

in the purity of their style. "I know no exercise," says he, "that will be found more useful for acquiring a proper style, than to translate some passage from an eminent English author into our own words. What I mean," he continues, "is to take for instance some page of one of Mr. Addison's Spectators, and read it carefully over two or three times, till we have got a firm hold of the thoughts contained in it, then to lay aside the book, to attempt to write out the passage from memory in the best way we can, and having done so, next to open the book, and compare what we have written with the style of the author. Such an exercise will, by comparison, shew us where the defects of our style lie—will lead us to the proper attentions for rectifying them—and among the different ways in which the same thought may be expressed, will make us perceive that which is the most beautiful.*

2. But I now proceed to the second grand requisite in enabling us to acquire a good English style; and it is, that we should first make ourselves master of the subject on which we mean to write. Now, that clearness of conception is favorable to eloquence, will appear, by referring to those instances in which it is allowed by all, that men have expressed themselves with the greatest force and feeling. When is it, for example, that the Barrister speaks with the greatest precision? Every one will at once admit, that it is only after he has mastered his cause. When is it that he rises to the highest strains of eloquence? It is, when roused by his sensibilities, he is pleading the cause, it may be, of injured innocence, and demanding reparation at the bar of justice.—When was it that the celebrated statesman, Mr. Wilberforce, a man of considerable powers of eloquence, outrivalled himself and shone the brightest among a whole galaxy of orators? It was after he had been furnished with the evidence of the wrongs of Africa, and when his whole heart and mind was filled with a sense of their reality. It was after he had made himself thoroughly conversant with the aggregate amount of misery which that section of the globe suffered in consequence of the traffic in slaves. It was after giving days and nights to a careful summing up of the whole statistics of crime, suffering and death, which resulted from trading in human flesh, that that celebrated person, year after year, in the British Senate, exhibited the noblest displays of fervid oratory. The truth is thought is the basis of a good style—and if that is wanting, the finest collocation of words, in so far as effect is concerned, is utterly without avail. The minds of men are now so disciplined by education, that if we would succeed in gaining their attention, we must have wherewith to convince the judgment as

* Dr. Blair.