

describe? An instrument which magnifies, which converts even a drop of water into a miniature *world* filled with life and movement. And what now does the word literally mean? Greek, *mikros*, little; *kosmos*, world. Could a fitter sign have been chosen to represent the instrument in question?

I would now like to consider shortly the beauties of words in composition. I allude to those particular beauties arising from the happy choice and felicitous combination of our word-pictures. I think that I have already sufficiently illustrated the beauties of words taken as mere words—that is, signs of notions. I have attempted to show their individual aptness, their peculiar fitness for the work assigned them. I have even lightly touched upon their graces in composition. What I have to do now is to dwell more fully upon the artistic effects resulting from apt combinations; such combinations, in fact, as adorn the pages of our best classical authors, that judicious, scholarly, perhaps inspired taste or faculty which prompts men of established reputation in letters to use none but the fittest words wherewith to express their meaning, the possession of which faculty is in fact the secret of their success as authors. There is not a writer of repute in our language, or indeed in any language, whose individuality of genius is not stamped on his compositions by some happy combination of words, which are the outpourings of a species of inspiration. These combinations, thus felicitously effected, convey something more than mere ideas; they awaken in us a keen perception of the beautiful; create an intense longing for the music of speech; and having roused the desire, they contain within themselves the means of gratifying it.

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness, but still will keep
A bower quiet for us," etc.

I quote from memory. Doubtless this sentiment could have been, and has been, expressed in other words by other poets; but it is Keats, and Keats alone, who has invested the thought with a charm peculiarly its own.

"When the hounds of spring are on winter's
traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain,
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain."

Here is a beautiful example of alliteration and onomatopœia. As the soft, suggestive cadence of the concluding lines fall upon the ear, we see in fancy ghostly shadows chasing each other across the wrinkled surface of some hawthorn-bowered wayside pool, pursued by the errant wind, or hear the subdued rustle of the whispering leaves in their gentle dalliance with the fitful breeze, mingling with the quick, light patter of the rain-drops, as the spring shower sweeps through the grove.

One of the most beautiful and striking instances, to my mind, of alliteration and middle rhyme in the English language, is to be found in that exquisite fantasy, Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner :—"

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea."

Pope's celebrated couplet on the English hexameter must be fresh in the memories of many. Notice the crushed, dragging effect of the concluding verse :—

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

Why, one almost sees the line, like the bruised and tortured reptile, writhing under the weird influence of the magic pen which gave it birth. Pope is a master of this art of according sound and sense. Here is the sound of a bow-string :—