Thomas Sheridan

1719–1788

Thomas Sheridan received a classical education from his father, the schoolmaster Dr. Thomas Sheridan, and in 1743 received an M.A. from Trinity College, Dublin. He began a career as a stage actor and became known as quite a good one, appearing in 1744 with the popular actor David Garrick, with whom he was favorably compared. Sheridan's son, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, became the now-famous playwright.

Thomas Sheridan was the godson of Jonathan Swift, to whose influence he attributed much of his passion for the English language, as well as his Augustan attitude toward the ancients. Like Swift, Sheridan endorsed the idea of "ascertaining" the language by establishing fixed rules for usage.

It was Sheridan's consuming interest in correcting the language that led him to forgo his acting career and become a proselytizer for elocution, although he continued to act on occasion and to manage theater companies for many years. His chief activity from 1756 to 1762 was giving his very successful lecture course, an endeavor repeated intermittently until as late as 1785. The *Lectures on Elocution* (excerpted here) were published in 1762; in later years, Sheridan published *A Plan of Education* (1769), *Lectures on the Art of Reading* (1775), and *A General Dictionary of the English Language* (1780). All these works reiterated in some form the argument that Sheridan had first made in 1756, in a work called *British Education: Or, The Source of the Disorders of Great Britain. Being an Essay towards proving, that the Immorality, Ignorance, and false Taste, which so generally prevail, are the natural and necessary Consequences of the present defective System of Education. With an attempt to shew, that a revival of the Art of Speaking, and the Study of Our Own Language, might contribute, in a great measure, to the Cure of those Evils.* The subtitle goes on to indicate that the revival of oratory and its elevation to the status it held in ancient Athens and Rome would improve religion, morality, and the fine arts and support the British constitution. The connection made here between "Immorality, Ignorance, and false Taste" is typically Augustan: From a knowledge and proper appreciation of classical culture (beginning, for Sheridan, with oratory), it follows as the night the day that one's moral values will rise to the corresponding level. Sheridan notes that the British, because of their superior religion and form of government, can rise even higher than the ancients. Oratory is the cornerstone of this enterprise precisely because it combines the arts with practical political use.

Sheridan thus found an ideal forum for his own talents and interests, and he was encouraged by the contemporary desire for linguistic self-improvement and educational reform (see the introduction to Part Four). He argues, too, that just as language is the medium of reason, so voice and gesture are "the natural language of the passions." John Locke (p. 814) had demonstrated the former connection, but the latter, says Sheridan, needs further philosophical investigation. Sheridan's lectures appeal to science, reverence for the ancients, linguistic anxiety (the popular passion

for speaking correctly), and morality, bringing to bear every possible argument for the importance of elocution. The very excess of this insistent overvaluation of elocution led to criticism and undervaluation of Sheridan's project. But his arguments are not without substance, and his principles for public speaking are familiar and reasonable. His practical instruction consists primarily of advice to be natural, to treat public speaking as a form of conversation, to adhere to correct grammar and usage, and to practice, for reasons of social expediency, the refined dialect of the educated English. He cautions against reading-pronunciation (e.g., pronouncing "often" with the "t") and urges speakers to attend to the meaning of sentences to determine the placement of emphasis and pauses. Gestures should also be natural. But, he notes, the meaning of gestures is conventional; they are actions attached to ideas: *Natural* therefore means "not mechanical," rather than "springing from human nature."

The short extract included here contains Sheridan's argument about the relationship between verbal and nonverbal communication. It is a good example of both the sophistication and the peculiarity of Sheridan's approach. Though Sheridan's own fame diminished, his work spawned many imitators, and the substance of his lectures was abstracted into many textbooks, most notably Hugh Blair's popular and long-lived *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres.* The elocution courses, often required, that appeared in colleges in Britain and the United States from Sheridan's time to ours show the power of the ideas that Thomas Sheridan so decisively formulated.

Selected Bibliography

Our excerpt is from the facsimile, reprinted without notes or introduction in 1968, of the first edition of 1762, entitled *A Course of Lectures on Elocution.* It is bound with several shorter works on language, a plan for a grammar, and an article on teaching English as a second language. The Augustan Reprint Society has published a facsimile of Sheridan's 1759 *A Discourse Being Introductory to His Course of Lectures on Elocution and the English Language* with a brief but helpful introduction by G. P. Mohrmann (1969).

Though often dismissed as a crank, Sheridan is treated positively in William Benzie's biography, *The Dublin Orator: Thomas Sheridan's Influence on Eighteenth-Century Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (Leeds, 1972), and in Wallace Bacon's "The Elocutionary Career of Thomas Sheridan (1719–1788)" (*Speech Monographs* 31 [March 1964]: 1–53). In *Things, Thought, Words and Actions: The Problem of Language in Late Eighteenth-Century British Rhetorical Theory* (1994), H. Lewis Ulman places Sheridan in the context of eighteenth-century rhetoric, relating him especially to Campbell and Blair, and praises his conceptualization of words as actions and language as performance. W. S. Howell discusses Sheridan's work sympathetically in *Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric* (1971).

G. P. Mohrmann discusses the elements of science, sentiment, and traditional rhetoric that went into the elocutionary movement in "The Language of Nature and Elocutionary Theory" (*Quarterly Journal of Speech* 52 [April 1966]: 116–24). Marie Hochmuth and Richard Murphy look at elocution in American schools in "Rhetorical and Elocutionary Training in Nineteenth-Century Colleges" and Frederick W. Haberman discusses "English Sources of American Elocution," both in *A History of Speech Education in America,* ed. Karl Wallace (New York, 1954).

explore the distinctions between "elocution" and "eloquence"

A Course of Lectures on Elocution

Lecture VI

TONES

Thus far, I have considered the several points, that are fundamentally, and essentially necessary, to every public speaker; without which he will be so far from making any impression on his hearers, that he will not be able to command their attention, nor, in many cases, even make himself understood.

Yet so low is the state of elocution amongst us, that a man who is master even of these rudiments of rhetoric, is comparatively considered, as one of an excellent delivery. This very circumstance therefore, is a sufficient inducement, to apply closely, at least to the mastery of these points.

But when a man has got so far, as I can see no reason that he should stop there, or that he should not farther endeavour, to make himself master of every thing, which can add grace, or force to his delivery; I shall now attempt to lay open the principles, that may serve as guides to him, in the use of the two remaining articles, tones, and gesture: upon which, all that is pleasurable, or affecting in elocution, chiefly depend.

Before I enter upon the subject of tones, it will be necessary to fix, the precise meaning, of the term language; to know what it comprehends, and what are its bounds.

I dare say there are few, who would not think it an affront offered to their understandings, if they were asked, "what they mean by the term language?" as being a thing, which every rational creature, is supposed necessarily to know. And I fancy, upon such a question's being proposed, the first thought that would occur to every one, who had not properly considered the point, is, that language is composed of words. And yet, this is so far from being an adequate idea of language, that the point in which most men think its very essence to consist, is not even a necessary property of language. For language, in its full extent, means, any way or method whatsoever, by which all that passes in the mind of one man, may be manifested to another. And as this is chiefly done by an agreement in the use of certain signs, it is no matter what those signs are; there being little or no natural connection, between any verbal signs and our ideas, which is sufficiently evinced, by the variety of languages that are spoken, in the different countries of the world.

is there is some-thing interesting in the word "manifest"

It is true, the facility with which the communication is carried on, by means of the organs of speech, preferably to any other method; together with some other reasons, which need not here be enumerated, have made mankind in general agree, in making articulate sounds or words, the symbols of their ideas; but we have ample proof, that this did not arise from a principle of necessity, but conveniency. For they who are born deaf, can make themselves understood by visible signs; and we have it on the best authority, that the Mimes of the Ancients, were perfectly intelligible, without the use of words. But why need I mention these, when every one who can read knows, that our thoughts may be communicated by visible marks, as well as by articulate sounds?

I am aware it will be said, that written language is only a copy of that which is spoken, and has a constant reference to articulation; the characters upon paper, being only symbols of articulate sounds.

But tho' all who are blest with the gift of speech, by constantly associating the ideas of articulate sounds, to those characters which they see on paper, come to imagine that there is a necessary connection between them, and that the one, is merely a symbol of the other; yet, that it is in itself, a manner of communication entirely different, and utterly independent of the other, we have ample demonstration from this; that it can be perfectly understood by those, who never had, nor ever could have, the least idea of an articulate sound. This has been fully proved, in the case of many persons born deaf, who yet could read, and understand written language perfectly well, and write their thoughts with accuracy.

It may at first view be thought, that I am labouring a point, of little or no consequence,

Gorgias always come to mind in these moments

farther than speculation; but as I think I shall be able to shew, that this fundamental errour with regard to our general idea of language, in confining it to such narrow bounds, has had a remarkable effect upon our practice; and that some of its noblest uses have been lost to us, thro' the want of a just notion of its comprehension; it must be granted, that before I proceed, it will be necessary, in the fullest manner, to clear up that point. The allowed utility of any measure, must be the first inducement, to enter on the pursuit of it; and the reasonableness of it must be shewn, before its utility will be allowed.

In civilized countries, possessed of the collected wisdom of ages in books, the learned think they know, or have it in their power to know every thing that it is possible for the human mind to be acquainted with. In vain have several new and important discoveries, made in latter ages, as well as in our own times, shewn how ill founded this opinion is. Learned vanity, which exceeds that of every other kind, still takes up arms against any thing that is offered as new. And even amongst the most candid, on account of the many pretensions that have been made to new discoveries, which have ended in smoke, the understanding is exceedingly on its guard, on such occasions; doubts of every thing that is offered to it, which does not carry conviction; and will scarcely admit of any conclusion, that does not amount to demonstration. This is the case even in subjects that are in themselves new, and which therefore have no prejudices to encounter: But when the subject happens to be of that kind which is open to all the world; which has not only been an object of enquiry and examination, in theory, but is also to be viewed in universal practice; and therefore is of that sort, about which all mankind have formed certain opinions, or judgements; it is evident, that the prepossessions to be encountered in that case, must be much stronger; and that nothing is likely to remove them, but necessary conclusions, drawn from self-evident premises.

Of this nature, is the subject of language; which being used by all mankind is of all others, the subject which mankind in general, think themselves best acquainted with, and that, of which they have the clearest and fullest comprehension. And yet it is of all others, that of which the most erroneous opinions are entertained, and with whose true nature, mankind in general are least acquainted. The reason of this might be clearly shewn, were there time now for such an enquiry; but it ought to make the most knowing and learned of men, doubtful of their judgements in this article, when it is considered with what candour, the clearsighted and judicious Locke, has acknowledged his errour in that point; and his ignorance of the true state of language, till the precision, necessary to his subject, compelled him to strict scrutiny into its nature: in consequence of which, he was divested of the prejudices, that he had imbibed from custom and education. With what ingenuous modesty has he confessed, that consciousness of errour, first gave rise to those new and important discoveries, laid open in the third book of his Essay, in which he treats of words! Where he says, "I must confess that when I first began this discourse of the understanding, and a good while after, I had not the least thought, that any consideration of words, was at all necessary to it." And yet this great man found, that he could not proceed himself with any certainty, or manifest his thoughts to others with any clearness, till he had first written an entire book upon that point, which he acknowledges he had before thought, utterly unnecessary; and till he had set himself right, as well as the rest of the world, in the mistaken notions entertained of language.

What a pity is it, that this penetrating writer, did not carry his enquiries farther into this important subject, as he seems in one place to promise. We might then have had, as accurate a knowledge, of the whole of language, as we now have, of that part of it which he had laid open to us. But he confined himself entirely to that branch of language, which related to his subject, as enquiry into the human understanding; his only object was, to examine the nature of words, as symbols of our ideas: whilst the nobler branch of language, which consists of the signs of internal emotions, was untouched by him as foreign to his purpose. And however we may be indebted to him, for the new lights which he has given us into the subject, so far as he has gone; yet it is to be feared, that by stopping there, he has not a

But language still treated as distinct from the production of ideas

little contributed, to the confined view which we have of language, in considering it, as made up wholly of words.

Our pains with respect to language, are at present limited, to the narrow conception which we have of it; and therefore are wholly confined to the knowledge and use of words: and I think I may venture to appeal to my hearers, whether this is not the generally received opinion? and whether he, who perfectly understands the meaning of the words, and has the right use of them at command, is not thought to be a master of language? Yet, if it can be shewn that this is only a part of language; if it can be shewn that it has other parts, absolutely necessary to the communication of what passes in our minds, which can not possibly be done by mere words; and that too in order to answer some of the noblest, and most important ends, of such social communication; it must be allowed, that our pains ought not to be confined, to that part only; but should proportionally be extended to those other parts, which are equally necessary, and in their consequences of more importance.

I have already shewn, that words are in their own nature, no essential part of language, and are only considered so thro' custom. I shall now proceed to shew, that when by custom they are made a necessary part, they are still only a part; that they can not possibly effect all the purposes of social communication; and that there are other parts, essentially necessary, to answer its noblest and best ends.

Words are, by compact, the marks or symbols of our ideas; and this is the utmost extent of their power. Did nothing pass in the mind of man, but ideas; were he a different kind of being from what he is; were he like the Houynhms of Swift,[1] always directed by a cool, invariable, and as I may say instinctive reason; to make known the ideas of such a mind, and its internal operations, would not be beyond the power of words: and a language composed of words only, provided there were a sufficient number of them, so that each idea, and each operation, might have its distinct mark, would sufficiently answer the end. For this we find effected amongst us, in all matters where simple reason, and mere speculation is concerned, as in the investigations of mathematical truths.

But as there are other things which pass in the mind of man, beside ideas; as he is not wholly made up of intellect, but on the contrary, the passions, and the fancy, compose great part of his complicated frame; as the operations of these are attended with an infinite variety of emotions in the mind, both in kind and degree; it is clear, that unless there be some means found, of manifesting those emotions, all that passes in the mind of one man can not be communicated to another. Now, as in order to know what another knows, and in the same manner that he knows it, an exact transcript of the ideas which pass in the mind of one man, must be made by sensible marks, in the mind of another; so in order to feel what another feels, the emotions which are in the mind of one man, must also be communicated to that of another, by sensible marks.

That the sensible marks necessary to answer this purpose, can not possibly be mere words, might fully be proved by a philosophical disquisition into their nature, were it proper at present to enter into such an enquiry: but this point may be made sufficiently clear to answer my present design, in a shorter way. It is certain that we have given names to many of these emotions, at least to such as are of the strongest, and most remarkable kind, tho' much the greater part of them, and the different degrees of all, remain without names. But the use of these names, is not to stand as types of the emotions themselves, but only as signs, of the simple or complex ideas, which are formed of those emotions; that we may be enabled, by the help of those names, to distinguish them in the understanding, and treat of their several natures, in the same cool manner as we do with regard to other ideas, that have no connection with any emotions of the mind.

Every one will at once acknowledge that the terms anger, fear, love, hatred, pity, grief, will not excite in him the sensations of those passions, and make him angry or afraid, compassionate or grieved; nor, should a man declare himself to be under the influence of any of those

[1]The Houyhnhnms (as Swift spelled the name) are the exquisitely rational and passionless horses that Gulliver meets in the fourth part of *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). [Ed.]

passions, in the most explicit and strong words that the language can afford, would he in the least affect us, or gain any credit, if he used no other signs but words. If any one should say in the same tone of voice that he uses in delivering indifferent propositions from a cool understanding, "Sure never any mortal was so overwhelmed with grief as I am at this present." Or "My rage is rouzed to a pitch of frenzy, I can not command it: Avoid me, be gone this moment, or I shall tear you to pieces:" Sure no one would feel any pity for the distress of the former, or any fear from the threats of the latter. We should either believe that he jested, or if he would be thought serious, we should be moved to laughter at his absurdity. And why is this? But because he makes use of words only, as the signs of emotions, which it is impossible they can represent; and omits the use of the true signs of the passions, which are, tones, looks, and gestures.

This will serve to shew us that the language, or sensible marks, by which the emotions of the mind are discovered, and communicated from man to man, are entirely different from words, and independent of them. Nor was this kind of language left to the invention of man, or to the chance of such arbitrary marks, as he should think proper to affix to the passions, in order to characterize them: no, it was necessary to society, and to the state of human nature in general, that the language of the animal passions of man at least, should be fixed, self-evident, and universally intelligible; and it has accordingly been impressed, by the unerring hand of nature, on the human frame. The improvement and exercise of the intellectual faculties, to any eminent degree, could fall to the lot of but a small portion of mankind; as even the necessaries for the support of life, can not be acquired by much the greater part, but by such constant labour and industry as will afford no time for contemplative studies. But tho' it be not necessary to society, that all men should know much; it is necessary that they should feel much, and have a mutual sympathy, in whatsoever affects their fellow creatures. All our affections therefore and emotions, belonging to man in his animal state, are so distinctly characterized, by certain marks, that they can not be mistaken; and this language of the passions, carries with it the stamp of its almighty Artificer; utterly unlike the poor workmanship of imperfect man, as it is not only understood by all the different nations of the world, without pains or study; but excites also similar emotions, or corresponding effects in all minds alike.

Thus, the tones expressive of sorrow, lamentation, mirth, joy, hatred, anger, love, pity &c. are the same in all nations, and consequently can excite emotions in us analogous to those passions, when accompanying words which we do not understand: nay the very tones themselves, independent of words, will produce the same effects, as has been amply proved by the power of musical imitations. And tho' these tones, are usually accompanied with words, in order that the understanding may at the same time perceive the cause of these emotions, by a communication of the particular ideas which excite them; yet that the whole energy, or power of exciting analogous emotions in others, lies in the tones themselves, may be known from this; that whenever the force of these passions is extreme, words give place to inarticulate sounds: sighs, murmurings, in love; sobs, groans, and cries in grief; half choaked sounds in rage; and shrieks in terrour, are then the only language heard. And the experience of mankind may be appealed to, whether these have not more power in exciting sympathy, than any thing that can be done by mere words.

Nor has this language of the passions been confined to man only; for in that respect, he seems to be included in the general law, given to all animals that are not mute, or wholly incapable of uttering any sound; as they also express their passions by certain tones, which striking the auditory nerves of those of the same species, always produce correspondent effects; inasmuch as their kindred organs, are invariably tuned by the hand of nature, in unison to those sounds.

But it is to be observed, that each species of animals, seem to have a language of their own, not at all understood, or felt by the rest. The lowing of the cow affects not the lamb; nor does the calf regard the bleating of the sheep. The neighing of the steed, calls up all the attention of the horse-kind; they gaze towards the place from whence the sound comes, and answer it, or run

some interesting claims
about the divisions between
species

that way, if the steed be not in view; whilst the cows and sheep raise not their heads from the ground, but continue to feed, utterly unmoved. The organs of hearing in each species, are tuned only to the sounds of their own; and whilst the roaring of the lioness, makes the forest tremble, it is the sweetest music to the ears of her young. This shews us, that the auditory nerves of animals, are constructed in such a way, as to be affected only with such sounds, as immediately regard the two chief ends of their being; the propagation, and preservation of their species: all other sounds therefore, excepting such as excite sympathy or antipathy, are indifferent to them. Sympathy, with those of their own kind; antipathy, against such as are their natural enemies, or destructive of their species. Those which excite sympathy, may be supposed to be all in concord; those which rouze antipathy, to be discords; which by creating an uneasy sensation, immediately dispose them to flight, to avoid the enemy. Thus the cry of dogs, warns the hare of his danger: and the howlings of the wolf, alarm the flock. The different species of animals, may therefore be considered, as so many different nations speaking different languages, that have no commerce with each other; each of which consequently understands none but their own; excepting only those who are in a state of warfare; by whom the language of the enemy is sufficiently understood, for the purpose of self preservation.

As the passions and emotions of the several kinds of animals, are very different, according to their different natures, so is there an equal diversity of tones, by which these several passions and emotions are expressed: from the horrible roarings of the lion, to the gentle bleatings of the lamb: from the loud bellowings of the wild bull, to the low purring of the domestic cat. But as there is no passion or emotion whatsoever, in the whole animal world, which is not to be found in man, so equally comprehensive is the language of his passions, which are all manifested by suitable tones. The roaring of the lion, is not more terrible than the voice of his anger; nor the cooings of the pigeon, more soft, than the murmurs of his love. The crowing of the morning cock, is not so clear and sprightly as the notes of his joy; nor the melancholy mournings of the turtle, so plaintive as those of his woe. The organs of hearing therefore in man, are so constructed, as not to be indifferent to any kind of tone, either in his own species, or in the animal world, that is expressive of emotion or passion: from all they receive either pleasure or pain, as they are affected with sympathy or antipathy. It is true that like the several tribes of animals, man is most affected, or has the strongest sympathy excited, by such tones as are uttered by those of his own species; and in proportion also by those which most nearly resemble them in others. We are moved most by the distressful cries of those animals, that have any similitude to the human voice, such as the fawn, and the hare, when seized in pursuit by dogs. But still we both feel and understand the nature of all others. Nor can any animal utter any sound which we cannot explain, or tell from what emotion, or passion it proceeds. This distinguishing faculty was necessary to man as master of the animal race, that by understanding their several languages, he might relieve their distresses, and supply their wants. And indeed we find, that the tones of all domestic animals, expressive of their wants or distresses, have a wonderful power over the human heart, and mechanically rouze us to their relief.

Thus extensive as are the powers of the human ear, those of the human voice, do not fall short of them; but are exactly suited to them in degree and comprehension; there is no tone which the ear can distinguish, that the voice, by pains and practice, is not capable of uttering. Hence it comes to pass, that as man understands the language of the different tribes of animals, so he can make himself understood by them. The horse rejoices in the applauding tones of his rider's voice, and trembles when he changes them to those of anger. What blandishments do we see in the dog when his master sooths him in kind notes; what fear, and even shame, when he changes them to those of chiding? By those the waggoner directs his team, and the herdsman his flock. Even animals of the most savage nature, are not proof against collective powers of the human voice; and shouts of multitudes will put wild beasts to flight, who can hear without emotion the roarings of the thunder.

But that man should be furnished with such an

extensive power in these points, even in his animal state, will appear reasonable, when we consider that his nature, is an abstract of all animal nature; and that in his tribe are to be found, all the emotions and passions, that belong to all the several tribes: consequently all the marks expressive of those emotions, or such as are similar to them, should belong to that tribe. If man is capable of being the most social, the most tender and affectionate to those of his own species, of any animal; he is at the same time, capable of becoming a greater enemy, and of having a stronger hatred and detestation of them, than is to be found, even amongst the different tribes of animals, that are born in a natural state of enmity. All the natural language therefore of sympathy, and antipathy, should be given to him in a higher degree, for the same reason that it is in a more limited state assigned to the several tribes of animals.

Thus far we find, that man, in his animal capacity, is furnished, like all other animals, by nature herself, with a language which requires neither study, art, nor imitation; which spontaneously breaks out in the exactest expressions, nicely proportioned to the degrees of his inward emotions; and which is not only universally understood, but felt by those of the same species, as also in certain degrees by the rest of the animal world. That animals should come perfect from the hand of nature, in this respect, as well as in every thing else, seems reasonable from this consideration; that they are utterly incapable of improving themselves; or of making any alteration in their frames by their own care or pains; their several faculties by an invariable law, growing to perfection, and decaying with their bodies, with as little assistance from themselves, as vegetation in herbs or trees if performed, in the insensitive world. As the first of animals, nature has not been less provident with regard to man; on the contrary this, as well as all his other animal faculties; is bestowed on him in a degree suitable to the superiority of his rank. But as man is something greater than the first of animals; as he is the link between animal and spiritual beings, and partakes of both their natures; other faculties, and other principles, belonging to his nobler, spiritual part, disclose themselves; of which there are no traces in the animal world.

The first great distinction between the human and animal species, and which seems to mark their boundaries, is this: that it is in the power of man, by his own pains and industry, to forward the perfection of his nature. And what the nobler part of his nature is, is clearly pointed out by that distinction; because it is that nobler part only, or such of his animal faculties, as are necessary to forward the perfection of that nobler part, which are capable of improvement by such pains. All the organs and faculties of his body necessary to his animal life, are so fashioned by the hand of nature, that they grow of course to perfection; but the organs (if I may be allowed the expression) and faculties of his mind, necessary to his rational life, are only in embryo; and it depends wholly upon the assistance of others, together with his own care, to give them birth, and bring them to maturity.

Hence arises the necessity of a social state to man both for the unfolding, and exerting of his nobler faculties. For this purpose, a power of opening a communication between mind and mind, was furnished in the most easy way, by bestowing on him the organs of speech. But still we are to observe, that nature did no more than furnish the power and means; she did not give the language, as in the case of the passions, but left it to the industry of men, to find out, and agree upon such articulate sounds, as they should chuse to make the symbols of their ideas. And she seems to have laid down the same general law, with respect to every thing which regarded the nobler part of man; to furnish nothing but what was absolutely necessary, and leave the rest to his own industry: from the exertion of which, his merit was to arise, and his pretensions to stand a candidate for his admission, into a higher, and happier order of beings. Accordingly as she did not furnish the words, which were to be the symbols of his ideas; neither did she furnish the tones, which were to manifest, and communicate by their own virtue, the internal exertions and emotions, of such of his nobler faculties, as chiefly distinguish him from the brute species; but left them also, like words, to the care and invention of man; contenting herself with supplying him with an instrument, of such a compass as would furnish a sufficient variety of tones, to an-

swer all the variety of emotions, exertions, and energies of all his faculties, if sought for, and settled by agreement, to be their marks. Nor has art found those which are of her invention to be of less efficacy, or less capable of exciting correspondent emotions, than those even of nature, when established by custom; in this case justly called second nature. The only difference between them lying in this, that the tones of the animal passions, of themselves excite analogous emotions, without the intervention of any thing else; they are understood, by being felt. But the tones resulting from the emotions and exertions of our nobler faculties, tho' they excite feeling, as it is in the nature of all tones to do so, yet it is only of a vague and indeterminate nature; not corresponding to the energies in the mind of the speaker, unless they are associated with words, or the symbols of the ideas, which give rise to those energies and emotions; their nature and degree then become fixed, and the hearer both feels and understands them. When any tones therefore are affixed to certain modes of expression, and adopted into general use; those tones, tho' they have no natural connection with the sentiment, no more than words have with ideas; yet by such association, become equally intelligible, and equally affecting with those that have, and are made part of the language; insomuch, that were those expressions to be uttered, without those tones, they would not convey their full meaning.

Thus far I have considered tones, chiefly in contradistinction to words, as the types and language of the passions, and all internal emotions, in the same way as articulate sounds, are the types and language of ideas, independent of any such emotions. But when we come to examine the powers of each in their full extent, we shall find, that tho' words are limited to their peculiar office, and never can supply the place of tones; yet tones, on the other hand, are not confined to their province, but often supply the place of words, as marks of ideas. And tho' the ease and distinctness with which our ideas are marked by articulate sounds, has made all mankind agree to use them in discourse, yet that tones are capable in a great measure of supplying their place, is clear from this; that the Chinese language is chiefly made up of tones, and the same individual word shall have sixty different meanings, according to the different tones in which it is pronounced. Here then it is clear, that fifty-nine of the sixty ideas, are marked by tones; for the same individual word, pronounced exactly in the same manner, can not possibly by itself, be a clear and distinct mark, for more than one idea. This indeed has prodigiously increased the difficulty of their language, so that it is scarcely possible for strangers to acquire it; and it is the labour of a man's life, even among the natives, to make himself fully master of it. Such a use of the tones therefore, in equal extent, has not been adopted by any other nation. But there are none which have it not in some degree. It is true these tones amongst us, are not annexed to words in their separate state, but only when they are ranged in sentences; and he must be very ignorant of speech, who does not know, that the same individual words in a sentence, shall have several very different meanings according to the tones which accompany the emphasis. To the use of these tones is owing in a great measure conciseness of discourse; and the necessity of multiplying words in language, to a degree that might make them burthensome to the memory, is removed. Nor are these the only advantages arising to language from tones; for by thus setting off words by tones, and making them determine their meaning, an agreeable variety may be introduced, into the most abstracted and philosophical discourses, in which there is no room for the language of the passions and emotions; and which consequently must occasion disgust, and soon weary attention, if delivered by the use of mere words, in one dull uniform tone. On the same account it is fortunate also that tones have been made the marks of the several pauses; and the links which unite together, the several members of sentences and periods.

But beside the use of tones, in the exertion of his animal, and intellectual faculties; there is another part of man's nature which seems to be the link that joins that other two, a great part of whose exertions, have their very essence, so far as they are communicated by the voice, in tones; I mean the fancy.—To one branch of this part of his frame, Nature herself has furnished matter for a language, different in its kind from all other,

and peculiar to man; I mean, risibility; and this matter, according to the exertions of fancy, is to be modified into an infinity of shapes. There is a laugh of joy, and a laugh of ridicule; there is a laugh of anger, and a laugh of contempt. Nay there are few of our passions, to which fancy can not adapt, and associate this language. And should we trace it thro all its several modifications and degrees, from the loud burst of joy, to the tones belonging to the dry sneer of contempt; we should find, that an extensive, and expressive language, independent of words, belongs to this faculty alone. Let any one who has been present at a well-acted comedy, only reflect, how very different the sentiments, characters, and humour have appeared, in the representation, from what was conveyed to him by the mere perusal of the words in his closet, and he will need no other proof to shew him how necessary, and how extensive a part, the tones make, of the language of fancy.

From what has been said, it will sufficiently appear, how grossly they are mistaken, who think that nothing is essentially necessary to language, but words: and that it is no matter, in what tones their sentiments are uttered, or whether there be any used, so that the words are but distinctly pronounced, and with such force of voice as to be clearly heard. Since it must be allowed, that the use of language is not merely to communicate ideas, but also all the internal operations, emotions, and exertions, of the intellectual, sensitive, and imaginative faculties of man: since it must be allowed, that from the frame of our language, our very ideas can not be communicated, nor consequently our meaning understood, without the right use of tones; as many of our ideas are marked and distinguished from each other by tones, and not words: and since it must be allowed that the connection or repugnance of our ideas, their relationship or disagreement, and various dependence on each other in sentences, are chiefly pointed out by tones belonging to the several pauses.

When therefore we reflect, that not only every thing which is pleasurable, every thing which is forcible and affecting in utterance, but also the most material points necessary to a full and distinct comprehension, even of the sense of what is uttered, depends upon tones; it may well astonish us to think, that so essential a part of language, should in a civilized country be wholly neglected. Nay worse, that our youth should not only be uninstructed in the true use of these, but in the little art that is used, they should be early perverted by false rules, utterly repugnant to those which nature has clearly pointed out to us. In consequence of which, all the noble ends which might be answered in a free state, by a clear, lively, and affecting public elocution, are in a great measure lost to us. And how can it be otherwise, when we have given up the vivifying, energetic language, stamped by God himself upon our natures, for that which is the cold, lifeless work of art, and invention of man? and bartered that which can penetrate the inmost recesses of the heart, for one which dies in the ear, or fades on the sight.