

can have no more. But even this is a great deal. We learn from experience, that the mistakes or oversights committed by the mind in one operation, are sometimes, on a review, corrected on the second, or perhaps on a third. Besides, the repetition, when no error is discovered, enlivens the remembrance, and so strengthens the conviction. But, for this conviction, it is plain that we are in a great measure indebted to memory, and in some measure even to experience.

Arithmetical operations, as well as geometrical, are in their nature scientific; yet the most accurate accountants are very sensible of the possibility of committing a blunder, and therefore rarely fail, for securing the matter, when it is of importance, to prove what they have done, by trying to effect the same thing another way. You have employed yourself, I suppose, in resolving some difficult problem by algebra, and are convinced that your solution is just. One whom you know to be an expert algebraist, carefully peruses the whole operation, and acquaints you that he hath discovered an error in your procedure. You are that instant sensible that your conviction was not of such an impregnable nature, but that his single testimony, in consequence of the confidence you repose in his experienced veracity and skill, makes a considerable abatement in it.

Many cases might be supposed, of belief founded only on moral evidence, which it would be impossible thus to shake. A man of known probity and good sense, and (if you think it makes an addition of any moment in this case) an astronomer and philosopher, bids you look at the sun as it goes down, and tells you, with a serious countenance, that the sun which sets to-day will never again rise upon the earth. What would be the effect of this declaration? Would it create in you any doubts? I believe it might, as to the soundness of the man's intellects, but not as to the truth of what he said. Thus, if we regard only the effect, demonstration itself doth not always produce such immovable certainty, as is sometimes consequent on merely moral evidence. And if there are, on the other hand, some well known demonstrations, of so great authority, that it would equally look like lunacy to impugn, it may deserve the attention of the curious to inquire how far, with respect to the bulk of mankind, these circumstances, their having stood the test of ages, their having obtained the universal suffrage of those who are qualified to examine them (things purely of the nature of moral evidence), have contributed to that unshaken faith with which they are received.

The principal difference then, in respect of the result of both kinds, is reduced to this narrow point. In mathematical reasoning, provided you are ascertained of the regular procedure of the mind, to affirm that the conclusion is false implies a contradiction; in moral reasoning, though the procedure of

the mind were quite unexceptionable, there still remains a physical possibility of the falsity of the conclusion. But how small this difference is in reality, any judicious person who but attends a little may easily discover. The geometrician, for instance, can no more doubt whether the book called Euclid's Elements is a human composition, whether its contents were discovered and digested into the order in which they are there disposed, by human genius and art, than he can doubt the truth of the propositions therein demonstrated. Is he in the smallest degree surer of any of the properties of the circle, than that if he take away his hand from the compasses with which he is describing it on the wall, they will immediately fall to the ground. These things affect his mind, and influence his practice, precisely in the same manner.

So much for the various kinds of evidence, whether intuitive or deductive; intuitive evidence, as divided into that of pure intellect, of consciousness, and of common sense, under the last of which that of memory is included; deductive evidence, as divided into scientific and moral, with the subdivisions of the latter into experience, analogy, and testimony, to which hath been added the consideration of a mixed species concerning chances. So much for the various subjects of discourse, and the sorts of evicton of which they are respectively susceptible. This, though peculiarly the logician's province, is the foundation of all conviction, and consequently of persuasion too. To attain either of these ends, the speaker must always assume the character of the close candid reasoner: for though he may be an acute logician who is no orator, he will never be a consummate orator who is no logician.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Nature and Use of the scholastic art of Syllogizing.

HAVING in the preceding chapter endeavoured to trace the outlines of natural logic, perhaps with more minuteness than in such an inquiry as this was strictly necessary, it might appear strange to pass over in silence the dialectic of the schools; an art which, though now fallen into disrepute, maintained, for a tract of ages, the highest reputation among the learned. What was so long regarded as teaching the only legitimate use and application of our rational powers in the acquisition of knowledge, ought not surely, when we are employed in investigating the nature and the different sorts of evidence, to be altogether overlooked.

It is long since I was first convinced, by what Mr. Locke had said on the subject, that the syllogistic art, with its figures

and moods, serves more to display the ingenuity of the inventor, and to exercise the address and fluency of the learner, than to assist the diligent inquirer in his researches after truth. The method of proving by syllogism, appears, even on a superficial review, both unnatural and prolix. The rules laid down for distinguishing the conclusive from the inconclusive forms of argument, the true syllogism from the various kinds of sophism, are at once cumbersome to the memory, and unnecessary in practice. No person, one may venture to pronounce, will ever be made a reasoner, who stands in need of them. In a word, the whole bears the manifest indications of an artificial and ostentatious parade of learning, calculated for giving the appearance of great profundity to what in fact is very shallow. Such, I acknowledge, have been, for a long time, my sentiments on the subject. On a nearer inspection, I cannot say I have found reason to alter them, though I think I have seen a little further into the nature of this disputative science, and consequently into the grounds of its futility. I shall, therefore, as briefly as possible, lay before the reader a few observations on the subject, and so dismiss this article.

Permit me only to premise in general, that I proceed all along on the supposition, that the reader hath some previous acquaintance with school logic. It would be extremely superfluous, in a work like this, to give even the shortest abridgment that could be made of an art so well known, and which is still to be found in many thousand volumes. On the other hand, it is not necessary that he be an adept in it; a mere smattering will sufficiently serve the present purpose.

My first observation is, that this method of arguing has not the least affinity to moral reasoning; the procedure in the one being the very reverse of that employed in the other. In moral reasoning we proceed by analysis, and ascend from particulars to universals; in syllogizing we proceed by synthesis, and descend from universals to particulars. The analytic is the only method which we can follow, in the acquisition of natural knowledge, or whatever regards actual existences; the synthetic is more properly the method that ought to be pursued, in the application of knowledge already acquired. It is for this reason it has been called the didactic method, as being the shortest way of communicating the principles of a science. But even in teaching, as often as we attempt, not barely to inform, but to convince, there is a necessity of recurring to the track in which the knowledge we would convey was first attained. Now, the method of reasoning by syllogism more resembles mathematical demonstration, wherein, from universal principles, called axioms, we deduce many truths, which, though general in their nature, may, when compared with those first principles, be justly styled particular. Whereas in all kinds of knowledge,

wherein experience is our only guide, we can proceed to general truths solely by an induction of particulars.

Agreeably to this remark, if a syllogism be regular in mood and figure, and if the premises be true, the conclusion is infallible. The whole foundation of the syllogistic art lies in these two axioms: "Things which coincide with the same thing, coincide with one another;" and "Two things, whereof one does, and one does not coincide with the same thing, do not coincide with one another." On the former rest all the affirmative syllogisms, on the latter all the negative. Accordingly, there is no more mention here of probability and of degrees of evidence, than in the operations of geometry and algebra. It is true, indeed, that the term *probable* may be admitted into a syllogism, and make an essential part of the conclusion, and so it may also in an arithmetical computation; but this does not in the least affect what was advanced just now; for in all such cases, the probability itself is assumed in one of the premises: whereas, in the inductive method of reasoning, it often happens, that from certain facts we can deduce only probable consequences.

I observe secondly, that though this manner of arguing has more of the nature of scientific reasoning than of moral, it has, nevertheless, not been thought worthy of being adopted by mathematicians, as a proper method of demonstrating their theorems. I am satisfied that mathematical demonstration is capable of being moulded into the syllogistic form, having made the trial with success on some propositions. But that this form is a very inconvenient one, and has many disadvantages, but not one advantage of that commonly practised, will be manifest to every one who makes the experiment. It is at once more indirect, more tedious, and more obscure. I may add, that if into those abstract sciences one were to introduce some specious fallacies, such fallacies could be much more easily sheltered under the awkward verbosity of this artificial method, than under the elegant simplicity of that which has hitherto been used.

My third remark, which, by the way, is directly consequent on the two former, shall be, that in the ordinary application of this art to matters with which we can be made acquainted only by experience, it can be of little or no utility. So far from leading the mind, agreeably to the design of all argument and investigation, from things known to things unknown, and by things evident to things obscure; its usual progress is, on the contrary, from things less known to things better known, and by things obscure to things evident. But that it may not be thought that I do injustice to the art by this representation, I must entreat that the few following considerations may be attended to.

When, in the way of induction, the mind proceeds from individual instances to the discovery of such truths as regard a species, and from these again to such as comprehend a genus, we may say with reason, that as we advance, there may be in every succeeding step, and commonly is, less certainty than in the preceding; but in no instance whatever can there be more. Besides, as the judgment formed concerning the less general was anterior to that formed concerning the more general, so the conviction is more vivid arising from both circumstances, that, being less general, it is more distinctly conceived, and being earlier, it is more deeply imprinted. Now, the customary procedure in the syllogistic science is, as was remarked, the natural method reversed, being from general to special, and consequently from less to more obvious. In scientific reasoning the case is very different, as the axioms, or universal truths from which the mathematician argues, are so far from being the slow result of induction and experience, that they are self-evident. They are no sooner apprehended than necessarily assented to.

But to illustrate the matter by examples, take the following specimen in *Barbara*, the first mood of the first figure:—

All animals feel;
All horses are animals;
Therefore all horses feel.

It is impossible that any reasonable man, who really doubts whether a horse has feeling or is a mere automaton, should be convinced by this argument. For, supposing he uses the names *horse* and *animal*, as standing in the same relation of species and genus which they bear in the common acceptation of the words, the argument you employ is, in effect, but an affirmation of the point which he denies, couched in such terms as include a multitude of other similar affirmations, which, whether true or false, are nothing to the purpose. Thus *all animals feel*, is only a compendious expression, for *all horses feel*, *all dogs feel*, *all camels feel*, *all eagles feel*, and so through the whole animal creation. I affirm, besides, that the procedure here is from things less known to things better known. It is possible that one may believe the conclusion who denies the major: but the reverse is not possible; for, to express myself in the language of the art, that may be predicated of the species, which is not predicable of the genus; but that can never be predicated of the genus, which is not predicable of the species. If one, therefore, were under such an error in regard to the brutes, true logic, which is always coincident with good sense, would lead our reflections to the indications of perception and feeling, given by these animals, and

the remarkable conformity which in this respect, and in respect to their bodily organs, they bear to our own species.

It may be said, that if the subject of the question were a creature much more ignoble than the horse, there would be no scope for this objection to the argument. Substitute, then, the word *oysters* for horses in the minor, and it will stand thus,

All animals feel;
All oysters are animals;
Therefore all oysters feel.

In order to give the greater advantage to the advocate for this scholastic art, let us suppose the antagonist does not maintain the opposite side from any favour to Descartes' theory concerning brutes, but from some notion entertained of that particular order of beings which is the subject of dispute. It is evident, that though he should admit the truth of the major, he would regard the minor as merely another manner of expressing the conclusion; for he would conceive an animal no otherwise than as a body endowed with sensation or feeling.

Sometimes, indeed, there is not in the premises any position more generic, under which the conclusion can be comprised. In this case you always find that the same proposition is exhibited in different words; inasmuch that the stress of the argument lies in a mere synonyma or something equivalent. The following is an example:—

The Almighty ought to be worshipped;
God is the Almighty;
Therefore God ought to be worshipped.

It would be superfluous to illustrate that this argument could have no greater influence on the Epicurean, than the first mentioned one would have on the Cartesian. To suppose the contrary is to suppose the conviction effected by the charm of a sound, and not by the sense of what is advanced. Thus also the middle term and the subject frequently correspond to each other, as the definition, description, or circumlocution, and the name. Of this I shall give an example in *Disamis*, as in the technical dialect the third mood of the third figure is denominated,—

Some men are rapacious;
All men are rational animals;
Therefore some rational animals are rapacious.

Who does not perceive that "rational animals" is but a periphrasis for men?

It may be proper to subjoin one example at least, in negative syllogisms. The subsequent is one in *Celarent*, the second mood of the first figure:—

Nothing violent is lasting;
But tyranny is violent;
Therefore tyranny is not lasting.

Here a *thing violent* serves for the genus of which *tyranny* is a species; and nothing can be clearer than that it requires much less experience to discover whether shortness of duration be justly attributed to tyranny the species, than whether it be justly predicated of every violent thing. The application of what was said on the first example, to that now given, is so obvious that it would be losing time to attempt further to illustrate it.

Logicians have been at pains to discriminate the regular and consequential combinations of the three terms, as they are called, from the irregular and inconsequent. A combination of the latter kind, if the defect lie in the form, is called a paralogism; if in the sense, a sophism; though sometimes these two appellations are confounded. Of the latter, one kind is denominated *petitio principii*, which is commonly rendered in English, *a begging of the question*, and is defined the proving of a thing by itself, whether expressed in the same or in different words, or which amounts to the same thing, assuming in the proof the very opinion or principle proposed to be proved. It is surprising that this should ever have been by those artists styled a sophism, since it is in fact so essential to the art, that there is always some radical defect in a syllogism which is not chargeable with this. The truth of what I now affirm will appear to any one, on the slightest review of what has been evinced in the preceding part of this chapter.

The fourth and last observation I shall make on this topic is, that the proper province of the syllogistical science is rather the adjustment of our language, in expressing ourselves on subjects previously known, than the acquisition of knowledge in things themselves. According to M. du Marsais, "Reasoning consists in deducing, inferring, or drawing a judgment from other judgments already known; or rather in showing that the judgment in question has been already formed implicitly, inasmuch that the only point is to develop it, and show its identity with some anterior judgment."² Now I affirm that the former part of this definition suits all deductive reasoning, whether scientific or moral, in which the principle deduced is distinct from, however closely related to, the principles from which the deduction is made. The latter part of

² Le raisonnement consiste à déduire, à inférer, à tirer un jugement d'autres jugemens déjà connus : ou plutôt à faire voir que le jugement dont il s'agit, a déjà été porté d'une manière implicite; de sorte qu'il n'est plus question que de le développer, et d'en faire voir l'identité avec quelque jugement antérieur. Logique Art. 7.

the definition, which begins with the words *or rather*, does not answer as an explication of the former, as the author seems to have intended, but exactly hits the character of syllogistic reasoning, and indeed of all sorts of controversy merely verbal. If you regard only the thing signified, the argument conveys no instruction, nor does it forward us in the knowledge of things a single step. But if you regard principally the signs, it may serve to correct misapplications of them, through inadvertency or otherwise.

In evincing the truth of this doctrine, I shall begin with a simple illustration from what may happen to any one in studying a foreign tongue. I learn from an Italian and French dictionary, that the Italian word *pecora* corresponds to the French word *brebis*, and from a French and English dictionary, that the French *brebis* corresponds to the English *sheep*. Hence I form this argument,

Pecora is the same with *brebis*;
Brebis is the same with *sheep*;

Therefore *pecora* is the same with *sheep*.

This, though not in mood and figure, is evidently conclusive. Nay, more, if the words *pecora*, *brebis*, and *sheep*, under the notion of signs, be regarded as the terms, it has three distinct terms, and contains a direct and scientific deduction from this axiom, "Things coincident with the same thing are coincident with one another." On the other hand, let the things signified be solely regarded, and there is but one term in the whole, namely, the species of quadruped denoted by the three names above mentioned. Nor is there, in this view of the matter, another judgment in all the three propositions, but this identical one, "A sheep is a sheep."

Nor let it be imagined that the only right application can be in the acquisition of strange languages. Every tongue whatever gives scope for it, inasmuch as in every tongue the speaker labours under great inconveniences, especially on abstract questions, both from the paucity, obscurity, and ambiguity of the words on the one hand; and from his own misapprehensions, and imperfect acquaintance with them on the other. As a man may, therefore, by an artful and sophistical use of them, be brought to admit, in certain terms, what he would deny in others, this disputatious discipline may, under proper management, by setting in a stronger light the inconsistencies occasioned by such improprieties, be rendered instrumental in correcting them. It was remarked above,³ that such propositions as these, "Twelve are a dozen," "Twenty are a score," unless considered as explications of the words *dozen* and

³ Chap. v. Sect. I. Part I.

score, are quite insignificant. This limitation, however, it was necessary to add; for those positions which are identical when considered purely as relating to the things signified, are nowise identical when regarded purely as explanatory of the names. Suppose that through the imperfection of a man's knowledge in the language, aided by another's sophistry, and perhaps his own inattention, he is brought to admit of the one term, what he would refuse of the other, such an argument as this might be employed,

Twelve, you allow, are equal to the fifth part of sixty;
Now a dozen are equal to twelve;
Therefore a dozen are equal to the fifth part of sixty.

I mark the case rather strongly, for the sake of illustration: for I am sensible, that in what regards things so definite as all names of number are, it is impossible for any one, who is not quite ignorant of the tongue, to be misled. But the intelligent reader will easily conceive, that in abstruse and metaphysical subjects, wherein the terms are often both extensive and indefinite in their signification, and sometimes even equivocal, the most acute and wary may be entangled in them.

In further confirmation of my fourth remark, I shall produce an example in *Camestres*, the second mood of the second figure:

All animals are mortal;
But angels are not mortal;
Therefore angels are not animals.

When the antagonist calls an angel an animal, it must proceed from one or other of these two causes, either from an error in regard to the nature of the angelic order, or from a mistake as to the import of the English word *animal*. If the first be the case, — namely, some erroneous opinion about angels, as that they are embodied spirits, generated and corruptible like ourselves, — it is evident that the forementioned syllogism labours under the common defect of all syllogisms. It assumes the very point in question. But if the difference between the disputants be, as it frequently happens, merely verbal, and the opponent uses the word *animal* as another name for living creature, and as exactly corresponding to the Greek term,⁴ arguments of this sort may be of service, for setting the impropriety of such a misapplication of the English name in a clearer light. For let it be observed, that though Nature hath strongly marked the principal differences to be found in different orders of beings, a procedure which hath suggested to men the manner of classing things into genera and species, this does not hold

⁴ Zoon.

equally in every case. Hence it is, that the general terms in different languages do not always exactly correspond. Some nations, from particular circumstances, are more affected by one property in objects, others by another. This leads to a different distribution of things under their several names. Now, though it is not of importance that the words in one tongue exactly correspond to those in another, it is of importance that in the same tongue uniformity in this respect be, as much as is possible, observed. Errors in regard to the signs tend not only to retard the progress of knowledge, but to introduce errors in regard to the things signified. Now, by suggesting the different attributes comprised in the definition of the term, as so many mediums in the proof, an appeal is made to the adversary's practice in the language. In this way such mediums may be presented as will satisfy a candid adversary, that the application he makes of the term in question is not conformable to the usage of the tongue.

On the other hand, it is certain, that in matters of an abstract and complex nature, where the terms are comprehensive, indefinite, not in frequent use, and consequently not well ascertained, men may argue together eternally, without making the smallest impression on each other, not sensible, all the while, that there is not at bottom any difference between them, except as to the import of words and phrases. I do not say, however, that this is a consequence peculiar to this manner of debating, though perhaps oftener resulting from it, on account of its many nice distinctions, unmeaning subtleties, and mazy windings, than from any other manner. For it must be owned, that the syllogistic art has at least as often been employed for imposing fallacies on the understanding, as for detecting those imposed. And though verbal controversy seems to be its natural province, it is neither the only method adapted to such discussions, nor the most expeditious.

To conclude then; what shall we denominate the artificial system, or organ of truth, as it has been called, of which we have been treating? Shall we style it the art of reasoning? So honourable an appellation it by no means merits, since, as hath been shown, it is ill adapted to scientific matters, and for that reason never employed by the mathematician; and is utterly incapable of assisting us in our researches into nature. Shall we then pronounce it the science of *logomachy*, or in plain English, the art of fighting with words, and about words? And in this wordy warfare, shall we say that the rules of syllogizing are the tactics? This would certainly hit the matter more nearly; but I know not how it happens, that to call any thing *logomachy* or *alteration*, would be considered as giving bad names; and when a good use may be made of an invention, it seems unreasonable to fix an odious name upon it,

which ought only to discriminate the abuse. I shall therefore only title it the scholastic art of disputation.⁵ It is the school-men's science of defence.

When all erudition consisted more in an acquaintance with words, and an address in using them, than in the knowledge of things, dexterity in this exertion conferred as much lustre on the scholar, as agility in the tilts and tournaments added glory to the knight. In proportion as the attention of mankind has been drawn off to the study of nature, the honours of this contentious art have faded, and it is now almost forgotten. There is no reason to wish its revival, as eloquence seems to have been very little benefited by it, and philosophy still less.

Nay, there is but good reason to affirm, that there are two evils at least which it has gendered. These are, first, an itch of disputing on every subject, however uncontroversial; the other, a sort of philosophic pride, which will not permit us to think that we believe any thing, even a self-evident principle, without a previous reason or argument. In order to gratify this passion, we invariably recur to words, and are at immense pains to lose ourselves in clouds of our own raising. We imagine we are advancing and making wonderful progress, while the mist of words in which we have involved our intellects, hinders us from discerning that we are moving in a circle all the time.⁶

⁵ It answers to that branch of logic which Lord Verulam styles *Doctrina de elenchis hermetica*; concerning which he affirms, "Dedimus ei nomen ex usu, quia verus ejus usus est plane redargutio, et cautio circa usum verborum. Quinto partem illam de predicamentis, si recte instituat, circa cautiones, de non confundendis aut transponendis definitionum et divisionum terminis, præcipuum usum sortiri existimamus, et huc etiam referri malimus." *De Aug. Scient. L. v. c. 4.*

⁶ How ridiculous are the efforts which some very learned and judicious men have made, in order to evince that whatever begins to exist must have a cause. One argues, "There must have been a cause to determine the time and place," as though it were more evident that the accidents could not be so determined without a cause, than that the existence of the thing could not be it must have been the cause of itself; a third, with equal consistency, that nothing must have been the cause. Thus, by always assuming the *absolute necessity of a cause*, they demonstrate the *absolute necessity of a cause*. For a full illustration of the futility of such pretended reasonings, see the Treatise of Human Nature, B. i. Part iii. Sect. 3. I do not think they have succeeded better, who have attempted to assign a reason for the faith we have in this principle, that the *future will resemble the past*. A late author imagines that he solves the difficulty at once, by saying, that what is now time past, was once future; and that though no man has had experience of what is future, every man has had experience of what *was* future. "Would it then be more perspicuous to state the question thus: 'How come we to believe that *what is future*, not *what was future*, will resemble the past?'" Of the first he says expressly, that no man has had experience, though almost in the same breath he tells us, not very consistently, "The answer is sufficient, have we not always found it to be so?" an answer which appears to me not more illogical than ungrammatical. But admitting with him, that to consider time as past or future (though no distinction can be more precise) is only puzzling the

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Consideration which the Speaker ought to have of the Hearers, as men in general.

RHETORIC, as was observed already, not only considers the subject, but also the hearers and the speaker.⁷ The hearers must be considered in a twofold view, as men in general, and as such men in particular.

As men in general, it must be allowed there are certain principles in our nature, which, when properly addressed and managed, give no inconsiderable aid to reason in promoting belief. Nor is it just to conclude from this concession, as some have hastily done, that oratory may be defined, "The art of deception." The use of such helps will be found, on a stricter examination, to be in most cases quite legitimate, and even necessary, if we would give reason herself that influence which is certainly her due. In order to evince the truth considered by itself, conclusive arguments alone are requisite; but in order to convince me by these arguments, it is moreover requisite that they be understood, that they be attended to,

question; let us inquire whether a reason can be assigned for judging that the unknown time will resemble the known. Suppose our whole time divided into equal portions. Call these portions A, B, C, D, E, F, G. Of these the three first have been experienced, the remaining four are not. The three first I found to resemble one another, but how must I argue with regard to the rest? Shall I say B was like A, therefore D will be like C; or, if you think it strengthens the argument, shall I say, C resembled A and B, therefore D will resemble A, B, and C. I would gladly know what sort of reasoning, scientific or moral, this could be denominated: or what is the medium by which the conclusion is made out? Suppose, further, I get acquainted with D, formerly unknown, and find that it actually resembles A, B, and C, how can this furnish me with any knowledge of E, F, and G, things totally distinct? The resemblance I have discovered in D, to A, B, and C, can never be extended to any thing that is not D, nor any part of D, namely to E, F, and G; unless you assume this as the medium, that the unknown will resemble the known; or, which is equivalent, that the future will resemble the past. So far is this principle, therefore, from being deduced from particular experience, that it is fundamental to all particular deductions from experience, in which we could not advance a single step without it. We are often misled, in cases of this nature, by a vague and popular use of words, not attending to the nicer differences in their import in different situations. If one were to ask me, "Have you, then, no reason to believe that the future will resemble the past?" I should certainly answer, "I have the greatest reason to believe it." And if the question had been concerning a geometrical axiom, I should have returned the same answer. By reason we often mean, not an argument, or medium of proving, but a ground in human nature on which a particular judgment is founded. Nay further, as no progress in reasoning can be made where there is no foundation, (and first principles are here the sole foundation,) I should readily admit, that the man who does not believe such propositions, if it were possible to find such a man, is perfectly irrational, and consequently not to be argued with.

that they be remembered by me; and in order to persuade me by them to any particular action or conduct, it is further requisite, that by interesting me in the subject, they may, as it were, be felt. It is not therefore the understanding alone that is here concerned. If the orator would prove successful, it is necessary that he engage in his service all these different powers of the mind, the imagination, the memory, and the passions. These are not the supplanters of reason, or even rivals in her sway; they are her handmaids, by whose ministry she is enabled to usher truth into the heart, and procure it there a favourable reception. As handmaids they are liable to be seduced by sophistry in the garb of reason, and sometimes are made ignorantly to lend their aid in the introduction of falsehood. But their service is not on this account to be dispensed with; there is even a necessity of employing it, founded on our nature. Our eyes and hands and feet will give us the same assistance in doing mischief as in doing good; but it would not therefore be better for the world, that all mankind were blind and lame. Arms are not to be laid aside by honest men, because carried by assassins and ruffians; they are to be used the rather for this very reason. Nor are those mental powers, of which eloquence so much avails herself, like the art of war or other human arts, perfectly indifferent to good and evil, and only beneficial as they are rightly employed. On the contrary, they are by nature, as will perhaps appear afterwards, more friendly to truth than to falsehood, and more easily retained in the cause of virtue, than in that of vice.³

SECTION I.—Men considered as endowed with Understanding.

But to descend to particulars; the first thing to be studied by the speaker is, that his arguments may be understood. If they be unintelligible, the cause must be either in the sense or

³ "Notandum est enim, affectus ipsos ad bonum apparens semper ferri, atque hoc ex parte aliquid habere cum ratione commune; verum illud in se, quod affectus intuentur precipue bonum in presentia; ratio prospectiva in longum, etiam futurum, et in summa. Ideoque cum que in presentia obversantur, impellant phantasiam fortius, succumbit plerumque ratio et subjugatur. Sed postquam eloquentia et suasionum vi effectum sit, ut futura abeunte in partes rationis, phantasia ratio fit superior. Concludamus igitur, non deberi magis vitio verti Rhetoricæ, quod deteriorem partem colonestare solat quam Dialecticæ, quod sophismata concinnare doceat. Quis enim necit contrarium eandem rationem esse, licet usu opponantur? De Aug. Scient. l. vi. c. 3. Τα βραχυτάτα πράγματα οὐχ ὁμοίως εἶναι, ἀλλ' αὐτὰ ῥ' ἀλλοῦ καὶ τα βλάπτει τὴν φαντασίαν οὐχ ὁμοίως εἶναι, ἀλλ' αὐτὰ ῥ' ἀλλοῦ κατὰ τὴν φύσιν τὴν αὐτὴν διὰ τὴν ἀντικειμένην τὴν λόγον, τούτοις καὶ καὶ τὴν ὁμοίαν, πλὴν ἐστὶν, καὶ μακρὰ κατὰ τὴν Χρηστικότητα, ἀλλ' ὁμοίως ὅμοιως, καὶ βλαπτείν αὐτοὺς. Arist. Rhet. l. i. c. i.

in the expression. It lies in the sense if the mediums of proof be such as the hearers are unacquainted with; that is, if the ideas introduced be either without the sphere of their knowledge, or too abstract for their apprehension and habits of thinking. It lies in the sense likewise, if the train of reasoning (though no unusual ideas should be introduced) be longer, or more complex, or more intricate, than they are accustomed to. But as the fitness of the arguments, in these respects, depends on the capacity, education, and attainments of the hearers, which in different orders of men are different, this properly belongs to the consideration which the speaker ought to have of his audience, not as men in general, but as men in particular. The obscurity which ariseth from the expression will come in course to be considered in the sequel.

SECTION II.—Men considered as endowed with Imagination.

The second thing requisite is that his reasoning be attended to; for this purpose the imagination must be engaged. Attention is prerequisite to every effect of speaking, and without some gratification in hearing, there will be no attention, at least of any continuance. Those qualities in ideas which principally gratify the fancy, are vivacity, beauty, sublimity, novelty. Nothing contributes more to vivacity than striking resemblances in the imagery, which convey, besides, an additional pleasure of their own.

But there is still a further end to be served by pleasing the imagination, than that of awakening and preserving the attention, however important this purpose alone ought to be accounted. I will not say with a late subtle metaphysician,⁴ that "Belief consisteth in the liveliness of our ideas." That this doctrine is erroneous, it would be quite foreign to my purpose to attempt here to evince.⁵ Thus much however is indubitable, that belief commonly enlivens our ideas; and that lively ideas have a stronger influence than faint ideas to induce belief. But so far are these two from being coincident, that even this connexion between them, though common, is not necessary. Vivacity of ideas is not always accompanied with faith, nor is faith always able to produce vivacity. The ideas raised in my mind by the *Cædipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles, or the *Lear* of Shakespeare, are incomparably more lively than those excited by a cold but faithful historiographer. Yet I may give full credit to the languid narrative of the latter, though I believe not a single sentence in those tragedies. If a proof were asked of

⁴ The author of a Treatise of Human Nature, in 3 vols.

⁵ If one is desirous to see a refutation of this principle, let him consult Reid's Inquiry, Chap. ii. Sect. 5.

the greater vivacity in the one case than in the other (which, by the way, must be finally determined by consciousness), let these effects serve for arguments. The ideas of the poet give strongly on the passions, command closer attention, operate more be not sufficient evidences of greater vivacity, I own I have no apprehension of the meaning which that author affixes to the term. The connexion, however, that generally subsisteth between vivacity and belief will appear less marvellous, if we reflect that there is not so great a difference between argument and illustration as is usually imagined. The same ingenious writer says, concerning moral reasoning, that it is but a kind of comparison. The truth of this assertion any one will easily be convinced of, who considers the preceding observations on that subject.

Where then lies the difference between addressing the judgment and addressing the fancy? and what hath given rise to the distinction between ratiocination and imagery? The following observations will serve for an answer to this query. It is evident, that though the mind receives a considerable pleasure when the resemblance of such a nature as is familiar to every body. Such are those resemblances which result from the specific and generic qualities of ordinary objects. What gives the principal delight to the imagination, is the exhibition of a strong likeness, which escapes the notice of the generality of people. The similitude of man to man, eagle to eagle, sea to sea, or in brief, of one individual to another individual of the same species, affects not the fancy in the least. What poet would ever think of comparing a combat between two of his heroes to a combat between other two? Yet no where else will he find so strong a resemblance. Indeed, to the faculty of imagination, this resemblance appears rather under the notion of identity; although it be the foundation of the strongest reasoning from experience. Again, the similarity of one species to another of the same genus, as of the lion to the tiger, of the alder to the oak, though this too be a considerable fund of argumentation, hardly strikes the fancy more than the preceding, inasmuch as the general properties, wherof every species participates, are also obvious. But if from the experimental reasoning we descend to the analogical, we may be said to come upon a common to which reason and fancy have an equal claim. "A comparison," says Quintilian,² "hath almost the effect of an example." But what are rhetorical comparisons, when brought to illustrate any point inculcated on the hearers, what are they, I say, but arguments from analogy? In proof of

² Instit. lib. v. cap. 11. Proximas exempli vires habet similitudo.

this let us borrow an instance from the forementioned rhetorician, "Would you be convinced of the necessity of education for the mind, consider of what importance culture is to the ground: the field which, cultivated, produceth a plentiful crop of useful fruits, if neglected, will be overrun with briars and brambles, and other useless or noxious weeds."³ It would be no better than trifling to point out the argument couched in this passage. Now if comparison, which is the chief, hath so great an influence upon conviction, it is no wonder that all those other oratorical tropes and figures addressed to the imagination, which are more or less nearly related to comparison, should derive hence both life and efficacy.⁴ Even antithesis implies comparison. Simile is a comparison in epitome.⁵ Metaphor is an allegory in miniature. Allegory and prosopoeia are comparisons conveyed under a particular form.

SECTION III.—Men considered as endowed with Memory.

Further, vivid ideas are not only more powerful than languid ideas in commanding and preserving attention, they are not only more efficacious in producing conviction, but they are also more easily retained. Those several powers, understanding, imagination, memory, and passion, are mutually subservient. That it is necessary for the orator to engage the help of memory, will appear from many reasons, particularly from what was remarked above, on the fourth difference between moral reasoning and demonstrative.⁶ It was there observed, that in the former the credibility of the fact is the sum of the evidence of all the arguments, often independent of one another, brought to support it. And though it was shown that demonstration itself, without the assistance of this faculty, could never produce conviction; yet here it must be owned, that the natural connexion of the several links in the chain renders the remembrance easier. Now, as nothing can operate on the mind which is not in some respect present to it, care must be taken by the orator that, in introducing new topics, the vestiges left by the former on the minds of the hearers may not be effaced. It is the sense of this necessity which hath given rise to the rules of composition.

Some will perhaps consider it as irregular, that I speak here

³ Ibid. Ut si animum dicas excolendum, similitudine utaris terræ, quæ neglecta sentes atque dumos, excolta fructus creat.

⁴ Præterea, nescio quomodo etiam credit facilius, quæ audienti jucunda sunt, et voluptate ad fidem ducitur. Quint. L. iv. c. 2.

⁵ Simile and comparison are in common language frequently confounded. The difference is this: Simile is no more than a comparison suggested in a word or two; as, He fought like a lion: His face shone as the sun. Comparison is a simile circumstantiated and included in one or more separate sentences.

⁶ Chap. v. Sect. ii. P. 1.

of addressing the memory, of which no mention at all was made in the first chapter, wherein I considered the different forms of eloquence, classing them by the different faculties of the mind addressed. But this apparent irregularity will vanish, when it is observed, that, with regard to the faculties there mentioned, each of them may not only be the direct, but even the ultimate object of what is spoken. The whole scope may be at one time to inform or convince the understanding, at another to delight the imagination, at a third to agitate the passions, and at a fourth to determine the will. But it is never the ultimate end of speaking to be remembered, when what is spoken tends neither to instruct, to please, to move, nor to persuade. This therefore is of necessity no more on any occasion than a subordinate end; or, which is precisely the same thing, the means to some further end; and as such, it is more or less necessary on every occasion. The speaker's attention to this subserviency of memory is always so much the more requisite, the greater the difficulty of remembrance is, and the more important the being remembered is to the attainment of the ultimate end. On both accounts, it is of more consequence in those discourses whose aim is either instruction or persuasion, than in those whose design is solely to please the fancy, or to move the passions. And if there are any which answer none of those ends, it were better to learn to forget them than to teach the method of making them to be retained.

The author of the treatise above quoted hath divided the principles of association in ideas into resemblance, contiguity, and causation. I do not here inquire into all the defects of this enumeration, but only observe that, even on his own system, order both in space and time ought to have been included. It appears at least to have an equal title with causation, which, according to him, is but a particular modification and combination of the other two. Causation, considered as an associating principle, is, in his theory, no more than the contiguous succession of two ideas, which is more deeply imprinted on the mind by its experience of a similar contiguity and succession of the impressions from which they are copied. This therefore is the result of resemblance and vicinity united. Order in place is likewise a mode of vicinity, where this last tie is strengthened by the regularity and simplicity of figure; which qualities arise solely from the resemblance of the corresponding parts of the figure; or the parts similarly situated. Regular figures, besides the advantages they derive from simplicity and uniformity, have this also, that they are more familiar to the mind than irregular figures, and are therefore more easily conceived. Hence the influence which order in place hath upon the memory. If any person question this influence, let him but reflect, how much easier it is to remember a considerable number of persons,

whom one hath seen ranged on benches or chairs, round a hall, than the same number seen standing promiscuously in a crowd: and how natural it is, for assisting the memory in recollecting the persons, to recur to the order wherein they were placed.

As to order in time, which in composition is properly styled Method, it consisteth principally in connecting the parts in such a manner as to give vicinity to things in the discourse which have an affinity; that is, resemblance, causality, or other relation in nature; and thus making their customary association and resemblance, as in the former case, co-operate with their contiguity in duration, or immediate succession in the delivery. The utility of method for aiding the memory, all the world knows. But besides this, there are some parts of the discourse, as well as figures of speech, peculiarly adapted to this end. Such are the division of the subject, the rhetorical repetitions of every kind, the different modes of transition and recapitulation.

SECTION IV.—*Men considered as endowed with Passions.*

To conclude; when persuasion is the end, passion also must be engaged. If it is fancy which bestows brilliancy on our ideas, if it is memory which gives them stability, passion doth more, it animates them. Hence they derive spirit and energy. To say that it is possible to persuade without speaking to the passions, is but at best a kind of specious nonsense. The coolest reasoner always in persuading addresseth himself to the passions some way or other. This he cannot avoid doing, if he speak to the purpose. To make me believe it is enough to show me that things are so; to make me act, it is necessary to show that the action will answer some end. That can never be an end to me which gratifies no passion or affection in my nature. You assure me, "It is for my honour." Now you solicit my pride, without which I had never been able to understand the word. You say, "It is for my interest." Now you bespeak my self-love. "It is for the public good." Now you rouse my patriotism. "It will relieve the miserable." Now you touch my pity. So far therefore it is from being an unfair method of persuasion to move the passions, that there is no persuasion without moving them.

But if so much depend on passion, where is the scope for argument? Before I answer this question, let it be observed that, in order to persuade, there are two things which must be carefully studied by the orator. The first is, to excite some desire or passion in the hearers; the second is, to satisfy their judgment that there is a connexion between the action to which he would persuade them, and the gratification of the desire or

argument may be employed to evince the reasonableness of the end, as well as the fitness of the means. But this way of speaking suits better the popular dialect than the philosophical. The term *reasonableness*, when used in this manner, means nothing but the goodness, the amiableness, or moral excellency. If therefore the hearer hath no love of justice, no benevolence, no regard to right, although he were endowed with the perspicacity of a cherub, your harangue could never have any influence on his mind. The reason is, when you speak of the fitness of the means, you address yourself only to the head; when you speak of the goodness of the end, you address yourself to the heart, of which we supposed him destitute. Are we then to class the virtues among the passions? By no means. But without entering into a discussion of the difference, which would be foreign to our purpose, let it suffice to observe, that they have this in common with passion. They necessarily imply an habitual propensity to a certain species of conduct, an habitual aversion to the contrary: a veneration for such a character, an abhorrence of such another. They are, therefore, though not passions, so closely related to them, that they are properly considered as motives to action, being equally capable of giving an impulse to the will. The difference is akin to that, if not the same, which rhetoricians observe between *pathos* and *ethos*, passion and disposition.⁸ Accordingly, what is addressed solely to the moral powers of the mind, is not so properly denominated the pathetic, as the *sentimental*. The term, I own, is rather modern, but is nevertheless convenient, as it fills a vacant room, and doth not, like most of our new-fangled words, jostle out older and worthier occupants, to the no small detriment of the language. It occupies, so to speak, the middle place between the pathetic and that which is addressed to the imagination, and partakes of both, adding to the warmth of the former the grace and attractions of the latter.

there is not a vice in the world but lying, and that acting virtuously in any situation is but one way or other of telling truth. When this curious theory comes to be explained, we find the practical lie results solely from acting contrary to what those moral sentiments dictate, which, instead of deducing, he everywhere presupposeth to be known and acknowledged by us. Thus he reasons perpetually in a circle, and without advancing a single step beyond it, makes the same things both causes and effects reciprocally. Conduct appears to be false for no other reason than because it is immoral, and immoral for no other reason but because it is false. Such philosophy would not have been unworthy those profound ontologists, who have blest the world with the discovery that "One being is but one being," that "A being is truly a being," and that "Every being has all the properties that it has," and who, to the unspeakable increase of useful knowledge, have denominated these the general attributes of being, and distinguished them by the titles, *unity*, *truth*, and *goodness*. This, if it be any thing, is the very sublimite of science.

⁸ This seems to have been the sense which Quintilian had of the difference between *πᾶθος* and *ἠθός*; when he gave *amor* for an example of the first, and *charitas* of the second. The word *ἠθός*; is also sometimes used for moral sentiment. Inst. l. vi. c. 2.

Now, the principal questions on this subject are these two:—How is a passion or disposition that is favourable to the design of the orator, to be excited in the hearers? How is an unfavourable passion or disposition to be calmed? As to the first it was said already in general, that passion must be awakened by communicating lively ideas of the object. The reason will be obvious from the following remarks: A passion is most strongly excited by sensation. The sight of danger, immediate or near, instantly rouseth fear; the feeling of an injury, and the presence of the injurer, in a moment kindle anger. Next to the influence of sense is that of memory, the effect of which upon passion, if the fact be recent, and remembered distinctly and circumstantially, is almost equal. Next to the influence of memory is that of imagination; by which is here solely meant the faculty of apprehending what is neither perceived by the senses, nor remembered. Now, as it is this power of which the orator must chiefly avail himself, it is proper to inquire what those circumstances are, which will make the ideas he summons up in the imaginations of his hearers, resemble, in lustre and steadiness, those of sensation and remembrance. For the same circumstances will infallibly make them resemble also in their effects; that is, in the influence they will have upon the passions and affections of the heart.

SECTION V.—*The circumstances that are chiefly instrumental in operating on the Passions.*

These are perhaps all reducible to the seven following, probability, plausibility, importance, proximity of time, connexion of place, relation of the actors or sufferers to the hearers or speaker, interest of the hearers or speaker in the consequences.

PART I.—*Probability.*

The first is *probability*, which is now considered only as an expedient for enlivening passion. Here again there is commonly scope for argument. Probability results from evidence, and begets belief. Belief invigorates our ideas. Belief raised to the highest becomes certainty. Certainty flows either from the force of the evidence, real or apparent, that is produced: or

⁹ I am not quite positive as to the accuracy of this enumeration, and shall therefore freely permit my learned and ingenious friend Dr. Reid, to annex the *et cetera* he proposes in such cases, in order to supply all defects. See *Sketches of the History of Man*, B. iii. St. 1. Appendix, c. ii. sect. 2.

¹ In the judiciary orations of the ancients, this was the principal scope for argument. That to condemn the guilty, and to acquit the innocent, would gratify their indignation against the injurious, and their love of right, was too manifest to require a proof. The fact that there was guilt in the prisoner, or that there was innocence, did require it. It was otherwise in deliberative orations, as the conduct recommended was more remotely connected with the emotions raised.

without any evidence produced by the speaker, from the previous notoriety of the fact. If the fact be notorious, it will not only be superfluous in the speaker to attempt to prove it, but it will be pernicious to his design. The reason is plain. By proving he supposeth it questionable, and by supposing actually renders it so to his audience: he brings them from viewing it in the stronger light of certainty, to view it in the weaker light of probability: in lieu of sunshine he gives them twilight. Of the different means and kinds of probation I have spoken already.

PART II.—*Plausibility.*

The second circumstance is *plausibility*, a thing totally distinct from the former, as having an effect upon the mind quite independent of faith or probability. It ariseth chiefly from the consistency of the narration, from its being what is commonly called natural and feasible. This the French critics have aptly enough denominated in their language *vraisemblance*, the English critics more improperly in theirs *probability*. In order to avoid the manifest ambiguity there is in this application of the word, it had been better to retain the word *verisimilitude*, now almost obsolete. That there is a relation between those two qualities must, notwithstanding, be admitted. This, however, is an additional reason for assigning them different names. An homonymous term, whose different significations have no affinity to one another, is very seldom liable to be misunderstood.

But as to the nature and extent of this relation, let it be observed, that the want of plausibility implies an internal improbability, which it will require the stronger external evidence to surmount. Nevertheless, the implausibility may be surmounted by such evidence, and we may be fully ascertained of what is in itself exceedingly implausible. Implausibility is, in a certain degree, positive evidence against a narrative; whereas plausibility implies no positive evidence for it. We know that fiction may be as plausible as truth. A narration may be possessed of this quality to the highest degree, which we not only regard as improbable, but know to be false. Probability is a light darted on the object, from the proofs, which for this reason are pertinently enough styled *evidence*. Plausibility is a native lustre issuing directly from the object. The former is the aim of the historian, the latter of the poet. That every one may be satisfied that the second is generally not inferior to the first, in its influence on the mind, we need but appeal to the effects of tragedy, of epic, and even of romance, which, in its principal characters, participates of the nature of poesy, though written in prose.

It deserves, however, to be remarked, that though plausibility alone hath often greater efficacy in rousing the passions

than probability, or even certainty; yet, in any species of composition wherein truth, or at least probability, is expected, the mind quickly nauseates the most plausible tale, which is unsupported by proper arguments. For this reason it is the business of the orator, as much as his subject will permit, to avail himself of both qualities. There is one case, and but one, in which plausibility itself may be dispensed with; that is, when the fact is so incontestible that it is impossible to entertain a doubt of it; for when implausibility is incapable of impairing belief, it hath sometimes, especially in forensic causes, even a good effect. By presenting us with something monstrous in its kind, it raiseth astonishment, and thereby heightens every passion which the narrative is fitted to excite.

But to return to the explication of this quality. When I explained the nature of experience, I showed that it consisteth of all the general truth collected from particular facts remembered; the mind forming to itself, often insensibly, and as it were mechanically, certain maxims, from comparing, or rather associating the similar circumstances of different incidents.² Hence it is, that when a number of ideas relating to any fact or event are successively introduced into my mind by a speaker; if the train he deduceth coincide with the general current of my experience; if in nothing it thwart those conclusions and anticipations which are become habitual to me, my mind accompanies him with facility, glides along from one idea to another, and admits the whole with pleasure. If, on the contrary, the train he introduceth run counter to the current of my experience; if in many things it shock those conclusions and anticipations which are become habitual to me, my mind attends him with difficulty, suffers a sort of violence in passing from one idea to another, and rejects the whole with disdain:

For while upon such monstrous scenes we gaze,
They shock our faith, our indignation raise.³

FRANCIS.

In the former case I pronounce the narrative natural and credible, in the latter I say it is unnatural and incredible, if not impossible; and, which is particularly expressive of the different appearances in respect of connexion made by the ideas in my mind, the one tale I call coherent, the other incoherent. When therefore the orator can obtain no direct aid from the memory of his hearers, which is rarely to be obtained, he must, for the sake of brightening, and strengthening, and if I may be permitted to use so bold a metaphor, cementing his ideas, bespeak the assistance of experience. Thus, if properly employed,

² Chap. V. Sect. ii. Part 2.

³ Quodcumque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.

Hor. De Arte Poet.

will prove a potent ally, by adding the grace of *verisimilitude* to the whole. It is therefore first of all requisite, that the circumstances of the narration, and the order in which they are exhibited, be what is commonly called natural, that is, congruous to general experience.

Where passion is the end, it is not a sufficient reason for introducing any circumstance that it is natural; it must also be pertinent. It is pertinent, when either necessary for giving a distinct and consistent apprehension of the object, at least for obviating some objection that may be started, or doubt that may be entertained concerning it; or when such as, in its particular tendency, promotes the general aim. All circumstances, however plausible, which serve merely for decoration, never fail to divert the attention, and so become prejudicial to the proposed influence on passion.

But I am aware that, from the explication I have given of this quality, it will be said, that I have run into the error, if it be an error, which I intended to avoid, and have confounded it with probability, by deriving it solely from the same origin, experience. In answer to this, let it be observed, that in every plausible tale which is unsupported by external evidence, there will be found throughout the whole, when duly canvassed, a mixture of possibilities and probabilities, and that not in such a manner as to make one part or incident probable, another barely possible, but so blended as equally to affect the whole, and every member. Take the *Iliad* for an example. That a haughty, choleric, and vindictive hero, such as Achilles is represented to have been, should, upon the public affront and injury he received from Agamemnon, treat that general with indignity, and form a resolution of withdrawing his troops, remaining thenceforth an unconcerned spectator of the calamities of his countrymen, our experience of the baleful influences of pride and anger renders in some degree probable; again, that one of such a character as Agamemnon, rapacious, jealous of his pre-eminence as commander-in-chief, who envied the superior merit of Achilles, and harboured resentment against him—that such a one, I say, on such an occurrence as is related by the poet, should have given the provocation, will be acknowledged also to have some probability. But that there were such personages, of such characters, in such circumstances, is merely possible. Here there is a total want of evidence. Experience is silent. Properly indeed the case comes not within the verge of its jurisdiction. Its general conclusions may serve in confutation, but can never serve in proof of particular or historical facts. Sufficient testimony, and that only, will answer here. The testimony of the poet in this case goes for nothing. His object we know is not truth but likelihood. Experience, however, advances nothing against those allega-

tions of the poet, therefore we call them possible; it can say nothing for them, therefore we do not call them probable. The whole at most amounts to this—if such causes existed, such effects probably followed. But we have no evidence of the existence of the causes; therefore we have no evidence of the existence of the effects. Consequently, all the probability implied in this quality is a hypothetical probability, which is in effect none at all. It is an axiom among dialecticians, in relation to the syllogistic art, that the conclusion always follows the weaker of the premises. To apply this to the present purpose, an application not illicit, though unusual—if one of the premises, suppose the major, contain an affirmation that is barely possible, the minor, one that is probable, possibility only can be deduced in the conclusion.

These two qualities, therefore, PROBABILITY and PLAUSIBILITY, (if I may be indulged a little in the allegoric style), I shall call sister-graces, daughter of the same father *Experience*, who is the progeny of *Memory*, the first-born and heir of *Sense*. These daughters *Experience* had by different mothers. The elder is the offspring of *Reason*, the younger is the child of *Fancy*. The elder, regular in her features, and majestic both in shape and mien, is admirably fitted for commanding esteem, and even a religious veneration: the younger, careless, blooming, sprightly, is entirely formed for captivating the heart, and engaging love. The conversation of each is entertaining and instructive, but in different ways. Sages seem to think that there is more instruction to be gotten from the just observations of the elder; almost all are agreed that there is more entertainment in the lively sallies of the younger. The principal companion and favourite of the first is *Truth*, but whether *Truth* or *Fiction* share most in the favour of the second it were often difficult to say. Both are naturally well-disposed, and even friendly to *Virtue*, but the elder is by much the more steady of the two; the younger, though perhaps not less capable of doing good, is more easily corrupted, and hath sometimes basely turned procuress to *Vice*. Though rivals, they have a sisterly affection to each other, and love to be together. The elder, sensible that there are but few who can for any time relish her society alone, is generally anxious that her sister be of the party; the younger, conscious of her own superior talents in this respect, can more easily dispense with the other's company. Nevertheless, when she is discoursing on great and serious subjects, in order to add weight to her words, she often quotes her sister's testimony, which she knows is better credited than her own, a compliment that is but sparingly returned by the elder. Each sister hath her admirers. Those of the younger are more numerous, those of the elder more constant. In the retinue of the former you will find the young, the gay, the dissipated; but

these are not her only attendants. The middle-aged, however, and the thoughtful, more commonly may be learned of the latter. To conclude; as something may be learned of characters from the invectives of enemies, as well as from the encomiums of friends, those who have not judgment to discern the good qualities of the first-born, accuse her of dulness, pedantry, and stiffness; those who have not taste to relish the charms of the second, charge her with folly, levity, and falseness. Meantime, it appears to be the universal opinion of the impartial, and such as have been best acquainted with both, that though the attractions of the younger be more irresistible at sight, the virtues of the elder will be longer remembered.

So much for the two qualities *probability* and *plausibility*, on which I have expatiated the more, as they are the principal, and in some respect, indispensable. The others are not compatible with every subject; but as they are of real moment, it is necessary to attend to them, that so they may not be overlooked in cases wherein the subject requires that they be urged.

PART III.—*Importance.*

The third circumstance I took notice of was *importance*, the appearance of which always tends, by fixing attention more closely, to add brightness and strength to the ideas. The importance in moral subjects is analogous to the quantity of matter in physical subjects, as on quantity the moment of moving bodies in a great degree depends. An action may derive importance from its own nature, from those concerned in it as acting or suffering, or from its consequences. It derives importance from its own nature, if it be stupendous in its kind, if the result of what is uncommonly great, whether good or bad, passion or invention, in respect of atrocity is diabolical: it derives importance from those concerned in it, when the actors or the sufferers are considerable, on account either of their dignity or of their number, or of both: it derives importance from its consequences, when these are remarkable in regard to their greatness, their multitude, their extent, and that either as to the many and distant places affected by them, or as to the future and remote periods to which they may reach, or as to both.

All the four remaining circumstances derive their efficacy purely from one and the same cause, the connexion of the subject with those occupied, as speaker or hearers, in the discourse. *Self* is the centre here, which hath a similar power in the ideal world to that of the sun in the material world, in communicating both light and heat to whatever is within the sphere of its activity, and in a greater or less degree according to the nearness or remoteness.

PART IV.—*Proximity of Time.*

First, as to *proximity of time*, every one knows that any melancholy incident is the more affecting that it is recent. Hence it is become common with story-tellers, that they may make a deeper impression on the hearers, to introduce remarks like these; that the tale which they relate is not old, that it happened but lately, or in their own time, or that they are yet living who had a part in it, or were witnesses of it. Proximity of time regards not only the past but the future. An event that will probably soon happen hath greater influence upon us than what will probably happen a long time hence. I have hitherto proceeded on the hypothesis, that the orator rouses the passions of his hearers by exhibiting some past transaction; but we must acknowledge that passion may be as strongly excited by his reasonings concerning an event yet to come. In the judiciary orations there is greater scope for the former, in the deliberative for the latter; though in each kind there may occasionally be scope for both. All the seven circumstances enumerated are applicable, and have equal weight, whether they relate to the future or to the past. The only exception that I know of is, that probability and plausibility are scarcely distinguishable, when used in reference to events in futurity. As in these there is no access for testimony, what constitutes the principal distinction is quite excluded. In comparing the influence of the past upon our minds, with that of the future, it appears in general, that if the evidence, the importance, and the distance of the objects be equal, the latter will be greater than the former. The reason, I imagine, is, we are conscious that as every moment, the future, which seems placed before us, is approaching; and the past, which lies, as it were, behind, is retreating, our nearness or relation to the one constantly increaseth as the other decreaseth. There is something like attraction in the first case, and repulsion in the second. This tends to interest us more in the future than in the past, and consequently to the present view aggrandizes the one and diminishes the other.

What, nevertheless, gives the past a very considerable advantage, is its being generally susceptible of much stronger evidence than the future. The lights of the mind are, if I may so express myself, in an opposite situation to the lights of the body. These discover clearly the prospect lying before us, but not the ground we have already passed. By the memory, on the contrary, that great luminary of the mind, things past are exhibited in retrospect: we have no correspondent faculty to irradiate the future: and even in matters which fall not within the reach of our memory, past events are often clearly discoverable by testimony, and by effects at present existing; whereas we have

nothing equivalent to found our arguments upon in reasoning about things to come. It is for this reason, that the future is considered as the province of conjecture and uncertainty.

PART V.—*Connexion of Place.*

Local *connexion*, the fifth in the above enumeration, hath a more powerful effect than proximity of time. Duration and space are two things, (call them entities or attributes, or what you please,) in some respects the most like, and in some respects the most unlike to one another. They resemble in continuity, divisibility, infinity, in their being deemed essential to the existence of other things, and in the doubts that have been raised as to their having a real or independent existence of their own. They differ, in that the latter is permanent, whereas the very essence of the former consisteth in transitoriness; the parts of the one are all successive, of the other all co-existent. The greater portions of time are all distinguished by the memorable things which have been transacted in them, the smaller portions by the revolutions of the heavenly bodies: the portions of place, great and small, (for we do not here consider the regions of the fixed stars and planets,) are distinguished by the various tracts of land and water, into which the earth is divided and subdivided; the one distinction intelligible, the other in a great measure chiefly known to the inquisitive, the other in a great measure obvious to all.

Hence perhaps it arises, that the latter is considered as a firmer ground of relation than the former. Who is not more curious to know the notable transactions which have happened in his own country from the earliest antiquity, than to be acquainted with those which have happened in the remotest regions of the globe, during the century wherein he lives? It must be owned, however, that the former circumstance is more frequently aided by that of personal relation than the latter. Connexion of place not only includes vicinage, but every other local relation, such as being in a province under the same government with us, in a state that is in alliance with us, in a country well known to us, and the like. Of the influence of this connexion in operating on our passions we have daily proofs. With how much indifference, at least with how slight and transient emotion, do we read in newspapers the accounts of the most deplorable accidents in countries distant and unknown! How much, on the contrary, are we alarmed and agitated on being informed that any such accident hath happened in our neighbourhood, and that even though we be totally unacquainted with the persons concerned!

PART VI.—*Relation to the Persons concerned.*

Still greater is the power of *relation* to the persons concerned, which was the sixth circumstance mentioned, as this tie is more direct than that which attacheth us to the scene of action. It is the persons, not the place, that are the immediate objects of the passions love or hatred, pity or anger, envy or contempt. Relation to the actors commonly produces an effect contrary to that produced by relation to the sufferers, the first in extenuation, the second in aggravation of the crime alleged. The first makes for the apologist, the second for the accuser. This I say is commonly the case, not always. A remote relation to the actors, when the offence is heinous, especially if the sufferers be more nearly related, will sometimes rather aggravate than extenuate the guilt in our estimation. But it is impossible with any precision to reduce these effects to rules; so much depending on the different tempers and sentiments of different audiences. Personal relations are of various kinds. Some have generally greater influence than others; some again have greater influence with one person, others with another. They are consanguinity, affinity, friendship, acquaintance, being fellow-citizens, countrymen, of the same surname, language, religion, occupation, and innumerable others.

PART VII.—*Interest in the Consequences.*

But of all the connective circumstances, the most powerful is *interest*, which is the last. Of all relations, personal relation, by bringing the object very near, most enlivens that sympathy which attacheth us to the concerns of others; interest in the effects brings the object, if I may say so, into contact with us, and makes the mind cling to it as a concern of its own. Sympathy is but a reflected feeling, and therefore, in ordinary cases, must be weaker than the original. Though the mirror be ever so true, a lover will not be obliged to it for presenting him with the figure of his mistress when he hath an opportunity of gazing on her person. Nor will the orator place his chief confidence in the assistance of the social and sympathetic affections, when he hath it in his power to arm the selfish.

Men universally, from a just conception of the difference, have, when self is concerned, given a different name to what seems originally the same passion in a higher degree. Injury, to whomsoever offered, is to every man that observes it, and whose sense of right is not debauched by vicious practice, the natural object of *indignation*. Indignation always implies *resentment*, or a desire of retaliating on the injurious person, so far at least as to make him repent the wrong he hath com-

mitted. This indignation in the person injured is, from our knowledge of mankind, supposed to be, not indeed universally, but generally so much stronger, that it ought to be distinguished by another appellation, and is, accordingly, denominated *revenge*. In like manner beneficence, on whomsoever exercised, is the natural object of our *love*; love always implies *beneficence*, or a desire of promoting the happiness of the beneficent person; but this passion in the person benefited is conceived to be so much greater, and to infer so strong an obligation to a return of good offices to his benefactor, that it merits to be distinguished by the title *gratitude*. Now by this circumstance of *interest* in the effects, the speaker, from engaging *pity* in his favour, can proceed to operate on a more powerful principle, *self-preservation*. The *benevolence* of his hearers he can work up into *gratitude*, their *indignation* into *revenge*.

The two last-mentioned circumstances, personal relation and interest, are not without influence, as was hinted in the enumeration, though they regard the speaker only, and not the hearers. The reason is, a person present with us, whom we see and hear, and who, by words, and looks, and gestures, gives the liveliest signs of his feelings, has the surest and most immediate claim upon our sympathy. We become infected with his passions. We are hurried along by them, and not allowed leisure to distinguish between his relation and our relation, his interest and our interest.

SECTION VI.—Other Passions, as well as Moral Sentiments, useful auxiliaries.

So much for those circumstances in the object presented by the speaker, which serve to awaken and inflame the passions of the hearers.⁴ But when a passion is once raised, there are

⁴ To illustrate most of the preceding circumstances, and show the manner of applying them, I shall take an example from Cicero's last oration against Verres, where, after relating the crucifixion of Gavius, a Roman citizen, he exclaims, "1. O nomen dulce libertatis! O jus eximium nostræ civitatis! O plebi Romanæ tribunitia potestas! 2. Huic tandem omnia reddita beneficio populi Romani fasces et securæ haberet, deligatus in foro virgis infestus, ac non nomini, generi, juri civium hostis, non illi inquam homini, sed causâ communi libertatis inimicus fuisti. 4. Quid enim attinuit, cum Martini more atque instituto suo, crucem fixissent post urbem, in via Pompeia, te jubere in ea parte figere, quæ ad fretum spectat; et hoc addere, quod illum locum deligere, ut ille qui se civem Romanum esse dicebat, te idcirco Italiani cerneret, ac domum suam prospicere posset? 5. Itaque illa crux sola, ad eam rem ab isto delectus est, ut ille in dolore cruciatuque moriens, per angusto freto divisa servitutis ac libertatis jura cognosceret; Italia autem

also other means by which it may be kept alive, and even augmented. Other passions or dispositions may be called in as auxiliaries. Nothing is more efficacious in this respect than a

alumnus suum, servitutis extremo summoque supplicio affectum videret. 7. Facinus est vincire civem Romanum, scelus verberare, prope parricidium necare, quid dicam, in crucem tollere? verbo satis digno tam nefaria res appellari nullo modo potest. 8. Non fuit his omnibus iste contentus. Spectet, inquit, patriam; in conspectu legum libertatisque moriatur. 9. Non tu hoc loco Gavius, non unum hominem, nescio quem, civem Romanum, sed communem libertatis et civitatis causam in illum cruciatum et crucem egisti. 10. Jam vero videte Romanis crucem non posset in foro, non in comitio, non in rostris defigere? 11. Quod enim his locis in provincia sua celebritate similium, regione proximum, potuit, elegit. 12. Monumentum sceleris qui ultro citroque navigarent. 13. Paulo ante, iudices, lacrymas in morte miserâ atque indignissimâ navarhorum non tenebamus; et recte de merito sociorum innocentium miserâ commovebamur. 14. Quid nunc in nostro sanguine tandem facere debemus? nam civem Romanorum sanguis conjunctus existendus est.—15. Omnes hoc loco cives Romani, et qui adsunt et qui ubicunque sunt, vestram severitatem desiderant, vestram fidem implerant, vestrum auxilium requirunt. 16. Omnia sua jura, commoda, auxilia, totam denique libertatem in vestris sententiis versari arbitrantur.—I shall point out the pathetic circumstances exemplified in this passage, observing the order wherein they were enumerated. I have numbered the sentences in the quotation to prevent repetition on referring to them. It must be remarked, first of all, that in judiciary orations, such as this, the proper place for plausibility is the narration; for probability, the confirmation or proof; the other five, though generally admissible into either of those places, shine principally in peroration. I shall show how the orator hath availed himself of these in the passage now cited. First, the peritance; and that first in respect of the enormity of the action, No. 7; of the disposition of the actor, No. 3, 9, 10; and to render probable what might otherwise appear merely conjectured, No. 4, 5, 8, 11, 12; in respect of consequences their greatness, No. 1, 2; where the crime is most artfully though implicitly represented as subversive of all that was dear to them, liberty, the right of citizens, their most valuable laws, and that idol of the people, the tribunitian power; their extent, No. 15, 16. Secondly, *proximity of time*; there is but an insinuation of this circumstance in the word *tandem*, No. 2. There are two reasons which probably induced the orator in this particular to be so sparing. One is, the recency of the crime, as if the criminal's pretorship was notorious; the other and the weightier is, that of all relations this is the weakest; and even what influence it hath, reflection serves rather to correct than to confirm. In appearing to lay stress on so slight a circumstance, a speaker displays rather penury of matter than abundance. It is better, therefore, in most cases, to suggest it as it were by accident, than to insist on it as of design. It deserves also to be remarked, that the word here employed is very emphatical, as it conveys at the same time a tacit comparison of their so recent degeneracy with the freedom, security, and glory which they had long enjoyed. The same word is again introduced, No. 14, to the same intent. Thirdly, *local connexion*; in respect of vicinage, how affecting, though indirectly, is it touched, No. 4, 5, 8, 11, 12! In- as to other local connexions, No. 2, "in provincia populi Romani, in oppido federatorum." Fourthly, *personal relation*; first of the perpetrator, No. 2, "ab eo qui beneficio," &c. his crime therefore more atrocious and ungrateful, the most sacred rights violated by one who ought to have protected them; next of the sufferer, No. 2, "civis Romanus." This is most pathetically urged, and, by a comparison introduced, greatly heightened, No. 13, 14. Fifthly, the *interest*, which not the hearers only, but all who bear the Roman name, have in the consequences, No. 15, 16. We see, in the above example, with what uncommon address and delicacy those circumstances ought to be

an answer. You urge our readiness to resent an affront or injury, real or imagined, which we receive, and which ought to gratify instead of provoking us, on the supposition that we hate ourselves. But may it not be retorted, that its being a gratification is that which excites our resentment, inasmuch as we are enemies to every kind of self-indulgence? If this answer will not suffice, I have another which is excellent. It lies in the definition of the word revenge. Revenge, I pronounce, may be justly "deemed an example of unmix'd self-abhorrence and benignity, and may be resolved into that power of imagination, by which we apply the sufferings that we inflict on others to ourselves; we are said to wreak our vengeance no longer than we fancy ourselves to suffer, and to be satiated by reflecting that the sufferings of others are not really ours, that we have been but indulging a dream of self-punishment, from which, when we awake and discover the fiction, our anger instantly subsides, and we are meek as lambs." Is this extravagant? Compare it, I pray you, with the preceding explication of compassion, to which it is a perfect counterpart. Consider seriously, and you will find that it is not in the smallest degree more manifest, that another and not ourselves is the object of our resentment when we are angry, than it is that another and not ourselves is the object of our compassion when we are moved with pity. Both indeed have a self-evidence in them, which, whilst our minds remain unsophisticated by the dogmatism of system, extorts from us an unlimited assent.

SECTION II.—*The author's hypothesis on this subject.*

Where so many have failed of success, it may be thought presumptuous to attempt a decision. But despondency in regard to a question which seems to fall within the reach of our faculties, and is entirely subjected to our observation and experience, must appear to the inquisitive and philosophic mind a still greater fault than even presumption. The latter may occasion the introduction of a false theory, which must necessarily come under the review and correction of succeeding philosophers. And the detection of error proves often instrumental to the discovery of truth. Whereas the former quashes curiosity altogether, and influences one implicitly to abandon an inquiry as utterly undeterminable. I shall therefore now offer a few observations concerning the passions, which, if rightly apprehended and weighed, will, I hope, contribute to the solution of the present question.

My first observation shall be, that almost all the simple passions of which the mind is susceptible may be divided into

two classes, the *pleasant* and the *painful*. It is at the same time acknowledged, that the pleasures and the pains created by the different passions, differ considerably from one another, both in kind and degree. Of the former class are love, joy, hope, pride, gratitude; of the latter, hatred, grief, fear, shame, anger. Let it be remarked, that by the name *pride* in the first class, (which I own admits a variety of acceptations,) no more is meant here than the feeling which we have on obtaining the merited approbation of other men, in which sense it stands in direct opposition to *shame* in the second class, or the feeling which we have when conscious of incurring the deserved blame of others. In like manner *gratitude*, or the resentment of favour, is opposed to *anger*, or the resentment of injury. To the second class I might have added *desire* and *aversion*, which give the mind some uneasiness or dissatisfaction with its present state; but these are often the occasion of pleasure, as they are the principal spurs to action, and perhaps more than any other passion relieve the mind from that languor which, according to the just remark of Abbé du Bos, is perfectly oppressive. Besides, as they are perpetually accompanied with some degree of either *hope* or *fear*, generally with both, they are either pleasant or painful as the one or the other preponderates. For these reasons they may be considered as in themselves of an indifferent or intermediate kind.

The second observation is, that there is an attraction or association among the passions, as well as among the ideas of the mind. Rarely any passion comes alone. To investigate the laws of this attraction would be indeed a matter of curious inquiry, but it doth not fall within the limits of the present question. Almost all the other affections attract or excite desire or aversion of some sort or other. The passions which seem to have the least influence on these are joy and grief; and of the two, joy, I believe, will be acknowledged to have less of the attractive power than grief. Joy is the end of desire and the completion of hope; therefore when attained, it not only excludes occasion for the others, but seems, for a while at least, to repel them, as what would give an impatient interruption to the pleasure resulting from the contemplation of present felicity, with which the mind, under the influence of joy, is engrossed. Grief hath a like tendency. When the mind is overwhelmed by this gloomy passion, it resists the instigations of desire, as what would again, to no purpose, rouse its activity; it disdains hope, it even loathes it as a vain and a delusive dream. The first suggestions of these passions seem but as harbingers to the cutting recollection of former flattering prospects, once too fondly entertained, now utterly extinct, and succeeded by an insupportable and irremediable disappointment, which every recollection serves but to

aggravate. Nay, how unaccountable soever it may appear, the mind seems to have a mournful satisfaction in being allowed to indulge its anguish, and to immerse itself wholly in its own afflictions. But this can be affirmed of sorrow only in the extreme. When it begins to subside, or when originally but in a weak degree, it leads the mind to seek relief from desire and hope, and other passions.—Love naturally associates to it benevolence, which is one species of desire, for here no more is meant by it than a desire of the happiness of the person loved. Hatred as naturally associates malevolence or malice, which is the desire of evil to the person hated.*

My third observation is, that pain of every kind generally makes a deeper impression on the imagination than pleasure does, and is longer retained by the memory. It is a common remark of every people and of every age, and consequently hath some foundation in human nature, that benefits are soon forgotten than injuries, and favours than affronts. Those who are accustomed to attend the theatre will be sensible, that the plots of the best tragedies which they have witnessed are better remembered by them than those of the most celebrated comedies. And indeed every body that reflects may be satisfied that no story takes a firmer hold of the memory than a tale of woe. In civil history, as well as in biography, it is the disastrous, and not the joyous events, which are oftenest recollected and retailed.

The fourth observation is, that from a group of passions (if I may so express myself) associated together, and having the same object, some of which are of the pleasant, others of the painful kind, if the present predominate, there ariseth often a greater and a more durable pleasure to the mind than would result from these, if alone and unmixed. That the case is so,

* The ambiguity and even penury of all languages, in relation to our internal feelings, make it very difficult, in treating of them, to preserve at once perspicuity and accuracy. Benevolence is sometimes used, perhaps with little variation from its most common import, for charity or universal love; and love itself will be thought by some to be properly defined by the desire or wish of the happiness of its object. As to the first, it is enough that I have assigned the precise meaning in which I use the term; and in regard to the second, those who are duly attentive to what passes within their own breasts will be sensible, that by love, in the strictest acceptation, is meant a certain pleasurable emotion excited in the mind by a suitable object, to which the desire of the happiness of the object is generally consequent. The felicity of the object may however be such as to leave no room for any desire or wish of ours in regard to it. This holds particularly in our love to God. Besides, there may be a desire of the happiness of others, arising from very different causes, where there is nothing of that sentiment or feeling which is strictly called *Love*. I own, at the same time, that the term love is also often used to denote simply benevolence or good-will; as when we are commanded to love all men, known and unknown, good and bad, friendly and injurious. To that tender emotion which qualities supposed amiable alone can excite, the precept surely doth not extend. These things I thought it necessary to observe, in order to prevent mistakes in a case which requires so much precision.

will, I believe, on a careful inquiry, be found to be a matter of experience: how it happens to be so, I am afraid human sagacity will never be able to investigate.

This observation holds especially when the emotions and affections raised in us are derived from sympathy, and have not directly self for the object. Sympathy is not a passion, but that quality of the soul which renders it susceptible of almost any passion, by communication from the bosom of another. It is by sympathy we rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep. This faculty, however, doth not act with equal strength in these opposite cases, but is much weaker in the first than in the second. It would perhaps be easier to assign the intention of nature in this difference, than the cause of the difference. The miserable need the aid and sympathy of others; the happy do not. I must further observe on this subject, what I believe was hinted once already, that sympathy may be greatly strengthened or weakened by the influence of connected passions. Thus love associates to it benevolence, and both give double force to sympathy. Hatred, on the contrary, associates to it malice, and destroys sympathy.

There are consequently several reasons why a scene of pure unmixed joy, in any work of genius, cannot give a great or lasting pleasure to the mind. First, sympathetic joy is much sinter and more transient than sympathetic grief, and they are generally the sympathetic passions which are infused by poets, orators, painters, and historians: secondly, joy is the least attractive of all the affections. It perhaps can never properly be said to associate to it desire, the great spring of action. The most we can say is, that when it begins to subside it again gives place to desire, this passion being of such a nature, as that it can hardly for any time be banished from the soul. Hence it is that the joy, which has no other foundation but sympathy, quickly tires the mind and runs into satiety. Hence it is, also, that dramatic writers, and even romance writers, make a scene of pure joy always the last scene of the piece, and but a short one. It may just be mentioned, thirdly, not indeed as an argument, (for of its weakness in this respect I am very sensible,) but as an illustration from analogy, that every thing in nature is heightened and set off by its contrary, which, by giving scope for comparison, enhances every excellence. The colours in painting acquire a double lustre from the shades; the harmony in music is greatly improved by a judicious mixture of discords. The whole conduct of life, were it necessary, might exemplify the position. A mixture of pain, then, seems to be of consequence to give strength and stability to pleasure.

The fifth observation is, that under the name *pity* may be

*What is the Cause that Nonsense so often escapes being detected
both by the Writer and by the Reader?*

CHAPTER VII.

SECTION I.

The Nature and Power of Signs, both in Speaking and in thinking.

Before quitting the subject of perspicuity, it will not amiss to inquire into the cause of this strange phenomenon, that even a man of discernment should write without meaning, and not be sensible that he hath no meaning; and that ridiculous people should read what hath been written in this manner, and not discover the defect. Both are surprising, but the first much more than the last. A certain remissness will seize the most attentive reader; whereas an author of distinction is supposed to have carefully digested all that he writes. It is reported of Lopez de Vega, a famous Spanish poet, the Bishop of Beller, being in Spain, asked him to explain one of his sonnets, which he said he had often read, but never understood. Lopez took up the sonnet, and after reading several times, frankly acknowledged that he did not understand it himself; a discovery which the poet probably made before.

But though the general fact hath been frequently observed, I do not find that any attempt hath been yet made to explain for it. Berkeley, indeed, in his *Principles of Human Knowledge*, hath suggested a theory concerning language, that not with this view, which, if well-founded, will go far to remove the principal difficulty: "It is a received opinion," that author, "that language has no other end but the communicating our ideas, and that every significant name stands for an idea. This being so, and it being without certain names, which yet are not thought altogether insignificant, not always mark out particular conceivable ideas, it is a way concluded that they stand for abstract notions; there are many names in use amongst speculative men, which do not always suggest to others determinate particulars, is what nobody will deny. And a little attention will discover that it is not necessary (even in the strictest reasoning) that significant names which stand for ideas should, every time they are used, excite in the understanding the ideas they are to stand for in reading and discoursing, names being the most part used as letters are in algebra, in which, though

particular quantity be marked by each letter, yet to proceed with it is not requisite that in every step each letter suggest to your thoughts that particular quantity it was appointed to stand for."¹ The same principles have been adopted by the author of a *Treatise of Human Nature*, who, speaking of abstract ideas, has the following words: "I believe every one examines the situation of his mind in reasoning, will agree with me, that we do not annex distinct and complete ideas to every term we make use of; and that in talking of *government*, *liberty*, *negotiation*, *conquest*, we seldom spread out in our minds all the simple ideas of which these complex ones are composed. 'Tis, however, observable that notwithstanding the imperfection, we may avoid talking nonsense on these subjects, and may perceive any repugnance among the ideas, as well as if we had a full comprehension of them. Thus if, instead of saying that *in war the weaker have always recourse to conquest*; the custom which we have acquired of attributing relations to ideas, still follows the words, and makes us immediately perceive the absurdity of that proposition."² The excellent observations to the same purpose have also been made by the elegant Inquirer into the origin of our ideas, the sublime and beautiful.³

Now, that the notions on this subject maintained by these ingenious writers, however strange they may appear on a superficial view, are well founded, is at least presumable from this consideration: that if, agreeably to the common hypothesis, we could understand nothing that is said but by actually comparing in our minds all the ideas signified, it would be impossible that nonsense should ever escape undiscovered, at least that we should so far impose upon ourselves, as to think we understand what in reality is not to be understood. We cannot in that case find ourselves in the same situation, when a meaning sentence is introduced into a discourse, wherein we and ourselves when a sentence is quoted in a language of which we are entirely ignorant: we are never in the smallest degree of imagining that we apprehend the meaning of the proposition.

Although a very curious fact hath been taken notice of by expert metaphysicians, and such a fact as will, perhaps, account for the deception we are now considering; yet the fact itself, in my apprehension, hath not been sufficiently accounted for. That mere sounds, which are used only as signs, and which have no natural connexion with the things whereof they are signs, should convey knowledge to the mind, even when they signify no idea of the things signified, must appear at first

Stroud, Sect. 10.

¹ Vol. I. Book i. Part ii. Sect. 7.

² Part V.

extremely mysterious. It is, therefore, worth while to consider the matter more closely; and in order to this, it will be proper to attend a little to the three following connections: first, that which subsisteth among things; secondly, that which subsisteth between words and things; thirdly, that which subsisteth among words, or the different terms used in the language.

As to the first of these connexions, namely, that which subsisteth among things, it is evident that this is original and natural. There is a variety of relations to be found in things by which they are connected. Such are, among several others, resemblance, identity,⁴ equality, contrariety, cause and effect, concomitancy, vicinity in time or place. These we have acquainted with by experience; and they prove, by means of association, the source of various combinations of ideas, abstractions, as they are commonly denominated. Hence modes, and distinctions into genera and species; of the order of which I have had occasion to speak already.⁵

As to the second connexion, or that which subsisteth between words and things, it is obvious, as it hath been formerly, that this is not a natural and necessary, but an artificial and arbitrary connexion. Nevertheless, though this connexion hath not its foundation in the nature of things, but in the conventions of men, its effect upon the mind is much the same. For having often had occasion to observe particular words used as signs of particular things, we hence contract a habit of associating the sign with the thing signified, in such that either, being presented to the mind, frequently introduces or occasions the apprehension of the other. Custom, in instance, operates precisely in the same manner as in the formation of experience formerly explained. Thus, certain sounds, and the ideas of things not naturally related to them, come to be as strongly linked in our conceptions, as the ideas of things naturally related to one another.

As to the third connexion, or that which subsisteth among words, I would not be understood to mean any connexion among the words considered as sounds, such as that which results from resemblance in pronunciation, equality in number of syllables, sameness of measure or cadence, but solely that connexion or relation which comes gradually to subsist among the different words of a language, in the mouths of those who speak it, and which is merely consequent on

⁴ It may be thought improper to mention *identity* as a relation, by which different things are connected; but it must be observed, that I only consider it, as to constitute distinct objects to the mind. Thus, in the consideration of the same person, when a child and when a man, is the consideration of different objects, between which there subsists the relation of identity.

⁵ Book I. Chap. v. Sect. ii. Part 2. On the formation of experience.

that those words are employed as signs of connected or related things. It is an axiom in geometry, that things equal to the same thing are equal to one another. It may, in like manner, be admitted as an axiom in psychology, that ideas associated with the same idea will associate with one another. Hence it will happen, that if from experiencing the connexion of two things there results, as infallibly there will result, an association between the ideas or notions annexed to them, as each will moreover be associated by its signs, there will likewise be an association between the ideas of the signs. Hence the sounds, considered as signs, will be conceived to have a connexion analogous to that which subsisteth among the things signified; I say the sounds considered as signs: for this way of considering them constantly attends us in speaking, writing, and reading. When we purposely abstract from it, and regard them merely as sounds, we are instantly sensible that they are quite unconnected, and have no other relation than what ariseth from similitude of tone or accent. But to consider them in this manner commonly results from previous signs, and requires a kind of effort which is not exerted in ordinary use of speech. In ordinary use they are regarded only as signs, or rather they are confounded with the things they signify; the consequence of which is, that, in the manner now explained, we come insensibly to conceive a connexion among them, of a very different sort from that of which words are naturally susceptible.

Now this conception, habit, or tendency of the mind, call it which you please, is considerably strengthened both by the frequent use of language, and by the structure of it. It is strengthened by the frequent use of language. Language is the sole channel through which we communicate our knowledge and discoveries to others, and through which the knowledge and discoveries of others are communicated to us. By reiterating discourse to this medium, it necessarily happens, that when things are related to each other, the words signifying those things are more commonly brought together in discourse. Hence the words and names themselves, by customary vicinity, are brought in the fancy a relation additional to that which they are purely from being symbols of related things. Further, the tendency is strengthened by the structure of language. All images whatever, even the most barbarous, as far as hath appeared, are of a regular and analogical make. The connexion is, that similar relations in things will be expressed similarly; that is, by similar inflections, derivations, compositions, arrangement of words, or juxtaposition of particles, according to the genius or grammatical form of the particular language. Now, as by the habitual use of a language (even though it were quite irregular) the signs would insensibly be-

come connected in the imagination, wherever the things signified are connected in nature; so, by the regular structure of language, this connexion among the signs is conceived as analogous to that which subsisteth among their archetypes. For these principles we may be enabled both to understand meaning and to perceive the justness of what is affirmed in end of the preceding quotation: "The custom which we have acquired of attributing certain relations to ideas, still follows the words, and makes us *immediately* perceive the absurdity of that proposition." *Immediately*, that is, even before we have leisure to give that attention to the signs which is necessary in order to form a just conception of the things signified. Confirmation of this doctrine it may be observed, that we do not think by signs as well as speak by them.

I have hitherto, in conformity to what is now become general and inveterate custom, and in order to avoid frequent circumlocutions, used the terms *sign* and *idea* as exactly synonymous. This, I am sensible, is not done with strict propriety. All words are signs, but that the signification cannot always be represented by an idea will, I apprehend, be abundantly evident from the observations following. All the truths which constitute science, which give exercise to reason, and are discovered by philosophy, are general; all our ideas, in the strictest sense of the word, are particular. All the particular truths about which we are conversant, are properly historical, and composed of furniture of memory. Nor do I include under the term *idea*, the truths which belong to natural history; for even these are too general. Now, beyond particular truths or individual facts, first perceived and then remembered, we should never be able to proceed one single step in thinking, any more than in conversing, without the use of signs.

When it is affirmed that *the whole is equal to all its parts*, there cannot be an affirmation which is more perfectly intelligible, or which commands a fuller assent. If, in order to comprehend this, I recur to ideas, all that I can do, is to form a notion of some individual whole divided into a certain number of parts, of which it is constituted, suppose of the year divided into the four seasons. Now, all that I can be said to discover here, is the relation of equality between this particular whole and its component parts. If I recur to another example, I only perceive another particular truth. The same holds true of a third and of a fourth. But so far am I, after the perception of ten thousand particular similar instances, from the discovery of the universal truth, that if the mind had not the power of considering things as signs, or particular ideas as representing infinity of others, resembling in one circumstance, but totally dissimilar in every other, I could not so much as conceive the meaning of a universal truth. Hence it is that

we do not adopt the expression of the author above quoted, *are particular in their nature, but general in their representation*.

There is, however, it must be acknowledged, a difficulty in explaining this power the mind hath, of considering ideas, not in their private, but, as it were, in their representative capacity; and, on that author's system who divides all the objects of thought into impressions and ideas, will be found altogether innumerable. It was to avoid this difficulty that philosophers have resorted to a downright absurdity, the doctrine of abstract ideas. I mean only that doctrine as it hath been frequently explained; so if any one is pleased to call that faculty by which a particular idea is regarded as representing a whole order, by the name *abstraction*, I have no objection to the term: may more, I think it sufficiently expressive of the sense:—whilst certain qualities of the individual remain unnoticed, and are therefore abstracted from, those qualities only which it hath in common with the order engross the mind's attention. But this is not what those writers seem to mean, who philosophize upon abstract ideas, as is evident from their own explications.

The patrons of this theory maintain, or at least express themselves as if they maintained, that the mind is endowed with a power of forming ideas, or images, within itself, that are possible not only of incongruous, but of inconsistent qualities, of a triangle, for example, that is of all possible dimensions and proportions, both in sides and angles, at once right-angled, obtuse-angled, and obtuse-angled, equilateral, equicrural, and equanim. One would have thought that the bare mention of such a hypothesis would have been equivalent to a confutation of it; and since it really confutes itself.

Seen in this manner one no less respectable in the philosophic world than Mr. Locke has, on some occasions, expressed himself. I consider the difference, however, on this article, between him and the two authors above mentioned, as more important than real, or (which amounts to the same thing) more words than in sentiments. It is indeed scarcely possible to men of discernment should think differently on a subject perfectly subjected to every one's own consciousness and experience. What has betrayed the former into such unguarded improper expressions, is plainly an undue, and till then, unprecedented use of the word *idea*, which he has employed in the same, I suppose of simplifying his system) to signify not only, as formerly, the traces of things retained in the memory, and the images formed by the fancy, but even the perceptions of the senses on the one hand, and the conceptions of intellect on the other, "it being that term which," in his theory of Human Understanding, B. II. C. xi. Sect. 10, 11; B. IV. C. vii.

spicuity in the style, which exhibits only the literal sense, is far from being to be dispensed with here, that it is even more requisite in this kind of composition than in any other. Accordingly, you will perhaps nowhere find more perfect models both of simplicity and of perspicuity of style than in the parables of the gospel. Indeed, in every sort of composition of a figurative character, more attention is always and justly considered as due to this circumstance than in any other sort of writing. Æsop's Fables are a noted example of this remark. In further confirmation of it, we may observe that no pieces are commonly translated with greater ease and exactness than the allegorical; and that even by those who apprehend nothing of the mystical sense. This sure could never be the case if the obscurity were chargeable on the language.

The same thing holds here as in painting emblems, or graving devices. It may, without any fault in the painter or engraver, puzzle you to discover what the visible figure of the sun was intended to signify; but if you are at a loss to know whether it be the figure of the sun or the figure of the moon, that you are looking at, he must have been undoubtedly a bungling artist. The body, therefore, if I may so express myself, of the emblem, or of the device, and precisely for the same reason, of the riddle or of the allegory, must be distinctly exhibited, so as scarcely to leave room for a possibility of mistake. The exercise that in any of these performances is given to ingenuity, ought wholly to consist in reading the soul.

I know no style to which darkness of a certain sort is more suited than to the prophetic. Many reasons might be assigned which render it improper that prophecy should be perfectly understood before it be accomplished. Besides, we are certain that a prediction may be very dark before the accomplishment, and yet so plain afterwards as scarcely to admit a doubt as to the events suggested. It does not belong to oracles to give laws to prophets, nor does it fall within the confines of any human art to lay down rules for a species of composition so far above art. Thus far, however, we may warrantably observe, that when the prophetic style is imitated in poetry, it ought, as much as possible, to possess the characteristics mentioned. This character, in my opinion, is possessed in a very eminent degree by Mr. Gray's ode called *The Bard*, which is all darkness to one who knows nothing of the English history posterior to the reign of Edward the first, and all light to one who is well acquainted with that history. But this is a species of writing whose peculiarities can scarcely be considered as exceptions from ordinary rules.

But further, may not a little obscurity be sometimes suitable in dramatic composition? Sometimes indeed, but

seldom; else the purpose of the exhibition would be lost. The drama is a sort of moral painting, and characters must be painted as they are. A blunderer cannot properly be introduced conversing with all the perspicuity and precision of a critic, no more than a clown can be justly represented expressing himself in the polished style of a courtier. In like manner, when the mind is in confusion and perplexity, arising from the sudden conduct of violent passions, the language will of necessity partake of the perturbation. Incoherent hints, precipitate sallies, vehement exclamations, interrupted perhaps by feeble checks from religion or philosophy; in short, every thing imperfect, abrupt, and desultory, are the natural expressions of a soul overwhelmed in such a tumult. But even here it may be said with truth, that to one skilled in reading Nature, there will arise a light out of the darkness, which will enable him to penetrate farther into the spirit, than he could have done by the description. This might be illustrated, were it necessary, but in a case so singular is hardly called an exception. The drama, then can but rarely claim to be indulged in obscurity of language, the fabulist never.

CHAPTER IX.

May there not be an Excess of Perspicuity?

WE HAVE concluded this subject with inquiring whether it be possible that perspicuity should be carried to excess. It hath been said that too much of it has a tendency to cloy the reader, and that it gives no play to the rational and active powers of the mind, will soon grow irksome through excess of facility. In the manner some able critics have expressed themselves on this point, who will be found not to differ in sentiment, but only in expression from the principles above laid down.

The objection ariseth manifestly from the confounding of two objects, the common and the clear, and thence very naturally to their contraries, the new and the dark, that are widely different. If you entertain your reader solely or chiefly with thoughts that are either trite or obvious, you cannot fail soon to weary him. You introduce few or no new sentiments into his mind, you give him little or no information, and consequently you neither exercise to his reason nor entertainment to his fancy. In what we read, and what we hear, we always seek

toricians call asyndeton, and to which they ascribe a wonderful efficacy. It ought to be observed that the natural connexion of the particulars mentioned is both close and manifest, and it is this consideration which entirely supersedes the artificial signs of that connexion, such as conjunctions and relative Our translators (who, it must be acknowledged, are not chargeable with this fault) have injured one passage in endeavouring to mend it. Literally rendered it stands thus: "Thou sentest forth thy wrath: it consumed them as stubble." These two simple sentences have appeared to them too much detached. For this reason, they have injudiciously combined them into one complex sentence, by inserting the relative *which*, and thereby weakened the expression: "Thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble." They have thought fit sometimes to add the conjunction *and* when it is not necessary, and might well have been spared.

If any one perceives not the difference, and consequently is not satisfied of the truth of this doctrine, let him make the following experiment on the song now under review. Let him transcribe it by himself, carefully inserting conjunctions and relatives in every place which will admit them in a consistent with the sense, and then let him try the effect of the whole. If, after all, he is not convinced, I know no argument which can weigh with him. For this is one of those cases in which the decision of every man's own taste must be final regard to himself.

But those who feel the difference in the effects, will perceive such as are so disposed to speculate a little about the operations either of Nature or of Art, is the cause which precede, and the effects which follow. Hence is suggested the mind the notion of power, agency, or causation, or notion or idea (call it which you please) is from the very nature of our nature, suggested, necessarily suggested, and instantaneously suggested; but still it is suggested and perceived. I would not choose to dispute with any man a word, and, therefore, lest this expression should appear

spirit and breath. A similar homonymy in the corresponding term *spirit*, not only in the oriental, but in almost all ancient languages, this noun has the affixed pronoun, by which it is appropriated to a personification *wind* is evidently excluded, and the meaning is limited to *spirit or breath*. When it is, besides, construed with the verb *blow*, the intention of the inspired penman to represent the wonderful soul which Jehovah blasted all the towering hopes of the Egyptians, and that such a manner is entirely in the Hebrew taste, which considers the natural object as bearing some relation to the Creator and Sovereign universe. The thunder is God's voice; the wind, his breath; the whirlwind, his footstool; the whirlwind and the tempest are of his nostrils.

Exod. xv. 7.

tionable, I declare my meaning to be only this, that it is perceived by the understanding, and not perceived by the senses, as the causes and the effects themselves often are. Could you then copy nature in an historical or descriptive manner, present to our imaginations the causes and the effects in their natural order; the suggestion of the power or agency which connects them will as necessarily result from the lively image you produce in the fancy, as it results from the perception of the things themselves, when they fall under the gaze of the senses.

But if you should take the other method, and connect with variety where there is relation; and, with the help of conjunctions and relatives, deduce with care effects from their causes, and allow nothing of the kind to pass unnoticed in the imagination, in lieu of a picture, you will present us with a series of reasoning or declamation. Would you, on the contrary, give to reasoning itself the force and vivacity of painting, by the method first prescribed, and that even when you present the energy of spiritual causes, which were never subjected to the scrutiny of sense. You will thus convert a series of abstruse reflection, which, however just, makes but a feeble impression upon the mind, into the most affecting and attractive imagery.

It is in this manner the psalmist treats that most sublime, that the same time, most abstract of all subjects, the presence of God. With what success he treats it every person of taste and sensibility will judge. After a few strictures on the life of man, and of the inferior animals, to whatever element, air, or earth, or water, they belong, he thus breaks out: "These wait all upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. Thou givest them. They hideest thy face. They are troubled. Thou takest away their breath. They die and return to their dust. Thou bringest forth thy spirit. They are created. Thou renewest the face of the earth." It must be acknowledged, that it is every subject, no, nor every kind of composition, that nature, or even admits the use of such glowing colours. Psalm is of the nature of the ode, being, properly defined, a sacred ode; and it is allowed that this species of poetry stands more fire than any other.

It may indeed be thought, that the vivacity resulting from the manner of composing is sufficiently accounted for, from the variety which it occasions, and of which I treated in the preceding chapter. It is an undoubted truth, that the brevity contributes to the force of the expression, but it is not