure nearly related to the former.

mer. Poets ſometimes make uſe of it, in order to help out their verſe, or merely to give variety to their ſtyle: but on thoſe occaſions it is to be conſidered as rather a trick of art, than an effort of nature. It is moſt natural, and moſt pathetic, when the perſon or thing to whom the apoſtrophe is made, and for whoſe ſake we give a new direction to our ſpeech, is in our eyes eminently diſtinguiſhed for good or evil, or raiſes within us ſome ſudden and powerful emotion, ſuch as the hearer would acquieſce in, or at leaſt acknowledge to be reaſonable. But this, like the other pathetic figures, muſt be uſed with great prudence. For if, inſtead of calling forth the hearer's ſympathy, it ſhould only betray the levity of the ſpeaker, or ſuch wanderings of his mind as neither the ſubject nor the occaſion would lead one to expect, it will then create diſguſt, inſtead of approbation. — The orator, therefore, muſt not attempt the paſſionate apoſtrophe, till the minds of the hearers be prepared to join in it. And every audience is not equally obſequious in this reſpect. In the forum of ancient Rome that would have paſſed for ſublime and pathetic, which in the moſt reſpectable Britiſh auditories would appear ridiculous. For our ſtyle of public ſpeaking is cool and argumentative, and partakes leſs of enthuſiaſm than the Roman did, and much leſs than the modern French or Italian. Of Britiſh eloquence, particular-

ly that of the pulpit, the chief recommendations are gravity and ſimplicity. And it is vain to ſay, that our oratory *ought* to be more vehement: for that matter depends on cauſes, which it is not only inexpedient, but impoſſible to alter; namely, on the character and ſpirit of the people, and their rational notions in regard to religion, policy, and literature. The exclamations of Cicero would weigh but little in our parliament; and many of thoſe which we meet with in French ſermons would not be more effectual if attempted in our pulpit. To ſee one of our preachers, who the moment before was a cool reaſoner, a temperate ſpeaker, an humble Chriſtian, and an orthodox divine, break out into a ſudden apoſtrophe to the immortal powers, or to the walls of the church, tends to force a ſmile, rather than a tear, from thoſe among us who reflect, that there is nothing in the ſubject, and ſhould be nothing in the orator, to warrant ſuch wanderings of fancy, or vehemence of emotion. If he be careful to cultivate a pure ſtyle, and a grave and graceful utterance, a Britiſh clergyman, who ſpeaks from conviction the plain unaffected words of truth and ſoberneſs, of benevolence and piety, will, if I miſtake not, convey more pathetic, as well as more permanent, impreſſions to the heart, and be more uſeful as a Chriſtian teacher, than if he were to put in practice all the

attitudes of Roſcius, and all the tropes and figures of Cicero.

But where the language of paſſion and enthuſiaſm is permitted to diſplay itſelf, whatever raiſes any ſtrong emotion, whether it be animated or inanimate, abſent or preſent, ſenſible or intellectual, may give riſe to the apoſtrophe. A man in a diſtant country, ſpeaking of the place of his birth, might naturally exclaim, "O my dear native land, "ſhall I never ſee thee more!" Or, when ſome great misfortune befals him, "Happy are ye, O my parents, that ye are not "alive to ſee this."—We have a beautiful apoſtrophe in the third book of the Eneid, where Eneas, who is telling his ſtory to Dido, happening to mention the death of his father, makes a ſudden addreſs to him as follows:

——— hic, pelagi tot tempeſtatibus actus,
Heu, genitorem, omnis curæ caſuſque levamen,
Amitto Anchiſen;—hic me, pater optime, feſſum
Deſeris, heu, tantis nequicquam erepte periclis!

This apoſtrophe has a pleaſing effect. It ſeems to intimate, that the love which the hero bore his father was ſo great, that when he mentioned him, he forgot every thing elſe; and, without minding his company, one of whom was a queen, ſuddenly addreſſed himſelf to that which, though preſent only in idea, was ſtill a principal object