

much in need of elucidation, as the Hebrew Bible. From the times of Grotius to the present day, I believe we can find scarcely one original commentator. And many, even of his remarks, have been borrowed from the Jews. The Dutch and German Commentaries are the books most worthy of the scholar's regard; but many of these are such, as to make it a question, whether they should be recommended or not. Nothing, if we except the dreams of Hutchinson, has come out in England for the last hundred years, in the shape of original investigation. Compilation has long been the order of the day; and names, respectable indeed and valuable in their time, are now appealed to as the only safeguards against innovation, or as instructors in the way of truth. In almost an universal dearth of Scriptural knowledge, this is not to be wondered at; nor is it to be condemned. It is, without doubt, the best and safest path. But it should not satisfy the minds of those who have both ability and opportunity for making further progress. And as the character of the times in which we live calls for such exertion, it is to be hoped, that the call will not be disregarded.' To a testimony like this, we cannot wish to add a single word.

ART. VI.—*Analytical Outlines of the English Language, or a cursory Examination of its Materials and Structure, in the form of Familiar Dialogues, intended to accompany Grammatical Studies.* By JOHN LEWIS. Richmond. Shepherd & Pollard. 8vo. 1825.

THIS is a work of some novelty, and evidently proceeds from a thinking, rather than an imitative mind. Though the author complains of the want of access to a very extensive library, he has certainly made a good use of those books (and they are among the best for his purpose), which he was able to command, and has approached and pursued his subject unshackled by any preceding system. We have not so much confidence as some, in the magical efficacy of dialogues, or conversations, regularly penned and printed, in gaining the attention of pupils, or imparting the instruction which such writings are intended to convey. Though called, and intended to be familiar, they

are usually couched in phrase too elaborate for the pupil; and for the teacher, they are a kind of labor saving machinery, on whose operation he may repose with too much confidence, and task his own intellect too tenderly. The dialogues and conversations which rise out of the daily lessons of the learner, if he is properly encouraged by his master, will be the true familiar dialogues, and will prove the most instructive. The teacher will perceive exactly how far he is understood, and will learn to vary his explanations, till he finds he has acquired the art of adapting them, in each case, to the comprehension of his scholars. Besides, there is something rather too alluring in the name of dialogues or conversations. It is calculated to raise an expectation of entertainment too high to be gratified, upon subjects *abstruse in their nature*; and *disappointment is a sore thing to children and youth*; an evil for which our ingenuity is sometimes taxed to the utmost to devise a remedy.

We feel bound to commend the modesty of Mr Lewis, in proposing his work merely as an accompaniment to grammatical studies. This modesty is the more deserving of praise, as it comes in contrast with the pretensions of some of his predecessors in a similar walk, who, from their supposed discoveries, or the novelty of their writings, have claimed for them a measure of praise paramount to that which belongs to the productions of all other philologists. This is a kind of charlatanry peculiar to no age. We recollect to have seen the title of a book, written by an obscure Englishman, in the seventeenth century, which runs thus; 'The art of signs; or a universal character and philosophical language, in which men speaking different languages, may be able, by studying it for the space of two weeks, to express their thoughts, either by writing or speech, no less intelligibly than individuals of the same community in their vernacular tongues; by which also the young may acquire the principles of philosophy and true logic, with much greater ease and despatch, than from the common treatises of philosophers.' This is a climax of arrogance, that is seldom equalled; but in some of its parts, we can find instances of too near resemblance, in more recent times. But let us return to the subject immediately before us.

Mr Lewis considers the process of induction the readiest way of acquiring the right use of words; and to a certain extent, no doubt, he is right. But perhaps every one is not sufficiently aware, that this process begins with the very dawn of

intellect; that the child has made some advances in it, before he can utter an articulate sound; and that he has made very great advances, before he is capable of understanding any classification of words, or any rules of construction. This process we say is always going on, liable indeed to be erroneous in numberless instances, but always progressive, without any consciousness, for a long time, on the part of the individual, of the steps by which he is acquiring his knowledge. The instructor may come forward in aid of the work, but it will proceed without him, and it cannot be checked. Now it is a great achievement of the philosopher, who has come to understand the use of induction, to make it serve as the ground of a just classification, in any art or science. And this is precisely what has been done (whether as perfectly as it can be done, or not, is foreign to our present purpose) in grammar. We will now see, by quoting Mr Lewis's remarks on this subject, how far we differ from him.

‘The classification of words is of little consequence, except as it facilitates or impedes our acquaintance with them, and increases or diminishes our power to use them correctly. Do the present names of the parts of speech, and their present classification, aid us so much in these respects, as they limit our inquiries to common resemblance in general signification? Can any other knowledge of words, than their individual import, enable us either to understand or to employ them properly? I know that pupils, by the observance of analogy, may parse sentences grammatically, and at the same time may be entirely ignorant of their meaning. Is not the system plainly defective, when its terms and classification lead to this result; and should evils, so fatally adverse to its grand design, be permitted to remain? It may appear rash and presumptuous to censure a system, which is, in some sort, consecrated in our eyes by habit and long use, or to threaten with innovation and change, a nomenclature, which is associated with our earliest ideas of what is right and proper. But truth has nothing to fear from free and candid discussion.’ *Preface*, pp. 10, 11.

The wisest men are sometimes so far seduced by a theory, as to look with too suspicious or jealous an eye upon everything foreign to it. If we are not deceived, this is the case with our author; for we can perceive no occasion for hostility between the inductive system, so far as he has applied it, and the common classification and arrangement of words in the grammars of

the European languages. He seems to apprehend, that where technical grammar begins, the process of induction must end. But this is by no means consonant with our notions on the subject, or with what we have learned from experience and observation. The two primary requisites for writing or speaking intelligibly are ; first, The using of words in their true meaning ; and, secondly, Arranging them in their true grammatical construction. *The first is acquired by gradual induction, which may be accidental and imperceptible, or the result of labor and investigation ; but the second is more mechanical, and great assistance is obtained from common practical grammars, whatever objections may be made to the multifarious division of words into parts of speech, as they are called, and whether that division is founded in radical or in accidental differences.* We feel no bigoted attachment to the common nomenclature in practical grammars, either as it regards the number of classes into which words are divided, or the names that are applied to them. Nor have we any objection to change, in regard to the definitions of the different parts of speech, if they can be made more descriptive or more distinctive. The number of classes into which words are divided, is much the same in all languages of the same family ; and it is desirable that it should be so, and that no important reform should be undertaken without the consent of the whole fraternity. If the learned of each nation should indulge their own caprice in this respect, which should lead to important differences, it would take away one of the greatest facilities for learning foreign languages. It would be no apology for change, that the present classification of words is not founded in the true philosophy of language ; for it is founded in something much more important, in usage, that *norma loquendi*, to which must be the final appeal in everything pertaining to language, whether within the province of grammar, logic, or rhetoric.

It appears to be a sound axiom in every art or science, that whatever has an appropriate office, should also have an appropriate name, and that it should be as descriptive as possible. The rhetorician, who writes for the instruction of others, would ill perform his work, without giving names to the various sources of pleasure to the imagination, the different kinds of figures of speech, and the divisions of an oration. The logician must assign names to the different modes of reasoning, in which he would indoctrinate his pupil ; and the grammarian is obliged, as

difficult as it may be, to give a name to each class of words, which has a common constructive use in the formation of a sentence. Objections have been made, and not without reason, to some of the names employed in practical grammars, for this purpose. But in this, as in many other cases, it is easier to point out the evil, than to discover and apply the remedy. And though we would not stigmatize as empirics, all who have labored to do this, yet we may be allowed to call in question their skill, if it is to be decided by the success of their endeavors. The term *pronoun*, for instance, is objected to by Mr Webster (of whose learning we would always speak with respect), because it is not descriptive of the whole office of that part of speech, since it often stands for something more than a noun. But the word *substitute*, for which he proposes to change it, seems more objectionable; for while the term pronoun denotes the primary and common use of the class of words it embraces, the term substitute is vague, and does not show that such words have any more relation to a noun, than to an interjection. We are fully aware of the imperfect manner in which the names and the definitions of different sorts of words are applicable to them; and the only question is, whether they are the best that can be found. In all languages in which *articles* are known, we perceive a peculiar use, which entitles them to a distinct name and place. The name, however, is merely technical, and a definition cannot be framed in such a way as to distinguish the article wholly from the adjective, or those pronouns, which are used adjectively, and called definitive or demonstrative. *Noun* or *name* is too general, because it belongs equally to the substantive and adjective. These last names, as well as *verb*, are appropriate enough, as technical terms, and can be sufficiently well defined for all practical purposes. Indeed we have never seen any attempt to improve the commonly received division of words, for the purposes of elementary instruction, which was at all satisfactory, nor any arguments sufficiently powerful to persuade us, that the present classification should be abandoned. Even if we admit that a nomenclature, a little more descriptive could be formed, no real benefit could result from the change, since, after all, the definitions and remarks must show the greater or less extension in which names, that are merely technical, are to be understood.

Mr Lewis displays much ingenuity in the execution of his work, and avails himself of many pleasant illustrations to recom-

mend his analysis, and take off from the dryness of what would otherwise be purely philosophical and preceptive. His commentaries sometimes go a little beyond the boundaries of grammar, into the borders of logic and rhetoric ; but this is a trespass, which it is so difficult to avoid, and the extent of which it is so difficult to determine, that it calls for no severity of criticism. There is a great deal in this analysis, which must be useful for teachers, and it contains much explanation similar to what the most intelligent teachers of grammar will always be led to apply in the course of their instructions.

Though not perhaps one of the most devoted, we fear Mr Lewis is rather too fervent a worshipper of John Horne Tooke. It has been the fashion among the disciples of this distinguished man, to disparage the works of all preceding grammarians ; to consider them as ignorant and blind guides, and to predict a total reformation in this department of learning. Paradoxical as it would seem to be, that all our practical grammars, founded upon language as it actually exists, should not only be miserably defective, but mischievously erroneous, such they have been confidently affirmed to be ; a paradox equally as absurd as that of Swift, when he remarked, that ‘ in many instances the English language offends against every part of grammar.’ And why is it that the English grammars of the last century maintain their ground, so that all subsequent to them are substantially the same grammars, somewhat more extended, and abounding more in illustration, but differing little from them in principles or modes of execution ? It is because common sense has prevailed over ingenious theory, and shown itself competent to distinguish between speculative and practical philosophy ; between a theory, which may stand or fall without any perceptible effect upon language, and a useful classification and system of rules, which every one may comprehend and apply as soon as he has occasion for them. Much of the idle talk that has prevailed on this subject, has grown out of the false supposition, that all discoveries concerning the formation of language have, not an indirect, but an immediate bearing upon our knowledge and use of words. But nothing is farther from the truth. The history of the formation of languages is very curious, and we are far from denying its utility. But to say that a writer or speaker must explore these profound depths before he can skillfully compose in his vernacular tongue, is much the same as to maintain that an artisan must be acquainted with the origin and all

the successive improvements of his tools, in order to use them with dexterity. If one is already furnished with a fine, copious apparatus of all conceivable varieties of words, which custom, aided by the rules founded upon it, has taught him how to use, he may be much entertained by being told how the first man and woman talked in pure nouns substantive, and how that out of these grew all the refinements and all the 'corruptions' of speech; but it is difficult to perceive, let him trace down his inquiries ever so far and faithfully, how it is to operate any change or improvement in his vernacular language.

The philological writings of Tooke were welcomed as the production of a discoverer. He was not anxious himself to declare to the world, that he was indebted to any pioneer who conducted him in his course, and opened to him the secret recesses, whence he brought forth his marvellous lore, to the astonishment of many a novice, as well as of some grammatical antiquaries. But it was unworthy of a man of such distinguished intellect, either to build on another's foundation without acknowledging the fact, or to come forward with a prologue, when he first appeared on the stage, in a new character, filled with expressions of contempt towards all who preceded him in the same province. It was no discovery of his, that the noun and the verb are the primary and principal, if not, strictly speaking, the only parts of speech. This division can be traced to Aristotle, and was followed by Plato, though the Stagyrte, in one of his popular works, added the connective and definitive. The knowledge of this division, of which the great English philologist could not be ignorant, for it had been brought forward by one of his own countrymen, who did not escape his notice and ridicule, might have led him to inquire how to dispose of other words difficult to be managed. By a course of analysis and induction, which had never before been carried far in the English language, he procured a sort of triumph, which we shall presently see how far he deserved.

The ancient and simple division of words, to which we have adverted, is the most convenient for philosophical inquiry. The noun, first in the order of nature, embracing in the origin of language the names of material and sensible objects, thence advancing to the names of their qualities, and from these to abstract formations, exhibits a process which is at the same time probable as to fact, and easily understood. Articles and similar definitive words, for emphasis or limitation, must have been of slower

growth ; and perhaps still later, those substitutes for nouns, which prevent the necessity of continually repeating the names of persons and things. But the greatest difficulty presents itself, when we come to the verb. Its primary use, in contradistinction from other words, is to affirm something ; and the kind of affirmation is as various as that of the signification of the words, which are so placed as to perform that office, or as that of the adjuncts by which anything is attributed to the subject. So complex, however, has it become by its changes for persons, moods, and tenses, all of which we associate in our notion of the verb, that it is difficult to separate what is accidental from what is radical, and for practical purposes it is useless to attempt such a separation. Most zealous controversies have been carried on concerning this subtle part of speech ; and though it seems hardly credible, that dry grammarians, who have been so often coupled with commentators, those 'poor pioneers in literature,' that drag forward

A wagon load of meanings for one word,
While A's deposed, and B with pomp restored,

should have spirits so excitable as to engage them in very serious quarrels ; yet there are stories told of some of the combatants, manifesting more ferocity than we can well imagine. Tooke's hostility towards the grammarians from whom he differed, discovers itself rather by ridicule than ill nature, though the latter appears to be one of its ingredients. In the commencement of his *Diversions of Purley*, he favors the ancient division of words into nouns and verbs, without asserting that they have anything in common, except what has been acknowledged by all grammarians. At the close of his book, however, he asserts that a verb is, as every word must be, a noun, but that it is also something more ; and that the title of verb was given to it on account of this distinguishing *something more*. But without proceeding to explain his meaning, he quotes, in the person of his friend, ten definitions of a verb, and then, as if weary of the work, he quits them with a sneer, and abruptly concludes his book. Mr Lewis follows in the same train.

'The conclusion to which our analytical investigations have led us, is, that the noun, physical and metaphysical, is the material of which all the words of all languages have been formed. The different parts of speech into which the English language is divided, we must therefore consider as subdivisions of one class.'

p. 155.

From childhood we have been taught, in learning different languages, to ascribe to the verb a great variety of changes by inflexion or auxiliary words, and to consider these changes as inherent properties. But it is a fair subject of inquiry, whether these changes are essential or accidental; whether they may not have arisen from gradual abbreviations in discourse, by means of which, either through arbitrary inflexions, or the composition of different words, so as to be pronounced and written like one, the several circumstances of person, time, &c. may be concisely expressed. If no radical word can, at the same time, mean more than one thing, it follows of consequence, that, when a word comes to signify something additional, it must be done by arbitrary or conventional changes, or by a significant compounding of words. There is nothing mysterious in this, and we can perceive no other solution of the difficulty. Jones, in his Greek Grammar, and some writers on Hebrew grammar, have attempted to dissect the verb, in order to find its composition and materials, and have discovered as much as one could expect would be found by such a process. It would, however, be expecting too much, concerning a very complex kind of words, in a remote age, that the history of their formation should be ascertained. It is the part of true philosophy to rest satisfied with a theory, which accounts for the fact, and which cannot be disproved. It will be readily perceived how easy it is in our own language to convert a noun into a verb. The recipe is very simple; it is only to assign to the noun the place of the verb, and to put a personal pronoun before it, and it will at once become a verb, submitting to all its changes. For proof of this, we cite a few examples from Shakspeare, who took unbounded liberties of the kind. Thus, in the pronoun itself; 'If thou *thouest* him a few times, it will not be amiss.' In his Henry the Eighth, it is said of Cardinal Wolsey,

His own letter only
Must fetch in whom he *papers*.

So in reference to a certain calamity; 'This *periods* his comfort.' Again, 'Come, *sermon* me no farther.'

Is this the Athenian minion whom the world
Voiced so regardfully?

To liberties of this kind it is impossible to fix any precise boundaries. If any words are introduced in this way, which are unauthorized by customary usage, they may be received or re-

jected at pleasure. If the traveller in the stage coach, in order to save words, chooses to write in his memoranda, that he *booked* himself for Worcester; or the farmer tells his neighbour, that he has *barned* all his hay; or the collegian informs us, that he *rooms* at Smith's, or *chums* with Williams, it may be very good economy of words, but it is better always to confine such phraseology to conversation or private diaries.

Some great reform in grammar has been a desideratum among certain speculative philosophers, ever since the time of Bacon; such a thorough investigation of the nature, use, and signification of language, as to remove that uncertainty which hangs over it; such a metaphysical and analogical arrangement of words and thoughts, in corresponding harmony, as to clear up all logical and grammatical obscurity. One would suppose, that their wishes must have been much more concerned in this business, than their hopes; though the project was stated with great apparent seriousness by Bacon, and reiterated with much seeming gravity by Leibnitz, Le Clerc, and Hartley. But it supposes a degree of perfection in the human understanding wholly unattainable; an ability to class ideas and their objects so unexceptionably, as to command the concurrence of all reasonable and reasoning men; and a certainty in the signs of thought so complete, that they cannot be misunderstood. The expectation of accomplishing all this is truly delusive, and anticipates changes in the physical and intellectual world far beyond what our most flattering notions of progressive improvement authorize us to predict. Locke had some vague notions concerning a reformation in language, rightly concluding, that if its imperfections, as the instrument of knowledge, could be remedied, 'a great many controversies, that make such a noise in the world, would of themselves cease; and the way to knowledge, and perhaps peace, too, lie a great deal opener than it does.'

It was justly complained of, by this great philosopher, that the part of grammar, which embraces particles, had been so much neglected. And this hint has probably had its effect in producing the increased attention, which has been paid to them by critics and grammarians since his time. Locke, though he is accused by Tooke of mistaking the nature of his own elaborate treatise, and of writing merely about words, when he imagined himself employed upon researches into the human understanding, despatches the subject of particles in a very short compass,

concluding with the hope, that it may give occasion to reflect upon their use and force in language. While intellectual philosophers have disclaimed all obligation to trace their derivation and settle their meaning, grammarians have too often considered them as words of little consequence, whose construction and general import it is important to settle, but whose etymology is not much to be regarded. Without them we can express common truths in short axioms and direct assertions ; but in order to frame hypotheses, and to connect propositions, on whose relation our reasoning may depend, to modify what is not absolute, and to disjoin things which must be distinguished from each other, the metaphysician, no less than the grammarian, must perceive how necessary they are. The metaphysician, especially, must be convinced, that all this cannot be done by means of words insignificant in themselves, and will gladly avail himself of the aid of the etymologist, so far as any light may be thrown on their true meaning. The derivation of these kinds of words is matter of curious inquiry ; and finding that nouns and verbs are the basis of all discourse, and being able also to trace the origin of many particles in various languages to these primary parts of speech, it is not wonderful that certain philologists have deduced a universal conclusion from numerous examples, and have inferred that all those words, which are called adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions, are abbreviations merely, and are derived either immediately or remotely from nouns and verbs.

Tooke, in his *Diversions of Purley*, maintained this theory in its full extent, and, in support of it, he showed great ingenuity, and took unwearied pains to investigate the origin of the English particles. From the manner in which his name has often been mentioned, it seems to have been supposed, that he was the author of a new method of etymological research ; that he pursued a trackless course, without a guide to conduct him ; that he was carried forward to discovery by his own resistless curiosity ; and that he was enabled to develope the truth, amidst all the darkness with which it was surrounded, by his own unaided sagacity. According to his own assertion, his conclusions were not deduced from individual examples, but his general reasoning *a priori* led him to the examination of particulars. The operations of his mind must have been of an extraordinary nature, or, on the other hand, very deceptive to himself ; for, his reasoning having regard to the use of words themselves, and not to

abstract notions, it would have been remarkable if those very words, to which his inquiries were directed, were not as well the occasion as the basis of his reasoning. An uncharitable critic might suspect, that he was led to make the assertion, to which we have alluded, from a wish to secure to himself the undivided reputation of a discoverer in the region of etymology; and that he expected, by his boldness, to repel the charge of having derived any hints from those who preceded him; from Scioppius, Vossius, or Perizonius; from the Messrs de Port Royal, or from Skinner. But through his long and elaborate solution of the word *that*, in its supposed conjunctive use, it seems hardly credible he should have been ignorant, that the Messrs de Port Royal had gone over the same process with *quod*, and had come precisely to the same result. The word *if*, he says, was examined by Skinner before him, and accounted for in the same manner; but, he adds, he knew it not till after he had completed his own investigation. By tracing the conjunctions to their primitives, the multifarious divisions of them would be superseded by such as are founded in the sense of the original words, which sense is now frequently unperceived or overlooked. Suppose, for instance, that, in Greek, the particle *ei* comes from the imperative *ei*, contracted *ei*, of *ei*; that in Latin *si*, *sin*, are from *sine*, imperative of *sinere*, or more probably from *sit*; and that in English, *if* is from the Saxon imperative *gif*, of the verb *to give*; we have a very good reason, founded in the signification of the original verbs, why they should imply condition or concession. In the verb *licet*, we perceive an example of direct appropriation, from the verb that denotes allowing or permitting, to a different use as a conjunction, but implying as before the concession or granting of something. And the equivalent word in English, *though* or *although*, is derived from an obsolete verb of similar signification.

Many of the English conjunctions are satisfactorily traced by Tooke to nouns and verbs. The same is done in regard to prepositions, which, he observes, as well as conjunctions, are to be found among the other parts of speech. 'The same kind of corruption' (a favorite word of his to denote every refinement and change) 'has disguised both conjunctions and prepositions; and ignorance of their true origin has betrayed grammarians and philosophers into the mysterious and contradictory language, which they have held concerning them.' He has

pursued his investigations further in respect to prepositions as well as conjunctions, than any one who preceded him; and has thus been enabled to point out more exactly the kind of relations which they denote, and in some degree to diminish the vague notion commonly entertained concerning them, which is not removed by the usual manner in which they are treated even in philosophical works on language. It had been discovered long before his time, that some of the prepositions had their origin in nouns and participles; but this was considered as an accident, which accounted for a few only, and the great mass was supposed to constitute a class of words whose derivation was either obscure or wholly unknown, and whose signification not being inherent, was pointed out by the relation in which each one stood to other words. It is not surprising, that advantage should be taken of the seeming contradiction of grammarians on this subject, who, while they acknowledge that these words denote relations primarily of place, and afterwards those of a moral nature, deny that they have any independent signification. It is from such unfortunate mistakes, rather than from any defect in their general principles of analysis, that Tooke often claims, and that we cannot forbear to concede to him a triumph over men of great learning and acuteness. And yet we cannot always restrain an emotion of disgust at the mean and petty quibbles, the weak and puerile gasconade, that pervade his writings, whenever he conceives that he has detected an instance of mistake or of ignorance in his predecessors.

The adverb no less than the conjunction and preposition were traced by the same author to the other principal parts of speech. And here certainly he could make no fair pretensions to novelty in his researches, though he was the first etymologist who extended his inquiries to any great variety of words in the English language. The limits of that class of words called adverbs, have never been very precisely defined. An old Latin grammarian observed, that whenever a word deviates from its ordinary manner of signifying, it passes into an adverb; and from the custom of giving this name to all words, that cannot elsewhere be classed, it is called by Tooke, 'the common sink and repository of all heterogeneous and unknown corruptions.' The author of the Port Royal Latin Grammar traced a large number of the Latin adverbs to their origin; some of which are found to be certain cases of obsolete nouns, and some, relatives or verbs either entire or abbreviated, in composition with other words. In Tooke's

writings we find, as well in regard to adverbs, as concerning the other particles, a very minute examination of some of those words whose derivation is obscure, and whose origin had not been discovered. This examination is followed, as might be expected, with various degrees of success; for though it is frequently satisfactory, it is sometimes only probable, and sometimes altogether fanciful. His laborious researches into the origin of particles were confined chiefly to the English language; but though they were thus limited for the most part to a single language, they appear to have been sufficiently arduous. He travelled through the barbarous regions of the north; disturbed the Saxon and Gothic remains; came back again, and intermeddled with the chaotic English of the fourteenth century, and pursued the abbreviations in discourse amidst all their corruptions, and in all their gradations and varieties through the mire of Chaucer, the harsh numbers of Gawin Douglas, and the crudities of Sir Thomas More, down to recent times. Having done all this, the conclusion from the whole, in his opinion, is, that 'there is no such thing as an adverb, preposition, or conjunction in any language; and that most of the words so called, may, by a skilful herald, be traced home to their own family and origin, without having recourse to mystery and contradiction with Harris, or with Locke cleaving open the head of man to give these words such a birth as Minerva's from the brain of Jupiter.' In all this, however, it must be observed, and in more like it, he has much voluntary contention with imaginary adversaries, and phantoms of his own raising.

As we have been led to this general view of the theory and actual researches of Tooke, which were in some degree novel, and which are certainly very ingenious, we shall subjoin a very few remarks on their utility. If we measure his deserts by the number of words that he has traced to their primitive parentage, and admit that he is correct in his genealogies, we must confer on him the praise of being a more thorough etymologist than any who preceded him upon the English language, so far as the origin of particles or abbreviations in discourse is the subject of inquiry. His labors in this province, as they were accompanied by a considerable share of success, so also they are to a certain degree useful. But, like every discoverer, he was disposed to overrate the value of what he had found by his toil and perseverance, and sometimes to insist upon the practical utility of what serves rather to gratify curiosity, than to impart any new

power to words, as instruments of thought, in promoting the perfection of discourse. In cases where the derivation of words is such, that the sense corresponds with what custom has established, it yields some satisfaction to a philosophical critic to be able to vindicate custom by the aid of etymology. But he can proceed no farther. He can indeed always avoid what he conceives to be wrong in the use of words, but his authority will not be sufficient, in defiance of general usage, to adopt that, which, by etymological speculation merely, appears to be right. Established usage, therefore, must be the test of criticism. For of what consequence would it be to the scholar to know, that *cur*, in Latin, is an abbreviation of *cui rei*; *deinceps*, of *dein* and *cipio*; that in English, *if* is derived from the Saxon imperative *gif*, and that *for* is corrupted from the Gothic noun signifying *cause*, if the idiom of the respective languages in which these words are found were not a sure guide, from whose direction we can scarcely deviate by accident, and should always be unwilling to deviate by design. In learning to write or speak a language, our object is to conform to the genius and idiom of that language, determined by those who write and speak it in the best manner; and if, in the zeal of showing our discoveries, we should reject everything that does not comport with what we find to have been the original use of terms, and endeavor to settle everything in speech by an exactly graduated genealogical scale, we should merely gratify a foolish vanity at the expense of convenience, and the hazard of ridicule and contempt. The thorough going etymologist may feel in a sad dilemma in his use of words when he finds them to be a corrupted issue from their northern ancestors; but for ourselves, the alternative is neither alarming nor difficult, when we are driven to the choice either of corrupting the Teutonic, or our good vernacular English, as it has existed for more than a century past.

If we should seem to have wandered out of our way, the only apology we can make, is, that we have followed whither we were led by Mr Lewis; and probably it has been more amusing to us, than it will be to most of our readers, to pass cursorily over a ground, which few are tempted to explore. We are not often called upon to examine works of this kind, proceeding from our own citizens; but they are not the less welcome because of their infrequency. There is no reason why we should not cultivate philology, and particularly our vernacular language, as much as if we were English born. And while we are so

often called to welcome the various productions of our statesmen and professional men, they in turn will not look contemptuously upon learned and ingenious philologers, to whom they owe some obligations, for their critical labors. We may fairly apply to every species of eloquence and oratory in our own language, what Cicero remarked concerning his; *Solum quidem et quasi fundamentum oratoris vides locutionem emendatam et Latinam*. By conforming to his own rigid maxim, we never find either that his sentiment was impoverished, or that his vehemence was checked, or that his imagination was held in durance and chains.

ART. VII.—*The Songs of Scotland, Ancient and Modern; with an Introduction and Notes, Historical and Critical, and the Characters of the Lyric Poets*. By ALLAN CUNNINGHAM. In four volumes. London. 1825. 12mo.

It is remarkable, that poetry, which is esteemed so much more difficult than prose among cultivated people, should universally have been the form which man, in the primitive stages of society, has adopted for the easier developement of his ideas. It may be, that the infancy of nations, like that of individuals, is more taken up with imagination and sentiment than with reasoning, and is thus instinctively led to verse, as best suited, by its sweetness and harmony, to the expression of passionate thought. It may be, too, that the refinements of modern criticism have multiplied rather than relieved the difficulties of the art. The ancient poet poured forth his *carmina incondita*, without any other ambition than that of accommodating them to the natural music of his own ear, careless of the punctilious observances, which the fastidious taste of a polished age so peremptorily demands. However this may be, it is certain, that poetry is more ancient than prose in the records of every nation, and that this poetry is found in its earliest stages almost always allied with music. Thus the Rhapsodies of Homer were chanted to the sound of the lyre by the wandering bards of Ionia; thus the citharædi of the ancient Romans, the Welch harper, the Saxon gleeman, the Scandinavian scald, and the Norman minstrel, soothed the sensual appetites of an unlettered