



JOSEPH DENNIE: The (Lay) Preacher *Gallant*

“In an age when immorality and vice are so prevalent, this sketch may not ‘be without its use.’ It will serve as an example to our young men to deter from vice, and to animate to virtue...”

~ from *The Port Folio*, Nov. 1810, vol. IV, No. 5, p. 526.

He was a lawyer for some time, and some had hopes he might become a minister, but when he finally settled into his true calling Joseph Dennie (1768-1812) became an essayist, poet, editor, and expositor of fine literature. By his own admission, among his greatest influences were Addison, Franklin, Goldsmith, and Sterne, and he was in his lifetime proclaimed “The American Addison.” It is necessary to bear in mind when trying to understand him that Dennie (a Boston area native ultimately transplanted, after some moving about, to Philadelphia) went through major vicissitudes in his development; so that one needs to be extra careful to eschew stereotyping or pigeonholing him. And when he died of cholera at the relatively young age of 44, it could be fairly said that he was, like the country itself, still a work in progress, and had neither fully realized his education or completed his intellectual maturation. However, this was not the result of laziness or insurmountable lack of ability. Rather the alterations that occurred reflected more a continued willingness on his part to improve himself and do better. He made mistakes. But he learned from them, was willing to change, and moved on with noticeable improvement. Early on, for example, he was superciliously opinionated. And yet with time came to display a very just impartiality in his reviews and criticisms; even toward some of his most extreme political opponents. As a wit, he tended to be mediocre and with a sense of humor even worse. Yet he suffered no lack of praise as a sparkling conversationalist and erudite scholar. He was one of the most strident and immovable of Federalists; decrying almost everything the young American Republic represented and espoused. And yet by his later years, he had considerably mellowed and learned to accept the new nation patiently and more philosophically. His works are largely ignored except by historians and specialists, and, save in form and style, most of his writings simply do

not stand out for exceptional brilliance or profundity of thought. If though he never attained lasting greatness as an author himself, he was ever seeking and striving for excellence; so that his example and didactic outlook at least successfully inspired others to achieve what he could not quite himself.

And this was of no little benefit to just burgeoning American letters of his day. When British critics dismissed American writers for showing want of merit, he, going by the editor's title of "Oliver Oldschool," didn't argue against them. Instead he seconded those critics, and in doing so helped goad his countrymen to aim for much higher standards than they otherwise expected of themselves. This made him a lively center of controversy, and in presiding as editor over the Philadelphia based magazine *The Port Folio*, he grew to become the sun of American literary culture and who drew within his gravitational orbit, or else repelled in opposition, some of the finest British and American literary figures of his day. Using as a source Milton Ellis' *Joseph Dennie and his Circle* (1915), and which (given what information is available) cannot be praised too highly as a study, his biography reads like a literary "Who's Who" of his generation, and there is hardly a well known American author of his time with whom Dennie did not have some friendly,¹ or unfriendly, dealing with; such as Robert Treat Paine Jr. (the poet), Royall Tyler,² Jonathan Mitchell Sewall, Timothy Dwight, Elihu Hubbard Smith, Charles Brockden Brown,³ William Dunlap, Joseph Hopkinson, John Quincy Adams, John Fenno, William Duane,⁴ John Howard Payne, Washington Irving;⁵ and a few British as well: poet, travel journalist John Davis, William Cobbett, Thomas Moore, Leigh Hunt, and Thomas Campbell. And if we add those who were only printed and or reviewed in *The Port Folio* or in one Dennie's earlier journals, the list of notables, including non-British Europeans, is, naturally, several times this number.

The Port Folio ran from 1801 to 1827, and the entire series, Duyckinck informs us, fills 47 volumes. Like Mathew Carey's *American Museum*, it covered a wide diversity of topics. And as well as poetry and reviews and essays on literature, it including biographies, sermons and orations, articles on theology, domestic morals and manners, sight-seeing and travel reports, politics, law, medicine, humor, the theater, painting in the fine arts, architecture, and "natural philosophy" (such as zoology, geology, and botany.) The magazine was the most popular of its kind in American and had subscribers from Georgia and Tennessee, to Ohio and Maine, and to all points in between. It reached its zenith in about 1802 to 1805, and then commenced falling off in both quality and sales in

¹ Including as contributors to the sundry newspapers and magazines, along with *The Port Folio*, Dennie in the span of his career wrote for.

² In the periodicals *The Eagle* (Darmouth, N.H.) and *The Farmer's Museum* (Walpole, N.H.), Tyler and Dennie teamed under the pen names "Colon and Spondee;" with Dennie, generally, representing the former and Tyler the latter.

³ An poetic elegy too whom can be found in *Port Folio*, Sept. 1810, vol. IV, no 3, pp. 287-289.

⁴ In this case of of Dennie's witty adversaries.

⁵ Irving's "Jonathan Oldstyle" pieces of 1802, much enjoyed by Aaron Burr, are presumably light-hearted parodies of Dennie's "Olver Oldschool" writings; while "Launcelot Langstaff," one of Irving's creations for *Salmagundi* (1807), is said by Milton Ellis to have been based on Dennie; noting also that Dennie in *The Port Folio* gave a positive review of that early work of the Knickerbockers.

about 1807 due to Dennie's declining health, incipient conflicts with Britain, and the effects of the Embargo.

As mentioned, for a brief time Dennie seriously contemplated becoming a minister, but discarded this notion because, quite frankly, it didn't pay enough. As well, he liked to be fancy dresser. Nonetheless, religion was always of eternal significance to him, and his writings are continually sprinkled with Biblical references and allusions.

In 1711, Ebenezer Pemberton, a Puritan minister at the Old South Church in Boston and Harvard teacher, stated in a eulogy:

"...The more of good literature civil rulers are furnished with, the more capable they are to discharge their trust to the honour and safety of their people. And learning is no less necessary, as an ordinary medium to secure the glory of Christ's visible kingdom. Without a good measure of this the truth can't be explained, asserted and demonstrated; nor errors detected and the heretick baffled -- When ignorance and barbarity invade a generation, their glory is laid in the dust; and the ruin of all that is great and good among them will soon follow."⁶

This attitude and perspective can well be said he have characterized Dennie and many other Federalists; and a comparison between the latter and the New England Puritans, in terms of both their strong influence and brief reign is no little apt. When the Democrats in effect declared that the voice of the people was the voice of God, this to a Federalist (or a Puritan), who believed that God (among men) was the judgment of highly educated and wise teachers devoted to the Bible could be nothing less than anathema – hence some of the bitterness and acrimony that flared up, including literal violence, between the two parties.

It sometimes too hastily assumed that all Federalists represented merely the wealthy and affluent. But this simply wasn't always true. When Alexander Hamilton expired bleeding from his bullet wound, no little of those pain filled hours were spent emphasizing and avowing his Christian belief. A "determined bachelor," Dennie himself passed away poor and heavily in debt, if not in dire poverty.

While it is impossible in such a short sampling to adequately present Dennie in all his various facets as a writer and editor, we *can* notwithstanding take the occasion to appreciate him at some of his most admirable.

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The following is one of Dennie's earliest published writings, and appeared in the *Massachusetts Magazine, or Monthly Museum* Feb. 1789.

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<sup>6</sup> *The Puritans: A Source Book of Their Writings*, vol. 1, edited by Perry Miller and Thomas R. Johnson, p. 18.

PANEGYRICK ON THOMSON<sup>7</sup>

Come, youthful muse, who, erst in cloister drear,  
Didst chime, adventurous, thy poetick bells,  
In jingling lays no longer vainly strive,  
With brother bards, the laurel meed to gain.  
Thine be the task, in rhyme unfetter'd verse,  
To hail the master of the rural song,  
And sing the beauties of a *Thomson's* page.

To thee with reverence bends the raptur'd muse,  
Thee to extol loud chaunts her aukward strain,  
The strain tho' dissonant, sublime the theme  
And copious, if she sing a *Thomson's* praise.

Nature, indulgent to a thoughtless world,  
Had long display'd the wonders of her hand;  
While busy man, in low pursuits involv'd,  
Or else reclining on the silken couch  
Of luxury, foe to nature's simple charms,  
With eye averted scarcely deign to view  
The scenes enchanting, which her pencil form'd.

The indignant goddess call'd her favourite son,  
To him her pencil, and her landscape gave,  
And bade him paint anew the sylvan scene.  
The bard obey'd; with softened tints retouch'd  
Great Nature's work, and, when the goddess view'd,  
She deeply blush'd, and own'd herself outdone.

The grateful *seasons*, in their annual round,  
With ardour emulous gifts conferr'd on thee.  
First, blooming *Spring* crop'd from the verdant mead  
A chaplet gay, thy temples to entwine,  
And ardent *Summer*, at meridian hour,  
When Phebus [sic] rag'd, and Zephyr ceas'd to breathe,  
Yielded the oak umbrageous where reclin'd  
You held high converse with the sylvan gods.  
Mild *Autumn*, sedulous, rang'd Pomona's grove,  
And pluck'd the ripest fruits to deck her board.  
*Winter* came last, high pil'd the blazing hearth,  
Restrain'd his winds, and gave the studious hour.

At early dawn, the evanescent forms

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<sup>7</sup> [Editor: Scottish poet James Thomson, author of *The Seasons* (1728-1730).]

Of pensive Dryads breathe in fancy's ear  
This plausible strain, in memory of *their* bard,  
“While artful anglers lure the finny prey,  
While fervent youths bathe in the lucid stream,  
While jocund shepherds whet their sounding shears,  
Around the shepherd's cot while Boreas howls,  
And brumal snow oppress the leafless bough,  
So long shall *Thomson's* wood notes charm the ear,  
So long his moral page improve the heart.”

#### ACADEMICUS.

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Among Dennie's most successful of writings were his “Lay Preacher” essays; of which this is one, and appeared in *The Farmer's Museum* of 24 Nov. 1795 and *The Port Folio* of 24 Dec. 1803.

#### ON THANKSGIVING.

“Give a sweet savour, and a memorial of fine flour: and make a fat offering.”  
—Eccles. xxxviii. 2.

Yesterday as I was pondering a theme for my next discourse, with an aching head, which checked invention, my hair dresser entered my chamber with the daily papers in his hand. Men of his class being naturally fond of politics, anxious for the public weal, eager to ask, and no less eager to tell the news, he therefore, after a few preliminary queries, informed me, with an Englishman's pride, that sir Sidney Smith had destroyed the gun-boats of the usurper, and that the thunder of British cannon was rocking the whole coast of France. He uttered this in a tone so cheerful, and with such sparkling eyes, that for a moment, in spite of my *rigid republicanism*, I actually participated in his pleasure. While he was occupied in chattering with the volubility of his profession, and in combing my gray locks, I picked up some of the papers, and as it behooved a preacher, looked for the grave and the moral. The politician and the man of the world, will perhaps smile when I add that no articles so attached my attention, as the proclamations for days of thanksgiving in some of the northern states. When I saw from every quarter, the fairest evidences of autumnal plenty, I felt the propriety of devotional gratitude, and was delighted that public commemoration of annual favours was one of the customs of my country.

In the most rude, as well as refined ages, a lively perception of benefits conferred by supreme power, has caused mankind to “give a sweet savour, and a memorial of fine flour, and to make a fat offering.” Long before Christianity had shed its lustre on the nations, we find the Jew, the Roman, and the Greek, raising the periodical hymn to the skies. Though their creeds, dictated by superstitious ignorance were clashing and various, yet gratitude to the “giver” was one and the same. If a general had enlarged an empire by

his enterprise, or defended paternal fields with his gallantry; if “ the sweet influences of a Pleiades” had graciously descended, and Italian granaries burst with plenty, the grateful ancients decreed the festal day and all orders, careless of business or pleasure, thronged the temples, and thanked the beneficent power. Thanksgiving was one of the first acts of devotion, described by the sacred historian. In the very infancy of time, amid the simplicity of pastoral life, we behold a striking scene; the amiable Abel, that blameless shepherd, selecting the fairest of the flock, and sacrificing them on the first altar. From a social supper with his disciples, from crowds of penitent or plausible Jews; we find the son of Mary retiring to the solitude of Mount Olivet, to render thanks, that neither the persecuting Pharisee, nor the subtle Sadducees, had abridged his life, or invalidated his doctrine. St. Paul, in his perilous voyage, when tossing in the Adriatic gulf, and exposed to all the horrors of a nocturnal shipwreck; while he was wishing anxiously for day, did not employ the first moments of returning light in the cares of navigation, but “*gave thanks*” for his safety; and partook of bread and meat with the mariners.

But without recurring to ancient examples to fortify a duty, in which there is so much pleasure to animate its exercise, I will now close by assigning a few reasons, peculiarly binding on Americans for periodical gratitude.

While many nations of the elder world are convulsed by revolution, menaced with dangers, or groaning under servitude, we are leading “quiet and peaceable lives,” and like the happy Zidonians, we dwell at once “careless and secure.” No inquisitor summons our sectaries to the stake, and in no cell of America has the clank of religious chains yet been heard. No Turkish sultan abridges life by a nod, and no Lama of superstition, tortures the credulity of ignorance, or affronts the discernment of wisdom. Though discord has hurled her brand among the nations, against the conflagration of war, we have had *the whole Atlantic as a ditch*. The gleam of arms has only been contemplated in the distance; and the sound of European artillery has been as “thunder heard remote.” Agonized France, under the mad dominion of petty tyrants, of the most execrable race enumerated in any of the rolls of history, has seen the lights of her church extinguished, her “nursing father” and “nursing mother” destroyed, her “nobles in fetters of iron,” and her subjects ground between the upper and nether millstone, of revolutionary experiment. The olive has yielded its oil, to illumine the *lantern*, and the grape has been trodden by the faltering feet, of the intoxicated soldier. Silent are the halls of the sovereign, and a *fox* looks out of the window. Contrast this shaded picture, my countrymen, with the scenes of peace and plenty, which environ you. Commerce wafts you her wares *from afar*, and her merchandise *from the ends of the earth*. Husbandry has turned its furrow to vivifying air, and liberal harvests have been reaped from your fields; your oxen are “strong to labour,” and your sheep scatter over the plains. Seeing, therefore, that you possess in tranquillity, such a goodly heritage; be careful that charity go hand in hand with cheerfulness, and as you *give thanks*, give alms. To him who has no father, stretch the parental hand, and when “the eye” of the beggar “sees, then let it bless you.” When you have thanked the great giver, and imparted from your store, to him “that is ready to perish,” then let the tabret sound in your feasts, then let the rejoicing heart rebound, and the voice of gladness diffuse a general complacency.

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From *The Port Folio*, vol. IV, No. 1, July 1810 pp. 21-38

RHETORIC -- FOR THE PORT FOLIO.  
LECTURE XI,

*Of the different figures of speech, and the peculiar method of justly communicating to each its proper expression both in reading and recitation.*

Gentlemen,

The intention of our wise and benevolent Creator, in endowing us with the faculty of speech, was, that we might communicate our thoughts and ideas to each other. Language, therefore, is the channel of thought; and the two great properties of language are *perspicuity* and *ornament*: or, first, the power of conveying our sentiments clearly or intelligibly to the minds of others, and, secondly, that of doing it in a polished and impressive manner.

The former property, or perspicuity, relates more immediately to composition: the latter, ornament, in a very considerable degree to elocution; because a figure or ornament of language would be very imperfectly and ineffectually introduced, if it were not enlivened by an appropriate mode of communication.

Rhetoricians have recommended the use of these figures, and elucidated their various powers. They are considered by Cicero as the chief source of light, of lustre, of energy, and of beauty, in language; he calls them the *eyes of eloquence*. They are embellishments of language, dictated either by the imagination, or the passions; and Quintilian,<sup>8</sup> the father of the oratorical school, divides them into two general classes; viz. those which respect the sense, and those which respect the sound. Of the former class are metaphors, allegories, &c. which have little reference to delivery, their perfection depending upon the accuracy of composition. But irony, climax, antithesis, &c. suppose a pronunciation throughout suitable to each, without which they cannot have their appropriate expression.

They were termed figures or attitudes of language by the Greeks, because they considered them as certain forms or positions given to words and thoughts, in order to heighten their beauty or increase their effect; as painters, by the attitudes of their portraits, render them more striking, or show them to greater advantage. It is my intention to define and exemplify, in my present address to you, some of the most important, and those in most general use; the whole collection being too extensive to admit of proper discussion within the prescribed limits of a lecture. To more elaborate treatises upon elocution I refer you for the remainder: many of which, however, will be found by a judicious critic to be nothing but pedantic subtleties, and, therefore, unnecessary appendages instead of real ornaments.

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<sup>8</sup> [Editor: Also "Quintilian," i.e., Marcus Fabius Quintilianus (c. 35–c.100 A.D.), Roman rhetorician.]

The following I consider to be of the number I have alluded to as the most interesting and useful, as well as most immediately connected with the subject which here demands your particular attention.

The first and most general figure to be met with in compositions of every description is Metaphor, under which, the language, relinquishing its precise and literal meaning, by a natural and animated description, directs the mind of the hearer or reader to the contemplation of the subject it is applied to, by the aid of imagery and allusion, so as to be rendered visible, as it were, to the mental eye, as it would be if represented on canvass to the corporeal. Hence a good rule has been established by rhetoricians to test the accuracy of a metaphor or allegory, when it is suspected to be imperfect or mixed, viz. to consider what sort of appearance the image or images presented to the mind would exhibit if delineated with a pencil. By which method we should immediately become sensible, whether incongruous circumstances were mixed, or the object was presented in one natural and consistent point of view.

A metaphor is sometimes confined to a single word, and is then called a trope; as, when we call a stupid man an ass. Of tropes the principal are metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony. When the name of one thing is applied to another on account of a supposed or real resemblance, it is called a metaphor; as, clouds of dust. When a trope changes the names of things by putting the adjunct for the subject, the effect for the cause, or the cause for the effect, the matter for the form, or rather for the form and matter united, or the form for the matter, it is called a metonymy; as, clothed in *purple* meaning purple garments. That is his *hand*, meaning his hand writing. When we put the name of a part for that of the whole, or the name of the whole for that of the part, it is a synecdoche; as, he gets his *bread* by his industry, meaning his support. When our words convey a sense contrary to what they express, but agreeable to what we intend, or are understood to intend, it is an irony; as, when we call a profligate, a very pious, good man. Particular care should be taken in pronouncing this trope; that our emphasis should have such expression that our meaning may not be misunderstood. These are, strictly speaking, tropes.

The difference between tropes and figures consists in this, that tropes affect single words only or chiefly; figures, are phrases, sentences, or even a continuation of sentences, used in a sense different from the original and literal sense, and yet so used as not to occasion obscurity. Hence, when tropes are extended into a description they become figures. Of figures the most important are the following, allegory, comparison, prosopopeia or personification, apostrophe, hyperbole, climax, and antithesis.

As metaphor is intended to ornament and give animation to a subject, a change of tone, of look, and of general expression, must take place, accommodated to the nature of the illustration introduced. For instance, lord Bolingbroke, speaking of the behaviour of Charles I to his last parliament, says, "In a word, about a month after their meeting, he dissolved them; and, as soon as he dissolved them, he repented; but he repented too late, of his rashness. Well might he repent; for the vessel was now full, and this last drop made the waters of bitterness overflow. Here we draw the curtain, and put an end to our



remarks.” This, though a perfectly correct and apposite metaphor, does certainly not require the animation in its delivery which the following does.

King Lear, when expelled from his house and exposed to all the violence of the tempest, exclaims, in this animated metaphor,

“Poor naked wretches! whereso’er ye are,  
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,  
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,  
Your loop’d and window’d raggedness defend you  
From seasons such as these?”

Shak[e]speare.

A very different expression from either of the foregoing, viz. a softness of tone, a complacency and gayety of countenance, with a sudden change to the frown of contempt and indignation, and a corresponding tone at the last line, is required in Chamont’s speech in the Orphan [by Thomas Otway], which is full of brilliant metaphors: and, at the last of keen resentment against the treatment of his sister:

“You took her up a little tender flower  
Just sprouted on a bank, which the next frost  
Had nipt; and with a careful loving hand,  
Transplanted her into your own fair garden,  
Where the sun always shines. There long she flourished,  
Grew sweet to sense, and lovely to the eye,  
Until at last a cruel spoiler came,  
Cropt this fair rose, and rifled all its sweetness,  
Then cast it like a loathsome weed away!”

Otway.

The most powerful indications of awe and terror in the tones, looks, and gesture of the speaker, are requisite to give proper expression to the following metaphorical description of the last day by Dr. [Edward] Young:

“At the destined hour,  
By the loud trumpet summoned to the charge,  
Shall all the formidable sons of fire,  
Eruptions, earthquakes, comets, lightnings, play  
Their various engines, all at once disgorge  
Their blazing magazines, and take by storm,  
This poor, terrestrial, citadel of man.”

*Night 9.* [of “Night Thoughts”]

The following metaphorical description of expiring life, by Dr. I[saac]. Watts, should be pronounced with the utmost pathos and solemnity, in a low and tremulous tone of voice, with strong emphatic pauses:

“Here am I bound in chains, a useless load  
Of breathing clay -- a burden to the seat  
That bears these limbs -- a borderer on the grave;  
Poor state of worthless being! While the lamp  
Of glimmering life burns languishing and dim;  
The flame just hovering o’er the dying snuff  
With doubtful alternations, half disjoin’d,  
And ready to expire with ev’ry blast.”

Lord Chesterfield, in his speech on restraining the liberty of the press, furnishes us with an assemblage of correct and beautiful metaphors:

“Every unnecessary restraint is a fetter upon the legs, is a shackle upon the hands of liberty: and one of the greatest blessings we enjoy, one of the greatest blessings, my lords, which a people can enjoy is liberty. But, every good in this life has its alloy of evil. Licentiousness is the alloy of liberty. It is an ebullition, an excrescence; it is a speck upon the eye of the political body, which I dare never touch but with a gentle, with a trembling hand, lest I injure the body; lest I destroy the eye upon which it is apt to appear. There is such a connexion between licentiousness and liberty, that it is not easy to correct the one without dangerously wounding the other. It is extremely hard to distinguish the true limit between them. In a changeable silk we can easily see there are two different colours, but we cannot easily discover where the one ends and the other begins: they blend insensibly.”

Allegory being a metaphor extended so far as to amount to a long continued description, or representation of some one thing by another that resembles it throughout, and the description carried on agreeably to the figurative as well as the literal meaning, requires a similar extension and accommodation of expression, according to the nature of the exemplification. Allegory is sometimes carried through a whole work, as in the Pilgrim’s Progress of [John] Bunyan. [Edmund] Spenser’s Faery Queen consists of a series of allegories. Opposition of character in allegory, may be exhibited in the following extracts.

[Mark] Akenside, in his poem on the Pleasures of Imagination, represents by a beautiful allegory, the necessity of industry to promote reputation in every line of life, and that some men are more susceptible of improvement than others:

“But, though heav’n  
In ev’ry breast hath sown these early seeds  
Of love and admiration, yet, in vain,  
Without fair Culture’s kind parental aid,  
Without enliv’ning suns; and genial show’rs,  
And shelter from the blast, in vain we hope  
The tender plant should rear its blooming head,  
Or yield the harvest promis’d in the spring.

Nor yet will ev'ry soil with equal stores  
Repay the tiller's labour, or attend  
His will obsequious, whether to produce  
The olive or the laurel. Different minds  
Incline to different objects; one pursues  
The vast alone, the wonderful, the wild:  
Another sighs for harmony, and grace,  
And gentlest beauty."

Here there being little emotion of mind expressed, little action is required: what is used should be slow and graceful; except in the last line but two; when the arms should be raised to the height of the head, and expanded; and at the expressions "wonderful" and "wild" should, though extended, be brought somewhat nearer together, the palms turned outwards, and the fingers expanded, with a corresponding expression of countenance, which should be suddenly contrasted in the next line by a change of tone expressive of tenderness, and a look indicative of love and solicitude, accompanied by a sigh, and inclination of the head to the left shoulder.

In the following extract, the phrenzy of despair is forcibly expressed by Calista, in the Fair Penitent [by Nicholas Rowe]:

"It is the voice of thunder, or my father.  
Madness! confusion! Let the storm come on,  
Let the tumultuous roar drive all upon me!  
Dash my devoted bark: ye surges break it!  
'Tis for my ruin that the tempest rises!  
When I am lost, sunk to the bottom low,  
Peace shall return, and all be calm again.

*Act 5<sup>th</sup>.*

The strongest expressions of grief and terror are to be given to the face and gesture, in the recitation of this energetic passages and, as in the former quotation, the last line should exhibit a perfect contrast in tone, look, and action.

I have here selected very brief instances of this figure, being restricted with respect to time, and necessarily led by the nature of my present subject to introduce a variety of examples. For complete allegories I refer you to Dr. [Samuel] Johnson's Rambler, and the other well known periodical works; Milton's allegory of Sin and Death in his second book of Paradise Lost is universally and deservedly applauded.

Nearly allied to metaphor and allegory is comparison, in which the two subjects are kept distinct in the expression as well as in the thought, whereas, in the former, they are distinct in the thought but not in the expression. This sudden change of thought requires an accommodated change of enunciation and action, descriptive of the exemplification introduced.

The degree of action and of general expression must depend altogether upon the nature of the description given: a comparison may be truly eloquent and apposite, and yet admit of very little action, and no variety of tone or change of countenance; as, in the following, from one of the sermons of the late reverend Dr. William Smith:

“Our faith and hope can give us no resemblance of God: but pure charity makes us in some sort, what he himself is in a superlative manner -- the helpers of the helpless, and partakers of his own joy in beholding a happy world. Our faith and hope may serve us as the handmaids of love here below; but leaving them behind us as of no further use, our love is all that we shall carry hence with us, as our dowery from earth to heaven.

“As yonder majestic Delaware is fed and supported in its course by tributary rills and springs, flowing from each mountain’s side, till at length it comes to mix its waters with its parent ocean, where it no longer stands in need of their scanty supplies; so faith and hope are the nourishing springs of our love, in our journey heavenwards; but when once arrived there, we shall no longer stand in need of their aid. ‘When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.’ Our faith shall be swallowed up in vision, and our hope in fruition: but our charity and love shall remain forever, mixing and blending in the unbounded ocean of parental and eternal love.”<sup>9</sup>

*Vol. II, ser. 19.*

Here any other action but that of the hand directed towards the river at the word “Delaware,” and towards Heaven at the word “Heavenwards,” would be improper.

[Edmund] Burke’s use of this figure in his celebrated description of the queen of France is of a similar nature:

“It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the queen of France! then the dauphiness, at Versailles: and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to more in; glittering like the morning star, full of life, and splendor, and joy. Oh! what a revolution! and what heart must I have to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall! I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards, to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult -- but the age of chivalry is gone!”

In the following simile, the conspicuous light in which the valour of Hector is placed, demands a considerable degree of exertion in the reader or speaker, in order to repeat it with proper animation:

“Thus, breathing death in terrible array,  
The close compacted legions urg’d their way:  
Fierce they drove on, impatient to destroy;  
Troy charged the first, and, Hector first of Troy.

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<sup>9</sup> [Editor: “Therefore the apostle says: ‘Now abides faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.’ because, when a man shall have reached the eternal world, while the other two graces will fail, love will remain greater and more assured.” St. Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, Book 1, ch. 39, 43.]

As from some mountain's craggy forehead torn  
 A rock's round fragment flies, with fury borne,  
 (Which from the stubborn stone a torrent sends)  
 Precipitate the pond'rous mass descends,  
 From steep to steep the rolling ruin bounds,  
 At ev'ry shock the crackling wood resounds.  
 Still gathering force, it smokes; and, urg'd amain,  
 Whirls, leaps, and thunders down, impetuous to the plain,  
 There stops. So Hector. Their whole force he prov'd,  
 Resistless when he rag'd, and when he stopp'd unmov'd.”  
*IL. b. 13, l. 187.*

In the preceding book, Homer's description of Sarpedon's pushing into the battle, like a lion among a flock of sheep, requires still more animation:

“So, press'd with hunger, from the mountain's brow,  
 Descends a lion on the flock below;  
 So stalks the lordly savage o'er the plain,  
 In sullen majesty and stern disdain.  
 In vain loud mastiffs bay him from afar,  
 And shepherds gall him with an iron war;  
 Regardless, furious, he pursues his way;  
 He foams, he roars, he rends the panting prey.”  
*IL. b. 12, 357.*

Among the most brilliant figures of eloquence we may place the figure prosopopeia or personification, which consists in ascribing life, sensibility, and action to inanimate objects. This figure admits of three degrees; first, when some of the properties or qualities of living creatures are given to inanimate objects: secondly, when those inanimate objects are introduced as acting like living creatures: and, thirdly, when they are represented, as speaking to us or as listening when we address them. The expression of the reader or speaker should rise in this scale, according to the strength given to the figure, accommodating it to the character or description introduced.

In the first or lowest degree this figure seldom raises the style above what may be conveyed by a single epithet, as the angry ocean, the thirsty ground, a furious dart, fierce winter, time kills grief.

A remarkable combination, with respect to different objects of this degree of the figure, is to be found in the following passage from [James] Thomson's *Winter* [from *The Seasons*]:

“Now shepherds! to your *helpless* charge be kind;  
*Baffle* the raging year, and fill their pens  
 With food at will; lodge them below the storm,  
 And watch them strict; for from the *bellowing* east,

In this dire season, oft the whirlwind's *wing*  
Sweeps up the *burden* of whole wintry plains  
At one wide waft, and o'er the hapless flocks,  
Hid in the hollow of two *neighbouring* hills,  
The *billowy* tempest 'whelms, till upward urg'd,  
The valley to a shining mountain *swells*,  
Tipp'd with a wreath high curling to the sky."

*Winter*, I. 263.

The second degree of this figure, is, when inanimate objects are represented as acting with a complete personification of character like living creatures; as in the following correct and vivid, though solitary instance of ornamented style in the sermons of Dr. T[homas]. Sherlock:

"Go to your natural religion, lay before her Mahomet and his disciples arrayed in armour and in blood, riding in triumph over the spoils of thousands who fell by his victorious sword. Show her the cities which he set in flames, the countries which he ravaged and destroyed, and the miserable distress of all the inhabitants of the earth. When she has viewed him in this scene, carry her into his retirement; show her the prophet's chamber, his concubines, and his wives; and let her hear him allege revelation, and a divine commission, to justify his adultery and his lust. When she is tired with this prospect, then show her the blessed Jesus, humble and meek, doing good to all the sons of men; let her see him in his most retired privacies; let her follow him to the mount, and hear his devotions and supplications to God. Carry her to his table, and view his poor fare, and hear his heavenly discourse. Let her attend him to the tribunal, and consider the patience with which he endured the scoffs and reproaches of his enemies; lead her to his cross; let her view him in the agony of death, and hear his last prayer for his persecutors, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!' When natural religion has thus viewed both, ask her, which is the prophet of God! But her answer we have already had, when she saw part of this scene through the eyes of the centurion, who attended at the cross. By him she spoke, and said, 'Truly this man was the son of God!'"

*T. Sherlock's sermons, dis. 9, vol. 1st.*

An ode to the departing year by [Samuel Taylor] Coleridge commences with this singularly beautiful instance of personification in this degree:

"Spirit! who sweepest the wild harp of time,  
It is most hard with an untroubled ear,  
Thy dark inwoven harmonies to hear!  
Yet, mine eye fixt on heaven's unchanging clime,  
Long had I listen'd, free from mortal fear,  
With inward stillness and a bowed mind:  
When lo! far onwards waving on the wind,  
I saw the skirts of the Departing Year!  
Starting from my silent sadness,  
Then, with no unholy madness,

Ere yet the enter'd cloud forbad[e] my sight,  
I rais'd th' impetuous song and solemnized his flight."

The third and the boldest form of personification is when inanimate objects are introduced not only as feeling and acting, but also as listening and speaking. Although this degree of the figure is sometimes the channel of calm and tender sentiment, it is generally the language of strong passion; and therefore, when it is introduced as the effusion of a mind violently heated and agitated, a corresponding tone and glow of elocution is necessary for the proper expression of it.

In reading or reciting the following lines by Metastasio, the utmost tenderness of tone and suavity of manners is required:

Gentle Zephyr! as you fly,  
If you kiss my fair one's ear,  
Whisper soft that you're a sigh,  
But from whose breast she must not hear.

Limpid rill! if e'er my love  
Near thy gurgling runnel rove,  
Murmur that from tears you rise,  
But tell her not from whose sad eyes.

The personification of *Pride*, in [Alexander] Pope's Essay on Man, exemplifies this figure, without calling into action any violent emotion of the mind:

Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine,  
Earth for whose use? Pride answers, "Tis for mine!  
For me kind Nature wakes her genial pow'r,  
Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r;  
Annual for me the grape, the rose, renew  
The juice nectareous and the balmy dew;  
For me the mine a thousand treasures brings;  
For me health gushes from a thousand springs;  
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;  
My footstool earth, my canopy the skies."

Milton thus describes the powerful and instantaneous effect of Eve's eating the forbidden fruit:

"So saying, her rash hand, in evil hour,  
Forth reaching to the fruit, she pluck'd, she eat;  
Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat  
Sighing, through all her works, gave signs of wo.  
That all was lost!"

Apostrophe is a figure which admits of more animation both in language and delivery than mere personification, because the object is addressed in the second person as if present.

The tone of voice to be employed in pronouncing this figure is as various as the passions it assumes; but as these passions are frequently very vehement, a higher and louder tone of voice is generally necessary in the apostrophe, than in that part of the subject which precedes it.

Dr. Akenside, in his proposed inscription for Shakspeare's monument, exhibits a fine exemplification of apostrophe.

“O youths and virgins! O declining eld!  
O pale misfortune's slaves! O ye who dwell  
Unknown with humble quiet! Ye who wait  
In courts, or fill the golden seat of kings!  
O sons of sport and pleasure! O thou wretch  
That weep'st for jealous love, or the sore wounds  
Of conscious guilt, or Death's rapacious hand  
Which left thee void of hope! O ye who roam  
In exile; ye who through th' embattled field  
Seek bright renown; or who for nobler palms  
Contend, the leaders of a public cause!  
Approach: behold this marble. Know ye not  
The features! Hath not oft his faithful tongue  
Told you the fashion of your own estate,  
The secrets of your bosom? Here then, round  
His monument, with reverence, while ye stand,  
Say to each other; 'This was Shakspeare's form,  
Who walk'd in every path of human life,  
Felt every passion, and to all mankind  
Doth now, will ever, that experience yield,  
Which his own genius only could acquire.’”

Dr. Wm. Smith commences a sermon to the freemasons in 1778 with a fine apostrophe to liberty.

“Liberty, evangelical and social! Jewel of inestimable price! Thou blessing of all blessings the first! Wooed and courted by many; won and wedded by few! Ever near us; yet often at a distance fancied! Through all the modes of faith by the saint pursued; and in every frame of government by the patriot sought! O thou celestial good! or rather, Thou who art the author of all good terrestrial and celestial! Supreme architect of the universe! who by our great and spiritual master thy son, hast taught us the true way of liberty -- the way of being free and accepted through him, may I now be enlightened and enlivened by a ray from thee.”



In all such addresses, the action, countenance, and tones, should express an apparent con[s]ciousness of the presence of the person or object.

Hyperbole may be stiled the extravagance of figurative language, and consists in magnifying or diminishing an object beyond reality.

Milton describes the remorse of Satan under this figure:

“Me miserable! which way shall I fly  
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?  
Which way I fly is hell -- myself am hell.  
And in the lowest deep, a lower deep  
Still threat’ning to devour me opens wide;  
To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven.”

A woman in grief is thus extravagantly described by [Nathaniel] Lee:

“I found her on the floor  
In all the storm of grief, yet beautiful;  
Pouring forth tears at such a lavish rate,  
That, were the world on fire, they might have drown’d  
The wrath of heav’n, and quench’d the mighty ruin.”

The following hyperbolic description of a man swimming, is given by Shakspeare:

“I saw him beat the surges under him,  
And ride upon their backs; he trade the water;  
Whose enmity he flung aside, and breasted  
The surge most swol’n that met him: his bold head  
’Bove the contentious waves he kept, and oar’d  
Himself with his good arms, in lusty strokes  
To th’ shore, that o’er his wave-borne basis bow’d,  
As stooping to receive him.”

*Tempest, A. 2, S. 1.*

The absurdity of describing in such turgid language, so familiar an action as that of swimming, will be rendered conspicuous by contrasting Shakspeare’s inflated, with that of Thomson’s simple and natural description of the same act:

Cheer’d by the milder beam the sprightly youth  
Speeds to the Veil known pool, whose chrystal depth  
A sandy bottom shows. Awhile he stands  
Gazing the inverted landscape, half afraid  
To meditate the blue profound below;  
Then plunges headlong down the circling flood.

His ebon tresses, and his rosy cheek,  
Instant emerge: and through th' obedient wave,  
At each short breathing by his lip repell'd,  
With arms and legs according well, he makes  
As humour leads, an easy winding path;  
While, from his polish'd sides a dewy light  
Effuses on the pleas'd spectators round."

*Summer*, 1. 1243.

The tones and action, however, in the reading or recitation of these descriptions, ought to be accommodated to the style in which they are conveyed. The former with the most boisterous energy, the latter with the same calmness and simplicity with which nature impels the performance of the action described.

Climax or amplification bears a striking resemblance to hyperbole, differing from it chiefly in degree. The object of hyperbole is to stimulate imagination, and extend our conception beyond the truth; that of climax, to elevate our ideas of the truth itself, by a concatenation of circumstances, ascending one above another in importance, and all referring to the same object. In reading or reciting a climax, the voice and expression must rise with the subject.

Among the poets, Shakspeare gives frequent specimens of this figure: such as,

"The cloud-capt tow'rs, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea all which it inherits, shall dissolve,  
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,  
Leave not a wreck behind."

Dr. W[illiam]. Smith in his funeral oration on general Montgomery, who was slain in the attack made by the Americans upon Quebec, in 1775, introduces the following animated climax:

"The magnificent structures raised by the gratitude of mankind to their benefactors of old had but a local and temporary use. They were beheld only by one people and for a few ages.

"The heav'n aspiring pyramid, the proud  
Triumphal arch, and all that ere upheld  
The worshipp'd name of hoar antiquity,  
Are mould'ring into dust."

"In vain does the way-faring man investigate the tottering ruins for the divinity once enshrined there! a scanty receptacle, about six feet in length and half the breadth, informs him that it once contained some human dust, long since mingled with the common mass. In vain does the prying antiquary dwell upon the sculpture, or strive to

collect and spell the scattered fragments of letters. The inscription is gone -- long since gone, effaced, obliterated! And fruitless were the search through the whole world for the hero's name, if it were not recorded in the orator's page, and proclaimed by the faithful voice of history.

"There it shall live, while the smallest vestiges of literature remain upon earth -- yea, till the final dissolution of things human; nor shall it perish then; but being the immediate care of heaven, the great archangel, when he sweeps suns and systems from their place, and kindles up their last fires, stretching forth his mighty arm, shall pluck the deathless scroll from the devouring conflagration, and give it a place among the archives of eternity."

The following singularly sublime passage in the sermon of a protestant divine, on the resurrection, affords another brilliant exemplification of this figure; and if delivered with proper expression of voice, pauses, and gesture, must exhibit a specimen of perfect elocution:

"Twice had the sun gone down upon the earth, and all as yet was quiet at the sepulchre. Death held his sceptre over the son of God -- still and silent the hours passed on\*<sup>10</sup> -- the rays of the midnight moon gleamed on their helmets and on their spears -- the enemies of Christ exulted in their success -- the hearts of his friends were sunk in despondency and in sorrow -- the spirits of glory waited, in anxious suspense, to behold the event, and wondered at the depth of the ways of God! At length the morning star, arising in the east, announced the approach of light -- the third day began to dawn upon the world -- when, on a sudden the earth trembled to its centre, and the powers of heaven were shaken -- an angel of God descended -- the guards shrunk back from the terror of his presence, and fell prostrate on the ground --' his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow --' he 'rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre and sat upon it!" But, who is this that cometh from the tomb, with dyed garments from the bed of death ?' 'He that is glorious in his apparel, walking in the greatness of his strength? It is thy prince, O Zion! Christians! it is your Lord! He hath trodden the wine-press alone; he hath stained his raiment with blood: but now, as the first born from the womb of nature, he meets the morning of his resurrection -- he arises a conqueror from the grave -- he returns with blessings from the world of spirits -- he brings salvation to the sons of men! Never did the returning sun usher in a day so glorious. It was the jubilee of the universe! The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy! The father of mercies looked down from his throne in the heavens with complacency -- he beheld his world restored -- he saw his work that it was good. Then did the desert rejoice; the face of nature was gladdened before him, when the blessings of The Eternal descended, as the dew of heaven, for the refreshing of the nations!"

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<sup>10</sup> [Footnote in original] \* -- 'Twas as the general pulse  
Of life stood still, and Nature made a pause,  
An awful pause!

*Young's Night Thoughts*, Ni. 1.

There is perhaps no figure more generally used to enforce sentiment than *antithesis*; and it is frequently adopted by our best authors. The pages of Dr. [Samuel] Johnson, Dr. Young, and Mr. [Edward] Gibbon, abound with antitheses. It is in fact a species of witticism, which, if conducted with tolerable correctness, cannot fail to please. It consists in placing together and contrasting things, essentially different or contrary, that they may mutually set off and illustrate each other.

Few of the figures of rhetoric derive more beauty from a proper pronunciation than this; the ear being as much gratified by an antithesis or opposite tone of the voice, as the understanding is pleased and enlightened by a contrast of thought. In general, the proper expression requires a considerable pause to be observed between each opposing part, which, with a correct emphasis, will sufficiently diversify them to the ear.

The following extract from Cicero's second oration against Catiline will forcibly exemplify this figure:

“If we will but compare *both parties*, and weigh the justice and the reasons of the *one* against the *other*, we shall find how inconsiderable our enemies are, and how easy it is to conquer them. For *modesty* fights on *this side* and *impudence* on *that*; here is *purity* of manners, there *impurity*; here is *faith*, there *fraud*; here is *piety*, there *wickedness*; here is *constancy*, there *fool-hardiness*; here is *honour*, there *infamy*; here is *continence*, there *lust*; here in fine, *justice*, *temperance*, *courage*, *prudence*, and all kinds of *virtues* are in confederacy, and contending with *injustice*, with *luxury*, with *cowardice*, with *temerity*, and all kinds of *vices*.”

These are some of the principal figures which elevate and ornament sentiment, and which in order to answer the end of their creation, and give a forcible expression to it, must be delivered with a justly corresponding energy of elocution according to their distinct nature. Instructions however, with respect to that expression, can be but very imperfectly conveyed through the medium of written language. To be correctly taught they must be exemplified. As it would be a vain undertaking for a painter to draw an accurate likeness of an individual whom he had never seen, without contemplating the form and assemblage of his features, and the peculiar expression of his countenance, so the mere description or theoretical communication of the laws and powers of oratory can never teach the art of speaking, unless the eye and the ear are at the same time instructed.

I shall conclude this lecture with a specimen of eloquent composition, as brilliant in imagery, as correct in style, and as refined in sentiment, as can be found in any language; and dictated by a man as remarkable for the point and power of his pen, as for the profligacy of his principles, and the infamy of his life, I mean the late Thomas Paine, author of several political publications, during the revolutionary war, and of several insolent and blasphemous attacks upon Christianity, since its termination. In the

Pennsylvania Magazine for March 1775, he published the following just and animated reflections on the life and death of lord Clive<sup>11</sup>:

“Ah! the tale is told! The scene is ended, and the curtain falls! As an emblem of the vanity of all earthly pomp, let his monument be a globe; but, be that globe a bubble; let his effigy be a man walking round it in his sleep; and let Fame, in the character of Shadow, inscribe his honours on the air.

“I view him but as yesterday on the burning plains of Plas[s]ey, doubtful of life, of health, of victory; I see him in the instant when ‘*to be or not to be,*’ were equal chances to the human eye. To be a lord or a slave -- to return loaded with the spoils or remain mingled with the dust of India. Did necessity always justify the severity of a conqueror, the rude tongue of Censure would be silent; and however painfully he might look back on scenes of horror, the pensive reflection would not alarm him. Though his feelings suffered, his conscience would be acquitted. The sad remembrance would move serenely, and leave the mind without a wound. But oh, India! thou loud proclaimer of European cruelties, thou bloody monument of unnecessary deaths, be tender in the day of inquiry, and show a *christian* world thou canst suffer and forgive!

“Departed from India, and loaded with the plunder, I see him doubling the Cape, and looking wishfully to Europe. I see him meditating on years of pleasure, and gratifying his ambition with expected honours. I see his arrival pompously announced in every newspaper, his eager eye rambling through the crowd in quest of homage, and his ear listening lest an applause should escape him. Happily for him he arrived before his *fame*, and the short interval was a time of rest. From the crowd I follow him to the court; I see him enveloped in the sunshine of sovereign favour, rivalling the great in honours, the proud in splendour, and the rich in wealth. From the court I trace him to the country: his equipage moves like a camp; every village bell proclaims his coming; the wondering peasants admire his pomp, and his heart runs, over with joy.

“But, alas! not satisfied with uncountable thousands, I accompany him *again* to India -- I mark the variety of countenances which appear at his landing. Confusion spreads the news. Every passion seems alarmed. The wailing widow, the crying orphan, and the childless parent, remember and lament; the rival nabobs court his favour; the rich dread his power; and the poor his severity. Fear and Terror march like pioneers before his camp; Murder and Rapine accompany it; Famine and Wretchedness follow in the rear!”--

In my next lecture, which will complete my proposed course, I shall state to you the different divisions of a regularly composed oration; with illustrations of its most essential and prominent parts, from some of our most celebrated forensic and didactic writers.

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From *The Port Folio*, Oct. 1810, vol. IV, no 4, pp. 336-339.

#### THE DRAMA -- FOR THE PORT FOLIO.

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<sup>11</sup> [*Editor*: Just prior to his death (believed to be by suicide), Robert Clive (1725-1774), the victor of the astonishing battle of Plassey in 1757, and that set in motion the ensuing British conquest of India, was offered command of the British forces in North America, but declined it.]

The stage is an important coadjutor in the refinement of manners and the improvement of taste. It has for ages been a fashionable amusement, as well as a useful school to all classes of society. By its lively delineation of real life, kings have been arrested in their path of luxury, and directed to a higher and a holier way; the rudest intellect has been insensibly forced to learn -- Virtue has been strengthened and confirmed in her resolutions -- and *guilty creatures*, with their hearts subdued by the cunning of the scene, have, it is said, *proclaim'd their malefactions*. Dramatic representations have therefore been cultivated and admired, wherever Science has extended her influence, or the Arts diffused their utility. If the drama has tended to polish the manners, to improve the understanding, and to ameliorate the heart, the votaries of fashion, of learning, and of benevolence, will surely contribute their united efforts to its support and embellishment. The theatre thus becomes the resort not merely of the wise but the elegant. While the severer critic reproves every violation of his rules, the smiles of Beauty will add a fascination to what before was entitled to esteem.

These remarks are made with a view to the renewed efforts contemplated for the advancement of the Philadelphia Stage. The management, already highly respectable, has gained an invaluable acquisition in the talents, taste, and worth of Mr. Wood, who has been long and deservedly a favourite upon our boards. The moment is therefore, propitious to improvement. At such a period the public expect a reformation of abuses which accident has created and time matured, and which strenuous efforts aided by such an opportunity, can alone remove. It is like a new dynasty in the history of a nation, where the people will submit to ten-fold greater hardships if inflicted by their new masters than they would have borne from the old.

No audience can be more liberal than that of Philadelphia, and at the same time, none on this side of the Atlantic is better calculated to judge: so that while errors are plainly perceived, a partial indulgence is generally extended towards those who commit them. But a perpetual recurrence of the same faults must weary patience, and incur reproof. Some of these we shall now exhibit, trusting that to be corrected they need only be named.

It has been too much the practice on our boards, in imitation perhaps of old, but certainly not of estimable examples, to appropriate particular parts to particular individuals, and indeed to invest a performer with a whole line of characters. These characters thus become, as it were, his prerogative, and he maintains his possession, with a tenacity often highly detrimental to the reputation of the company and the interests of the manager: for a respectable actor thus excluded from a part in which he is calculated to shine, is either omitted in the *cast* altogether, or forced into a station far below that to which his merits entitle him.

Among the hallooings of the gallery, and the titterings of the ladies of the upper boxes, and the flusterings of the lobby knights, to say nothing of the scene shifters' whistle, and the dancing of cities and oceans over their boards, it is not to be expected that we should completely realize the story of the drama. Partridge himself, although he

thought any man would have behaved *just so* on seeing a ghost, yet was not perfectly persuaded that it was a true raw-head and bloody-bones. At the same time the illusion should be aided as much as circumstance will permit, and every obstacle should be removed that can be effected by industry or art. It is therefore unpardonable that such dreadful incongruities in dress should sometimes amaze the view with a confusion of time and place, rank and fashion. An Egyptian Lysimachus, will sometimes contend with a Spanish Hephestion, and the attendants of Cleopatra will often march in corduroy pantaloons and cossack boots. We have seen a murderer of Caesar, without a change, become a grandee of Spain, or an English baron. It appears sufficient if the consistent actor can only get into what he considers the *olden time*, where he thinks his grandfather's smallclothes are of the true classic cut, and that the same manners and habits will suit the climates of Greece and Italy -- the period of the Trojan war and the reign of queen Elizabeth. The liberality of the manager we are confident provides against this evil, and the attention of the *full grown* player should be at least commensurate to it. To this subject Mr. Kemble has devoted infinite attention, and for the improvement he has effected, merits scarcely less applause than for his able delineation of character.

While, however, we recommend a laudable imitation of the excellencies of the London stage, we would by no means have its vices copied too. Now, however great an actor Mr. Cooke, the toper, may be, we are disposed to think Mr. Cooke, a temperate man, would be much better. But in pursuance of his great example, some of our friends often fall into what he calls his *old complaint*, without talents to extenuate the offence. This is not confined to actors of the lowest grade, with some of whom we take it to be, "the custom always of an afternoon," but on some occasions infects even royalty itself. The gods have sometimes, it is said, sipped nectar until they were half seas over, and monarchs have in their frolics imbibed "potations pottle deep," but an actor intoxicated is a monster so insulting, and so much calculated to disgust, as to be absolutely unworthy of pity or pardon.

But it is not of less importance that a reformation of abuses should take place in the theatre *generally*, than that it should be exhibited *on the stage*: for while the players owe duties to the public, there are correlative duties, which should be no less carefully observed towards them. The decent part of the audience are perpetually insulted by the intrusion of certain characters among them, less pure than snow. These Paphian priestesses not only offend by their association, but often interrupt the performance, "when some necessary question of the play is to be considered." The fault, however, is not so much with them, as with those who, by their attention, encourage and invite them. Neglect and disapprobation, defeating the object of their visits, would prevent a recurrence of these improprieties -- for

Vice is a monster of such horrid mien,  
That to be hated needs but to be seen.

Another practice, totally inconsistent with the decency of the place, is the almost suffocating diffusion of cigar smoke, to the infinite annoyance of comfort and cleanliness. The coffee room is sometimes a perfect *smoke house*, to the exclusion of all

who are accustomed to inhale a pure atmosphere. Should it not be the duty of the keeper of the room to abolish this sin against decorum, for his own sake, as well as for the public good?

We cannot avoid congratulating the audience on the merit of the managers as actors merely: a stock of talent is thus incorporated as it were into the boards of the theatre, and we are always confident that the best parts in most pieces will be well sustained. It is to be hoped that the arduous duties of directing the conduct of others will not prevent them from appearing themselves, as usual, on the stage. It must be admitted, that too great a cheapness will render the greatest merit in some measure unattractive. We are far from wishing that either of these gentlemen should prostitute their talents to parts beneath them, any more than that they should avoid characters in which they are so well calculated to excel.

In most places the theatre constitutes a kind of warehouse where the commodities of beauty and elegance are displayed at a single view to the best advantage: that with us, the managers have heretofore appeared resolved to direct our whole attention to the stage, for so Tartarean has been the darkness of the front of the house, at all seasons, that conscience has often induced us to cry out like Polonius, for “lights! lights! lights!” The ventilator will undoubtedly diminish this defect, but illumination must be increased, or Beauty will be content no longer to blush unseen.

To the taste of Mr. Robbins we commit the decorations, believing that he will agree with us in saying, that however well green hangings may suit the despair of Calista or even Othello’s jealousy, they are but sorry emblems of the comic Muse.

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*William Thomas Sherman*  
1604 NW 70th St.  
Seattle, Washington 98117  
206-784-1132

[wts@gunjones.com](mailto:wts@gunjones.com)

<http://www.gunjones.com> and [http://www.scribd.com/wsherman\\_1](http://www.scribd.com/wsherman_1)

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