

(See Harris's "Hermes," ch. viii.) Now, in English, forms like *sit*, *eset*, *habuisset*, &c., are often represented by compound forms. Some wiseacre, finding that subjunctive forms (or modes of expression) are of two kinds in English, simple and compound, and that grammarians had two terms in use, Potential and Subjunctive, hit upon the bright idea of calling the simple form Subjunctive, and the compound form Potential, and then proceeded to extend the latter term to all combinations in which the verbs "may," "shall," "can," &c., appeared, even though they were really Indicative, being under the hallucination that the compound forms, which were Subjunctive (or Potential) in their force, were so simply by virtue of the use of the auxiliary.

Why should English Grammar be defaced by this senseless abortion? As I have remarked elsewhere, "Is it not marvellous that teachers, who in their Latin classes never dream of telling their pupils that *possum scribere* is the potential mood of *scribo*; and when they give a German lesson, never insist that *ich kann schreiben* is a potential mood of *schreiben*; or in Greek, that *γχαθις δυναμαι* is a potential mood of *γχαθις*; or in French, that *je puis écrire* is a potential mood of *écrire*,—still hanker after that blessed potential mood in English?" It cannot survive much longer, however. You will find no Potential Mood recognized by scholars like Koch, or Matzner, or Skeat, or Morris, or Latham, or Adams. It belongs to the veriest old-fogeydom of English Grammar, and will disappear from grammatical teaching as soon as people think clearly and consecutively on these subjects, and realize the fact that English is not something apart by itself, but belongs to a great group of languages, which, amid their manifold varieties, have in common the same fundamental principles and laws of speech.

## APPLICATION OF TIME TO SIMILES IN ELOCUTION.

BY RICHARD LEWIS.

It is not necessary for me to define the simile; but if any students wish brief and correct views on this and other common figures of speech, I refer them to Bain's English Composition and Rhetoric. The simile and the metaphor are the most common and important rhetorical figures, and as they pervade every higher form of literature, and especially poetry and oratory, which lie so much in the province of elocution, it is important to have a clear and fixed principle for our guidance in their delivery. An attempt has been made to this end, by teachers who have been more anxious to be original than correct, by giving a rule based on the value of the figure; if it exalts the literal passage, it must be read or spoken slower than that passage; but if it depreciates the passage, it must be read or spoken faster. A few illustrations will show that this rule is fallacious, and if applied would utterly mar the force of the figure.

In the following passages the similes are intended to strengthen the literal passage—they exalt it, but should, by their very nature, be read with greater energy and in quicker time:

"Is not my word like as a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"—Jer. xxiii. 29.

"Oh, that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away, and be at rest."—Ps. lv. 6.

"And all went merry as a marriage bell."—Byron.

"His Ironsides charged in turn like a torrent, driving all before them."—Thorne.

In these examples the similes exalt the literal, and to read them slower would, in some instances, have rather a ludicrous effect.

In the next examples, although the simile is intended to strengthen

on the depreciative effect, quick time would leave a contrary impression:

"O precious hours! O golden prime,  
And affluence of love and time!  
Even as a miser counts his gold,  
Those hours the ancient time-piece told."

Longfellow.

The miser counts his gold slowly—hangs over each piece to make sure it is all right. The simile illustrates the slow beating of the clock.

"In that mansion used to be  
Free-hearted hospitality;  
His great fires up the chimney roared,  
The stranger feasted at his board."

All this is suggestive of joy and life, and should be read faster than the succeeding verses, which, with the simile, are suggestive of solemnity and slowness:

"But—like the skeleton at the feast—  
That warning time-piece never ceased," &c., &c.

"And the daughter of Zion is left—as a cottage in the vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city."—Isaiah i. 8.

Every simile here suggests inaction, and would be marred by fast reading.

It would be quite easy to multiply to any extent examples to shew that the rule which applies the principle of time in the delivery of a simile according to its value would utterly destroy its force. I submit the principle which I have always used, and which pupils of any age can easily appreciate and apply, viz.: read the simile according to its nature. If from its nature it is intended to illustrate force and quick action, then let it be delivered with more force and quickness of time than the literal; but if in its nature it is a symbol of slowness or inaction, let it be read slower.

I have had the privilege of hearing Miss Cushman read the following passage, and I remember what tender pathos she gave to the similes, as she read them in the slowest time; and I believe that Miss Neilson and Mrs. Siddons read the same passage in the way suggested:

"She never told her love,  
But let concealment—like a worn i' the bud,  
Feed on her damask cheek."

The worm creeps slowly through the bud, and hence the nature of the simile suggests slowness in its delivery.

"She pined in thought;  
And with a green and yellow melancholy  
She sat, like Patience on a monument,  
Smiling at grief."—Shakespeare.

The last simile is still more suggestive of slowness, because Patience is passive and inactive, and this is a marble patience without life or action.

I have seen the next passage given as an example for slow reading because it elevates the literal; but flames and fire are quick and energetic in their action; and, as in the verse from Jeremiah, where God's word is said to destroy all that opposes it like the swift flames, the simile gives greater force to the literal by swifter delivery than the literal:

"As when a flame the winding valley fills,  
And unsuns on crackling shrubs between the hills,  
Then o'er the stubble, up the mountain flies,  
Fires the high woods and blazes to the skies,  
This way and that, the spreading torrent roars,  
So sweeps the hero through the washed shores."

—Pope's Homer.

I suppose the simile in the following example depreciates, but