

ANATOMISTS AND ARTISTS.

MUCH as the canons of scientific criticism have been changed in the course of the last century, it may be doubted whether the prevailing tone of art criticism has not altered more. From Lionardo to Hogarth, the beautiful was handled as something positive and objective, a matter of rules and principles, proportions and formulæ; while the scientific imagination was still allowed to run rampant amongst quiddities and qualities, appetites and faculties, amongst laws of nature as elastic as the precepts of art were precise. Now, on the contrary, science is almost afraid to trust its own collections of facts, when they seem most significant, lest an unlawful fragment of inference should be at the bottom of their unwonted intelligibility; and art, to complete the contrast, breaking away from its backboards and calisthenic exercises, tends to resolve its precepts into a series of sugared epithets and ecstatic imagery. Thus the sister Muses have still too little in common for Mr. Darwin's overtures to meet with much response even from painters, if any such there be, who aim consciously at anatomical consistency in drawing a face as well as a limb or torso. Yet the disappointment which he seems to have felt at not finding more confirmation for his theories of expression in the masterpieces of art will be shared by all who hoped his researches might throw a little reflex light upon the origin and nature of what is called Taste, the only and very uncertain guide left us in the search after actual and ideal beauty. He says:

"Fourthly, I had hoped to derive much aid from the great masters in painting and sculpture, who are such close observers. Accordingly I have looked at photographs and engravings of many well-known works, but, with few exceptions, have not thus profited. The reason no doubt is, that in works of art beauty is the chief object, and strongly contracted facial muscles destroy beauty. The story of the composition is generally told with wonderful force and truth by skilfully given accessories."

But there are two points to be considered in connection with this paragraph, which, though lying partly outside Mr. Darwin's main purpose, may help to explain the cause of his and our disappointment. In works of art beauty is *a* chief object, but it is not always *the* chief object; and though strongly contracted facial muscles destroy beauty, Mr. Darwin nowhere *proves* that such contraction is an essential part of *all* expression of the emotions; and the fact that such close observers as the great masters in painting attempt to represent expression without it is almost fatal to the assumption.

It is true that the pursuit of positive beauty of type is seldom combined with a strong feeling for the secondary and relative beauties of expression, and the highest perfection of the two may perhaps be incompatible. The Apollo and Venus of Greek art are divinely incapable of human passion, divinely indifferent to human sympathy; and the only modern master whose works will bear comparison in this respect with those of antiquity—the artist of the Sistine Chapel—suggests, indeed, indefinite possibilities of passion, but does not particularize any one emotion in his most classically beautiful figures. There may be passions of any degree of strength behind the shell, but ideal physical perfection of type presupposes them all to be in equilibrium, or temporary repose. But there are long ages in the history of art in which no such type of human beauty is recognised, and it is obvious that, when this conception is wanting, art, if it is to live at all, must live either by idealising something besides physical beauty, or by reproducing the beauties of nature literally, or by representing natural objects which are not beautiful. Nearly all the best Christian art is of the first kind, which ranks the portraiture of the soul above that of the body, and would, if the choice were inevitable, prefer to sacrifice some portion of material grace rather than a particle of spiritual truth. While Italian art was religious, it was never reduced to these alternatives, and the questions discussed in Lessing's *Laocoön* did not force themselves into consideration until the latter days of the Renaissance, when Pagan and Catholic art were empty and insipid to about an equal degree. It is hard to conceive a sound theory of expression which should fail to draw confirmation and illustration from the great dramatic paintings produced before that time; but Mr. Darwin's face is set in an opposite direction to that of the idealists whose works he interrogates in vain. While he is looking backwards to distinguish causes, they aim forwards at divining tendencies. He wishes to know when and why the first human animal drew back its lip, knit its brow, screwed up its eye, or wrinkled its cheek. They try to imagine angelic, diabolical, or heroic emotions showing through the features of a more or less ordinary man. If their inspiration is sound, the result is true prophetically, and the spiritual life tends to modify the physical type in the direction they indicate; but they are only of use to the naturalist in so far as the modifications they represent are presumably a continuation of the line previously followed. We can understand a physician or an anatomist being interested in the splendid beauty of a Greek statue, and it is probable that almost every technical inaccuracy their fuller knowledge might detect could be excused or accounted for on some *quasi*-physiological pretext, of which the artist himself was most likely unconscious. Idealism is truthful so long as it observes the laws of nature while recombining her facts. But an artist with a sense of beauty naturally idealizes the normal state of a

subject, not its distortions, and all expression would be distortion of human beauty if it were the effect of surviving apeishness.

If Italian painting throws as little light upon the origin of expression as Greek sculpture does, the reason must be very different. The play of features is not yet made an end in itself, but it is freely admitted as an instrument in the main endeavour to represent idealized passions. It cannot be said that Michel Angelo's "Three Fates" are expressionless, still less that they were made so in obedience to a theory of feminine beauty, and yet "so much subtler is a human mind than the outside tissues which make a sort of blazonry or clock-face for it," * that there would be something wanting to the painting if Atropos' complacently malicious leer were the work of any determinable cluster of muscles. The muscles of the face are few, the thoughts they serve to express many; ideal depth and range of expression cannot be obtained by heightening the muscular action, because, within so limited a surface as the human face, one contraction would fall foul of another, and the result be grotesque as well as false. Even an ordinary face often expresses composite emotions which cannot, so far as we see, be reduced to their physical elements. We know as a matter of reason that every effect must have a cause, and that when a face which has conveyed one idea to us ceases to do so, or conveys a different one, the face has undergone some sensible alteration. But the complexity of the effect produced gives a presumption against the simplicity of the cause. An infinite number of infinitely small modifications of form and colour, are the physical tokens of emotion; and when, by some legerdemain, an artist with merely finite resources yet succeeds in suggesting more than even nature is wont to express, we should certainly expect his illustration of her laws to be an aid in deciphering their purport and origin. But idealism naturally dwells on the specific characteristics of the type to be idealized. Man is an emotional intelligence as well as an erect, bimanous mammal, and it is in the former character that the Italian masters choose to paint him; whence Mr. Darwin's disappointment, for the development of the spiritual side of humanity reacts upon and disturbs the physical type. Yet the development is perfectly normal, and the subtler shades of feeling represented by a skilful brush will find their place at a later stage of the study of facial anatomy, supposing the natural history of expression ever to proceed beyond the most elementary knowledge.

The first point is to recognise the composite nature of man as made up of "l'âme et la bête," for the two have such very different emotions to express that it is scarcely possible for the same characters to serve for both. The human animal, like a dog or an ape, has appetites and impulses of which the gratification is necessarily pleasurable, and the reverse disagreeable. But to express a list of the passions after

* Middlemarch, p. 6.

Collins, or any ordinary moralist, requires resources much more varied than *la bete* has at command. Every animal, man included, can look glad or sorry, friendly or irate, but the limits of physical expression are indicated by the incongruity which strikes us at the thought of an angry sheep, a pensive goose, a candid fox, or an affectionate tiger. These animals vary as much in feature as the men of one race; but the moral or intellectual character of the species is regarded as fixed, and the cast of countenance that goes with it is often used as a type or standard of the expression natural to such a disposition. Mr. Darwin takes no account of association as affecting the *interpretation* of expression, as well as its *origin*, though, as there is an element of convention in every language, it is important to distinguish between signs which it is natural to make, and the influences naturally drawn from any given sign. The natural language of what may be called the animal passions, includes all varieties of gesture; a dog's tail is at least as sure an index to his feelings as his face, and all simple primitive emotions express themselves in attitude, as well as in grimace. It is not till the state of nature has been left behind that it becomes at once possible and necessary to judge of states of mind from the expression of the face alone. But when men are so far sophisticated as to check or conceal their natural gesticulations as undignified or dangerous self-betrayal, we can no longer be certain that even the muscles of their faces contract and relax in a perfectly natural manner. These muscles are less easily controlled than those of the body, but within certain limits they obey the will, and their habitual movements are even subjected to the fickle influence of fashion, as, for instance, the abnormal activity of the lachrymal glands in memoirs and romances of the eighteenth century, or the curl of the upper lip affected more recently by Byronic youths who were far from desiring to bite or rend anybody in real life.

For this reason Mr. Darwin was no doubt right in thinking that expression can be most instructively studied in subjects who rarely pose for effect, *i. e.*, infants, the lower animals, the insane, and savages. But here a fresh difficulty meets us. Except in the case of the insane, whose passions are of course biassed by their infirmity or eccentricity of mind, the faces that are capable of telling a true story may, unfortunately, like the needy knife-grinder, have no story to tell. Children laugh and cry with more *abandon* than adults; savages betray anger or astonishment more frankly than civilized travellers; but the more elaborate, profound, and distinctively human emotions can scarcely be expressed in the faces of beings incapable of experiencing them, unless indeed the vocabulary of expression be more limited than is commonly thought, and tragic passions leave the same mark upon the features as brutish appetites. This is difficult to believe, and yet hard to disprove, because, in the first place, tragic passions are not common in real life, and in the second place, all the

habits of civilized society are calculated to restrain their full and free expression, so that even when they prove too strong for restraint we cannot tell that their expression may not have been modified by the mere fact of having to overcome an artificial obstacle. The popular conception of such expressions as intense grief, horror, agony, hatred, despair, is, if not exactly conventional, derived from tradition, reaching back, perhaps, to an early state of civilization, when profound emotions were allowed free vent, but now preserved chiefly in the theatre and in the works of the old masters. Everyone knows what, for instance, Le Brun's drawings of the passions are *meant* to represent, but very few are in a position to criticise the moral and anatomical truth of his delineation. It is impossible not to suspect that the amateur jury, empanelled by Mr. Darwin to pronounce upon Dr. Duchenne's photographs of galvanized muscles, really made prints of this kind their standard. Lawyers and doctors of wide experience might be able to speak from observation and knowledge, but the general public does not see the working of deep feeling often enough to verify the traditional representation of its effects in the face. Even artists, whose instincts ought to be our surest guides, have to choose their models much as Le Brun selected his illustrations, taking faces that even in repose have something the look of the passion to be represented; for he does not give the effect of different emotions on the same face, which might have been an instructive study; but avarice is always old; devotion, feminine; anger, masculine; joy, youthful; while those forms of mental or bodily agitation that are not associated with any type of countenance nor with any particular age or sex, are much the least easily recognisable.

Mr. Darwin's volume will be generally thought to have given the *coup de grâce* to the old-fashioned human vanity which led even Sir Charles Bell to admire the adaptation of the eye and mouth to the uses of the painter, and to account for the flexible beauty of their lines as an end in itself, or at most an end in conjunction with the further purpose of expressing the more delicate shades of emotion. Indeed it may be doubted whether any really natural and primitive expression owes its origin to its use as a means of communication. The cry of pain is not consciously a call for help, and extreme pain is scarcely common enough to give rise to a habit of crying out under it, because the cry might sometimes be serviceable in bringing help. The natural, visible, or audible *effect* of any emotion comes to be recognised as its *sign*, and is called its expression, as if the subject of the emotion were consciously or voluntarily working the muscles that are really stirred, as it were, accidentally, in consequence of their dependence on whatever organ is directly affected. But the association is first discerned by the spectator, and cannot obviously be discerned until it is established as a tolerably universal fact. A kind of natural selection no doubt determines the survival of some grimaces

out of the infinite variety of which children, monkeys, and rustics are capable, and especially of those which are most easily made, recognised, and imitated; but this is only another way of saying that those muscles which, from the nature of the organism, act most readily, tend to preserve and perpetuate their activity. Education, by introducing a fresh feeling of personal dignity, and developing a reluctance to display emotion on what may, on reflection, be thought insufficient grounds, checks the natural tendency of expression to become more varied with the development of new mental sensations, and thus the muscular movements continue to be most distinctly marked in animals and classes where they are really least expressive. This fact does not in the least interfere with the physical origin of all expression, but it allows us to conjecture that the expression of passions belonging to a late stage in the development of man's spiritual nature will be determined by other causes than possible utility. All the muscles are full-grown, and their habits of action are formed before they can be called on to mould the features of a *Mater Dolorosa*, a *St. Catherine*, or a *St. John*. New composite emotions may be expressed with the old muscles, without the emotion being on that account a lineal descendant of the animal impulse that first caused them to vibrate. And this is so much the case, that the most trustworthy idealized representations of passion seldom heighten the facial contractions; shading and colour, and the all-important expression of the eye are the instruments—not "skilfully given accessories"—by which great artists can make the same face tell one story or another. Generally the soul is added by the painter, for not one in a thousand lights, like Guido, upon an embodied tragedy, and in a mere portrait gives us *Beatrice Cenci*.

The best models for the physical side of expression are taken from the uncultivated classes, who allow their muscles to work uncontrolled; but unless the artist can add an ideal depth of soul to the skeleton outline thence derived, he must either turn realist or fall into melodrama. To caricature a violent passion is comparatively easy, and implies only an ordinary knowledge of the anatomy of expression; but it is not given to all would-be realists to be commonplace with Dutch fidelity, or to make a fine art of observation. The best of the Dutch masters could see a common face exactly as it was, and were not afraid to paint it without an incongruous depth of expression; accordingly their cooks and housewives have just as much individuality as belongs to ordinary features, and instead of a sham animation, are proved to be alive by the unmistakably real look of half vacant absorption with which they pursue their trifling avocations. The secret of the great humorists is to take a dozen different unsophisticated faces and show in each one the working of the same commonplace feeling of wonder, amusement, discomfiture, or the like. Thus, without going outside the limits of truth in search of incom-

patible sensational effects, they preserved the stable facts of expression, and profited by the infinite physical varieties of feature in the natural man to supplement, or even to supersede, their own invention. This variety helps no doubt to lead less conscientious observers to exaggerate the copiousness of nature's vocabulary, and to suppose that commonplace feeling is as various as its expression. And they have a further excuse in the instances which we meet with now and then of a face which bears permanently, and as it were constitutionally, the expression appropriated to a particular mental emotion. But English painters of the "Derby Day" and "Railway Station" school are not content to reproduce faithfully well-selected models; they aim at much more than this, and effect much less. They seem to wish to draw the abstract idea of a real British thief, beggar, policeman, daily governess, or what not, and as these are in truth beings of a very material order, the attempt to idealize them generally produces nondescript creatures, that seem to be on their way from a hair-dresser's shop to the pages of the "London Journal." Similarly in domestic scenes, the meetings, partings, and bereavements, so plentifully represented in our exhibitions, the artist never paints an honest low-life mother without trying to interpolate the idea of maternity, and every rustic lover is condemned to look a whole idyll, though his sraock may be a daub, and his corduroys decidedly out of drawing. Or, to take a single hackneyed subject, "Learning to Read," which must have appeared a dozen times at the Academy, the mother's face always hints, in conventional language, at a dozen shallow sentiments, and yet fails to express a tithe of the reality possessed by a little Netscher on the same subject in the Peel Collection, which only aims at reproducing the absent languid attention with which a mother or anyone else listens to a child's spelling lesson.

The normal expression of the average human face when it is neither glad nor sorry, varies between one of placid unconcern and eager interest, but in both states of mind the lines are nearly unchanged; it is the commonplace soul breathing life into the commonplace body with the minimum expenditure of pure spiritual energy, and in proportion to the inactivity of the mind is the stability, the *vis inertiae* of the material flesh and blood. It is with this last element, then, that a true realist would have to begin, and without prejudging the question whether the finer emotions ever lodge in a vulgarized shell, he would soon find in practice that all the eloquence of which an ordinary face is capable goes to express its everyday thoughts and feelings, so that it has nothing left to spare for sensational emergencies. It is related of Cooke the actor that his "snarling muscles" were peculiarly powerful, which enabled him to assume a more than ordinarily bloodthirsty expression; but the modern life-preserver is not wielded with the teeth, and there is therefore no reason, in the

nature of things, why a London burglar should have a murderous-looking countenance, except, indeed, as far as the habitual conduct reacts upon the bodily frame. An observer like Hogarth, who, according to Sir Charles Bell, represents in his drunkards all the physical symptoms of confirmed intemperance, would, no doubt, succeed in catching the brutal stolidity or animal ferocity which characterizes a typical member of the criminal classes. But a murder committed by accident, and in the way of business, would not permanently affect the features of a naturally pleasant or intelligent face, and though it might for a time banish everything but a look of selfish concern, that would not, under ordinary circumstances, be distinguishable from the excitement of a costermonger quarrelling for a farthing change. Similarly, the nearest female relative of our supposed criminal, if he were being tried for his life, would no doubt "await the verdict" in anxious suspense, but it does not follow that her face would wear an expression of more intense gravity than that of a modest housekeeper bargaining for stale greens on Saturday night. If this way of putting the case seems a little too strong we can allow something for the purely physical effects of serious excitement or terror in quickening the breath or driving the blood from the face, which the French so well indicate in the phrase, "*ses traits s'altèrent.*" But this form of expression varies much with the individual constitution, and though such affections supply the first hint for a physiognomical transcript of the finer emotions, they have a much narrower range than even the primary passions, and stop short long before the complexities of civilised sentiment are attained. As has been said, the instincts of a tragic actor, and the imagination of great painters, are almost our only guides to the natural language of rare and intense passion, and it is about as reasonable to expect the persons casually implicated in a vulgar modern melodrama to display a sudden mastery of this language as to expect every aged pauper with undutiful children to talk like King Lear.

We are far from wishing to maintain that the realist is not to paint expression; on the contrary, our argument tends to call in question the primitiveness of such expression as does not fall within his province. To control the muscles of the face is a part of modern education, and it is because the lesson is so well learnt as to make models scarce, that the passive vacancy of the Dutch school is nearly the only expression that finds a true artistic utterance between the two extremes of impassioned ideal humanity and unrestrained animal spirits. The chief exception to the rule is one which helps to prove it. As Sir Charles Bell pointed out, it was an incalculable advantage to the artists of Italy and Spain to have the simple devotion of the peasants in both countries always before their eyes, so that they were able, as it were, to treat the religious sentiment realistically. But this sentiment is an acquired one in the first instance, and a long

course of unbroken traditional supremacy is needed for it to grow into the second nature of a whole class and overrule or absorb the personal idiosyncracies of its most sensitive members. In later times and northern countries we have nothing equivalent to this resource, for the derivative, pre-eminently civilized expression produced by voluntary restraint put upon the muscular movements of the face is not a suitable subject for artistic treatment. It may be a sign of much hidden meaning, but the meaning is intentionally hidden, and it is plainly absurd to try and represent at once the act of concealment and the thing concealed. And yet this is what scenes of domestic life, with titles like a three-volume novel, in nine cases out of ten, attempt to do for us under "realistic" treatment.

When civilized children are carefully instructed not "to make faces," as it is called, the indulgence of the propensity becomes associated with the idea of vulgarity; and if we consider further that the three primitive emotions which the face of the human animal seems especially destined to express—mirth, grief, and astonishment—appear ridiculous when indulged in upon inadequate provocation, and that less provocation is required by the uneducated than by the critical mind, no further explanation is needed to prove that modern realistic art is virtually restricted to the treatment of low life and comedy. Our first tendency perhaps is to suspect the great comic painters of exaggeration, but Teniers and Ostade are realists, in spite of the animation which makes their works so rich in illustrations of "strongly contracted facial muscles." Hogarth's observation, though quite as scrupulous and perhaps more varied, is less serviceable in this respect, because each picture, as a book in some satiric epos, had to tell a longer story than there was room for in the faces alone, so that in his case it is true that much of the wonderful variety of expression is helped out by "skilfully chosen accessories." Nothing of course can be more truthful than such figures as the boy crying in his *Noon*, or the attention of the little student of the *¼d. Post*. The *Midnight Conversation* again is an admirable caricature, or scarcely a caricature, of the expression of human beings who have mislaid their minds in a punch-bowl; but he was hardly psychologist enough to trace the slightest physical signs of moral degradation in a countenance still young and handsome. He was more successful in finding or inventing features of which the mere outline is humorous, like the projecting underlip of the bear leader in *Hudibras*, which expresses comical remonstrance and defiance excellently, and could never be made to express anything else. In fact, feature rather than expression, is the natural province of caricature; an exaggerated expression turns to burlesque, and changes its nature in the process; but the humorous element in political or other personal caricatures, consists in giving disproportionate weight to some real characteristic, in developing some

faint resemblance to an absurd prototype, in seizing and accentuating a laughable or damaging analogy.

Callot's works *ought* to be of much service to the student of expression, but that great master of grotesque is too imaginative to be overtaken as yet by halting scientific inductions. We interpret ordinary gesture language too laxly not to miss some of the significance of his caricatures of it, but there is no mistaking his unrivalled skill in giving a comic incongruity to mere attitude; the fact that fluttering garments or brandished hats may make an integral part of the general effect, goes to show that what strikes us as expressive, often does so as a suggestion or reminder of some quaint analogy, rather than by any real or apparent show of purpose. This is the only way of accounting for the expressiveness of a whole composition, which is as remarkable in some of Callot's prints as in the most elaborate finished pictures. He has the art of making a group, as such, express a single feeling as well as an individual face might: his squares of infantry, advancing armies, or winding processions, have all a strictly individual character. The grotesques, strictly so called, seem to owe their comic power to the success with which they parody the structure of real organisms; he makes a quaint chariot look somehow as if it were alive; his griffins bark like dogs, and his salamanders swim as comfortably through the flames as a duck in a pond; we feel *sé non è vero, è ben trovato*, but the monsters are all the time so very monstrous that it adds to the humour of the representation for them to look as much at home as if they were perfectly natural and orderly items in the scale of creation. We appreciate him best by comparing him with a predecessor of considerable merit in the same line, the elder Breughel, surnamed *le drôle*; Callot has the spirit, Breughel only the bodily elements of drollery; one creates, the other merely compiles, and the difference in the effect produced proves the impossibility of giving a true or plausible rendering of any particular expression without a previous conception and reproduction of the individual character as a whole. Even a goblin has a spiritual nature which determines the *ensemble* of his grimaces. Callot's fine sense of the significance of attitudes makes him a reliable guide when, as not unfrequently happens, he draws an unmistakably expressive face, the expression of which we should nevertheless be very likely to interpret wrongly if the face were separated from its surroundings. Thus, in a small print of St. Thomas Aquinas praying, the head, taken by itself, might pass for an illustration of fear, as understood by Le Brun. In another series the strenuous exertion of men drawing a gun is very truly represented, but the faces alone would seem to represent pain, as may often be noticed in real life with swimmers, even when not conscious of making any painful effort. Chronic or prolonged distress gives a more pitiable expression than mere pain; while fear, unless accompanied by pain, is often evidenced

by gestures of avoidance without any facial contraction. It is indeed a question whether the shrinking, the wish to avoid some present or expected danger, which is an essential element of fear, does not always, when the expression is natural and uncontrolled, betray itself in the attitude as well as in the face; and then the subject would obviously be incomplete unless the connection, or correlation between the movements of the bodily and facial muscles had been determined. The fact is there are two kinds of fear; fear *lest* evil should come, which is altogether mental, and only directly affects the nerves, while the expression of merely animal dread of an approaching injury cannot but be influenced by the kind of danger and the direction from which it seems to come. This is well illustrated in one of Brauwer's tavern quarrels, where two very distinct and life-like pictures of fear—not pain—are presented by two men, one being throttled by a friend, and the other vigorously grasped by the hair; the same desire to escape from an unpleasant predicament has to be differently expressed, because the danger comes from different quarters. Talk about expression in the abstract must always be rather unsatisfactory, for a really expressive illustration of fear, or anything else, will always have to express fear of some particular danger by some particular individual. The importance of attitude to the true representation of anger is nearly the same, as appears, to keep still to Callot, in one of his battle-pieces, where a terrible Turk is dealing a mortal blow with great naturalness and goodwill, though his turbaned head, divorced from its natural support, would be taken at most to express bright-eyed attention.

The muscular contractions attendant upon laughter are of course amply illustrated by the Dutch painters from Teniers and Ostade downwards; but we are not obliged to depend so much on their assistance here, which is the more fortunate, as an affection which consists in recurring changes can be much better studied from the living model than from the most faithful sketch, which can only fix the appearance of a single moment. Grave as the world is growing, a natural laugh may still be met with often enough for its expression to be universally recognisable; and if the habits of observation, which Mr. Darwin seems to succeed in developing amongst his acquaintances, are extended to his readers, there will soon be no lack of theories of laughter as valuable as the following variation upon Mr. Darwin's, which, to be quite candid, was suggested by the smile of a single infant in arms casually met in Kensington Gardens. Mr. Darwin considers laughter in children as a sign of mere joy or good spirits, which, according to his principle of antithesis, vents itself in a sort of relaxation or rebound from every state or action associated with the sense of pain, and may also, as suggested by Mr. Spencer, naturally carry off its surplus unemployed energies along those muscular channels which yield readily to the slightest pressure. Mr. Darwin

admits the difficulty of connecting this account of the primitive affection with such a complex subject as the causes of laughter in adults. "Something incongruous or unaccountable, exciting surprise and some sense of superiority in the laugher, who must be in a happy frame of mind, seems to be the commonest cause." But surely this is a much better account than the first of the laughter of children. If we consider for a moment that the first things at which a baby laughs are the antics performed by its seniors for its supposed entertainment, the accuracy of the description appears complete. When a fond parent tickles an infant's cheek, or makes some strange sound or grotesque grimace, the first expression evoked is one of surprise or wonder that so irrational a proceeding may portend; the astonishment is at first not unmixed with alarm, but the discerning infant speedily perceives that no injury is intended, and the tension of the expectant muscles thereupon relaxes, with an impetus that carries them pendulum-wise past the point of placid repose. The act of relaxation is pleasurable in two ways, as associated with the feeling of relief that what began by exciting surprise did not proceed to excite tears, and also with the feeling of complacency in the triumphant exercise of penetration which discovered the object under consideration to be nothing worse than ridiculous. The iteration in laughter might be explained partly by a voluntary attempt to reproduce a pleasant experience, partly by the tendency of the pendulum to swing a second time when it has swung a first, while the convulsion of the diaphragm and the cachinnatory sounds would follow from the tendency to hold the breath at the moment of astonishment and to regulate the subsequent gasps of amused relief. According to this view, infants and the most cultivated philosophers would have the same sense of humour: older children and the half-educated laugh from habit, nervousness, imitation, or fashion, on occasions which it is impossible to explain by any consistent theory of the ridiculous.

It would probably be difficult to exaggerate the influence of imitation in fixing and perpetuating the forms of facial expression, whether in smiles, frowns, or any other apparently more arbitrary signs. In children it is very often impossible to distinguish between the effects of imitation and inheritance, though there is no mistaking the result when the two act together. Unconscious, instinctive imitation is happily illustrated in more than one of Ostade's works, as where an elder sister reproduces the grimace of a baby who is declining a spoonful of broth; and still more unmistakably in a scene where a boor is reading the newspaper with evident difficulty, and the faces of the listeners all reflect his mixed expression of deep attention and amused pride in his own success. But imitation can only influence what may be called active, or positive expressions; when the muscles are neutral, and the eye only seems to speak, the expression is apt to be uncertain, and, especially in the case of children, the spectator often

adds irrelevant associations of his own. Thus the pathetic look of Sir Joshua Reynolds's little "Strawberry Girl" is due to her brown liquid eyes, which are large enough and pretty enough to tell the whole story of a woman's love, sorrow, or anything else, though the tiny maiden was not necessarily melancholy because she was born with one beauty full grown. On the other hand, the precocious air of deep reflection with which some babies wrinkle their foreheads and screw up their eyes, while others, reclining in their perambulators, view creation with a placid, penetrative gaze, as if they were deep in metaphysical problems, may, after all, be only a fair index to the mind within; for it is a question worthy the attention of philosophers whether what we call innate ideas and necessary forms of thought are not really the result of these infant meditations; the first fruits of inductive experience, condemned to solve, as it can, the problem of thinking without words. It is in half conventional signs and gestures that imitation has most scope, and a very trifling natural impulse would be enough to account for the origin of most easy and significant grimaces; the muscles of the face, as we see in monkeys, would rather be uselessly employed than left altogether idle. In man, moreover, as a gregarious animal, there seems to be an involuntary tendency to share the emotions witnessed, as well as merely to reproduce their expression. As Mr. Darwin once observed, a child's instinct is to cry when it thinks its nurse is going to do so; and this habit of feeling and acting in flocks has, probably, had more to do with the development of specific varieties of expression than their, in any case, slight and remote utility. A truly consistent utilitarian is the last triumph of evolution, and there is no reason to suppose that even monkeys come much nearer to that high ideal than ordinary men, who agree to this day in living the same lives, talking the same talk, eating the same food, wearing the same clothes, building the same houses, though many of them are perfectly convinced that the lives are useless, the talk dull, the food unwholesome, the clothes ugly, the houses inconvenient. It is a comparatively small matter that they should make the same faces; but it is contrary to all analogy to suppose that their fashions in that solitary particular were the work of sound, practical reasoning.

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