XXXIII.

SOUND ADAPTED TO THE SENSE.

"'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,
The sound must seem an echo of the sense."

ONOMATOPŒIA.

Onomatopœia, or Onomatopy, consists in the formation of words in such a manner that the sound shall imitate the sense. Thus the words *buzz, crackle, crash, flow, rattle, roar, hiss, whistle*, are evidently formed to imitate the sounds themselves. Sometimes the word expressing an object is formed to imitate the sound produced by that object; as, *wave, cuckoo, whip-poorwill, whisper, hum.*

It is esteemed a great beauty in writing when the words selected for the expression of an idea, convey, by their sound, some resemblance to the subject which they express, as in the following lines:

The whitewashed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnished clock that clicked behind the door.*

Of a similar character, and nearly of equal merit, are those sentences or expressions which in any respect imitate or represent the sense which they are employed to express. Thus Gray, in his Elegy, beautifully expresses the reluctant feeling to which he alludes in the last verse of the following stanza:

"For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one *longing, lingering* look behind!"

And Pope, in his "Essays on Criticism," in a manner, though different, yet scarcely less expressive, gives a verbal representation of his idea, by the selection of his terms, in the following lines:

"These, equal syllables alone require,
Though *oft* the *ear* the *open* vowels tire,

* These lines will not fail to recall to the memory of the classical student those peculiarly graphic lines of Virgil, in one of which he describes the galloping of a horse:

"Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum."

and in another the appearance of a hideous monster:

"Monstrum horrendum in forma ingens cui lumen ademptum."

While expletives their feeble aid *do* join,
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line."

"A needless Alexandrine ends the song,
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along."

"Soft is the strain, when Zephyr gently blows,
And the *smooth stream* in *smoother numbers flows*,
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The *hoarse, rough verse* should like the torrent *roar.*
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labors, and the words move slow.
Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main."

As an exercise in Onomatopœia, the student may select such words as he can recall in which the sound bears a resemblance to the signification.

XXXIV.

DEFINITION, AND DISTINCTION OR DIFFERENCE

The object of this exercise is to accustom the student to acquire clear ideas of things, and to perceive distinctions and differences wherever they exist. Clear ideas of a subject must be acquired before any thing can be correctly said or written upon it.

A definition, as described by logicians, consists of two parts, which they call the *genus* and the *difference*. The genus is the name of the *class* to which the object belongs. The difference is the property or properties by which the individual thing to be defined is distinguished from other individuals of the same class. Thus, if a definition is required of the word *justice*, we may commence by saying, "Justice is that virtue which induces us to give every one his due." Here, *virtue* is the *class* to which the object belongs; but this part of the definition may be applied to *honesty*, another quality of the same class, as well as to justice; for "Honesty is also a virtue which induces us to give every one his due." Something more, therefore, must be added to our definition, by which *justice* may be distinguished from *honesty*, and this *something more*, in whatever form it may be presented, will be the *difference* which excludes honesty from the same definition.

Example.

JUSTICE.

Justice is that virtue which induces us to give to every one his due. It requires us not only to render every article of property to its right owner, but also to esteem every one according to his merit, giving credit for talents and virtues wherever they may be possessed, and withholding our approbation from every fault, how great soever the temptation that leads to it.

It will easily be seen from this definition in what the *difference* lies, which excludes honesty from the definition. Honesty, it is true, requires that we should render to every one his due. But honesty does not necessarily imply the esteeming of every one according to his merit, giving credit for talents and virtues,* &c.

A definition should generally be an analysisis of the thing defined, that is, it should comprise an enumeration of its principal qualities or attributes.

Example 2d.

A Swallow.

1. A swallow is an animal. — This definition is not correct, because it will apply also to a horse, or a cow, or a dog, or a cat, as well as to a swallow.
2. A swallow is a bird. — So also is an eagle, or a goose, and therefore this definition is not sufficiently distinct.
3. A swallow is an animal which has two legs. — And so is a man, and therefore this definition is not sufficiently exclusive.
4. A swallow is an animal that has two legs, and wings. — And so is *a bat;* and therefore this definition is faulty.
5. A swallow is an animal, that has wings, feathers, and a hard, glossy bill, with short legs, a forked tail, and large mouth, and exceeding all other birds in the untiring rapidity of its flight and evolutions. Its upper parts are steel blue, and the lower parts of a light, chestnut color. It seeks the society of man, and attaches its nest to the rafters in barns.

This definition contains the *difference*, as well as the class, and may therefore be considered as sufficiently correct for our present purpose.†

* See *Synonymes*, page 40.
† See Parker and Fox's Grammar, Part III., No. 387.

Example 3d.

Eternal.

The term *eternal* is properly applied to that only which always has existed and always will exist. It implies *without beginning and without end.* This definition excludes the application of the term *eternal* from every thing that ever had a beginning, as well as from that which will ever have an end. The circumstance of *having no beginning* is the specific difference between the terms *eternal* and *infinite. Infinite*, endless, unceasing, &c., imply only *without end.*

After explaining the meaning, or giving the definition of the terms in this exercise, the student should be required to give an instance of the proper application of the word.

Exercises.

Give a definition to the following words, and point out the distinction or difference between them and other words, which in some respect resemble them.

Temperance.	To Transpose.	Amplify
Equity.	To Disregard.	Composition.
Synthesis.	Excellence.	History.
Analogy.	Activity.	Astrology.
Comparison.	To Disobey.	Literature.
Judgment.	Tautology.	Science.
Reasoning.	Narration.	Art.
Description.	Outline.	

The distinction or difference between two subjects may likewise be exhibited as in the following

Example.

Grammar, rhetoric, and logic are kindred branches of science, but each has its separate department and specific objects. Rhetoric teaches how to express an idea in proper words; grammar directs the arrangement and inflections of the words; logic relates to the truth or correctness of the idea to be expressed. Grammar addresses itself to the understanding; rhetoric, to the imagination; logic, to the judgment. Rhetoric selects the materials; grammar combines them into sentences; logic shows the agreement, or disagreement, of the sentences with one another. A sentence may

be grammatically correct, but rhetorically incorrect, as in the following extract:

"To take *arms* against a *sea* of troubles, and, by opposing, end them."

Here every word is grammatically correct; but to represent a man clad in armor to *fight water*, is a mixed metaphor, violating one of the fundamental principles of rhetoric. So, also, a sentence may be both grammatically and rhetorically faultless, while it violates logical principles. Thus, "All men are bipeds, and, as birds are also bipeds, birds are to be considered as men."

Exercises.

The student may show the distinction between the following words:

Quack and charlatan.
Projector, speculator, and economist.
Bookworms and syllable hunters.
Cant, prosing, puritanical.
The word *liberal*, as applied to politicians, theologians, and philosophers; 1st, when assumed by themselves; 2dly, when applied to them by their adversaries.

The different senses in which the word *independence* is used, as applied to nations and individuals, to a man's character, opinions, and circumstances, is explained in the following

Example.

When we speak of a nation's independence, we mean, that it is not connected with any other nation, so as to be obliged to receive laws or magistrates from it, to pay a revenue into its treasury, or in any way to submit to its dictates. When we see a nation whose laws are framed by its own magistrates, whether elective or hereditary, without regard to the pleasure of any other nation; where the taxes are levied for the support of its own interest, and for the maintenance of its own magistrates; where it is not necessary that the consent of another should be obtained, before it is at liberty to make war upon a foreign state, or to enter into alliance with any foreign power that they please, — to that nation custom gives the epithet "independent."

Nor does the submission of a people to the will of a despot contradict its claim to be considered an independent nation.

The subjects are, indeed, dependent upon the caprice of a tyrant, and he has absolute power over their lives, property, and political interest; but this internal slavery does not exclude them from being considered independent as a nation, and from taking a part, as such, in the disputes of other governments, provided that their own master is not also subject to some foreign power. A subject province becomes independent, when, finding itself strong enough for its purpose, it throws off the yoke of the ruling power, and declares itself free; and it is recognized as such by other nations, if it succeeds in establishing its claim, either by arms, or the consent of the government to which it was subject.

A man is said to be independent in his character, when he does not permit the opinion of the world to influence his actions. He is independent in his opinions, when he maintains them in spite of ridicule, or the ideas of the rest of the community. If he conducts himself according to these opinions, carries into action his ideas of right and wrong, though they be contrary to what every one else thinks, he is independent in character. A man may be so subservient to another, that he will disguise his own opinions, and uphold those of the other. For some benefit conferred, or from the expectation of some advantage, he will stoop to flatter the notions of his patron, pretend to guide all his actions according to those ideas, and even regulate his conduct by rules which he knows to be wrong; and merely for the sake of being permitted to expect a slight favor. Such a man has no claim to independence of character or opinions.

When a person does not rely on the profits of his business for subsistence, but has laid up or received as an inheritance a sum of money, the income of which is sufficient for his maintenance, he is considered independent in his circumstances.

Independence is, in most cases, an excellent quality and state; but when a man's independence of character leads him to abuse, and refuse to conform to, the customs of his country, because he perceives in them something absurd, it makes him appear ridiculous.

XXXV

ANALOGY.

Analogy, as defined by Johnson, is a resemblance between two things with regard to some circumstances or effects.

Webster defines it thus: An agreement or likeness between things in some circumstances or effects, when the things are otherwise entirely different. Thus, learning is said to *enlighten* the mind, that is, it is to the mind what light is to the eye. enabling it to discover what was hidden before.*

Example.

Youth and morning resemble each other in many particulars. Youth is the first part of life. Morning is the first part of the day. Youth is the time when preparation is to be made for the business of life. In the morning, arrangements are made for the employment of the day. In youth, our spirits are light, no cares perplex, no troubles annoy us. In the morning the prospect is fair, no clouds arise, no tempest threatens, no commotion among the elements impends. In youth we form plans which the later periods of life cannot execute; and the morning, likewise, is often productive of promises which neither noon nor evening can perform.

From this example it will be seen that subjects which in reality have in themselves no actual resemblance, may be so contrasted as to present an appearance of resemblance in their effects. Many of the beauties of poetry arise from the poet's observing these similitudes, and expressing them in appropriate language. Thus darkness and adversity, comfort and light, life and the ocean, evening and old age, misfortune and a storm, a clergyman and a shepherd, smiles and sunshine, tears and rain, a guilty conscience and a defenceless body, are subjects which in themselves have no actual similitude; yet, when contrasted with their effects, points of resemblance will

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* When the thing to which the analogy is supposed happens to be mentioned, analogy has after it the prepositions *to* or *with*: when both the things are mentioned after analogy, the preposition between is used. — *Johnson.*

be readily seen, which show an obvious analogy. Thus, also, in the following extract the poet in addressing the sun shows an analogy between the evaporation of water, and the flight of a bird.

> "Thou lookest on the waters, and they glow
> And take them wings and mount aloft in air," &c.

The skilful allusion to such analogies constitutes the highest art of the poet, as it forms also the most pleasing beauty of poetry. Indeed, without such allusions, poetry loses all of its charms, and verse degenerates into mere '*sing-song*.'

It will be a useful exercise for the student to prepare lists of subjects between which an analogy may be traced.

XXXVI.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

A Figure, in the science of language, is a departure from the common forms of words, from the established rules of syntax, or from the use of words according to their literal signification.

A departure from the *common form* of words is called a figure of etymology, or an etymological figure. [*See Elision, &c.*]

A departure from the established rules of syntax is called a syntactical figure. [*See Enallage, Hyperbaton, Pleonasm, &c.*]

A departure from the use of words in their literal signification is called a figure of rhetoric, or a rhetorical figure. [*See Trope, Metaphor.*]

Figurative language properly includes all of these different kinds of figures; but the term is sometimes restricted to rhetorical figures.*

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* Holmes's "Rhetoric" enumerates a list of two hundred and fifty figures connected with the subjects of Logic, Rhetoric, and Grammar. The work is remarkable for its quaintness, and possesses some merit *as a vocabulary.* His cautions with regard to the use of figures are so characteristic, that they may afford some amusement, if not edification to the student. The following is his language with regard to Tropes and Figures:

"The faults of Tropes are nine:

> "Of tropes perplext,[1] harsh,[2] frequent,[3] swoll'n,[4] fetched far,[5]
> Ill representing,[6] forced,[7] low,[8] lewd,[9] beware."

Many words that are used in common discourse have two significations or rather significations of two different kinds; namely, a literal and a figurative signification.

A word is said to be used literally or to have its literal signification when it is used in a manner, which is authorized by the general consent of those who speak and write with correctness the language in which it is found.

A word is used figuratively, when though it retains its usual signification it is applied in a manner different from its common application. Thus when we speak of the *head* of an *animal*, we use the word *head* in its literal signification as implying that part of the body which contains the eyes, nose, mouth, ears, &c. But when we speak of the *head* of a class, or of a division of an army, or any thing without life, we recall to mind the analogy or resemblance between two objects, separately considering the *highest* or most prominent part of each, and apply the name of that part in the one, to the similar part in the other. In this manner the word is *turned* from its literal meaning to a figurative signification, and this turning of the word receives the rhetorical name of *a trope;* a derivation from a Greek word, which signifies *a turning.* So also, "*The dawn,*" properly means the *earliest part* of the morning, or of the day; and "*twilight*" expresses the *close* or *latter part of day.* But, by a rhetorical figure, these words are used to express the *earliest* and *latest* parts of other subjects. Thus, "the *dawn* of bliss," expresses the commencement of happiness or bliss; and, "the *twilight of our woes,*" is used to signify the close or termination of sorrow. "The morning of our joy," implies the earliest period of our enjoyment. "The eve of his departure," implies the *latest point of time,* previous to his departure.

The use of figures, or of figurative language, is,—

1. They render the language copious.
2. The richness of language is thereby increased.
3. They increase the power and expressiveness of language.
4. They impart animation to style.*

There is another class of figures styled *metaphors,* which so nearly resemble *tropes,* that the difference cannot always be easily described.

The literal meaning of the word metaphor is *a transferring* from one subject to another. As used in rhetoric, it implies a transferring of the application of a word, in its literal meaning, from one object, or class of objects, to another, founded upon some similarity, analogy, or resemblance.*

"And the faults of figures are six:

"Figures unnatural[1], senseless[2], too fine spun[3],
Over adorned[4], affected[5], copious[6], shun." (!!!)
"*Rhetoric made Easy,* by John Holmes. London, 1755."

* The student who would see a beautiful illustration of this subject, is referred to Newman's Rhetoric, chap. 3d

A metaphor is a simile or comparison expressed in one word. Thus: The soldiers were lions in the combat: The soldiers fought *like lions.* [*See Comparison.*]

A trope is the mere change, or turning, of a word from its original signification. Hence, if the word be changed, the figure is destroyed. Thus, when we say, The clouds *foretell* rain, we have a trope in the word *foretell.* If the sentence be read, The clouds foreshow rain, the figure disappears.

The following examples will clearly illustrate the difference between plain and figurative language:

Examples.

Figurative. She had been the pupil of the village pastor, the favorite lamb of his little flock.

Plain. She had been the pupil of the village clergyman, the favorite child of his small congregation.

Figurative. Man! thou pendulum between a smile and tear.

Plain. Man! thou who art always placed between happiness and misery, but never wholly enjoying the one, nor totally afflicted with the other.

Figurative. He found the tide of wealth flowing merely in the channels of traffic; he has diverted from it invigorating rills to refresh the garden of literature.

Plain. He saw that men of wealth were employing their riches only in the business of commerce. He set the example of appropriating a portion of wealth to the increase and diffusion of knowledge.

Figurative. A stone, perhaps, may tell some wanderer where we lie, when we came here, and when we went away; but even that will soon refuse to bear us record: Time's effacing fingers will be busy on its surface, and at length wear it smooth.

Plain. A stone, perhaps, may be erected over our graves, with an inscription bearing the date of our birth, and the day

* "Metaphore is an alteration of a worde, from the proper and naturall meaning to that which is not proper, and yet agreeth thereunto by some likenesse that appeareth to be into it."—*Wilson — The Arte of Rhetorique* p. 175.

of our death; but even that will not last long. In the course of time the stone will be mutilated or broken, and the inscription be entirely destroyed.

It will readily be seen from these examples that analogy is the foundation of a large proportion of figurative language. Thus in the first example, "She had been the pupil of the village pastor, the favorite *lamb* of his little flock," the analogy lies between a clergyman and a shepherd; a congregation and a flock of sheep, the little ones of the congregation and the young lambs of the flock.

It will be found a very useful exercise for the student to trace out the analogies thus presented by figurative language. The following extracts are selected, in which he may point out the subjects between which the analogy is directly or indirectly implied. Such an exercise will open his eyes to the beauties of poetry, and prepare him for the imitation of those beauties. Perhaps it will be better that this should be an *oral* exercise.

Extracts.

The meek-eyed morn appears, mother of dews,
At first faint gleaming in the dappled east.

How reverend is the face of this tall pile,
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
To bear aloft its arched and ponderous roof,
By its own weight made steadfast and immovable,
Looking tranquillity!

Youth is not rich in time; it may be poor;
Part with it, as with money, sparing; pay
No moment but in purchase of its worth;
And what its worth — ask death-beds; they can tell.

——— Enter this wild wood,
And view the haunts of nature. The calm shade
Shall bring a kindred calm, and the sweet breeze,
That makes the green leaves dance, shall waft a balm
To thy sick heart.

Throngs of insects in the glade
Try their thin wings, and dance in the warm beam
That waked them into life. Even the green trees
Partake the deep contentment; as they bend
To the soft winds, the sun from the blue sky
Looks in, and sheds a blessing on the scene.

The breath of night's destructive to the hue
Of every flower that blows.

So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she ate.
Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe
That all was lost.

The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

Thou 'rt purpling now, O Sun, the vines of Canaan,
And crowning with rich light the cedar tops of Lebanon.

The tempests of fortune.

The last steps of day.
The storms of adversity.

My ear is pained,
My soul is sick with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is filled.

The superb lotus was holding up his cup to the sun. as if for a full draught of his light.

Life is a sea as fathomless,
As wide, as terrible, and yet sometimes
As calm and beautiful. The light of heaven
Smiles on it, and 'tis decked with every hue
Of glory and of joy. Anon, dark clouds
Arise, contending winds of fate go forth,
And Hope sits weeping o'er a general wreck.

XXXVII.

TRANSLATION OF PLAIN INTO FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

The following Examples present instances of plain language converted into figurative. This exercise will require a greater effort of imagination than the last; but the difficulty of the task must not prevent an attempt at its execution.

*Examples.**

Plain. It was evening, and the sun slowly went down.
Figurative. 'T was eve: — upon his chariot throne
The sun sank lingering in the west.
Plain. Showery April.
Figurative. Tear-dropping April.

* For an example showing the difference in the vivacity of style in plain and figurative language, see note on pages 118 and 119.

Plain. The winds made the large trees bend.

Figurative. The giant trees leaned back from the encountering breeze.

Plain. The thunder is echoed from the tops of the mountains.

Figurative. From peak to peak leaps the live thunder.

Plain. It is again morning, a bright, fair, and pleasant morning; and the clouds have all passed away.

Figurative The morn is up again, the dewy morn,
With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom,
Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn.

Plain. Oldest of Lakes.

Figurative. Father of Lakes.

Plain. Yonder comes the bright sun, enlightening the East.

Figurative. But yonder comes the powerful King of day,
Rejoicing in the east.

Plain. The light dew — the unpleasant storms.

Figurative. The light-footed dews: — the surly storms.

Plain. The earth is covered with snow, or
The snow covers the earth.

Figurative. The earth lies buried in a shroud of snow.

Plain. Much rain has fallen from the clouds to-day.

Figurative. The clouds have dropped their garnered fulness down.

Plain. The fair morning makes the eastern skies look bright.

Figurative. The fair morning gilds the eastern skies.

Plain. Some solitary column stands alone, while the others have been thrown down.

Figurative. Some solitary column mourns above its prostrate brethren.

Plain. If pleasant looks will not soothe your displeasure,
I shall never attempt it with tears.

Figurative. If sunshine will not dissolve thy snow,
I shall never attempt it with rain.

Plain. The love that is caused by excitement is soon destroyed by affliction.

Figurative. The love that is ordered to bathe in wine,
Would be sure to take cold in tears.

Plain. Authors of modern date write for money, not for fame.

Figurative. 'T is but to snip his locks they (modern authors) follow the golden-haired Apollo.

The conversion of plain into figurative language requires the exercise of considerable thought, and quickness of perception in tracing analogies. It is recommended to the student before he attempts an exercise of this kind, to read with attention portions of the works of some distinguished poet, with special reference to the figures he employs. Let him analyze the expressions, and point out what portions are figurative, in what the figure consists, and on what analogy the figure is founded. An exercise of this kind will bring the mind into vigorous action, and like all exercises having that tendency, cannot fail to be highly beneficial.

XXXVIII.

RULES OF METAPHORS.

The following are the rules laid down by Dr. Blair, in relation to metaphors:

First. They must be suited to the nature of the subject; neither too numerous, nor too gay, nor too elevated for it. We must neither attempt to force the subject, by the use of them, into a degree of elevation not congruous to it; nor, on the contrary, suffer it to fall below its proper dignity. Some metaphors would be beautiful in poetry, which would be unnatural in prose; some are graceful in orations, which would be highly improper in historical composition. Figures are the dress of sentiment; they should, consequently, be adapted to the ideas which they are intended to adorn.

The *second rule* respects the choice of objects whence metaphors are to be drawn. The field for figurative language is very wide. All nature opens her stores, and allows us to collect them without restraint. But we must beware of using such allusions as raise in the mind mean, low, or dirty ideas. To render a metaphor perfect, it must entertain as well as enlighten. The most pleasing metaphors are derived from the frequent occurrences of art and nature, or from the civil transactions and customs of mankind.

In the *third* place, a metaphor should be founded on a resemblance, or analogy, which is clear and striking, not far fetched, nor difficult to be discovered. Harsh or forced metaphors are always displeasing, because they perplex the reader, and, instead of illustrating the thought, they render it intricate and confused.

In the *fourth* place, we must never jumble metaphorical and plain language together; that is, never construct a period, so that part of it must be understood metaphorically, part literally

In the *fifth* place, take care not to make two different metaphors meet on the same object. This, which is called mixed metaphor, is one of the greatest abuses of the figure. Shakspeare's expression, for example,

"To take *arms* against a *sea* of troubles," makes a most unnatural medley, and entirely confounds the imagination.*

In examining the propriety of metaphors, it is a good rule to form a picture of them, and to consider how the parts agree, and what kind of figure the whole presents, when delineated with a pencil.

Metaphors, in the *sixth* place, should not be crowded together on the same object. Though each of them be distinct, yet if they be heaped on one another, they produce confusion.

The *last* rule concerning metaphors is, they should not be too far pursued. For, when the resemblance, which is the foundation of the figure, is long dwelt upon, and carried into all its minute circumstances, an *allegory* is produced, instead of a metaphor; the reader is wearied, and the discourse becomes obscured. This is termed, straining a metaphor.

XXXIX.

PROSOPOPOEIA, OR PERSONIFICATION.

The literal meaning of prosopopoeia is, *the change of things to persons.* A fondness for life and animated beings, in preference to inanimate objects, is one of the first principles of literary taste. That figure, therefore, by which life and action are attributed to inanimate objects, is one of frequent occurrence among the best writers of prose and of poetry. To poetical writers, especially, it is of the greatest consequence, as constituting the very life and soul, as it were, of their numbers. This will easily be seen by the following example:

"The brilliant sun is rising in the east."

How tame and spiritless is this line, compared with the manner in which the same idea is expressed by the poet, thus

"But yonder comes the powerful King of Day,
Rejoicing in the east." †

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* Mr. Steele, in his "*Prosodia Rationalis*," has rescued the Bard of Avon from this inconsistent metaphor, by the suggestion, that it was originally written, "To take arms against assail of troubles."

† This extract, from Thomson's Seasons, operates as a temptation, that cannot be resisted, to present another from the same page, which, as a picture, remarkable alike for beauty of coloring, dignity of appearance, and sublimity of conception, is scarcely equalled in any other language. That

There are three different degrees of this figure, says Dr. Blair, which it is requisite to distinguish in order to determine the propriety of its use.

The first is, when *some of the properties* of living creatures are ascribed to inanimate objects; the second, when these inanimate objects are described as *acting like such as have life;* and the third, when they are exhibited as speaking to us, or as listening.

The first and lowest degree of this figure, which consists in *ascribing to inanimate objects some of the qualities of living creatures,* raises the style so little, that the humblest discourse admits it without any force. Thus, a *raging* storm, a *deceitful* disease, a *cruel* disaster — are familiar expressions. This, indeed, is so obscure a degree of personification, that it might, perhaps, be properly classed with simple metaphors, which almost escape our observation.

The second degree of this figure is, when we represent inanimate objects as *acting* like those that have life. Here we rise a step higher, and the personification becomes sensible. According to the nature of the action which we ascribe to those inanimate objects, and to the particularity with which we describe it, is the strength of the figure. When pursued to a considerable length, it belongs only to studied harangues; when slightly touched, it may be admitted into less elevated compositions.

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the student may duly appreciate the skill of the poet, and the magnificence of the design, it is first presented in plain language:

"Every thing that grows depends on the light and heat of the sun, as it is passing along the ecliptic. All mankind depend upon it for their daily subsistence. The seasons, the hours, the wind and the rain, the dew and the storm, influenced as they are by the sun, are instrumental in producing herbs, fruits, and flowers, during the whole year."

From such a tame and lifeless recital, the poet has formed the following magnificent picture, which he holds up to the sun, under the name (see Onomatopœia) of "Parent of Seasons:"

"The vegetable world is also thine
Parent of Seasons! who the pomp precede,
That waits thy throne, as through thy vast domain,
Annual, along the bright ecliptic road,
In world-rejoicing state, it moves sublime.
Meantime the expecting nations, circled gay,
With all the various tribes of foodful earth,
Implore thy bounty, or send grateful up
A common hymn; while, round thy beaming car,
High seen, the Seasons lead, in sprightly dance
Harmonious knit, the rosy-fingered Hours,
The Zephyrs floating loose, the timely Rains,
Of bloom ethereal, the light-footed Dews,
And, softened into joy, the surly Storms.
These in successive turn, with lavish hand,
Shower every beauty, every fragrance shower,
Herbs, flowers, and fruits; till, kindling at thy touch,
From land to land is flushed the vernal year."