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Vol. I.

Lecture XIV. Origin and Nature of Figurative Language

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LECTURE XIV.

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

HAVING now finished what related to the construction of sentences, I proceed to other rules concerning Style. My general division of the qualities of Style, was into Perspicuity and Ornament. Perspicuity, both in single words and in sentences, I have considered. Ornament, as far as it arises from a graceful, strong, or melodious construction of words, has also been treated of. Another, and a great branch of the ornament of Style, is, Figurative Language; which is now to be the subject of our consideration, and will require a full discussion.

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Our first enquiry must be, What is meant by Figures of Speech *?

* On the subject of Figures of Speech, all the writers who treat of rhetoric or composition, have insisted largely. To make references, therefore, on this subject, were endless. On the foundations of Figurative Language, in general, one of the most sensible and instructive writers, appears to me, to be M. Marfais, in his *Traité des Tropes pour servir d'Introduction à la Rhétorique, & à la Logique.*

LECT. IN general, they always imply some departure
 XIV. from simplicity of expression; the idea which we intend to convey, not only enunciated to others, but enunciated, 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 thought 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 God? 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 admiration and astonishment being expressed together with it.

BUT, though Figures imply a deviation from what may be reckoned the most simple form of Speech, we are not thence to conclude, that

For observations on particular Figures, the *Elements of Criticism* may be consulted, where the subject is fully handled, and illustrated by a great variety of examples.

they imply any thing uncommon, or unnatural. LECT.
This is so far from being the case, that, on XIV.
very many occasions, they are both the most natural, and the most common method of uttering our sentiments. It is impossible to compose any discourse without using them often; nay, there are few Sentences of any length, in which some expression or other, that may be termed a Figure does not occur. From what causes this happens shall be afterwards explained. The fact, in the mean time, shows, that they are to be accounted part of that Language which nature dictates to men. They are not the invention of the schools, nor the mere product of study: on the contrary, the most illiterate speak in figures, as often as the most learned. Whenever the imaginations of the vulgar are much awakened, or their passions inflamed against one another, they will pour forth a torrent of Figurative Language, as forcible as could be employed by the most artificial declaimer.

WHAT then is it, which has drawn the attention of critics and rhetoricians so much to these forms of Speech? It is this: They remarked, that in them consists much of the beauty and the force of Language; and found them always to bear some characters, or distinguishing marks, by the help of which they could reduce them under separate classes and heads. To this, perhaps, they owe their name of Figures. As the figure, or shape of one body, distinguishes it from another, so these forms of Speech have,

LECT. each of them, a cast or turn peculiar to itself,
XIV. which both distinguishes it from the rest, and distinguishes it from Simple Expression. Simple Expression just makes our idea known to others; but Figurative Language, over and above, bestows a particular dress upon that idea; a dress, which both makes it be remarked, and adorns it. Hence, this sort of Language became early a capital object of attention to those who studied the powers of Speech.

FIGURES, in general, may be described to be that Language, which is prompted either by the imagination, or by the passions. The justness of this description will appear, from the more particular account I am afterwards to give of them. Rhetoricians commonly divide them into two great classes; Figures of Words, and Figures of Thought. The former, Figures of Words, are commonly called Tropes, and consist in a word's being employed to signify something that is different from its original and primitive meaning; so that if you alter the word, you destroy the Figure. Thus, in the instance I gave before; "Light ariseth to the upright, in darknes." The Trope consists, in "light and darknes" being not meant literally, but substituted for comfort and adversity, on account of some resemblance or analogy, which they are supposed to bear to these conditions of life. The otherclass, termed Figures of Thought, supposes the words to be used in their proper and literal meaning, and the figure to consist in the turn of the thought;

as is the case in exclamations, interrogations, apostrophes, and comparisons; where, though you vary the words that are used, or translate them from one Language into another, you may, nevertheless, still preserve the same Figure in the thought. This distinction, however, is of no great use; as nothing can be built upon it in practice; neither is it always very clear. It is of little importance, whether we give to some particular mode of expression the name of a Trope, or of a Figure; provided we remember, that Figurative Language always imports some colouring of the imagination, or some emotion of passion, expressed in our Style: And, perhaps, figures of imagination, and figures of passion, might be a more useful distribution of the subject. But without insisting on any artificial divisions, it will be more useful, that I enquire into the Origin and the Nature of Figures. Only, before proceeding to this, there are two general observations which it may be proper to premise.

THE first is, concerning the use of rules with respect to Figurative Language. I admit, that persons may both speak and write with propriety, who know not the names of any of the Figures of Speech, nor ever studied any rules relating to them. Nature, as was before observed dictates the use of Figures; and, like Mons. Jourdain, in Moliere, who had spoken for forty years in prose, without ever knowing it, many a one uses metaphorical expressions to good purpose, without any idea of what a metaphor is.

LECT. It will not, however, follow thence, that rules
XIV. are of no service. All science arises from observations on practice. Practice has always gone before method and rule; but method and rule have afterwards improved and perfected practice, in every art. We, every day, meet with persons who sing agreeably, without knowing one note of the gamut. Yet, it has been found of importance to reduce these notes to a scale, and to form an art of music; and it would be ridiculous to pretend, that the art is of no advantage, because the practice is founded in nature. Propriety and beauty of Speech, are certainly as improveable as the ear or the voice; and to know the principles of this beauty, or the reasons which render one Figure, or one manner of Speech preferable to another, cannot fail to assist and direct a proper choice.

BUT I must observe, in the next place, that although this part of style merit attention, and be a very proper object of science and rule; although much of the beauty of composition depends on figurative language; yet we must beware of imagining that it depends solely, or even chiefly, upon such language. It is not so. The great place which the doctrine of tropes and figures has occupied in systems of rhetoric; the over-anxious care which has been shown in giving names to a vast variety of them, and in ranging them under different classes, has often led persons to imagine, that, if their composition was well bespangled with a number of these

ornaments of speech, it wanted no other beauty; whence has arisen much stiffness and affectation. For it is, in truth, the sentiment or passion, which lies under the figured expression, that gives it any merit. The figure is only the dress; the sentiment is the body and the substance. No figures will render a cold or an empty composition interesting; whereas, if a sentiment be sublime or pathetic, it can support itself perfectly well, without any borrowed assistance. Hence several of the most affecting and admired passages of the best authors, are expressed in the simplest language. The following sentiment from Virgil, for instance, makes its way at once to the heart, without the help of any figure whatever. He is describing an Argive, who falls in battle, in Italy, at a great distance from his native country:

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Sternitur, infelix, alieno vulnere, cœlumque
Aspicit; et dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos *.

Æn. x. 781.

A single stroke of this kind, drawn as by the very pencil of Nature, is worth a thousand figures.

- * " Anthares had from Argos travell'd far,
- " Alcides' friend, and brother of the war;
- " Now falling, by another's wound, his eyes
- " He casts to Heaven, on Argos thinks, and dies."

In this translation, much of the beauty of the original is lost. " On Argos thinks and dies," is by no means equal to " dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos: " As he dies, he remembers his beloved Argos." — It is indeed observ-

LECT. In the same manner, the simple style of Scripture;

XIV. "He spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" — "God said, let there be light; and there was light," imports a lofty conception to much greater advantage, than if it had been decorated by the most pompous metaphors. The fact is, that the strong pathetic, and the pure sublime, not only have little dependance on figures of speech, but, generally, reject them. The proper region of these ornaments is, where a moderate degree of elevation and passion is predominant; and there they contribute to the embellishment of discourse, only,

able, that in most of those tender and pathetic passages, which do so much honour to Virgil, that great poet expresses himself with the utmost simplicity; as,

Te, dulcis Conjux, te solo in littore secum,
Te veniente die, te decedente canebat.

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And so in that moving prayer of Evander, upon his parting with his son Pallas:

At vos, O Superi! et Divum tu maxime rector
Jupiter, Arcadii quæso miseresce regis.
Et patrias audite preces. Si numina vestra
Incolumem Pallanta mihi, si fata reservant,
Si visurus eum vivo, et venturus in unum,
Vitam oro; patiar quemvis durare laborem!
Sin aliquem infandum casum, Fortuna, minaris,
Nunc, O nunc liceat crudelem abrumpere vitam!
Dum curæ ambiguae, dum spes incerta futuri;
Dum te, chare puer! mea fera et sola voluptas!
Amplexu teneo; gravior ne nuncius aures
Vulneret ———

ÆN. VIII 572.

when there is a basis of solid thought and natural sentiment; when they are inserted in their proper place; and when they rise, of themselves, from the subject, without being sought after.

HAVING premised these observations, I proceed to give an account of the Origin and nature of Figures; principally of such as have their dependence on language; including that numerous tribe, which the rhetoricians call Tropes.

AT the first rise of language, men would begin with giving names to the different objects which they discerned, or thought of. This nomenclature would, at the beginning, be very narrow. According as men's ideas multiplied, and their acquaintance with objects increased, their stock of names and words would increase also. But to the infinite variety of objects and ideas, no language is adequate. No language is so copious, as to have a separate word for every separate idea. Men naturally sought to abridge this labour of multiplying words *in infinitum*; and, in order to lay less burden on their memories, made one word, which they had already appropriated to a certain idea or object, stand also for some other idea or object; between which and the primary one, they found, or fancied, some relation. Thus, the preposition, *in*, was originally invented to express the circumstance of place: "The man was killed *in* the wood." In progress of time, words were wanted to express men's being connected with certain conditions of fortune, or certain situations of mind; and some

LECT. resemblance, or analogy, being fancied between
 XIV. these, and the place of bodies, the word, *in*, was employed to express men's being so circumstanced; as, one's being *in* health, or *in* sickness, *in* prosperity or *in* adversity, *in* joy or *in* grief, *in* doubt, or *in* danger, or *in* safety. Here we see this preposition, *in*, plainly assuming a tropical signification, or carried off from its original meaning, to signify something else, which relates to, or resembles it.

TROPES of this kind abound in all languages, and are plainly owing to the want of proper words. The operations of the mind and affections, in particular, are, in most languages, described by words taken from sensible objects. The reason is plain. The names of sensible objects, were, in all languages, the words most early introduced; and were, by degrees, extended to those mental objects, of which men had more obscure conceptions, and to which they found it more difficult to assign distinct names. They borrowed, therefore, the name of some sensible idea, where their imagination found some affinity. Thus, we speak of, a *piercing* judgment, and a *clear* head; a *soft* or a *hard* heart; a *rough* or a *smooth* behaviour. We say, *inflamed* by anger, *warmed* by love, *swelled* with pride, *melted* into grief; and these are almost the only significant words which we have for such ideas.

BUT, although the barrenness of language, and the want of words, be doubtless one cause of the

invention of Tropes ; yet it is not the only, nor, perhaps, even the principal source of this form of speech. Tropes have arisen more frequently, and spread themselves wider, from the influence which Imagination possesses over all language. The train on which this has proceeded among all nations, I shall endeavour to explain.

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EVERY object which makes any impression on the human mind, is constantly accompanied with certain circumstances and relations, that strike us at the same time. It never presents itself to our view, *isolé*, as the French express it; that is independent on, and separated from, every other thing; but always occurs as some how related to other objects; going before them, or following after them; their effect or their cause; resembling them, or opposed to them; distinguished by certain qualities, or surrounded with certain circumstances. By this means, every idea or object carries in its train some other ideas, which may be considered as its accessories. These accessories often strike the imagination more than the principal idea itself. They are, perhaps, more agreeable ideas; or they are more familiar to our conceptions; or they recal to our memory a greater variety of important circumstances. The imagination is more disposed to rest upon some of them; and therefore, instead of using the proper name of the principal idea which it means to express, it employs, in its place, the name of the accessory or correspondent idea; although the principal have a proper and well-known

I E C T. name of its own. Hence a vast variety of tropical
 XIV. or figurative words obtain currency in all languages, through choice, not necessity; and men of lively imaginations are every day adding to their number.

THUS, when we design to intimate the period, at which a state enjoyed most reputation or glory, it were easy to employ the proper words for expressing this; but as this readily connects, in our imagination, with the flourishing period of a plant or a tree, we lay hold of this correspondent idea, and say, "The Roman empire flourished most under Augustus." The leader of a faction, is plain language; but, because the head is the principal part of the human body, and is supposed to direct all the animal operations, resting upon this resemblance, we say, "Catiline was the head of the party." The word, *Voice*, was originally invented to signify the articulate sound, formed by the organs of the mouth; but, as by means of it men signify their ideas and their intentions to each other, *Voice* soon assumed a great many other meanings, all derived from this primary effect. "To give our *Voice*" for any thing, signified, to give our sentiment in favour of it. Not only so; but *Voice* was transferred to signify any intimation of will or judgment, though given without the least interposition of *Voice* in its literal sense, or any sound uttered at all. Thus we speak of listening to the *Voice* of Conscience, the *Voice* of nature, the *Voice* of God. This usage takes

takes place, not so much from barrenness of language, or want of a proper word, as from an allusion which we choose to make to *Voice*, in its primary sense, in order to convey our idea, connected with a circumstance which appears to the fancy to give it more sprightliness and force.

THE account which I have now given, and which seems to be a full and fair one, of the introduction of Tropes into all Languages, coincides with what Cicero shortly hints, in his third book *De Oratore*. “*Modus transferendi*”
“*verba latè patet; quam necessitas primum*”
“*genuit, coacta inopiâ et angustiiis; post autem*”
“*delectatio, jucunditasque celebravit. Nam ut*”
“*vestis, frigoris depellendi causâ reperta primo,*”
“*post adhiberi cæpta est ad ornatum etiam cor-*”
“*poris et dignitatem, sic verbi translatio institutâ*”
“*est inopiæ causâ, frequentata, delectationis*.*”

FROM what has been said, it clearly appears, how that must come to pass, which I had occasion to mention in a former Lecture, that all Languages are most figurative in their early state. Both the causes to which I ascribed the origin of Figures, concur in producing this effect at

* “The figurative usage of words is very extensive; an usage to which necessity first gave rise, on account of the paucity of words, and barrenness of Language, but which the pleasure that was found in it afterwards rendered frequent. For, as garments were first contrived to defend our bodies from the cold, and afterwards were employed for the purpose of ornament and dignity, so Figures of Speech, introduced by want, were cultivated for the sake of entertainment.”

LECT. the beginnings of society. Language is then most
XIV. barren; the stock of proper names, which have been invented for things, is small; and, at the same time, imagination exerts great influence over the conceptions of men, and their method of uttering them; so that, both from necessity and from choice, their Speech will, at that period, abound in Tropes. For the savage tribes of men are always much given to wonder and astonishment. Every new object surprises, terrifies, and makes a strong impression on their mind; they are governed by imagination and passion, more than by reason; and, of course, their Speech must be deeply tinged by their genius. In fact, we find, that this is the character of the American and Indian Languages; bold, picturesque, and metaphorical; full of strong allusions to sensible qualities, and to such objects as struck them most in their wild and solitary life. An Indian chief makes a harangue to his tribe, in a style full of stronger metaphors than a European would use in an epic poem.

As Language makes gradual progress towards refinement, almost every object comes to have a proper name given to it, and Perspicuity and Precision are more studied. But still, for the reasons before given, borrowed words, or as rhetoricians call them, Tropes, must continue to occupy a considerable place. In every Language, too, there are a multitude of words, which, though they were Figurative in their first application to certain objects, yet, by long use, lose that figurative power

wholly, and come to be considered as simple and literal expressions. In this case, are the terms which I remarked before, as transferred from sensible qualities to the operations or qualities of the mind, a *piercing* judgment, a *clear* head, a *hard* heart, and the like. There are other words which remain in a sort of middle state; which have neither lost wholly their figurative application, nor yet retain so much of it, as to imprint any remarkable character of figured Language on our style; such as these phrases, "apprehend one's meaning;" "enter on a subject;" "follow out an argument;" "stir up strife;" and a great many more, of which our Language is full. In the use of such phrases, correct writers will always preserve a regard to the figure or allusion on which they are founded, and will be careful not to apply them in any way that is inconsistent with it. One may be "sheltered under the patronage of a great man;" but it were wrong to say, "sheltered under the masque of dissimulation," as a masque conceals, but does not shelter. An object in description, may be "clothed," if you will, "with epithets;" but it is not so proper to speak of its being "clothed with circumstances;" as the word "circumstances," alludes to standing round, not to clothing. Such attentions as these are requisite in the common run of Style.

WHAT has been said on this subject, tends to throw light on the nature of Language in general; and will lead to the reasons, Why Tropes or Figures contribute to the beauty and grace of Style.

LECT. FIRST, They enrich Language, and render it
 XIV. more copious. By their means, words and phrases are multiplied for expressing all sorts of ideas; for describing even the minutest differences; the nicest shades and colours of thought; which no Language could possibly do by proper words alone, without assistance from Tropes.

SECONDLY, They bestow dignity upon Style. The familiarity of common words, to which our ears are much accustomed, tends to degrade Style. When we want to adapt our Language to the tone of an elevated subject, we would be greatly at a loss, if we could not borrow assistance from Figures; which properly employed, have a similar effect on Language, with what is produced by the rich and splendid dress of a person of rank; to create respect, and to give an air of magnificence to him who wears it. Assistance of this kind, is often needed in prose compositions; but poetry could not subsist without it. Hence Figures form the constant Language of poetry. To say, that "the sun rises," is trite and common; but it becomes a magnificent image when expressed, as Mr. Thomson has done:

But yonder comes the powerful king of day
 Rejoicing in the east. ———

To say, that "all men are subject alike to death," presents only a vulgar idea; but it rises and fills the imagination, when painted thus by Horace:

Pallida mors æquo pulsat pede, pauperum tabernas
Regumque turres.

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Or,

Omnes eodem cogimur; omnium;
Versatur urna, ferius, ocyus,
Sors exitura, et nos in æternum
Exilium impositura cymbæ*.

In the third place, Figures give us the pleasure of enjoying two objects presented together to our view, without confusion; the principal idea which is the subject of the discourse, along with its accessory, which gives it the figurative dress. We see one thing in another, as Aristotle expresses it; which is always agreeable to the mind. For there it nothing with which the fancy is more delighted, than with comparisons, and resemblances of objects; and all Tropes are founded upon some relation or analogy between one thing and another. When, for instance, in place of "youth," I say, the "morning of life;" the fancy is immediately entertained with all the resembling circum-

* With equal pace, impartial fate,
Knocks at the palace, and the cottage gate.

Or,

We all must tread the paths of fate;
And ever shakes the mortal urn;
Whose lot embarks us, soon or late,
On Charon's boat; ah! never to return.

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stances which presently occur between these two objects. At one moment, I have in my eye a certain period of human life, and a certain time of the day, so related to each other, that the imagination plays between them with pleasure, and contemplates two similar objects, in one view, without embarrassment or confusion. Not only so, but,

In the fourth place, Figures are attended with this farther advantage, of giving us frequently a much clearer and more striking view of the principal object, than we could have if it were expressed in simple terms, and divested of its accessory idea. This is, indeed, their principal advantage, in virtue of which, they are very properly said to illustrate a subject, or to throw light upon it. For they exhibit the object, on which they are employed, in a picturesque form; they can render an abstract conception, in some degree, an object of sense; they surround it with such circumstances as enable the mind to lay hold of it steadily, and to contemplate it fully. "Those persons," says one, "who gain the hearts of most people, who are chosen as the companions of their softer hours, and their reliefs from anxiety and care, are seldom persons of shining qualities, or strong virtues: it is rather the soft green of the foil, on which we rest our eyes, that are fatigued with beholding more glaring objects." Here, by a happy allusion to a colour, the whole conception is conveyed clear and strong to the mind in one word. By a well chosen Figure, even conviction is assisted,

and the impresson of a truth upon the mind made more lively and forcible than it would otherwise be. As in the following illustration of Dr. Young's: "When we dip too deep in pleasure, we always stir a sediment that renders it impure and noxious;" or in this, "A heart boiling with violent passions, will always send up infatuating fumes to the head." An image that presents so much congruity between a moral and a sensible idea, serves like an argument from analogy to enforce what the author asserts, and to induce belief.

BESIDES, whether we are endeavouring to raise sentiments of pleasure or aversion we can always heighten the emotion by the figures which we introduce; leading the imagination to a train, either of agreeable or disagreeable, of exalting or debasing ideas, correspondent to the impresson which we seek to make. When we want to render an object beautiful, or magnificent, we borrow images from all the most beautiful or splendid scenes of nature; we thereby, naturally, throw a lustre over our object; we enliven the reader's mind, and dispose him to go along with us, in the gay and pleasing impressons which we give him of the subject. This effect of Figures is happily touched in the following lines of Dr. Akenfide, and illustrated by a very sublime figure:

————— Then the inexpressive strain,
Diffuses its enchantment. Fancy dreams
Of sacred fountains and Elysian groves,

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And vales of blifs. The intellectual power
 Bends from his awful throne a wond'ring ear,
 And fmiles. —————

Pleas. of Imaginat. I. 124.

WHAT I have now explained, concerning the use and effects of Figures, naturally leads us to reflect on the wonderful power of Language: and indeed, we cannot reflect on it without the highest admiration. What a fine vehicle is it now become for all the conceptions of the human mind; even for the most subtile and delicate workings of the imagination! What a pliant and flexible instrument in the hand of one who can employ it skilfully; prepared to take every form which he chuses to give it! Not content with a simple communication of ideas and thoughts, it paints those ideas to the eye; it gives colouring and relievo, even to the most abstract conceptions. In the figures which it uses, it sets mirrors before us, where we may behold objects, a second time, in their likeness. It entertains us, as with a succession of the most splendid pictures; disposes, in the most artificial manner, of the light and shade, for viewing every thing to the best advantage; in fine, from being a rude and imperfect interpreter of men's wants and necessities, it has now passed into an instrument of the most delicate and refined luxury.

To make these effects of Figurative Language sensible, there are few authors in the English Language, whom I can refer to with more

advantage than Mr. Addison, whose imagination is, at once, remarkably rich, and remarkably correct and chaste. When he is treating, for instance, of the effect which light and colours have to entertain the fancy, considered in Mr. Locke's view of them as secondary qualities, which have no real existence in matter, but are only ideas in the mind, with what beautiful painting has he adorned this philosophic speculation? "Things," says he, "would make but a poor appearance to the eye, if we saw them only in their proper figures and motions. Now, we are everywhere entertained with pleasing shows and apparitions; we discover imaginary glories in the heavens, and in the earth, and see some of this visionary beauty poured out upon the whole creation. But what a rough unsightly sketch of nature should we be entertained with, did all her colouring disappear, and the several distinctions of light and shade vanish? In short, our souls are, at present, delightfully lost, and bewildered in a pleasing delusion; and we walk about, like the enchanted hero of a romance, who sees beautiful castles, woods, and meadows; and, at the same time, hears the warbling of birds, and the purling of streams: but, upon the finishing of some secret spell, the fantastic scene breaks up, and the disconsolate knight finds himself on a barren heath, or in a solitary desert. It is not improbable, that something like this may be the state of the soul after its first

LECT. "separation, in respect of the images it will receive from matter." No. 413. Spec.

HAVING thus explained, at sufficient length, the Origin, the Nature, and the Effects of Tropes, I should proceed next to the several kinds and divisions of them. But, in treating of these, were I to follow the common tract of the scholastic writers on Rhetoric, I should soon become tedious, and, I apprehend, useless, at the same time. Their great business has been, with a most patient and frivolous industry, to branch them out under a vast number of divisions, according to all the several modes in which a word may be carried from its literal meaning, into one that is Figurative, without doing any more; as if the mere knowledge of the names and classes of all the Tropes that can be formed, could be of any advantage towards the proper, or graceful use of Language. All that I purpose is, to give, in a few words, before finishing this Lecture, a general view of the several sources whence the tropical meaning of words is derived: after which I shall, in subsequent Lectures, descend to a more particular consideration of some of the most considerable Figures of Speech, and such as are in most frequent use: by treating of which, I shall give all the instruction I can, concerning the proper employment of Figurative Language, and point out the errors and abuses which are apt to be committed in this part of style.

ALL Tropes, as I before observed, are founded on the relation which one object bears to

another; in virtue of which, the name of the one can be substituted instead of the name of the other; and by such a substitution, the vivacity of the idea is commonly meant to be increased. These relations, some more, some less intimate, may all give rise to Tropes. One of the first and most obvious relations is, that between a cause and its effect. Hence, in Figurative Language, the cause is, sometimes, put for the effect. Thus, Mr. Addison, writing of Italy:

L E C T.
XIV.

Blossoms, and fruits, and flowers, together rise,
And the whole year in gay confusion lies.

Where the "whole year" is plainly intended, to signify the effects or productions of all the seasons of the year. At other times, again, the effect is put for the cause; as, "grey hairs" frequently for old age, which causes grey hairs; and "shade," for trees that produce the shade. The relation between the container and the thing contained, is also so intimate and obvious, as naturally to give rise to Tropes:

————— Ille impiger hausit
Spumantem pateram et pleno se proluit auro.

Where every one sees, that the cup and the gold are put for the liquor that was contained in the golden cup. In the same manner, the name of any country, is often used to denote the inhabitants of that country; and Heaven, very com-

LECT. monly employed to signify God, because, he is
 XIV. conceived as dwelling in Heaven. To implore the assistance of Heaven, is the same as to implore the assistance of God. The relation betwixt any established sign and the thing signified, is a further source of Tropes. Hence,

Cedant arma togæ; concedat laurea linguæ.

The "toga," being the badge of the civil professions, and the "laurel," of military honours, the badge of each is put for the civil and military characters themselves. To "assume the sceptre," is a common phrase for entering on royal authority. To Tropes, founded on these several relations, of cause and effect, container and contained, sign and thing signified, is given the name of Metonymy.

WHEN the Trope is founded on the relation between an antecedent and a consequent, or what goes before, and immediately follows after, it is then called a Metalepsis; as in the Roman phrase of "Fuit," or "Vixit," to express that one was dead. "Fuit Ilium et ingens gloria Dardanidum," signifies, that the glory of Troy is now no more.

WHEN the whole is put for a part, or a part for the whole; a genus for a species, or a species for a genus; the singular for the plural, or the plural for the singular number; in general, when any thing less, or any thing more, is put for the precise object meant; the figure is then called a Synecdoche. It is very common, for instance,

to describe a whole object by some remarkable part of it; as when we say, "A fleet of so many "fail," in the place of "ships;" when we use the "head" for the "person," the "pole" for the "earth" the "waves" for the "sea." In like manner, an attribute may be put for a subject; as, "Youth and "Beauty," for the young and beautiful;" and sometimes a subject for the attribute, But it is needless to insist longer on this enumeration, which serves little purpose. I have said enough, to give an opening into that great variety of relations between objects, by means of which, the mind is assisted to pass easily from one to another; and, by the name of the one, understands the other to be meant. It is always some accessory idea, which recalls the principal to the imagination; and commonly recalls it with more force, than if the principal idea had been expressed.

THE relation which, of all others, is by far the most fruitful of Tropes, I have not yet mentioned; that is, the relation of Similitude and Resemblance. On this is founded what is called the Metaphor: when, in place of using the proper name of any object, we employ, in its place, the name of some other which is like it; which is a sort of picture of it, and which thereby awakens the conception of it with more force or grace. This figure is more frequent than all the rest put together; and the language, both of prose and verse, owes to it much of its elegance and grace. This, therefore, deserves very full and particular consideration; and shall be the subject of the next Lecture.