division in pointing, than a colon between any of its members.

It may be of use here to give a specimen of a long sentence, broken down into several periods; by which we shall more clearly perceive the disadvantages of long sentences, and how easily they may be amended. Here follows the sentence in its original form: "Though in yesterday's paper we showed how every thing that is great, new, or beautiful, is apt to affect the imagination with pleasure, we must own, that it is impossible for us to assign the necessary cause of this pleasure, because we know neither the nature of an idea, nor the substance of a human soul: and therefore, for want of such a light, all that we can do, in speculations of this kind, is, to reflect on those operations of the soul that are most agreeable; and to range, under their proper heads, what is pleasing or displeasing to the mind, without being able to trace out the several necessary and efficient causes, from whence the pleasure or displeasure arises."

The following amendment, besides breaking down the period into several sentences, exhibits some other useful alterations: "In yesterday's paper, we showed that every thing which is great, new, or beautiful, is apt to affect the imagination with pleasure. We must own, that it is impossible for us to assign the efficient cause of this pleasure, because we know not the nature either of an idea, or of the human soul. All that we can do, therefore, in speculations of this kind, is to reflect on the operations of the soul which are most agreeable, and to range under proper heads what is pleasing or displeasing to the mind."

A *third* rule for preserving the unity of sentences, is, *to keep clear of all unnecessary parentheses.*

On some occasions, when the sense is not too long suspended by them, and when they are introduced in a proper place, they may add both to the vivacity and to the energy of the sentence. But for the most part their effect is extremely bad. They are wheels within wheels; sentences in the midst of sentences; the perplexed method of disposing

of some thought, which a writer wants judgment to introduce in its proper place.

The parenthesis in this sentence is striking and proper;

"And was the ransom paid? It was; and paid
"(What can exalt the bounty more?) for thee."

But in the following sentence, we become sensible of an impropriety in the use of it. "If your hearts secretly reproach you for the wrong choice you have made, (as there is time for repentance and retreat; and a return to wisdom is always honourable,) bethink yourselves that the evil is not irreparable." It would be much better to express in a separate sentence, the thoughts contained in this parenthesis; thus: "If your hearts secretly reproach you for the wrong choice you have made, bethink yourselves that the evil is not irreparable. Still there is time for repentance and retreat; and a return to wisdom is always honourable."

See the APPENDIX *to the Exercises*, p. 219, &c.

CHAPTER III.

Of the STRENGTH *of a* SENTENCE.

Exercises, p. 190. Key, p. 163.

THE THIRD requisite of a perfect sentence, is *Strength.*

By this is meant such a disposition and management of the several words and members, as shall bring out the sense to the best advantage, and give every word, and every member, its due weight and force.

A sentence may be clear, it may also be compact in all its parts, or have the requisite unity, and yet, by some circumstance in the structure, it may fail in that strength of impression, which a better management would have produced.

The *first* rule for promoting the strength of a sentence, is. *to prune it of all redundant words and members.*

It is a general maxim, that any words which do not add some importance to the meaning of a sentence, always injure it. Care should therefore be exercised with respect to synonymous words, expletives, circumlocutions, tautologies, and

the expressions of unnecessary circumstances. The attention becomes remiss, when words are multiplied without a correspondent multiplication of ideas. "Content with deserving a triumph, he refused the honour of it;" is better language than to say, "Being content with deserving it," &c.

"In the Attic commonwealth," says an author, "it was the privilege and birthright of every citizen and poet, to rail aloud and in public." Better simply thus: "In the Attic commonwealth, it was the privilege of every citizen to rail in public."

Another expresses himself thus: "They returned back again to the same city from whence they came forth;" instead of, "They returned to the city whence they came." The five words, *back, again, same, from,* and *forth*, are mere expletives, that have neither use nor beauty, and are therefore to be regarded as encumbrances.

The word *but* is often improperly used with *that:* as, "There can be no doubt *but that* he seriously means what he says." It is not only useless, but cumbersome: "There can be no doubt *that* he seriously means what he says." By transposing the parts of the sentence, we shall immediately perceive the propriety of omitting this word: "That he seriously means what he says, there can be no doubt."

"I am honestly, seriously, and unalterably of opinion, that nothing can possibly be more incurably and emphatically destructive, or more decisively fatal, to a kingdom, than the introduction of thoughtless dissipation, and the pomp of lazy luxury." Would not the full import of this noisy sentence be better expressed thus: "I am of opinion, that nothing is more ruinous to a kingdom, than luxury and dissipation?"

Some writers use much circumlocution, in expressing their ideas. A considerable one, for so very simple a thing as a man's wounding himself, says, "To mangle, or wound, his outward form and constitution, his natural limbs or body."

But, on some occasions, circumlocution has a peculiar force; as in the following sentence: "Shall not *the Judge of all the earth* do right."

In the sentences which follow, the ill effects of tautology appear.

"So it is, that I must be *forced* to get home, partly by stealth, and partly by *force*."

"Never did Atticus succeed better in gaining the *universal* ove and esteem of *all* men."

The subsequent sentence contains several unnecessary circumstances. "On receiving this information, he arose, went out, saddled his horse, mounted him, and rode to town." All is implied in saying, "On receiving this information, he rode to town."

This manner, however, in a certain degree, is so strongly characteristic of the simple style of remote ages, that, in books of the highest antiquity, particularly the Bible, it is not at all ungraceful. Of this kind are the following scriptural phrases. "He lifted up his voice, and wept." "He opened his mouth, and said." It is true, that, in strictness they are not necessary to the narration, but they are of some importance to the composition, as bearing the venerable signature of ancient simplicity. It may, on this occasion, be further observed, that the language of the present translation of the Bible, ought not to be viewed in an exceptionable light, though some parts of it may appear to be obsolete. From universal admission, this language has become so familiar and intelligible, that in all transcripts and allusions, except where the sense is evidently injured, it ought to be carefully preserved. And it may also be justly remarked, that, on religious subjects, a frequent recurrence of scripture-language is attended with peculiar force and propriety.

Though it promotes the strength of a sentence to contract a round-about mode of expression, and to lop off excrescences, yet we should avoid the extreme of pruning too closely: some leaves should be left to shelter and surround the fruit. Even synonymous expressions may, on some occasions, be used with propriety. One is, when an obscurer term which we cannot well avoid employing

needs to be explained by one that is clearer. The other is, when the language of the emotions is exhibited. Emotion naturally dwells on its object; and when the reader also feels interested, repetition and synonymy have frequently an agreeable effect.

The following passage, taken from Addison, who delighted in a full and flowing style, may, by some persons, be deemed not very exceptionable. "But there is nothing that makes its way more directly to the soul than beauty, which immediately diffuses a secret satisfaction and complacency through the imagination, and gives a finishing to any thing that is great or uncommon. The very first discovery of it strikes the mind with inward joy, and spreads a cheerfulness and delight through all its faculties." Some degree of verbosity may be discovered in these sentences, as phrases are repeated which seem little more than the echo of one another; such as, *diffusing satisfaction and complacency through the imagination,—striking the mind with inward joy,—spreading cheerfulness and delight through all its faculties*. But, perhaps, some redundancy is more allowable on such lively subjects, than it would be on other occasions.

After removing superfluities, the *second* rule for promoting the strength of a sentence, is, *to attend particularly to the use of copulatives, relatives, and all the particles employed for transition and connexion.*

These little words, *but, and, or, which, whose, where, then, therefore, because*, &c. are frequently the most important words of any; they are the joints or hinges upon which all sentences turn; and, of course, much of their strength must depend upon such particles. The varieties in using them are, indeed, so many, that no particular system of rules respecting them can be given. Some observations, tending to illustrate the rule, may, however, be mentioned.

What is called splitting particles, or separating a preposition from the noun which it governs, is to be avoided. As if I should say. "Though virtue borrows no assistance

from, yet it may often be accompanied by, the advantages of fortune." Here we are put to a stand in thought, being obliged to rest a little on the preposition by itself, which, at the same time, carries no significancy till it is joined to its proper substantive.

Some writers needlessly multiply demonstrative and relative particles, by the frequent use of such phraseology as this: "There is nothing which disgusts us sooner than the empty pomp of language." In introducing a subject, or laying down a proposition, to which we demand particular attention, this sort of style is very proper; but, on common occasions, it is better to express ourselves more simply and briefly: "Nothing disgusts us sooner than the empty pomp of language."

Other writers make a practice of omitting the relative, where they think the meaning can be understood without it: as, "The man I love;" "The dominions we possessed, and the conquests we made." But though this elliptical style is intelligible, and is allowable in conversation and epistolary writing, yet in all writings of a serious and dignified kind, it ought to be avoided. There, the relative should always be inserted in its proper place, and the construction filled up. "The man whom I love." "The dominions which we possessed, and the conquests which we made."

With regard to the copulative particle *and*, which occurs so frequently in all kinds of composition, several observations are to be made. First, it is evident, that the unnecessary repetition of it enfeebles style. The following sentence from Sir William Temple, will serve for an instance. He is speaking of the refinement of the French language: "The academy, set up by Cardinal Richelieu, to amuse the wits of that age *and* country, *and* divert them from raking into his politics *and* ministry, brought this into vogue; *and* the French wits have, for this last age, been wholly turned to the refinement of their style *and* language; *and*, indeed, with such success, that it can hardly be equalled, *and* runs

equally through their verse *and* their prose." Here are no fewer than eight *ands* in one sentence. Some writers often make their sentences drag in this manner, by a careless multiplication of copulatives.

But, in the next place, it is worthy of observation, that though the natural use of the conjunction *and*, is to join objects together, yet, in fact, by dropping the conjunction, we often mark a closer connexion, a quicker succession of objects, that when it is inserted between them. "I came, I saw, I conquered," expresses with more force the rapidity and quick succession of conquest, than if connecting particles had been used.

On the other hand, when we seek to prevent a quick transition from one object to another, when we are making some enumeration, in which we wish that the objects should appear as distinct from each other as possible, and that the mind should rest, for a moment, on each object by itself, copulatives may be multiplied with peculiar advantage. As when an author says, "Such a man might fall a victim to power; but truth, and reason, and liberty, would fall with him." Observe, in the following enumeration made by the Apostle Paul, what additional weight and distinctness are given to each particular, by the repetition of a conjunction: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God."

The words designed to mark the transition from one sentence to another, and the connexion between sentences, are sometimes very incorrect, and perform their office in an imperfect and obscure manner. The following is an example of this kind of inaccuracy. "By greatness, I do not mean the bulk of any single object only, but the largeness of a whole view. *Such* are the prospects of an open champaign country, a vast uncultivated desert," &c. The word *such* signifies of that nature or quality, which necessarily presupposes some adjective or word descriptive of a quality

going before, to which it refers. But, in the foregoing sentence, there is no such adjective. The author had spoken of *greatness* in the abstract only; and, therefore, *such* has no distinct antecedent to which we can refer it. The sentence would have been introduced with more propriety, by saying, *To this class belong*, or, *under this head are ranged*, the prospects, &c.

As connective particles are the hinges, tacks, and pins, by which the words in the same clause, the clauses in the same member, the members in the same sentence, and even the sentences in the same discourse, are united together, and their relations suggested, they should not be either too frequently repeated, awkwardly exposed to view, or made up of polysyllables, when shorter words would as well convey our meaning. *Notwithstanding that, insomuch that, forasmuch as, furthermore*, &c. are tedious words, which tend to overload and perplex a sentence.

We shall conclude this head with two remarks on the subject of inserting or omitting the conjunctions. The first is, that the illative conjunctions, the casual, and the disjunctive, when they suit the sense, can more rarely be dispensed with than the copulative. The second is, that the omission of copulatives always succeeds best, when the connexion of the thoughts is either very close, or very distant. It is mostly in the intermediate cases that the conjunction is deemed necessary. When the connexion in thought is very distant, the copulative appears absurd; and when very close, superfluous.

The *third* rule for promoting the strength of a sentence, is, *to dispose of the capital word, or words, so that they may make the greatest impression.*

That there are, in every sentence, such capital words, on which the meaning principally rests, every one must see; and that these words should possess a conspicuous and distinguished place, is equally plain. For the most part, with us, the important words are placed in the beginning of the sentence. So in the following passages: "Silver and gold

have I none; but such as I have, give I unto thee," &c. "Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?"

Sometimes, however, when we intend to give weight to a sentence, it is of advantage to suspend the meaning for a little, and then bring it out full at the close. "Thus," says an author, "on whatever side we contemplate this ancient writer, what principally strikes us, is his wonderful invention."

To accomplish this end, the placing of capital words in a conspicuous part of the sentence, the natural order of our language must sometimes be inverted. According to this natural order, the nominative has the first place, the verb the second, and the objective, if it be an active verb that is employed, has the third. Circumstances follow the nominative, the verb, or the objective, as they happen to belong to any of them. "Diana of the Ephesians is great," is the natural order of the sentence. But its strength is increased by inversion, thus: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." "I profess, in the sincerity of my heart," &c. is the natural order of a circumstance. Inverted thus: "In the sincerity of my heart, I profess," &c.

Some authors greatly invert the natural order of sentences; others write mostly in a natural style. Each method has its advantages. The inverted possesses strength, dignity, and variety: the other, more nature, ease, and simplicity. We shall give an instance of each method, taken from writers of considerable eminence. The first is of the inverted order. The author is speaking of the misery of vice. "This, as to the complete immoral state, is what of their own accord, men readily remark. Where there is this absolute degeneracy, this total apostacy from all candour, truth, or equity, there are few who do not see and acknowledge the misery which is consequent. Seldom is the case misconstrued when at worst. The misfortune is, that we look not on this depravity, nor consider how it stands in less degrees. As if, to be absolutely immoral, were, indeed, the greatest misery; but to be so in a

little degree, should be no misery or harm at all. Which, to allow, is just as reasonable as to own, that it is the greatest ill of a body to be in the utmost manner maimed or distorted; but that to lose the use only of one limb, or to be impaired in some single organ or member, is no ill worthy the least notice." Here is no violence done to the language, though there are many inversions.

The following is an example of natural construction: "Our sight is the most perfect, and the most delightful, of all our senses. It fills the mind with the largest variety of ideas, converses with its objects at the greatest distance, and continues the longest in action, without being tired, or satiated with its proper enjoyments. The sense of feeling can, indeed, give us a notion of extension, shape, and all other ideas that enter at the eye, except colours; but, at the same time, it is very much straitened and confined in its operations," &c.

But whether we use inversion or not, and in whatever part of the sentence we dispose of the capital words, it is always a point of consequence, that these capital words should stand clear and disentangled from any other words that would clog them. Thus, when there are any circumstances of time, place, or other limitations, which the principal object of our sentence requires to have connected with it, we must take care to dispose of them, so as not to cloud that principal object, nor to bury it under a load of circumstances. This will be made clearer by an example. "If, whilst they profess only to please, they secretly advise, and give instruction, they may now perhaps, as well as formerly, be esteemed, with justice, the best and most honourable among authors." This is a well-constructed sentence. It contains a great many circumstances and adverbs necessary to qualify the meaning; *only*, *secretly*, *as well*, *perhaps*, *now*, *with justice*, *formerly*; yet these are placed so properly, as neither to embarrass, nor weaken the sentence; while that which is the capital object in it, viz. "being justly esteemed the best and most honourable

among authors," comes out in the conclusion clear and detached, and possesses its proper place. See, now, what would have been the effect of a different arrangement: "If, whilst they profess to please only, they advise and give instruction secretly, they may be esteemed the best and most honourable among authors, with justice, perhaps, now as well as formerly." Here we have precisely the same words, and the same sense; but, by means of the circumstances being so intermingled as to clog the capital words, the whole becomes feeble and perplexed.

The *fourth* rule for promoting the strength of sentences, is, *that a weaker assertion or proposition should never come after a stronger one; and that, when our sentence consists of two members, the longer should, generally, be the concluding one.*

Thus, to say, "When our passions have forsaken us, we flatter ourselves with the belief that we have forsaken them," is both more easy and more clear, than to begin with the longer part of the proposition: "We flatter ourselves with the belief that we have forsaken our passions, when they have forsaken us."

In general, it is agreeable to find a sentence rising upon us, and growing in its importance, to the very last word, when this construction can be managed without affectation. "If we rise yet higher," says Addison, "and consider the fixed stars as so many oceans of flame, that are each of them attended with a different set of planets; and still discover new firmaments and new lights, that are sunk further in those unfathomable depths of ether; we are lost in such a labyrinth of suns and worlds, and confounded with the magnificence and immensity of nature."

The *fifth* rule for the strength of sentences is, *to avoid concluding them with an adverb, a preposition, or any inconsiderable word.*

Agreeably to this rule, we should not conclude with any of the particles *of to from, with, by.* For instance, it is a great deal better to say, "Avarice is a crime of which wise men are often guilty," than to say, "Avarice is a crime which wise men are often guilty of." This is a phraseology which all correct writers shun; and with reason. For as the mind cannot help resting a little, on the import of the word which closes the sentence, it must be disagreeable to be left pausing on a word, which does not, by itself, produce any idea.

For the same reason, verbs which are used in a compound sense, with some of these prepositions, are, though not so bad, yet still not proper conclusions of a period: such as, *bring about, lay hold of, come over to, clear up,* and many other of this kind; instead of which, if we can employ a simple verb, it always terminates the sentence with more strength. Even the pronoun *it,* should, if possible, be avoided in the conclusion: especially when it is joined with some of the prepositions; as, *with it, in it, to it.* We shall be sensible of this in the following sentence: "There is not, in my opinion, a more pleasing and triumphant consideration in religion, than this, of the perpetual progress which the soul makes towards the perfection of its nature, without ever arriving at a period *in it.*" How much more agreeable the sentence, if it had been so constructed as to close with the word *period!*

Besides particles and pronouns, any phrase, which expresses a circumstance only, always appears badly in the rear of a sentence. We may judge of this by the following passage: "Let me therefore conclude by repeating, that division has caused all the mischief we lament; that union alone can retrieve it; and that a great advance towards this union, was the coalition of parties, so happily begun, so successfully carried on, and of late so unaccountably neglected; to say no worse." This last phrase, "to say no worse," occasions a falling off at the end. The proper disposition of such circumstances in a sentence, requires attention, in order to adjust them so, as shall consist equally with the perspicuity and the strength of the period.—

Though necessary parts, they are, however, like irregular stones in a building, which try the skill of an artist, where to place them with the least offence. But it must be remembered, that the close is always an unsuitable place for them. Notwithstanding what has been said against concluding a period with an adverb, &c. this must not be understood to refer to such words, when the stress and significancy of the sentence rest chiefly upon them. In that case, they are not to be considered as circumstances, but as the principal objects: as in the following sentence. "In their prosperity, my friends shall never hear of me, in their adversity, always." Here, "*never*" and "*always*" being emphatical words, were to be so placed as to make a strong impression.

The *sixth* rule relating to the strength of a sentence, is, *that, in the members of a sentence, where two things are* compared *or* contrasted *with one another; where either a resemblance or an opposition is intended to be expressed; some resemblance, in the language and construction, should be preserved. For when the things themselves correspond to each other, we naturally expect to find a similar correspondence in the words.*

Thus, when it is said, "The wise man is happy when he gains his own approbation; the fool, when he recommends himself to the applause of those about him;" the opposition would have been more regular, if it had been expressed thus: "The wise man is happy when he gains his own approbation; the fool, when he gains that of others."

"A friend exaggerates a man's virtues: an enemy inflames his crimes." Better thus: "A friend exaggerates a man's virtues; an enemy, his crimes."

The following passage from Pope's Preface to his Homer, fully exemplifies the rule just given: "Homer was the greater genius; Virgil, the better artist: in the one, we most admire the man; in the other, the work. Homer hurries us with a commanding impetuosity; Virgil leads us with an attractive majesty. Homer scatters with a generous profusion; Virgil bestows with a careful magnificence. Homer, like the Nile, pours out his riches with a sudden overflow; Virgil, like a river in its banks, with a constant stream."—Periods thus constructed, when introduced with propriety, and not returning too often, have a sensible beauty. But we must beware of carrying our attention to this beauty too far. It ought only to be occasionally studied, when comparison or opposition of objects naturally leads to it. If such a construction as this be aimed at, in all our sentences, it leads to a disagreeable uniformity; produces a regularly returning clink in the period, which tires the ear; and plainly discovers affectation.

The *seventh* rule for promoting the strength and effect of sentences, is, *to attend to the sound, the harmony, and easy flow, of the words and members.*

Sound is a quality much inferior to sense; yet such as must not be disregarded. For, as long as sounds are the vehicle or conveyance for our ideas, there will be a very considerable connexion between the idea which is conveyed, and the nature of the sound which conveys it.—Pleasing ideas, and forcible reasoning, can hardly be transmitted to the mind, by means of harsh and disagreeable sounds. The mind revolts at such sounds, and the impression of the sentiment must consequently be weakened. The observations which we have to make on this subject, respect the choice of words; their arrangement; the order and disposition of the members; and the cadence or close of sentences.

We begin with the choice of words. It is evident, that words are most agreeable to the ear, when they are composed of smooth and liquid sounds, in which there is a proper intermixture of vowels and consonants; without too many harsh consonants rubbing against each other; or too many open vowels in succession, to cause a hiatus, or disagreeable aperture of the mouth.

It may always be assumed as a principle, that whatever sounds are difficult in pronunciation, are, in the same pro-

portion, harsh and painful to the ear. Vowels give softness; consonants, strength to the sound of words. The melody of language requires a just proportion of each; and the construction will be hurt, will be rendered either grating or effeminate, by an excess of either. Long words are commonly more agreeable to the ear than monosyllables. They please it by the composition or succession of sounds which they present to it; and accordingly, the most harmonious languages abound most in them. Among words of any length, those are the most melodious, which do not run wholly either upon long or short syllables, but are composed of an intermixture of them: such as, *repent, profess, powerful, velocity, celerity, independent, impetuosity.*

If we would speak forcibly and effectually, we must avoid the use of such words as the following; 1. Such as are composed of words already compounded, the several parts of which are not easily, and therefore not closely united: as, "*Unsuccessfulness, wrongheadedness, tenderheartedness:*" 2. Such as have the syllables which immediately follow the accented syllable, crowded with consonants that do not easily coalesce: as, "*Questionless, chroniclers, conventiclers.*" 3. Such as have too many syllables following the accented syllable: as, "*Primarily, cursorily, summarily, peremptoriness:* 4. Such as have a short or unaccented syllable repeated, or followed by another short or unaccented syllable, very much resembling: as, "*Holily, sillily, lowlily, farriery.*" A little harshness, by the collision of consonants, which nevertheless our organs find no difficulty in articulating, and which do not suggest to the hearer the disagreeable idea, either of precipitation or of stammering, is by no means a sufficient reason for suppressing a useful term. The words *hedg'd, fledg'd, wedg'd, drudg'd, grudg'd, adjudg'd,* which some have thought very offensive, are not exposed to the objections which lie against the words above mentioned. We should not do well to introduce such hard and strong sounds too frequently; but when they are used sparingly and properly, they have

even a good effect. They contribute to that variety in sound which is advantageous to language.

The next head, respecting the harmony which results from a proper arrangement of words, is a point of greater nicety. For, let the words themselves be ever so well chosen, and well sounding, yet, if they be ill disposed, the melody of the sentence is utterly lost, or greatly impaired. That this is the case, the learners will perceive by the following examples. "Pleasures simple and moderate always are the best:" it would be better to say, "Simple and moderate pleasures are always the best." "Office or rank may be the recompense of intrigue, versatility, or flattery;" better thus, "Rank or office may be the recompense of flattery, versatility, or intrigue." "A great recommendation of the guidance offered by integrity to us, is, that it is by all men easily understood:" better in this form; "It is a great recommendation of the guidance offered to us by integrity, that it is easily understood by all men." In the following examples, the words are neither selected nor arranged, so as to produce the most agreeable effect. "If we make the best of our life, it is but as a pilgrimage, with dangers surrounding it: better thus, "Our life, at the best, is a pilgrimage, and dangers surround it." "We see that we are encumbered with difficulties, which we cannot prevent:" better, "We perceive ourselves involved in difficulties that cannot be avoided." "It is plain to any one who views the subject, even slightly, that there is nothing here that is without allay and pure:" improved by this form; "It is evident to the slightest inspection, that nothing here is unallayed and pure."

We may take, for an instance of a sentence remarkably harmonious, the following from Milton's Treatise on Education: "We shall conduct you to a hill-side, laborious indeed at the first ascent; but else so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospects, and melodious sounds on every side, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming." Every thing in this sentence conspires to promote the harmony. The words are well chosen: full of liquids and soft sounds; *labo*

rious, smooth, green, goodly, melodious, charming; and these words so artfully arranged, that, were we to alter the situation of any one of them, we should, presently, be sensible of the melody's suffering.

To promote this harmonious arrangement of words, the following general directions will be found of some use. 1st. When the preceding word ends with a vowel, let the subsequent one begin with a consonant; and *vice versâ. A true friend, a cruel enemy*, are smoother and easier to the voice, than *a true union, a cruel destroyer*. But when it is more perspicuous or convenient, for vowels or consonants to end one word and begin the next, it is proper that the vowels be a long and short one; and that the consonants be either a liquid and a mute, or liquids of different sorts: thus, *a lovely offspring; a purer design; a calm retreat;* are more fluent than, *a happy union, a brief petition, a cheap triumph, a putrid distemper, a calm matron, a clean nurse.* From these examples, the student will perceive the importance of accurately understanding the nature of vowels and consonants, liquids and mutes; with the connexion and influence which subsist amongst them. 2d. In general, a considerable number of long or short words near one another should be avoided. "Disappointment in our expectations is wretchedness:" better thus; "Disappointed hope is misery." "No course of joy can please us long:" better, "No course of enjoyment can delight us long." A succession of words having the same quantity in the accented syllables, whether it be long or short, should also be avoided. "James was needy, feeble, and fearful:" improved thus; "James was timid, feeble, and destitute." "They could not be happy; for he was silly, pettish, and sullen:" better thus; "They could not be happy; for he was simple, peevish, and gloomy." 3d. Words which begin alike, or end alike, must not come together; and the last syllable of the preceding word, should not be the same as the first syllable of the subsequent one. It is not so pleasing and harmonious to say, "This is a convenient contrivance;" "He is an indulgent parent;" "She behaves with uniform formality;" as, "This is a useful contrivance;" "He is a kind parent;" "She behaves with unvaried formality."

We proceed to consider the members of a sentence, with regard to harmony. They should not be too long, nor disproportionate to each other. When they have a regular and proportional division, they are much easier to the voice, and more clearly understood, and better remembered, than when this rule is not attended to: for whatever tires the voice, and offends the ear, is apt to mar the strength of the expression, and to degrade the sense of the author. And this is a sufficient ground for paying attention to the order and proportion of sentences, and the different parts of which they consist. The following passage exhibits sentences in which the different members are proportionally arranged.

Temple, speaking sarcastically of man, says; "But his pride is greater than his ignorance, and what he wants in knowledge he supplies by sufficiency. When he has looked about him as far as he can, he concludes there is no more to be seen; when he is at the end of his line, he is at the bottom of the ocean; when he has shot his best, he is sure none ever did, or ever can, shoot better, or beyond it. His own reason he holds to be the certain measure of truth: and his own knowledge of what is possible in nature." Here every thing is at once easy to the breath, grateful to the ear, and intelligible to the understanding. See another example of the same kind, in the 17th and 18th verses of the 3rd chapter of the prophet Habakkuk. We may remark here, that our present version of the Holy Scriptures, especially of the Psalms, abounds with instances of an harmonious arrangement of the words and members of sentences.

In the following quotation from Tillotson, we shall become sensible of an effect very different from that of the preceding sentences. "This discourse, concerning the easiness of the Divine commands, does all along suppose and acknowledge the difficulties of the first entrance upon a religious course; except only in those persons who have had the happiness to be trained up to religion, by the easy and insensible degrees

of a pious and virtuous education." Here there is some degree of harshness and unpleasantness, owing principally to this, that there is properly no more than one pause or rest in the sentence, falling betwixt the two members into which it is divided: each of which is so long as to occasion a considerable stretch of the breath, in pronouncing it.

With respect to the cadence or close of a sentence, care should be taken, that it be not abrupt, or unpleasant. The following instances may be sufficient to show the propriety of some attention to this part of the rule. "Virtue, diligence, and industry, joined with good temper and prudence, are prosperous in general." It would be better thus: "Virtue, diligence, and industry, joined with good temper and prudence, have ever been found the surest road to prosperity." An author speaking of the Trinity, expresses himself thus: "It is a mystery which we firmly believe the truth of, and humbly adore the depth of." How much better would it have been with this transposition: "It is a mystery, the truth of which we firmly believe, and the depth of which we humbly adore."

In order to give a sentence this proper close, the longest member of it, and the fullest words, should be reserved to the conclusion. But in the distribution of the members, and in the cadence of the period, as well as in the sentences themselves, variety must be observed; for the mind soon tires with a frequent repetition of the same tone.

Though attention to the words and members, and the close of sentences, must not be neglected, yet it must also be kept within proper bounds. Sense has its own harmony; and in no instance should perspicuity, precision, or strength of sentiment, be sacrificed to sound. All unmeaning words, introduced merely to round the period, or fill up the melody, are great blemishes in writing. They are childish and trivial ornaments, by which a sentence always loses more in point of weight, than it can gain by such additions to its sound. *See the Octavo Grammar, on this chapter.*

See also the APPENDIX *to the Exercises*, p. 219, &c.

CHAPTER IV.

Of FIGURES *of* SPEECH.

Exercises, p. 203. Key, p. 175.

The FOURTH requisite of a perfect sentence, is a judicious use of the Figures of Speech.

As figurative language is to be met with in almost every sentence; and, when properly employed, confers beauty and strength on composition; some knowledge of it appears to be indispensable to the scholars, who are learning to form their sentences with perspicuity, accuracy, and force. We shall, therefore, enumerate the principal figures, and give them some explanation.

In general, Figures of Speech imply some departure from simplicity of expression; the idea which we mean to convey is expressed in a particular manner, and with some circumstance added, which is designed to render the impression more strong and vivid. When I say, for instance, "That a good man enjoys comfort in the midst of adversity;" I just express my thoughts in the simplest manner possible: but when I say, "To the upright there ariseth light in darkness;" the same sentiment is expressed in a figurative style; a new circumstance is introduced; "light," is put in the place of "comfort," and "darkness" is used to suggest the idea of "adversity." In the same manner, to say, "It is impossible, by any search we can make, to explore the Divine Nature fully," is to make a simple proposition: but when we say, "Canst thou, by searching, find out the Lord? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know?" this introduces a figure into style, the proposition being not only expressed, but with it admiration and astonishment.

But, though figures imply a deviation from what may be reckoned the most simple form of speech, we are not thence to conclude, that they imply any thing uncommon or unnatural. On many occasions, they are both the most natural, and the most common method of uttering our sentiments. It would be very difficult to compose any discourse without