

ENGLISH COMPOSITION
AND RHETORIC

ENLARGED EDITION

PART FIRST

INTELLECTUAL ELEMENTS OF STYLE

BY

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PREFACE.

IN re-modelling the Manual of *English Composition and Rhetoric*, after twenty years' experience of teaching, I have seen fit to narrow its scope, so as to do more ample justice to certain portions of the work chosen for their general utility.

The subject as thus modified has been much enlarged both in exposition and in illustration, and is made to fall under two divisions; a separate volume being given to each. With certain reservations, it may be said, that the first division is occupied with the Elements of Style that concern the Understanding; while the second division, without any reservation, is to comprise the Emotional Qualities.

The topics of the present volume are the following:—Order of Words; Number of Words; the Sentence; the Paragraph; Figures of Speech; and finally, the Qualities of Style named respectively Clearness, Simplicity, Impressiveness and Picturesqueness. Every one of these topics is fully expounded, exemplified, and applied to the arts of criticism and composition.

In further explanation of the mode of treatment, I may refer to the department of Figures of Speech, occupying nearly one-third of the volume. Never before has that branch received so large a share of attention. Under the designation of Figures, the ancient authors of the Rhetorical art not only originated a considerable part of our critical vocabulary, but discussed many of the fundamentals of style and com-

position. Their enumeration of Figures in detail was voluminous, while the classification of them was imperfect. Still, the place of these Figures in Rhetoric is now established beyond recall. Under such circumstances, the best thing to do is to select and methodize all such as disclose any capital or leading features of style. This has been my first object. Next, in expounding the kinds so selected, I have steadily endeavoured to prescribe the conditions regulating the efficiency of the several varieties of figure, and to apply these conditions in particular testing examples. This is necessarily a hazardous proceeding; but it cannot be evaded by whoever aims at expounding the Rhetorical art with any degree of thoroughness.

It is under the Figures, that the Intellectual and Emotional Elements are unavoidably mingled; so that special precautions have to be taken to obviate the risk of confusing the learner. While the applications to the Understanding are fully stated, the amount of attention given to the aspects that relate to Feeling is such, as to make it necessary to lay down briefly the principles that regulate this department; the complete handling being reserved for the Second Part.

The rest of the volume bears almost exclusively on the species of composition addressed to the Understanding. As regards this particular aim, the new work differs from the existing one in omitting to handle, under express headings, the so-called KINDS of Composition—namely, Description, Narration, Exposition, Oratory. Much of what was included under those designations is here reproduced in other connexions: the laws of Description are exhaustively treated in the discussion of Picturesqueness; and a considerable part

of what pertains to the Expository art will be found distributed throughout the several topics as now arranged. Still, there is room for separate Manuals, giving an exhaustive treatment of the Kinds of Composition, under their own specific designations, as in the first Rhetoric, where there remain a number of suggestions, as well as illustrations, that have not been transferred to the present work.

As with the Figures, so with the other portions, the laws governing the efficiency of the various devices of style are sedulously applied to individual cases.

It appears to me to be a possible thing, to arrive at a definite code of prescriptions for regulating the Intellectual Qualities of composition. Granting that a certain progress has been made towards this consummation, the fact would seem to mark out the department as a fit subject for school discipline, at the proper stage; not to mention its direct bearing upon the valuable accomplishment of writing well. The several topics embraced are mostly on a level as regards ease of comprehension; and the exposition is conducted with the view of bringing the pupil's own judgment into play. The concluding subject of the volume—the quality named Picturesqueness, is properly an introduction to Part Second, but does not very deeply involve the peculiar niceties inseparable from the Emotional Qualities.

The exemplification is conducted partly by short instances adduced under the principles, and partly by the minute and critical analysis of passages of some length; both methods being essential to good teaching.

In most cases, the number of examples adduced for illustration and criticism has been purposely made

large, in order that the principles may be seen in the widest range of their application; and, for the same reason, they have been chosen from a considerable variety of English writers. In the discussion of individual passages, there is frequent room for difference of opinion as regards the judgments pronounced; nevertheless, the object in view is attained, if the pupil is exercised in comprehending the principles, and in discriminating their applications.

There is no attempt to provide additional exercises. These are best obtained in the readings that accompany instruction in literature. No one author, however eminent, is enough for the purpose of reference; and our miscellaneous reading-books are not as yet on a great enough scale. Fortunately, there is a valuable resource in the cheap reprints of English Classics that have lately become common. I may instance the Messrs. Chambers, as having taken a lead in this enterprise. In the Reprints, together with the Miscellany of Tracts, published by them, a little library can be selected for a very small sum, comprehensive enough to illustrate all the matters of importance in the fullest Rhetoric text-book.

The labour bestowed upon the present work, both in its original form and in the revision, has been incurred under the belief that, in any complete course of instruction in Literature, there must be a place for Rhetoric, as methodically expounded. What that place should be, I have discussed at length in a separate treatise, devoted to the entire question of Teaching English.

ABERDEEN, *January, 1887.*

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THE PARAGRAPH.

1. The division of discourse next above the Sentence is the Paragraph. It is a collection, or series, of sentences, with unity of purpose.

Between one paragraph and another, there is a greater break in the subject than between one sentence and another. The internal arrangement comes under laws that are essentially the same as in the sentence, but on a greater scale.

The Paragraph Laws are important, not only for their own sake, but also for their bearing on an entire composition. They are the general principles that must regulate the structure of sections, chapters, and books. The special laws applying to different kinds of prose composition—Description, Narrative, Exposition, and Persuasion—cannot supersede those general principles; they only deal with the matter in hand from a higher point of view. Apart from the application of these higher laws, we may adapt an old homely maxim, and say, ‘Look to the Paragraphs, and the discourse will take care of itself’.

DISTRIBUTION INTO SENTENCES.

2. The consideration of the Unity of the individual Sentence leads up to the structure of the Paragraph, as composed of sentences properly parted off.

We have seen that, in adjusting sentences, the comparative breaks of meaning in the successive statements must be attended to; whence the unity of the sentence enters into the domain of paragraph law.

The following example, from Helps’s *Spanish Conquest in America*, is a study of distribution in a Narrative paragraph. The subject is an expedition of Ojeda along the American coast near the River Darien. He captured a number of Indians and a quantity of gold in the course of his voyage, and, disembarking, founded San Sebastian.

“Ojeda sent his stolen gold and Indians home to Saint Domingo, in order that more men and supplies might be despatched to him ;

"and he inaugurated the building of his new town by a foray into the territories of a neighbouring Indian chief, who was reported to possess much gold." Here two separate facts are stated in one sentence, the author judging it inexpedient to devote a sentence to each. The facts are closely related in time, and the separation of a semicolon is thought enough for them. The concluding clause is explanatory, but it is an explanation that also saves a narrative clause. It suggests the purpose of the expedition, namely, the search for gold, and at the same time accounts for it.

"This foray, however, produced nothing for Ojeda, and his men were soon driven back by clouds of poisoned arrows." Again two distinct facts are brought together, mainly to avoid the multiplication of short sentences. In reciting the four statements now given, the writer has thought fit to introduce the sentence break between the second and the third. But a minute attention to the comparative degrees of intimacy of the four facts, might suggest the end of the first as the greater break; the second, third, and fourth being all related to the one matter of the foray against the Indians.

The author now commences a new paragraph, to suit the transition to a new subject.

"How their people should be fed, seems always to have been a secondary consideration with these marauding governors; and, indeed, on like occasions, in all periods of the world, it appears as if gold were supposed to be meat, drink, and clothing, the knowledge of what it is in civilised communities creating a fixed idea of its universal power, of which people are not able to divest themselves." The second member of this sentence is a sort of generalization of the remark contained in the first, which is itself a general observation prefatory to the next part of the narrative. Long as this second member is—being a general maxim burdened with a clause of reason or explanation,—the writer did well to place it as an appendage to the previous clause, to which it ought to be kept in subordination. This will be seen still better from the next sentence.

"Famine now began to make itself felt at St. Sebastian." This sentence joins on naturally to the first part of the foregoing, and would not have joined on so well to the second part, if that had been made a separate sentence. The author has thought fit to confine this sentence to a single fact. The brevity of it makes a not unacceptable contrast to the length of the preceding.

"Just at this point of time, however, a supply from a most appropriate quarter came suddenly to the aid of the hungry inhabitants of the new town." A single statement occupies this sentence also. It might have been coupled with the foregoing, although, on the whole, the present arrangement is preferable.

"There came in sight a vessel, which had been stolen from some Genoese by its commander Bernardino de Talavera, who was bringing it to the new settlement, as being a place where the title to any possessions would not be too curiously looked

"into." The first clause—"There came in sight a vessel"—contains the only fact essential to the narrative, but the author indulges in a little digression or by-plot, informing the reader how the vessel came. Such digressions are unavoidable, and often proper in narrative; and one mode of keeping them from trenching on the main story is to make them subordinate members of a sentence whose principal is the main story. To erect them into distinct sentences, on the plea of unity, would be to substitute a greater evil for a less.

"The supplies which this vessel brought, were purchased by Ojeda, and served to relieve for a moment the famishing colony." The principal subject connects the sentence with the principal member of the foregoing—"There came in sight a vessel,"—and the digressional explanation is no more heard of. The sentence itself contains two facts, so nearly allied that a comma is enough to divide them.

"But their necessities soon recommenced; and, with their necessities, their murmurings." The break between this and the foregoing is enough to make a distinct sentence. Also its two component facts are, as in the former case, nearly related, and proper to be joined in the same sentence. It is probable that there would not have been even a semicolon pause, but for the occurrence of the two commas enclosing the phrase 'with their necessities'.

"The Indians also harassed them by perpetual attacks, for the fame of Ojeda's deeds was rife in the land, and the natives were naturally very unwilling to have such a neighbour near them." The change of subject requires a new sentence; the main clause is followed by two clauses of reason or explanation, so necessary as to be added on with merely a comma break.

"The Spanish Commander did what he could to soothe his people, by telling them that Enciso, the partner in his expedition, and his alcalde, was coming; and, as for the Indians, Ojeda repelled their attacks with his usual intrepidity." Here again are two distinct but connected facts. The connection, however, is not of the closest kind; and two sentences would not have been improper.

"His Indian enemies, however, began to understand the character of the man they had to deal with, and, resolving to play upon his personal bravery, which amounted to fool-hardiness, they laid an ambuscade for him." This has three statements, but the last contains the action, and the two others are merely preparatory. A good example of a narrative sentence.

"The Indians then feigning an attack, Ojeda rushed out with his wonted impetuosity, until he came within reach of their ambuscade, which concealed four bowmen." The circumstances here given all concur in describing a single action. The unity is perfect. The participial form of the commencing clause is skilfully chosen, so as not to interfere with the prominence of the principal subject, Ojeda.

"These discharging their poisoned arrows, one of them passed

"through his thigh ; and this was the first time, strange to say, in "his adventurous and riskful life, that he had been wounded." Again we have a unity in the action. The participial form commences for the same reason as before ; the second member is an explanatory clause of the periodic form, rightly included in the same sentence.

"No veteran, however, could have shown more indifference to "pain in the remedy which he insisted upon adopting." This is properly made a new sentence ; its structure, however, is not free from exception. The place of the principal subject is occupied by a subordinate word—'veteran' ; and there is an awkwardness in the connection of the parts. Better thus : 'Nevertheless, the remedy that he insisted on adopting, showed him to surpass any veteran in indifference to pain'.

"He ordered two plates of iron brought to a white heat to be "tied on to the thigh, threatening the reluctant surgeon to hang "him if he did not apply the remedy." This also contains a single action, and therefore is in accordance with the most rigorous demands of unity.

"It was so severe that it not only burnt up the leg and the "thigh, but the heat penetrated his whole body, so that it became "necessary to expend a pipe of vinegar in moistening the bandages "which were afterwards applied." Otherwise :—'So severe was the application, that not only were the leg and the thigh burnt up, but the heat penetrated his whole body, and, in moistening the bandages that were afterwards applied, they had to expend a pipe of vinegar'. The sentence is an explanatory addition to the foregoing, and might have made one with it, but for the length and the prolixity of the resulting compound. It was also, perhaps, desirable not to accumulate the horrors of the transaction in one unbroken string.

"All this torture Ojeda endured without being bound." The impressiveness of the fact stated justifies the separateness of this brief sentence.

"Would that this terrible energy and power of endurance had "been given to a career more worthy of them !"—Appropriately closes the paragraph. The last few sentences digress from the main story, to recount the incidents personal to the chief ; and after such a digression, it is desirable to resume the narrative in a new paragraph.

The passages to be given under the next, and following, Paragraph Laws, will continue the exemplification of the Distribution in Sentences.

EXPLICIT REFERENCE.

3. The bearing of each sentence of a Paragraph on the sentences preceding needs to be explicit.

accordingly, is to consider the various sources of the tendency to conform. The *Essay* closes with a paragraph commencing with this sentence: 'A reasonable watchfulness against conformity will not lead a man to spurn the aid of other men, still less to reject the accumulated mental capital of ages'; and so the object is to make some practical observations against extreme ideas on either side.

Thus, all the seven paragraphs are introduced in harmony with the rule. Helps, like Macaulay, manifestly felt the importance of such a preliminary indication of the theme.

UNITY.

20. Unity in a Paragraph implies a sustained purpose, and forbids digressions and irrelevant matter.

The Rule just expounded is unmeaning, except on the supposition that a paragraph has a set purpose, and adheres to that throughout.

Unity is violated in several ways. A common mistake, of the simplest kind, is to run on in one paragraph what should be divided into two or more. As with the sentence, so with the Paragraph, the only general principle that can be laid down, is to make the divisions at the larger breaks; and so there may sometimes be doubt in the application of the rule. But, when a Paragraph is allowed to become much protracted, the reader loses the sense of any unity of purpose in it, and the break, when it comes, is of little use. More rarely, the opposite extreme is met with the custom of writing in short paragraphs—of one, two, and three sentences. The object in this case is to give a look of greater importance to each individual remark; the effect, however, is to produce a disjointed style, and largely to nullify the paragraph division by reducing it nearly to the level of the sentence.

A more serious breach of the Unity of the Paragraph is caused by the introduction of unnecessary digressions and irrelevant matter. Take, as an example, the following paragraph from Dryden, on Translation:—

(1) Translation is a kind of drawing after the life; where every one will acknowledge there is a double sort of likeness, a good one and a bad. (2) It is one thing to draw the outlines true, the features like, the proportions exact, the colouring itself perhaps tolerable; and another thing to make all these graceful, by the posture, the shadowings, and chiefly by the spirit which animates the whole. (3) I cannot, without some indignation, look on an ill copy of an excellent original; much less can I behold with patience Virgil, Homer, and some others, whose beauties I have been

endeavouring all my life to imitate, so abused, as I may say, to their faces by a botching interpreter. (4) What English readers, unacquainted with Greek or Latin, will believe me or any other man, when we commend these authors, and confess, we derive all that is pardonable in us from their fountains, if they take those to be the same poets whom our Oglevies have translated? (5) But I dare assure them that a good poet is no more like himself in a dull translation, than his carcase would be to his living body. (6) There are many who understand Greek and Latin, and yet are ignorant of their mother-tongue. (7) The properties and delicacies of the English are known to few; it is impossible even for a good wit to understand and practise them without the help of a liberal education, long reading, and digesting of those few good authors we have amongst us; the knowledge of men and manners, the freedom of habitudes and conversation with the best company of both sexes; and, in short, without wearing off the rust which he contracted while he was laying in a stock of learning. (8) Thus difficult it is to understand the purity of English, and critically to discern, not only good writers from bad, and a proper style from a corrupt, but also to distinguish that which is pure in a good author, from that which is vicious and corrupt in him. (9) And for want of all these requisites, or the greatest part of them, most of our ingenious young men take up some cried-up English poet for their model; adore him, and imitate him, as they think, without knowing wherein he is defective, where he is boyish and trifling, wherein either his thoughts are improper to his subject, or his expressions unworthy of his thoughts, or the turn of both is unharmonious.

Here, the object of the first two sentences is to give a general statement of the nature and the difficulties of Translation. From this we pass off, in the third, to an expression of the writer's personal feelings towards bad translations; and this is farther expanded in sentences (4) and (5). There is no indication of what is the connection with the preceding sentences; and, in point of fact, the connection is but slight. The matter might either be omitted altogether or reduced to a short passing reference. A third alternative would be to place these sentences in a separate paragraph, prefaced by some such statement as this: 'A good original must not be judged by an ill copy'. The harm done by the digression would thus be reduced; but it would still prevent the first two sentences from being so closely connected as they should be with the matter that is now to follow.

The remainder of the paragraph is much better connected; the chief defect is, that the leading idea is not indicated. Whatever course may be taken with the digressive matter just referred to, these sentences should have a paragraph to themselves. If the digression were

omitted, this paragraph might be brought into connection with the first paragraph, thus:—'For a good translation two things are required: a knowledge of English as well as a knowledge of the original'. If the digression were retained as a separate paragraph, then the point here discussed might be brought into relation with it by another sentence preceding the one just given:—'That good translations are few is not to be wondered at. For a good translation two things,' &c.

Thus the passage illustrates more than one of the above remarks on the Violations of Unity. It contains a digression whose chief motive is, not the exposition of the subject, but merely the expression of thoughts and feelings interesting to the writer. It includes matter sufficiently distinct to require the paragraph to be broken up. Moreover, it has also shown how the laws of Explicit Reference and Indication of the Theme tend to secure the Unity of the Paragraph.

The Unity of the Paragraph—or what may correspond to the Paragraph—is not strictly enjoined in Poetry. Digressions are permitted that do little towards enforcing the leading ideas, if only they serve the general ends of Poetry and are not so distant or prolonged as to interfere with the main ideas. The similes of Milton are constantly developed into pictures that have interest and beauty quite apart from the apparent purpose of their introduction. As an example reference may be made to the famous comparison of Satan's shield to the moon (*Paradise Lost*, Book I, 287).

CONSECUTIVE ARRANGEMENT.

21. The first thing involved in Consecutive Arrangement is, that related topics should be kept close together: in other words, Proximity has to be governed by Affinity.

When an idea is put forward, the way to stamp it on the mind is, to give everything connected with it—iterations, examples, illustrations, and proofs—before passing to another subject.

This is like attacking in a phalanx, instead of in loose order.

FIGURES OF SPEECH.

1. A Figure of Speech is a deviation from the plain and ordinary way of speaking, for the sake of greater effect.

Instead of saying 'That is very strange,' we may, on a particular occasion, say 'How strange!' 'The *sunshine* of the *breast*' is a departure from the ordinary meanings of both the words 'sunshine' and 'breast'. The 'Board of Green Cloth' is highly figurative. 'Oh that a man should take an *enemy* into his mouth, to *steal* away his brains.'*

2. A classification of the more important Figures may be based on the three leading divisions of the Human Understanding.†

The powers of the Understanding are as follows:—

(1.) DISCRIMINATION, or Feeling of Difference, Contrast, Relativity. This means that the mind is affected by change, as in passing from rest to motion, from cold to heat, from light to dark; and that the greater and the more sudden the change, the stronger is the effect. The figure denominated *Antithesis*, or *Contrast*, derives its force from this fact.

(2.) The second power is called SIMILARITY, or the Feeling of Agreement. This signifies that, when like objects come under our notice, we are impressed by the circumstance—as

* The idea of 'Figure' has nothing to do with Arithmetic; it signifies an unusual form of speech. Both the Latin *figura* and the Greek *εἰκῆμα* properly denoted any 'form' of speech, so that, according to this usage, all language is in some figure; and Quintilian mentions that this wider meaning was still occasionally employed. It was but a natural limitation of the idea when *figura* and *εἰκῆμα* were specially applied to those more striking 'forms' that consist in a deviation from the ordinary way of speech. With the wider meaning compare the application of the same terms to the 'figures' of the Syllogism—that is, the various 'forms' it assumes.

† All the ancient rhetoricians recognized a distinction between Figures and Tropes, though the exact nature of the distinction was much disputed. In general, a *Trope* was considered to consist in the use of one word for another, as in the Metaphor, Metonymy, Synecdoche; while a *Figure* implied a change in the relations of the words or the application of a whole sentence, such as Antithesis, Exclamation, Apostrophe. The distinction is artificial, and turns on a point that has little relevance to the leading uses of the Figures in style.

when we see the resemblance of a child to its parent. The Figures named *Simile*, *Metaphor*, *Allegory*, are modes of Similarity.

(3.) The third power of the Intellect is RETENTIVENESS, or Acquisition. The ability to retain successive impressions without confusion, and to bring them up afterwards, distinguishes Mind; it is a power familiarly known by the name Memory. Now, the chief way that retentiveness or memory works is this: impressions *occurring together* become associated together, as sunrise with daylight; and, when we are made to think of one, we are reminded of its accompaniments. We cannot think of the sun's rising without thinking of daylight, and the other circumstances that go along with it. Hence the mental association of things *contiguously* placed is a prominent fact; and one of its many consequences is to cause us often to name a thing by some of its adjuncts, as the sovereign by 'the throne,' wealth by 'gold'. Such is the nature of *Metonymy*.

Of the three powers of Intellect now named, the second, Similarity, is most abundant in figures, and these may be taken first in order.

FIGURES FOUNDED ON SIMILARITY.

SIMILITUDES IN GENERAL.

1. The intellectual power named Similarity; or Feeling of Agreement, there being also Diversity, is our chief instrument of invention.

In the world at large, things repeat themselves in new aspects and connections. The diversity is an obstacle to the sense of agreement; when we are able to overcome this obstacle, we are rewarded with important discoveries and aids to knowledge. It was a great stretch of identification, under disguises, to find out that our earth resembles a ball in shape, and revolves about the sun, like Jupiter and Venus.

2. The most important identifications of all are those that extend knowledge by generalizing such phenomena as fall under the same laws.

The referring of the heavenly motions to the force of

In some instances words are employed as metaphors in meanings completely at variance with their original use, thereby causing conflict and loss of power. The words 'Alloy,' 'Amalgam,' 'Fusion,' are notable examples. An Alloy, in chemistry and in the arts, means the mixing of two or more metals, generally with the view of producing a compound superior in quality and in usefulness to a simple metal. It is altogether an exception to make an alloy of a precious metal with some inferior one in order to palm off a debased article. Yet this is the only meaning attached to the word in its metaphorical use. Again, an Amalgam means solely the union of mercury with another metal. The attraction of mercury for silver and gold is so powerful as to be the principal means of separating those metals from the ores. But the metaphorical Amalgam is simply a vague name for intimate union or combination, as when two separate societies are united into one. In this fact there is no implication of any characteristic feature of the amalgam, as understood in science. Lastly, the word Fusion in physics means *melting* and no more. In its transference as a metaphor, it signifies *mixing* solely.

3. The brevity of the Metaphor renders it liable to the vice called Mixing Metaphors.

This arises when metaphors from different sources are combined in the same subject: as 'to *kindle a seed*'. We may *sow a seed* or *kindle a flame*; but kindling a seed is incongruous and confusing to the mind.

The following example from Addison is familiar—

I *bridle* in my struggling muse with pain
That longs to *launch* into a bolder strain.

Three different figures are conjoined in one action.

'The very *hinge* and *centre* of an immense system: 'hinge' is out of place.

'All my pretty *chickens* and their *dam*' is the mixing of two metaphors.

A common incongruity is to speak of '*scenes* being enacted': a play or drama is enacted, and in the course of the play the scenes are *shifted*.

'Mackintosh's philosophic mind threw a *luminous radiance* over that *intricate* subject, the criminal code:' with '*luminous radiance*,' we should have '*dark*' or '*obscure*' applied to the subject.

'Their reputation was not bounded by the *shallow waters* of the historic Tweed, or even by the then far greater *width* of the Channel.' Here the obstruction is presented in two different and inconsistent aspects.

'Physiology and psychology thus become united, and the study of man passes from the uncertain *light* of mere opinion to the *region* of science.'

'The very recognition of these by the jurisprudence of a nation is a *mortal wound* to the very *keystone* upon which the whole vast arch of morality reposes.'

Thomson has this remarkable mixture of figures—

Straight the *fierce storm* involves his mind anew,
Flames through the nerves, and boils along the veins.

Shelley has this example in the Ode to the West Wind—

O, thou,
Who *charioteest* to their dark wintry bed
The *winged seeds*, where they lie cold and low,
Each *like a corpse* within its grave.

The following are from Keats, illustrating further the tendency to incongruity in writers that indulge in great profusion of similitudes.

With *beaded bubbles winking* at the brim—

with reference to a "beaker" full of wine.

Into her dream he *melted*, as the rose
Blendeth its odour with the violet,—
Solution sweet.

Here the figure of melting is interrupted by a simile changing the conception, and is resumed again in "solution sweet".

Slowly they sail, slowly as *icy isle*
Upon a calm sea *drifting*.

If an iceberg is described as an 'icy isle,' it should not be when it is conceived as 'drifting'.

Even Pope, usually correct in such points, has the following remarkable mixture—

Love, hope and joy, fair pleasure's smiling *trains*,
Hate, fear and grief, the *family* of pain,
These *mixt* with art, and to *due bounds* confined,
Make and maintain the *balance* of the mind ;
The *lights and shades*, whose well accorded *strife*
Gives all the *strength and colour* of our life.

Each clause introduces a new conception, though the subject is the same throughout.

There is no objection to different metaphors being successively applied to the same subject, provided they are kept distinct. Thus : 'They admire the profundity of what is mystical and obscure, mistaking the *muddiness* of the water for *depth* (1), and *magnifying* in their imagina-

tions what is *viewed through a fog*' (2). (Whately.) The harmony of each figure applied to the subject, is a feature in such finished writers as Gray and Campbell. Compare, for example, the figures in the two stanzas of the 'Elegy' beginning—

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page—
or the six lines beginning—

Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne—

or the lines—

Even from the tomb the voice of natures cries,
Even in our ashes live their wonted fires.

When words do not readily suggest their metaphorical basis, the incongruity is not felt. In the line of Young—

Her voice is but the *shadow* of a sound,

the mixture is not objectionable.

So—

A *touch of shame* upon her cheek.

In these instances, the metaphorical usage is so habitual as to prevent the original meaning from asserting itself.

Somewhat similar is the case with the lines in Tennyson, describing death as—

The *shadow* cloaked from head to foot,
Who keeps the keys of all the creeds.

Here the term *shadow* is employed to designate a being conceived as unsubstantial, yet dark; and, with this application, there is nothing inharmonious in ascribing to the 'shadow' the personal attributes of being cloaked and keeping keys.

There are, however, many words that have ceased to be metaphors, but still so far suggest their original meaning as to give the sense of harmony when the figure is attended to. Thus, to say 'the *impression* was conveyed' is not in keeping, although quite intelligible. 'Upon the style it is that these *perplexities* depend for their *illumination*.'

'Fetter' properly means a chain or bond for the feet. It is often used for bonds in general; but has not so lost its primary signification that we may speak, without inconsistency, of 'beneficial legislation that has struck the *fetters* from the *hands* of industry'.

So in this instance: 'The *decline* of the material comforts of the working classes had been incessant, and had

now reached an alarming *height*.' 'Decline' is often used with little feeling of its metaphorical nature; but its conjunction with 'height' is realized as a discord.

The metaphorical word 'point' cannot always be used in harmony with its original sense. One of its meanings is the same as subject-matter, or subject of discourse; and we must often use such combinations as 'embracing, enlarging upon, contesting, opening up, a point'—expressions highly incongruous with the literal meaning. But the phrase 'point of view' retains enough of its literal meaning to render the following incongruous: 'Nothing could be more *one-sided* than the point of view adopted by the writers'; 'a more *extended* point of view'. So, 'to *approach* from a standpoint' does not give the sense of harmony that is felt in the expression, 'to *view* from a standpoint'.

The mixture of the metaphorical and the plain or literal is also objectionable. Dryden, speaking of the aids he had in his translations, says, 'I was sailing in a vast ocean without other help than the *pole-star* of the ancients, and the *rules of the French stage* among the moderns'.

4. A Metaphor must not be *strained*.

By this is meant pursuing the figure into irrelevant details.

Young, speaking of old age, says—

It should
Walk thoughtful on the silent, solemn shore
Of that vast ocean it must sail so soon:
*And put good works on board: and wait the wind
That shortly blows us into worlds unknown.*

In the two last lines, the feelings suggested are out of keeping with what goes before. At first, an emotion of deep solemnity is awakened; then the figure changes to the prosaic and calculating operations of a sea-faring enterprise.*

Take now the famous passage—

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

* "Lord Shaftesbury is sometimes guilty of pursuing his metaphors too far: fond to an uncommon degree of every decoration of style, when he has once started a figure which pleases him, he always seems unwilling to discontinue the chase. Thus having represented soliloquy under the metaphor of a proper method of evacuation for an author, he pursues the figure through several pages, under all the forms of discharging crudities, throwing off froth and scum, bodily operation, taking physic, curing indigestion, giving vent to cholera, bile, flatulencies and tumours, till at last the idea becomes nauseous and disgusting." (*Irving*.)

Here we have both impropriety and straining. The tides rise and fall twice every twenty-five hours; it is, therefore, a contradiction to speak of a man's experiencing only one high tide in his life. Used for a lucky or favourable conjuncture, the figure is wholly inappropriate. Then as to the bearing on the voyage of life: to miss a tide is merely half a day's delay in starting; while it can have nothing to do with sailing in shallows, a mishap that would simply imply the want of a good chart or other equipment of navigation. Lastly, the union of 'shallows' and 'miseries' is an example of mixing the metaphorical and the literal.

In the following instance from Pope, the first application of the figure is appropriate, but the fitness is wanting in the last two lines.

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

To a 'monster' we should certainly not be tempted to act in this manner; to express this aspect of vice we should require some other comparison, such as the siren. The figure of the 'monster' is unfitting after the second line. So, in this other example from the same poet. Having spoken of man as 'a wild where weeds and flowers promiscuous shoot,' he proceeds—

Together let us beat this ample field,
Try what the open, what the covert yield!
The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore
Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar;
Eye nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise.

The Metaphor, in its simplest and most characteristic form, begins and ends with a single word or phrase, as in many of the instances above quoted. In many cases, however, as has been seen, the idea is developed or expanded into circumstantial details. It is only in such instances that the fault of straining the metaphor can be committed. It is, however, in the Simile that the expansion of a figure into numerous circumstances most naturally occurs, and, consequently, where the special rules and precautions for maintaining consistency are most applicable.

“hot (independently of the heat used to stimulate the combination); and in the resulting compound, neither of the elements will be recognized.”

Again: “The two gases called oxygen and hydrogen may be made to combine chemically [this assumes previous instruction as to those gases]. The union takes place in the proportion of 8 of oxygen to 1 of hydrogen (by weight). There is a great quantity of heat evolved. The compound, which is water, shows none of the characteristic properties of either element.”

These additional examples are cast so as to repeat the three facts of Chemical Union in the order they were formerly stated in.

CLEARNESS.

1. Clearness is opposed to obscurity, vagueness, ambiguity, or ill-defined boundaries.

A statement is clear when there is no possibility of confounding it with anything else. Clearness is, by pre-eminence, the intellectual merit of style. Another name for the quality is Precision.

As contributing to Clearness, we may cite—

I. The Laws of the Sentence and the Paragraph generally.

II. The Figures of Similarity and of Contrast.

III. The laws above enumerated as referring to the Intellectual Qualities at large.

It is not necessary, and would be confusing, to enter into a renewed exemplification of these various points. There remains, however, a specific device, which can be illustrated best in the present connexion.

2. One chief obstacle to Clearness is the ambiguity of language.

The number of names in the language that possess more than one distinct meaning, is very great; they may be counted by hundreds. Take the words ‘box,’ ‘post,’ ‘care,’ ‘heart,’ ‘right,’ ‘fellow,’ ‘nature,’ ‘taste,’ ‘sense,’ ‘light,’ ‘touch,’ ‘will,’ ‘finish’. Words formed from the same stem, but having different terminations, usually express different shades of meaning, and such terms are specially apt to be confounded. For example, ‘sensual’ and ‘sensuous,’ ‘repulsion’ and ‘repellent,’ ‘proposal’ and ‘proposition,’ ‘confound’ and ‘confuse’.

The best illustration of the plural senses of words is seen in Epigrams, and especially 'puns'. (See EPIGRAM.)

Bentham's directions for clearness assume the possibility of finding an apposite and unambiguous word for every occasion, which is what Rhetoric cannot teach. His first rule is :—

"When the language affords a word appropriated exclusively to the expression of the import which alone it is your intention to express, avoid employing any word which is alike applicable to the expressing of that import, and to a different one which may require to be distinguished from it".

This supposes further that a writer knows the precise meaning of every word in the language. Such knowledge is not easy of attainment. The helps to it are still in great measure wanting. One valuable aid has lately been afforded in a little work entitled "Leading and Important English words, explained and exemplified, by William L. Davidson".

Bentham's second rule is :—

"Unless for special reason, by whatsoever name an object has once been designated, by that same name and no other continue to designate it ; or if, on any account, you find it matter of necessity or convenience to employ for that purpose this or that other name, take care to give notice of the change".

The desire for variety is the most frequent cause of changing the name for a given meaning.

The rule following treats as unavoidable the use of words with double meanings, and exemplifies the known modes of obviating the evil.

3. When a word has a plurality of meanings, it should be placed in such a connexion as to exclude all but the one intended.

It is not uncommon to find words so placed in their context, as to suggest most readily the meaning *not* intended. For example :— 'A man who has lost his eye-sight has, in one *sense*, less consciousness than he had before'. The word 'sense,' being used after the mention of eye-sight, is naturally supposed to mean one of our five senses, which is not the case. Again : 'And *seeing* dreams are caused by the distemper of the inward parts of the body'; here the word 'seeing' followed by 'dreams' is apt to suggest the act of vision, instead of the use of the word as a conjunction for 'inasmuch as'. 'There is something unnatural in *painting*, which a skilful eye will easily discern from native beauty and complexion.' Here the first suggestion that would arise from the mention of 'painting' is the art of painting ; what we find to be the meaning is a 'painted face'.

In other instances, there is pure ambiguity from two meanings being equally suggested. 'His *presence* was against him' means either 'the fact of his being present and not absent,' or his 'demeanour and appearance'. 'I *remarked* the circumstance' might be either, 'I made a remark to some one,' or 'I was myself struck with the

circumstance'. The word 'common,' from its two significations, 'usual' and 'widely spread,' is a frequent cause of ambiguity.

Brougham's famous saying, 'The schoolmaster is *abroad*,' has two senses, and does not at once suggest his sense.

Among words with plural meanings, we may instance 'air'. 'The *air* of an assembly of the gods' is an uncertain expression; it might be 'air' in the sense of atmosphere, or 'air' as character, demeanour.

'*Complementary colours*' is a technical phrase in optics; but it most readily brings to mind the idea of wearing colours by way of compliment to some party or person. This ambiguity, however, is only in sound.

The word 'last' often makes ambiguity from standing either for what is immediately preceding, or for the latest and concluding term of a series.

'Many good examples and many judicious observations' is open to a double rendering. There would be no equivocation, if we were to say 'many good experiments, and many judicious remarks'.

A 'question' may be either something asked, or a subject for discussion; hence, while 'to *ask* a question' is plain, 'to *give* a question' is ambiguous; it may mean to propound a topic.

'The *appearance* of gout can never be looked upon as a good omen: a statement *contrary* to a once popular opinion.' The word 'appearance' is ambiguous; 'appearing,' or 'the fact of gout's appearing,' would be free from ambiguity. Obscurity is also caused by the difficulty of construing the application of 'contrary'; but this is owing to the clash of negations, which will be fully considered under Simplicity.

'The school was placed in its present *position* a century ago.' This means either locality, or constitution and rank with reference to other corporate bodies in the neighbourhood.

'And even though the insurrection was at once put down, it might be well to have the means of summary and immediate punishment at hand, *hanging*, as it were, over the heads of the population, to strike terror into their minds in the event of any further disposition to disorder manifesting itself.' The word 'hanging' is especially unfortunate here. Coming in connexion with punishment, it is at once interpreted as signifying the infliction of death by hanging.

'Out of mathematics, nearly all the writing is spent in *loading* the syllogism, and very little in *firing* it.' The word 'loading' suggests its principal meaning—laying on a load. Some other construction would be needed to show at once that the figure used was the loading and discharge of fire-arms.

'But even if there should be room for the *reflection*, *light*, indeed, would that reflection be.' The confusion of 'light' as luminosity, with 'light' as opposed to heavy, is exceedingly common; and with the word 'reflection' preceding, we necessarily think of the first-named meaning.

As metaphors give words new significations, they are chargeable with many of the ambiguities of language. 'A half truth' is a literal impossibility; its meaning can only be metaphorical, and the metaphor does not explain itself.

Metonymy is also a source of new meanings of words, and consequently gives openings for ambiguity. 'He has taken to the turf,' 'he has a good table,' admit of both the literal and the figurative renderings; and the ambiguity needs to be obviated by the context.

The mixing of adjectives and verbs in the following sentence is confusing:—'The fierce conqueror, *untutored* and *unrefined*, half *grudged* and half *despised* the diplomatic powers of his patrician lieutenant'.

4. It is desirable to avoid using the same word in two different senses, within a short interval.

Such constructions as the following tend to obscurity, and, when not misleading, are inelegant. 'If the show of *anything* be good for *anything*, sincerity is better.' 'It is many times as troublesome to make *good* the pretence of a *good* quality, as to have it.' 'He turned to the *left* of the House, and then *left* abruptly.' 'The *truth* is that error and *truth* are blended in their minds.' 'I look upon it as my *duty*, so long as I keep within the bounds of truth, of *duty* and of decency.'

'To say that these are immutable essences, is all *one* as if *one* should say—'

'As *good* kill a man as a *good* book.'

'Hunting he *loved*, but *love* he laughed to scorn.'

'Whatever *is*, *is* right.' The first 'is' means existence. The second is the copula verb: 'Whatever exists is right'; 'whatever exists, exists rightly'.

'Having *two* clusters of ideas, and knowing them to be *two*, is not *two* things but one and the same thing.' For the second *two* say *different*.

'He *means* to take advice as to the best *means* of trying the question.' Inelegant.

'The proud city, ornamented with stately buildings, as became the *capital* of the world, showed a succession of glittering spires and orders of architecture, some of them chaste and simple, like those the *capitals* of which were borrowed from baskets-ful of acanthus' (Scott). We naturally take 'capitals' in the same sense as 'capital' just used, until the words following show the mistake.

'Hume's views on *cause* were anticipated by *casual* remarks of other writers.' Say 'chance,' 'scattered' or 'incidental' remarks.

'Knowledge, in one of its *senses*, is synonymous with *sensaticn*; ' one of its *meanings*.

'We confine ourselves *within* what we believe to be not only desirable, but *within* no long period attainable in England.' Bad sentence altogether :—'We confine ourselves within not only what we believe to be desirable, but what may, in no long period, be attainable in England'.

But all be that he was a philosophre,
Yet haddè he *but* litel gold in cofre,
But all that he might of his frendès hente.

'The fallacy we conceive to be this, that the visible body can be contained *within* the eye, *without* the eye of the visible body also being contained therein.'

'We may know that it is *no* common age.' The recurrence of the same sound for different words and meanings is unadvisable.

The two senses of the pronoun 'we,' called the editorial and the representative, are apt to be confused in this way. '*We* (the writer) will now proceed to enquire how *we* (men generally) first arrive at such notions.' It is in discussing human nature that this clash arises, and the mode of avoiding it is to use the singular pronoun for the speaker's self, or else to make the construction impersonal.

When a recurring word has one meaning prevailing through the same discourse, it is wrong to bring it in unexpectedly in one of its other meanings.

The word 'wit,' is said to be used, in Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, in *seven* different acceptations.

Ambiguity frequently arises in a sentence from the bad arrangement of words.

The laws for the right placing of qualifying adjuncts, given partly under SYNTAX in Grammar and partly under ORDER OF WORDS in Rhetoric, have in view mainly the prevention of ambiguity.

5. The best known device for overcoming ambiguity is to employ Contrast; that is, to state the opposite of what is meant.

When we say 'light,' as opposed to 'darkness,' we effectually prevent the confusion of this meaning with 'light' as opposed to 'heavy'.

The important word 'moral' has several significations; it is opposed to 'physical,' to 'intellectual,' to 'immoral'.

'Civil' is opposed to 'rudeness,' in one of its senses; in other senses, to 'ecclesiastical,' to 'military'.

'Earth' is contrasted, according to the occasion, with heaven, the sun, the moon, another planet, sea, air, water, rock, sand.

6. The prevention of ambiguity is an occasion of permissible tautology.

'Sense' is rendered precise by 'sense and acceptation,' and by 'sense or susceptibility'. (See NUMBER OF WORDS, p. 51.)

7. When terms are varied for the sake of sound, care should be taken that they are not so placed as to suggest a difference of meaning.

Synonymous words are very seldom exactly coincident in meaning, though a great deal may be common to both. If therefore we suggest a difference, the reader will naturally think of the points of difference rather than agreement.

'Scarlet rhododendrons sixty feet in *height* are surrounded by trees two hundred feet in *elevation*.' The balanced form suggests that *elevation* is not the same thing as *height*. 'That reach two hundred feet,' would avoid the objection.

'Mr. Gladstone has issued invitations for a full-dress parliamentary *dinner*, and Lord Granville has issued invitations for a full-dress parliamentary *banquet*.' The two clauses being identical, except the one word, we naturally think of the 'banquet' as different from the 'dinner'.

'Mr. Ayrton has accepted Dr. Hooker's explanation of the letter at which *the First Commissioner of Works* took umbrage.' Here the full description of the office seems to point to a person different from the subject of the sentence, for whom a pronoun is the natural reference.

The clearness arising from the management of ambiguous words has been a progressing virtue of English writers. It was little attended to in the Elizabethan and immediately subsequent epochs. Perhaps the most remarkable exception to the general rule was Hobbes; yet no good writer in the present day would allow to pass the number of ambiguities found in him.

It may be doubted if the ancient Græek and Roman authors attended much to this peculiar merit of style. Many of them certainly overlooked it.

SIMPLICITY.

1. Simplicity means being easily understood. It is opposed to abstruseness or difficulty.