under any of them. This thought fit to premise, that the Reader may not judge too hastily of this Piece of Criticism, or look upon it as imperfect, before he has seen the whole Extent of it.

The Sentiments in all these Poems are the Thoughts and Behaviour which the Author ascribes to the Persons whom he introduces, and are just when they are conformable to the Characters of the several Persons. The Sentiments have likewise a Relation to Things as well as Persons, and are thus perfect when they are such as are adapted to the Subject. If in either of these Cases the Poet erases, or expiates, magnifies or diminishes, raises Love or Hated, Pity or Terror, or any other Passion, we ought to consider whether the Sentiments he makes the Use of are proper for their Ends. Hunger is compared by the Critics for his Defect as to this Particular in several Parts of the Blind and Oliveyard, 625 at the same Time those who have treated this great Poet with Candour, have attributed this Defect to the Times in which he lived. It was the Fault of the Age, and not of Homer, if there wants that Delig-
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No. 279.

Saturday, January 19.

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been formed upon Tradition, History and Observation. It was much easier therefore for Homer to find proper Sentiments for an Assembly of Greek Generals than for Milton to discover his internal Counsel with proper Characters, and inspire them with a Variety of Sentiments.

The Loves of Dido and Aeneas are only Copies of what has passed between other Persons. As Adam and Eve, before the Fall, are a different Species from that of Mankind, who are descended from them; and there but a Poet of the most untouched Invention, and the most exquisite Judgment, could have filled their Conversation and Behavior with such beautiful Circumstances during their State of Innocence.

Nor is it sufficient for an Epic Poem to be filled with such Thoughts as are natural, unless he should also with such as are sublime. Virgil in this Particular falls short of Homer. He has not indeed so many Thoughts that are low and vulgar; but at the same Time he has not so many Thoughts that are sublime and noble. The Truth of it in Virgil seldom rises into very astonishing Sentiments, where he is not fired by the Idea. Heevery where chooses and pleases us by the Force of his own Genius; but seldom elevates and transports us; where he does not both his Hats from Homer. Milton's chief Talent, and indeed his distinguishing Excircle, lies in the Sublimity of his Thought. There are others of the Moderns who rival him in every other Part of Poetry; but in the Greatness of his Sentiments he triumphs over all the Poets both Modern and Ancient, Homer only excepted. It is impossible for the Imagination of Man, to descend itself with greater Ideas, than those which he has laid together in his first Book, and which follow. The Seventh, which describes the Creation of the World, is likewise wonderfully sublime, tho' not so apt to stir up Emotions in the Mind of the Reader, nor consequently so perfect in the Epic Way of Writing, because it is filled with less Action. Let the Reader compare what Longinus has observed on several Passages in Homer and he will find Parallels for most of them in the Paradise Lost.

From what has been said we may infer, that there are two Kinds of Sentiments, the Natural and the Sublime, which are always to be pursued in an Epic Poem. There are also two Kinds of Thoughts, which are carefully to be avoided. The first are such as are affected and unnatural; the second such as are mean and vulgar. As for the first Kind of Thoughts we meet with little or Nothing that is like them in Virgil. He has some of those little Points and Puerilities that are so often in his works, and some of the Epigrammatic Tones of Lucan, none of those swelling Sentiments which are so frequent in Statius and Claudius, none of those petty Embellishments of Tasso. Every Thing is just and natural. His Sentiments show that he had a perfect Insight into humane Nature, and that he knew every Thing which was the most proper to affect it.

Mr. Dryden has in some Places, which I may hereafter take Notice of, misrepresented Virgil's Way of Thinking as to this Particular, in the Translation of the Aeneid. I do not remember that Homer anywhere falls into the Faults of Inattention, which were indeed the false Refinements of later Ages. Milton must be content, he has sometimes erred in this Respect. I shall shew more at large in another Paper; but considering all the Poems of the Age in which he was writ, and those which were affected with this wrong Way of Thinking, he is rather to be admired that he did not give more into it, than that he did sometimes comply with the visible Taste which prevails so much among modern Writers. But since several Thoughts may be natural which are low and grudging, an Epic Poet should not only avoid such Sentiments as are unnatural or affected, but also such as are low and vulgar. Homer has opened a great Field of Raillery to Men of more Delicacy than Greatness of Genius, by the Homeliness of some of his Sentiments. But, as I have before said, these are rather to be imputed to the Simplicity of the Age in which he lived, to which I may also add, of that which he described, than to any Imperfections in that Divine Poet.
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No. 279.
Saturday, January 15, 1712.

For love of others' peace: but I suppose,
If we Propose once again were sought,
We should compass them in a quick Searth,
To whose that Select in the fairest Manner:
Lender, the Verse we most when Terms of Whites,
Of hard Contest, and full of Force we're born,
Such as we might preserve them all,
To receive such rights, so Free,
And not from such in Foot, to be understood;
Let us ascertain with the Truth that:
They live in or our Foes walk not upright.
Thus they among themselves in pleasure rest
Stood exclam.-

No. 280.
Monday, January 21.

[STELEG.]

The Dukes of Passion makes a Man agreeable,
or unwelcome to those with whom he converses,
according to the Mover from which that Inclination
seems to proceed; if the true root of Friendship
arises from innate Benevolence, it never falls of Success;
if from a Vanity to excel, its Disappointment is no less
certain; what we call an agreeable Man, is be who is
endowed with that general Bent to do acceptable
Things, from a Delight he takes in them merely as such;
and the Attribution of that Character is what constitutes
a Fop. Under these Leaders one may draw up
all who make their Manners of Vintre except in
dumb Show. A natural and select Conversation is
composed of Persons who have the Talent of pleasing
with Delicacy of Sentiments flowing from natural
Chastity of Thought; but mixed Company is frequently
made up of Pretenders to Mirth, and is usually pester'd
with overstrained schemes, and painful Wranglings.
Now and then you meet with a Man so exactly formed
for Passion, that it is so Matter what he is doing or saying
that is to say, that there need be no Manner of Impudence
in it, to make him gain upon every Body who hears
him. This Felicity is not the Gift of Nature
only, but must be attended with happy Circumstances,
which add a Dignity to the familiar Behaviour which
Distinguishes

Yea, Zeljus among the Ancients, and Monsieur Perre
rounds among the Moderns, pushed their Ridicule very
far upon him, on Account of some with Sentiments
There is no Instance to be observed in Virgil under
this Head, and not very few in Milton.
I shall give but one Instance of this Impropriety of
Sentiments in Homer, and at the same Time compare
it with an Instance of the same Nature, both in Virgil
and Milton. Sentiments which seize Laughter, can very
seldom be admitted with any Decency into an Herrick
Poesy, whose Business it is to excite Passion of a much
nobleer Nature. Homer, however, in his Characters of
Vulcan and Thetis, in his Story of Min and
Venus in his Behaviour of Iris and in other Passages,
has been observed to have imposed into the Humorous
Character, and to have departed from that serious Air
which seems essential to the Magnificence of an Epic
Poem. I remember but one Laughter in the whole
Aeneid, which, rises in the 36th Book upon Minster,
where he is represented as shaved, overboard, and
inverting himself upon a Rock. But this Piece of Mirth
is so well timed that the severe Critics can have
Nothing to say against it, for it is in the Book of Games
and Diversions where the Reader's Mind may be
supposed to be sufficiently relaxed for such
Entertainment. The only Piece of Humour in
Paradise Lost, is where the Evil Spirits are described as
rejoicing the Angels upon the Success of their new Invented
Artillery. This Passage I look upon to be the most
Exceptionable in the whole Poesy, being nothing else
but a String of Punts, and those too not very indifferent
ones.

Some behold their flight,
And fly his Masse there in Discord wild.
O Pity, why are we not in these Villas proud?
Be while they fear were coming, and when we;
To entertain those fair with open Front.
And Brave. (what could we most) pronounced Terms
Of Compassion straight then the sight of blinding,
Now all, and late strange Vegetus fell.
As they would dance: yet for a Dance they seem'd
Somewhat encouraged and wild perhaps,
For