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Vol. I.

Lecture XV. Metaphor

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LECTURE XV.

METAPHOR.

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XV.

AFTER the preliminary observations I have made, relating to Figurative Language in general, I come now to treat separately of such Figures of Speech, as occur most frequently, and require particular attention: and I begin with Metaphor. This is a figure founded entirely on the resemblance which one object bears to another. Hence, it is much allied to Simile, or Comparison; and is indeed no other than a comparison, expressed in an abridged form. When I say of some great minister, "that he upholds the state, like a pillar which supports the weight of a whole edifice," I fairly make a comparison; but when I say of such a minister, "that he is the Pillar of the state," it is now become a Metaphor. The comparison betwixt the Minister and a Pillar, is made in the mind; but is expressed without any of the words that denote comparison. The comparison is only insinuated, not expressed: the one object is

supposed to be so like the other, that, without formally drawing the comparison, the name of the one may be put in the place of the name of the other. "The minister is the Pillar of the state." This, therefore, is a more lively and animated manner of expressing the resemblances which imagination traces among objects. There is nothing which delights the fancy more, than this act of comparing things together, discovering resemblances between them, and describing them by their likeness. The mind thus employed, is exercised without being fatigued; and is gratified with the consciousness of its own ingenuity. We need not be surprised, therefore, at finding all Language tinged strongly with Metaphor. It insinuates itself even into familiar conversation; and, unsought, rises up of its own accord in the mind. The very words which I have casually employed in describing this, are a proof of what I say; *tinged*, *insinuates*, *rises up*, are all of them metaphorical expressions, borrowed from some resemblance which fancy forms between sensible objects, and the internal operations of the mind; and yet the terms are no less clear, and, perhaps, more expressive, than if words had been used, which were to be taken in the strict and literal sense.

THOUGH all Metaphor imports comparison, and, therefore, is, in that respect, a figure of thought; yet, as the words in a Metaphor are not taken literally, but changed from their proper to a Figurative sense, the Metaphor is

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L E C T. commonly ranked among Tropes or Figures of
XV. words. But, provided the nature of it be well understood, it signifies very little whether we call it a Figure or a Trope. I have confined it to the expression of resemblance between two objects. I must remark, however, that the word Metaphor is sometimes used in a looser and more extended sense; for the application of a term in any figurative signification, whether the figure be founded on resemblance, or on some other relation, which two objects bear to one another. For instance; when grey hairs are put for old age, as, "to bring one's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave;" some writers would call this a Metaphor, though it is not properly one, but what rhetoricians call a Metonymy; that is, the effect put for the cause; "grey hairs" being the effect of old age, but not bearing any sort of resemblance to it. Aristotle, in his Poetics, uses Metaphor in this extended sense, for any figurative meaning imposed upon a word; as a whole put for the part, or a part for the whole; a species for the genus, or a genus for the species. But it would be unjust to tax this most acute writer with any inaccuracy on this account; the minute subdivisions, and various names of Tropes, being unknown in his days, and the invention of later rhetoricians. Now, however, when these divisions are established, it is inaccurate to call every figurative use of terms, promiscuously, a Metaphor.

Of

OF all the figures of Speech, none comes so near to painting as Metaphor. Its peculiar effect is to give light and strength to description; to make intellectual ideas, in some sort, visible to the eye, by giving them colour, and substance, and sensible qualities. In order to produce this effect, however, a delicate hand is required; for, by a very little inaccuracy, we are in hazard of introducing confusion, in place of promoting Perspicuity. Several rules, therefore, are necessary to be given for the proper management of Metaphors. But, before entering on these, I shall give one instance of a very beautiful Metaphor, that I may show the figure to full advantage. I shall take my instance from Lord Bolingbroke's Remarks on the History of England. Just at the conclusion of his work, he is speaking of the behaviour of Charles I. to his last parliament: "In a word," says he, "about
" a month after their meeting, he dissolved
" them; and, as soon as he had dissolved them,
" he repented; but he repented too late of his
" rashness. Well might he repent; for the vessel
" was now full, and this last drop made the
" waters of bitterness overflow." "Here," he adds, " we draw the curtain, and put an end
" to our remarks." Nothing could be more happily thrown off. The Metaphor, we see, is continued through several expressions. The *vessel* is put for the state, or temper of the nation already *full*, that is, provoked to the highest by former oppressions and wrongs; this *last drop*,

LECT. stands for the provocation recently received by
 XV. the abrupt dissolution of the parliament; and the
overflowing of the waters of bitterness, beautifully
 expresses all the effects of resentment let loose
 by an exasperated people.

ON this passage, we may make two remarks
 in passing. The one, that nothing forms a more
 spirited and dignified conclusion of a subject,
 than a figure of this kind happily placed at the
 close. We see the effect of it, in this instance.
 The author goes off with a good grace; and
 leaves a strong and full impression of his subject
 on the reader's mind. My other remark is, the
 advantage which a Metaphor frequently has
 above a formal comparison. How much would
 the sentiment here have been enfeebled, if it had
 been expressed in the style of a regular simile,
 thus: "Well might he repent; for the state of
 " the nation, loaded with grievances and pro-
 " vocations, resembled a vessel that was now
 " full, and this superadded provocation, like
 " the last drop infused, made their rage and
 " resentment, as waters of bitterness, overflow."
 It has infinitely more spirit and force as it now
 stands, in the form of a Metaphor. "Well
 " might he repent; for the vessel was now full;
 " and this last drop made the waters of bitter-
 " ness overflow.

HAVING mentioned, with applause, this in-
 stance from Lord Bolingbroke, I think it incum-
 bent on me here to take notice, that, though I
 may have recourse to this author, sometimes,

for examples of style, it is his style only, and L E C T. not his sentiments, that deserve praise. It is, XV. indeed, my opinion, that there are few writings in the English Language, which, for the matter contained in them, can be read with less profit or fruit, than Lord Bolingbroke's works. His political writings have the merit of a very lively and eloquent style; but they have no other; being, as to the substance, the mere temporary productions of faction and party; no better, indeed, than pamphlets written for the day. His Posthumous, or, as they are called, his Philosophical Works, wherein he attacks religion, have still less merit; for they are as loose in the style as they are flimsy in the reasoning. An unhappy instance, this author is, of parts and genius so miserably perverted by faction and passion, that, as his memory will descend to posterity with little honour, so his productions will soon pass, and are, indeed, already passing into neglect and oblivion.

RETURNING from this digression to the subject before us, I proceed to lay down the rules to be observed in the conduct of Metaphors; and which are much the same for Tropes of every kind.

THE first which I shall mention, is, that they be suited to the nature of the subject of which we treat; neither too many, nor too gay, nor too elevated for it; that we neither attempt to force the subject, by means of them, into a degree of elevation which is not congruous to

L E C T. it; nor, on the other hand, allow it to sink
XV. below its proper dignity. This is a direction which belongs to all Figurative Language, and should be ever kept in view. Some Metaphors are allowable, nay beautiful, in poetry, which it would be absurd and unnatural to employ in prose; some may be graceful in orations, which would be very improper in historical, or philosophical composition. We must remember, that figures are the dress of our sentiments. As there is a natural congruity between dress, and the character or rank of the person who wears it, a violation of which congruity never fails to hurt; the same holds precisely as to the application of figures to sentiment. The excessive, or unseasonable employment of them, is mere foppery in writing. It gives a boyish air to composition; and, instead of raising a subject, in fact, diminishes its dignity. For, as in life, true dignity must be founded on character, not on dress and appearance, so the dignity of composition must arise from sentiment and thought, not from ornament. The affectation and parade of ornament, detract as much from an author, as they do from a man. Figures and Metaphors, therefore, should, on no occasion, be stuck on too profusely; and never should be such, as refuse to accord with the strain of our sentiment. Nothing can be more unnatural, than for a writer to carry on a train of reasoning, in the same sort of Figurative Language, which he would use in description. When he reasons,

we look only for perspicuity; when he describes, we expect embellishment; when he divides, or relates, we desire plainness and simplicity. One of the greatest secrets in composition is, to know when to be simple. This always gives a heightening to ornament, in its proper place. The right disposition of the shade, makes the light and colouring strike the more: "Is enim
" est eloquens," says Cicero, "qui et humilia
" subtiliter, et magna graviter, et mediocria
" temperatè potest dicere.—Nam qui nihil potest
" tranquille, nihil leniter, nihil definite, distinctè,
" potest dicere, is, cum non præparatis auribus
" inflammare rem cœpit, furere apud sanos, et quasi
" inter sobrios bacchari temulentus videtur *." This admonition should be particularly attended to by young practitioners in the art of writing, who are apt to be carried away by an undistinguishing admiration of what is showy and florid, whether in its place or not*.

* " He is truly eloquent, who can discourse of humble
" subjects in a plain style, who can treat important ones
" with dignity, and speak of things, which are of a middle
" nature, in a temperate strain. For one who, upon no
" occasion, can express himself in a calm, orderly, distinct
" manner, when he begins to be on fire before his readers
" are prepared to kindle along with him, has the appearance
" of raving like a madman among persons who are in their
" senses, or of reeling like a drunkard in the midst of
" sober company."

* What person of the least taste, can bear the following passage, in a late historian. He is giving an account of

LECT. THE second rule, which I give, respects the
 XV. choice of objects, from whence Metaphors, and other Figures, are to be drawn. The field for Figurative Language is very wide. All nature, to speak in the style of figures, opens its stores to us, and admits us to gather, from all sensible objects, whatever can illustrate intellectual or moral ideas. Not only the gay and splendid objects of sense, but the grave, the terrifying, and even the gloomy and dismal, can, on different occasions, be introduced into figures with propriety. But we must beware of ever using such allusions as raise in the mind disagreeable, mean, vulgar, or dirty ideas. Even, when Metaphors are chosen in order to vilify and degrade any object, an author should study never to be nauseous in his allusions. Cicero blames an orator of his time, for terming his enemy "*Stercus Curiae*;" "*quamvis fit simile*,"

the famous act of parliament against irregular Marriages in England: "*The bill*," says he, "*underwent a great number of alterations and amendments, which were not effected without violent contest*." This is plain Language, suited to the subject; and we naturally expect, that he should go on in the same strain, to tell us, that, after these contests, it was carried by a great majority of voices, and obtained the royal assent. But how does he express himself in finishing the period? "*At length, however, it was floated through both houses, on the tide of a great majority, and steered into the safe harbour of royal approbation*." Nothing can be more puerile than such Language. Smollet's History of England, as quoted in Critical Review for Oct. 1761, p. 291.

says he, "tamen est deformis cogitatio similitudinis." But, in subjects of dignity, it is an unpardonable fault to introduce mean and vulgar Metaphors. In the treatise on the Art of Sinking, in Dean Swift's works, there is a full and humorous collection of instances of this kind, wherein authors, instead of exalting, have contrived to degrade, their subjects by the figures they employed. Authors of greater note than those which are there quoted, have, at times, fallen into this error. Archbishop Tillotson, for instance, is sometimes negligent in his choice of Metaphors; as, when speaking of the day of judgment, he describes the world, as "cracking about the sinners ears." Shakespeare, whose imagination was rich and bold, in a much greater degree than it was delicate, often fails here. The following, for example, is a gross transgression; in his Henry V. having mentioned a dunghill, he presently raises a Metaphor from the steam of it; and on a subject too, that naturally led to much nobler ideas:

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And those that leave their valiant bones in France,
Dying like men, though buried in your dunghills,
They shall be fam'd; for there the sun shall greet them,
And draw their honours reeking up to heaven.

Act. IV. Sc. 3.

IN the third place, as Metaphors should be drawn from objects of some dignity, so particular care should be taken that the resemblance,

LECT. which is the foundation of the Metaphor, be
 XV. clear and perspicuous, not far-fetched, nor difficult to discover. The transgression of this rule makes, what are called harsh or forced Metaphors, which are always displeasing, because they puzzle the reader, and, instead of illustrating the thought, render it perplexed and intricate. With Metaphors of this kind, Cowley abounds. He, and some of the writers of his age, seem to have considered it as the perfection of wit, to hit upon likenesses between objects which no other person could have discovered; and, at the same time, to pursue those Metaphors so far, that it requires some ingenuity to follow them out, and comprehend them. This makes a Metaphor resemble an ænigma; and is the very reverse of Cicero's rule on this head: "*Verecunda debet esse translatio; ut deducta esse in alienum locum, non irruisse, atque ut voluntarie non vi venisse videatur* *." How forced and obscure, for instance, are the following verses of Cowley, speaking of his mistress:

Woe to her stubborn heart, if once mine come
 Into the self-same room,

* "Every Metaphor should be modest, so that it may carry the appearance of having been led, not of having forced itself into the place of that word whose room it occupies; that it may seem to have come thither of its own accord, and not by constraint." *De Oratore*, L. III, c. 53.

'Twill tear and blow up all within,
Like a Granada, shot into a magazine.
Then shall love keep the ashes and torn parts,
Of both our broken hearts;
Shall out of both one new one make;
From her's th' alloy, from mine the metal take;
For of her heart, he from the flames will find
But little left behind;
Mine only will remain entire,
No dross was there to perish in the fire.

In this manner he addresseth sleep:

In vain, thou drowsy God, I thee invoke,
For thou who dost from fumes arise,
Thou who man's soul dost overshadow,
With a thick cloud by vapours made;
Canst have no power to shut his eyes,
Whose flame's so pure, that it sends up no smoke.
Yet how do tears but from some vapours rise?
Tears that bewinter all my year;
The fate of Egypt I sustain,
And never feel the dew of rain,
From clouds which in the head appear:
But all my too much moisture owe
To overflowings of the heart below *.

Trite and common resemblances should indeed
be avoided in our Metaphors. To be new, and

* See an excellent criticism on this sort of metaphysical
poetry, in Dr. Johnson's Life of Cowley.

L E C T. not vulgar, is a beauty. But when they are
 XV. fetched from some likenesses too remote, and lying
 too far out of the road of ordinary thought,
 then, besides their obscurity, they have also the
 disadvantage of appearing laboured, and as the
 French call it, "*recherché*." whereas Metaphor,
 like every other ornament, loses its whole grace,
 when it does not seem natural and easy.

It is but a bad and ungraceful softening,
 which writers sometimes use for a harsh meta-
 phor, when they palliate it with the expression,
as it were. This is but an awkward parenthesis;
 and Metaphors, which need this apology of an
as it were, had, generally, be better omitted.
 Metaphors, too, borrowed from any of the
 sciences, especially such of them as belong to
 particular professions, are almost always faulty
 by their obscurity.

In the fourth place, it must be carefully at-
 tended to, in the conduct of Metaphors, never
 to jumble metaphorical and plain language toge-
 ther; never to construct a period so, that part
 of it must be understood metaphorically, part
 literally: which always produces a most dis-
 agreeable confusion. Instances, which are but too
 frequent, even in good authors, will make this
 rule, and the reason of it, be clearly understood.
 In Mr. Pope's translation of the *Odyssy*, Pene-
 lope, bewailing the abrupt departure of her son
 Telemachus, is made to speak thus:

Long to my joys my dearest Lord is lost,
 His country's buckler, and the Grecian boast:

Now from my fond embrace, by tempests torn,
Our other column of the state is borne:
Nor took a kind adieu, nor fought consent *!

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IV. 960.

Here in one line, her son is figured as a column; and in the next, he returns to be a person, to whom it belongs to take adieu, and to ask consent. This is inconsistent. The Poet should either have kept himself to the idea of a Man, in the literal sense; or, if he figured him by a Column, he should have ascribed nothing to him but what belonged to it. He was not at liberty to ascribe to that Column the actions and properties of a Man. Such unnatural mixtures render the image indistinct; leaving it to waver, in our conception, between the figurative and the literal sense. Horace's rule, which he applies to Characters, should be observed by all writers who deal in Figures:

—Servetur ad inum,

Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.

Mr. Pope, elsewhere, addressing himself to the King, says,

* In the original, there is no allusion to a Column, and the metaphor is rightly supported:

Ἡ πρῶν μὲν ποσσὶν ἰσθλὸν ἀπολεσά θυμολοιγέται,
Παντοῦχῃ ἀρετῇ κεκασμένον ἐν Δυναστείῃ
Ἐθλὸν, τὰ κλεῖος εὖρε καθ' Ἑλλάδα καὶ μετὰ Ἀγῶνι,
Νῦν δ' αὖ παῖδ' ἀγαπήλον ἀνθρῶπιον θύελλαι
Ἀλλὰ ἐν μεγαλῶν, ὅδ' ὀδυνηθεὶς ἀνάστα.

Δ. 724.

- I. E C T. To thee the World its present homage pays,
 XV. The harvest early, but mature the praise.

This, though not so gross, is a fault, however, of the same kind. It is plain, that, had not the rhyme misled him to the choice of an improper phrase, he would have said,

The harvest early, but mature the crop:

And so would have continued the figure which he had begun. Whereas, by dropping it unfinished, and by employing the literal word, *praise*, when we were expecting something that related to the Harvest, the figure is broken, and the two members of the sentence have no proper correspondent with each other:

The *Harvest* early, but mature the *Praise*.

THE Works of Ossian abound with beautiful and correct Metaphors; such as that on a Hero: "In peace, thou art the Gate of Spring; in war, the Mountain Storm." Or this, on a Woman: "She was covered with the Light of Beauty; but her heart was the House of Pride." They afford, however, one instance of the fault we are now censuring: "Trothal went forth with the Stream of his people, but they met a Rock: for Fingal stood unmoved; broken they rolled back from his side. Nor did they roll in safety; the spear of the King pursued their flight."

At the beginning, the Metaphor is very beautiful. LECT.
 The Stream, the unmoved Rock, the Waves XV.
 rolling back broken, are expressions employed in
 the proper and consistent language of Figure; but,
 in the end, when we are told, "they did not
 "roll in safety, because the spear of the King
 "pursued their flight," the literal meaning is
 improperly mixed with the Metaphor: they are
 at one and the same time, presented to us as
waves that roll, and men that may be *pursued* and
wounded with a spear. If it be faulty to jumble
 together, in this manner, metaphorical and plain
 language, it is still more so,

In the fifth place, to make two different
 Metaphors meet on one object. This is what
 is called mixed Metaphor, and is indeed one
 of the grossest abuses of this figure; such as
 Shakespeare's expression, "to take arms against a
 "sea of troubles." This makes a most unnatural
 medley, and confounds the imagination entirely.
 Quintilian has sufficiently guarded us against it;
 "Id imprimis est custodiendum, ut quo genere
 "cœperis translationis, hoc finias. Multi autem
 "cùm initium a tempestate sumserunt, incendio
 "aut ruina finiunt; quæ est inconsequentia rerum
 "fœdissima*." Observe, for instance, what an
 inconsistent groupe of objects is brought together

* "We must be particularly attentive to end with the
 "same kind of Metaphor with which we have begun.
 "Some, when they begin the figure with a Tempest,
 "conclude it with a conflagration; which forms a shameful
 "inconsistency."

- LECT. by Shakespeare, in the following passage of the
 XV. Tempest ; speaking of persons recovering their judgment after the enchantment , which held them , was dissolved :

———— The charm dissolves apace ;
 And as the morning steals upon the night ,
 Melting the darkness , so their rising senses
 Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle
 Their clearer reason. —————

So many ill - sorted things are here joined , that the mind can see nothing clearly ; the morning *stealing* upon the darkness , and at the same time *melting* it ; the senses of men *chasing fumes* ; *ignorant fumes* , and *fumes* that *mantle*. So again in Romeo and Juliet :

———— as glorious ,
 As is a winged messenger from heaven ,
 Unto the white upturned wondering eyes
 Of mortals , that fall back to gaze on him ,
 When he bestrides the lazy pacing clouds ,
 And sails upon the bosom of the air.

Here , the Angel is represented , as , at one moment , *bestriding* the clouds , and *sailing* upon the air ; and upon the *bosom* of the air too ; which forms such a confused picture , that it is impossible for any imagination to comprehend it.

MORE correct writers than Shakespeare , sometimes fall into this error of mixing Metaphors.

It is surprizing how the following inaccuracy should have escaped Mr. Addison, in his Letter from Italy: LECT. XV.

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

The muse, figured as a horse, may be *bridled*; but when we speak of *launching*, we make it a ship; and, by no force of imagination, can it be supposed both a horse and a ship at one moment; *bridled*, to hinder it from *launching*. The same Author, in one of his numbers in the Spectator, says, "There is not a single view of human nature, which is not sufficient to extinguish the seeds of pride." Observe the incoherence of the things here joined together, making "a view extinguish, and extinguish seeds."

HORACE also, is incorrect, in the following passage:

Urit enim fulgore suo qui prægravat artes
Infra se positas. —————

Urit qui prægravat. — He dazzles who bears down with his weight; makes plainly an inconsistent mixture of metaphorical ideas. Neither can this other passage be altogether vindicated:

* In my observation on this passage, I find, that I had coincided with Dr. Johnson, who passes a similar censure upon it, in his life of Addison.

L E C T.

Ah! quantâ laboras in Charybdi,

XV.

Digne puer, meliore flammâ!

Where a whirlpool of water, Charybdis, is said to be a flame, not good enough for this young man; meaning, that he was unfortunate in the object of his passion. Flame is, indeed, become almost a literal word for the passion of love; but as it still retains, in some degree, its figurative power, it should never have been used as synonymous with water, and mixed with it in the same Metaphor. When Mr. Pope (Eloisa to Abelard) says,

All then is full, possessing and possessed,
No craving void left aking in the breast;

A *void* may, metaphorically, be said to *crave*; but can a *void* be said to *ake*?

A GOOD rule has been given for examining the propriety of Metaphors, when we doubt whether or not they be of the mixed kind; namely, that we should try to form a picture upon them, and consider how the parts would agree, and what sort of figure the whole would present, when delineated with a pencil. By this means, we should become sensible, whether inconsistent circumstances were mixed, and a monstrous image thereby produced, as in all those faulty instances, I have now been giving; or whether the object was, all along, presented in one natural and consistent point of view.

As

As Metaphors ought never to be mixed, so, LECT. XV.
in the sixth place, we should avoid crowding
them together on the same object. Supposing each
of the Metaphors to be preserved distinct, yet,
if they be heaped on one another, they produce
a confusion somewhat of the same kind with the
mixed Metaphor. We may judge of this by the
following passage from Horace:

Motum ex Metello consule civicum,
Bellique causas, et vitia, et modos,
Ludumque fortunæ, gravesque
Principum amicitias, & arma
Nondum expiatis uncta cruoribus,
Periculosa plenum opus aleæ,
Tractas, et incedis per ignes
Suppositos cineri doloso *.

Lib. 2. 1.

This passage, though very poetical, is, however,

* Of warm commotions, wrathful jars,
The growing seeds of civil wars;
Of double fortune's cruel games,
The specious means, the private aims,
And fatal friendships of the guilty great,
Alas! how fatal to the Roman state!
Of mighty legions late subdued,
And arms with Latian blood embrod;
Yet unatoned (a labour vast!
Doubtful the die, and dire the cast!)
You treat adventurous, and incautious tread
On fires with faithless embers overspread. FRANCIS.

L E C T. XV. harsh, and obscure; owing to no other cause but this, that three distinct Metaphors are crowded together, to describe the difficulty of Pollio's writing a history of the civil wars. First, "Tractas arma uncta cruoribus nondum ex-piatis;" next, "Opus plenum periculosaæ aleæ;" and then; "Incedis per ignes suppositos doloso cineri." The mind has difficulty in passing readily through so many different views given it, in quick succession, of the same object.

THE only other rule concerning Metaphors which I shall add, in the seventh place, is, that they be not too far pursued. If the resemblance, on which the figure is founded, be long dwelt upon, and carried into all its minute circumstances, we make an allegory instead of a metaphor; we tire the reader, who soon wearies of this play of fancy; and we render our discourse obscure. This is called, straining a Metaphor. Cowley deals in this to excess; and to this error is owing, in a great measure, that intricacy and harshness, in his figurative Language, which I before remarked. Lord Shaftsbury, is sometimes guilty of pursuing his Metaphors too far. Fond, to a high degree, of every decoration of style, when once he had hit upon a figure that pleased him, he was extremely loth to part with it. Thus, in his advice to an author, having taken up soliloquy, or meditation, under the Metaphor of a proper method of evacuation for an author, he pursues this Metaphor through several pages, under all the forms "of discharging crudities,

“ throwing off froth and scum , bodily operation, L E C T.
 “ taking physic, curing indigestion, giving vent XV.
 “ to choler, bile, flatulencies, and tumours; ”
 till at last, the idea becomes nauseous. Dr. Young also often trespasses in the same way. The merit, however, of this writer, in figurative Language, is great, and deserves to be remarked. No writer, ancient or modern, had a stronger imagination than Dr. Young, or one more fertile in figures of every kind. His Metaphors are often new, and often natural and beautiful. But, as his imagination was strong and rich, rather than delicate and correct, he sometimes gives it too loose reins. Hence, in his Night Thoughts, there prevails an obscurity, and a hardness in his style. The Metaphors are frequently too bold, and frequently too far pursued; the reader is dazzled rather than enlightened; and kept constantly on the stretch to comprehend, and keep pace with, the author. We may observe, for instance, how the following Metaphor is spun out:

Thy thoughts are vagabonds; all outward bound,
 Midst sands and rocks, and storms to cruise for pleasure;
 If gained, dear bought; and better mis'd than gain'd.
 Fancy and sense, from an infected shore,
 Thy cargo brings; and pestilence the prize;
 Then such the thirst, insatiable thirst,
 By fond indulgence but inflam'd the more,
 Fancy still cruises, when poor sense is tired.

LECT. Speaking of old age, he says, it should
XV.

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

THE two first lines are uncommonly beautiful; "walk thoughtful on the silent, &c." but when he continues the Metaphor, to "putting good works on board, and waiting the wind," it plainly becomes strained, and sinks in dignity. Of all the English authors, I know none so happy in his Metaphors as Mr. Addison. His imagination was neither so rich nor so strong as Dr. Young's; but far more chaste and delicate. Perspicuity, natural grace and ease, always distinguish his figures. They are neither harsh nor strained; they never appear to have been studied or sought after; but seem to rise of their own accord from the subject, and constantly embellish it.

I HAVE now treated fully of the Metaphor, and the rules that should govern it, a part of the doctrine of style so important, that it required particular illustration. I have only to add a few words concerning Allegory.

AN Allegory may be regarded as a continued Metaphor; as it is the representation of some one thing by another that resembles it, and that is made to stand for it. Thus in Prior's Henry and Emma, Emma in the following allegorical manner describes her constancy to Henry:

Did I but purpose to embark with thee
On the smooth surface of a summer's sea,
While gentle zephyrs play with prosperous gales,
And fortune's favour fills the swelling sails;
But would forsake the ship, and make the shore,
When the winds whistle, and the tempests roar?

LECT.
XV.

WE may take also from the Scriptures a very fine example of an Allegory, in the 80th Psalm; where the people of Israel are represented under the image of a vine, and the figure is supported throughout with great correctness and beauty; "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt, thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it; and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs into the sea, and her branches into the river. Why hast thou broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it; and the wild beast of the field doth devour it. Return, we beseech thee, O God of Hosts, look down from Heaven, and behold, and visit this vine!" Here there is no circumstance (except perhaps one phrase at the beginning, "thou hast cast out the heathen,") that does not strictly agree to a vine, whilst, at the same time, the whole quadrates happily with the Jewish state represented by this figure. This is the first and princi-

LECT. XV. pal requisite in the conduct of an Allegory, that the figurative and the literal meaning be not mixed inconsistently together. For instance, instead of describing the vine, as wasted by the boar from the wood, and devoured by the wild beast of the field, had the Psalmist said, it was afflicted by heathens, or overcome by enemies (which is the real meaning), this would have ruined the Allegory, and produced the same confusion, of which I gave examples in Metaphors, when the figurative and literal sense are mixed and jumbled together. Indeed, the same rules that were given for Metaphors, may also be applied to Allegories, on account of the affinity they bear to each other. The only material difference between them, besides the one being short, and the other being prolonged, is, that a Metaphor always explains itself by the words that are connected with it in their proper and natural meaning; as when I say, "Achilles was a Lion;" an "able Minister is the Pillar of the State." My Lion and my Pillar are sufficiently interpreted by the mention of Achilles and the Minister, which I join to them; but an Allegory is, or may be, allowed to stand more disconnected with the literal meaning; the interpretation not so directly pointed out, but left to our own reflection.

ALLEGORIES were a favourite method of delivering instructions in ancient times; for what we call Fables or Parables are no other than Allegories; where, by words and actions attributed

to beasts or inanimate objects, the dispositions of men are figured; and what we call the moral, is the unfigured sense or meaning of the Allegory. An Enigma or Riddle is also a species of Allegory; one thing represented or imaged by another; but purposely wrapt up under so many circumstances, as to be rendered obscure. Where a riddle is not intended, it is always a fault in Allegory to be too dark. The meaning should be easily seen through the figure employed to shadow it. However the proper mixture of light and shade in such compositions, the exact adjustment of all the figurative circumstances with the literal sense, so as neither to lay the meaning too bare and open, nor to cover and wrap it up too much, has ever been found an affair of great nicety; and there are few species of composition in which it is more difficult to write so as to please and command attention, than in Allegories. In some of the visions of the Spectator, we have examples of Allegories very happily executed.