

P. Which ornaments of composition are used in its construction?

S. Personification, and Metaphor.

P. Diverst the passage of its ornaments, and poetical arrangement, and how will it appear?

S. Somewhat as follows.—For a last time the eye appears brilliant; during life it was an organ of expression to the soul, and was a chief ornament to the human frame.

P. How are the ornaments supplied?

S. By attaching “personification” to nature, and saying that the brilliancy of the eye is occasioned by her efforts; brilliancy or vividness, by “metaphor” is called fire; the soul is personified as sitting on the eye ball, and looking from it in its various tempers; and the ornamental nature of the eye is implied by metaphor, in saying, that it gained the flesh credit in the world.

P. What is gained by the embellishment of this passage, and by its poetical construction?

S. Strength of expression, pathos, brilliancy, beauty—and illustration—which induces pleasing picturesque thoughts—beside the principal object, but all tending to heighten its effect.

P. Can you give any philosophical reason, why the simple recital may be departed from, and why the glowing language of poetry should be added?

S. Many of the productions and operations of nature, are almost unutterably exquisite and beautiful—few more so, than the human eye. Simple language is inadequate to describe its wonders, it is impossible even to imagine them satisfactorily—it may then be inferred, that comparison, illustration, and the ornaments, with which time has enriched language, are necessarily used to convey a lively picture of this object to the mind. These ornaments indeed, seem efforts of nature, to overcome the poverty of speech, and to express herself, at all adequately, in the dialect of men. They are as the many rays of light which centre in the magnifying glass, and so allow of a more perfect inspection of distant and minute objects. We all find that objects—tho’ near to touch or sight—are distant from adequate expression and description—hence, the collecting of poetic light from many sources, that it may all bear on the subject under consideration.

P. You have been taught the value of a right understanding of words. There are a few terms in your exercise which I wish you to define. You mentioned nature’s effort—what ideas have you of Nature—how would you define the term?

S. I imagine nature to mean, generally, the visible works of the Creator—poetry, as in the passage under consideration, imagines a personage called Nature, who is supposed to preside over the simple, original, or native state of things.