

plenty to do, and to prepare, in an English study, it is also useful to make them feel that they must always be on their guard against supposing that they understand what they do not. An occasional failure on the part of the whole class, has sometimes a very beneficial and bracing effect on their future exertions;

One danger of boys in this exercise is, that they may sometimes press the analysis too far, and include under the head of metaphor what deserves a different name. The process of expansion is so regular, and seems to explain so much, that they want to expand every expression that is not literally true. Thus they would like to expand "pale death" and "dark dishonour," or "gaunt famine." It is necessary, therefore, to explain to them that these expressions are not metaphors, not even personal metaphors like "a frowning fountain," or "a sighing oak." In the personal metaphor, "a frowning mountain," the overhanging and threatening brow of a mountain is compared to the projecting brow of a frowning person; but, in "pale death," death is not compared to a person, but is represented as a person. A painter would not represent a mountain, while he would death, as a human being. Between personal metaphor and what may be called personification, there lies a kind of debateable province. I will give one instance of what I mean. "The earth drank up his blood." Now here there may or may not be a strong personification. If the context told us of Gessler dying on the soil of the land of Switzerland, the earth would be represented as vindictively draining the life-blood of her oppressor, and this might be called a distinct personification; but in most cases the personification would be weak, and the expression would merely be a way of saying that the blood oozed almost as rapidly into the earth, as water disappears when drunk by a man or beast, and there would be little more personification than in saying "a sponge imbibes water." Such expressions are already so simple that they do not require explanation, and the process of expansion applied to them would be misplaced. There can be no possible advantage in a boy's expanding the expression in Gray's "Bard," and telling out that, as a man sighs, so an oak makes a noise that reminds one of sighing. It is a good exercise for a boy to distinguish between metaphors that are good and bad. We may point out to him that a metaphor, like a word, must be suited to the context. For instance, since a tree inhales and exhales certain gases through the medium of its foliage, "the leaves are the lungs of a tree" may be a very suitable metaphor in a treatise on natural science; but you would not like to say that "spring comes clothing the trees with their green lungs." Again, for the introspective Hamlet, the "mind's eye" is a very appropriate and beautiful metaphor; and Menenius Agrippa, wrangling with a cobbler, may appropriately call him.

"You, the great toe of this assembly."

And even Hamlet, in his lighter mood, may say that his friends are neither the soles of fortune's feet, nor the button on her cap; but scarcely any context could justify such metaphor as the "mind's hand or toe." We might briefly lay down the laws of metaphor thus.

(1) A metaphor must not be used unless it is needed to throw light upon the thought of the speaker.

(2) A metaphor must not enter too much into detail; for every additional detail increases the improbability that the correspondence of the whole comparison can be sustained without exaggeration. As an instance of excessive detail and consequent exaggeration, take

"For now hath time made me his numbering clock,
My thoughts are minutes, and with sighs they jar
Their watches on unto mine eyes, the outward watch,
Whereto my finger, like a dial's point,
Is pointing still, in cleansing them from tears."

(3) A metaphor must not be far-fetched. We may instance

"Here lay Duncan,
His silver skin laced with his golden blood."

(4) Two metaphors must not be confused. We must not speak of "the thunderbolt overflowing its banks." An instance may be found in—

"Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since?"

(5) A metaphor, when taken liberally, must be wholly false. In other words, the two first terms of the simile must be wholly distinct from the third and fourth terms. Thus, the "venom'd spear of slander hath wounded mine honour," is a good metaphor, because slander and slander's spear are invisible, and cannot really wound mine honour," is decidedly objectionable; because, though the tongue cannot wound, it can touch. On the same principle you might say of a virulent and unprincipled critic, that "he assailed the best established reputation with his pen," but you could not venture to say, except with a touch of humorous irony, that "he blackened the most spotless reputations with his ink." Ink is literally black, and the least touch of literal truth destroys the falsehood, which is the foundation of a good metaphor. In accordance with these rules, pupils may be taught not only to analyse and expand, but also to criticise and draw out the appropriateness and inappropriateness of a metaphor, referring to the canons laid down.

I had hoped, when I began this Lecture, to include in it some remarks on Prosody, and its place in the higher English teaching, as well as upon Logic; but the want of time compels me to omit all reference whatever to these subjects. I may, perhaps, have another opportunity for repairing this omission. I could not do justice to these subjects in the brief space that remains, and I therefore prefer to pass over them entirely, and to conclude with one or two observations which are the result of some very recent experience.

I lately met a friend of mine, who is an Assistant-master in one of the leading public schools of the kingdom. During the last term he had been teaching English with zeal and assiduity. But upon my enquiring how he was satisfied with the results of his work, he replied that he was quite dissatisfied. "He could not get the fellows to work at it." Somewhat surprised at this, I enquired his method of teaching. "What did you set the boys to do?" "Oh! I told them to read over the lesson well, and then I asked them questions about it. They did not know much about it; so I told them what I thought they ought to know, and then, next time, I examined them in what I had told them; but they did not seem to take it in quite, or to feel much interest in it." "Did you give them anything definite to do?" I once more asked. "Did you tell them to expand any metaphors?" "No." "Well, did you give them any derivations, or point out any difficulties? I suppose they had an Etymological Dictionary at all events?" "No; they had not."

This conversation was very gratifying to me. If my intelligent friend—and he is very intelligent—had been able to make boys work at English without previously giving them notice of some questions, without any paper work, without any definite laws of etymology, diction, and metaphor, I should have felt that he was far more successful than he had a right to be, and certainly far more successful than I have ever been. I have myself passed through my friend's depressing experience; I have known what it is to have a class come up with a scene from Shakespeare, at which they had worked very hard, and which they fondly thought they had mastered. Oh, the singular, and apparently unaccountable, perverseness