

garde de ne pas se laisser fixer dans les yeux ; il ne doit pas moins veiller avec soin sur les muscles qui avoisinent la bouche, qui lors des certains mouvemens intérieures se maîtrisent très difficilement. ‘Si les hommes,’ dit Leibnitz, ‘voulai<sup>ent</sup> examiner davantage avec un véritable esprit observateur les signes extérieures de leurs passions, le talent de se contrefaire deviendrait un art moins facile.’ ‘Cependant l’âme conserve toujours quelque pouvoir sur les muscles ; mais elle n’en a aucun sur le sang,’ dit Descartes ; et par cette raison la rougeur ou la pâleur subite dependent peu ou presque point de notre volonté.”

It is right, however, that I should mention that the late most eminent teacher of the art of Dramatic Elocution in Paris, François Delsarte, who died about five years ago, and whose pupil, Rachel, was perhaps the highest type of his school on the stage of France, as Macready was on the stage of England, always contended that the eyes themselves, apart from the other features, did not express the emotions, but only *indicate* the objects that excite the emotions. He says : “Cover the lower part of the face with your hand, and impart to your look all the energy of which it is susceptible, and it will be impossible for the most sagacious observer to discover whether your look expresses anger or attention. On the other hand, uncover the lower part of the face, and if the nostrils are dilated, if the contracted lips are drawn up, there is no doubt that anger is written on the countenance. An observation which confirms the purely indicative part performed by the eye is, that among raving madmen, the lower part of the face is violently contracted, while the vague and uncertain look shows clearly that their fury has no object.”

Now, the opinion of such an accomplished instructor, and one who could number among his pupils not only such *artistes* as Rachel and Macready, but the gifted Sontag, Madeleine Brohan, Barbot, Pasea, and others of eminence on the French stage ; and among the orators of the French pulpit, such men as Père Lacordaire, Père Hyacinthe, and other celebrated preachers, is undoubtedly entitled to high respect. But I cannot think here that Delsarte is altogether right. Undoubtedly the eyelids, eyebrows, and mouth are most powerful adjuncts in the expression of the emotions ; but I am certainly disposed, from the observations I have made, to come to the conclusion that the eyes themselves *do* grow bright or dull under the influence of certain emotions, that they *do* sparkle in mirth or melt in pity. On this point I was anxious to obtain the opinion of so distinguished a naturalist and so careful and accurate an observer as Mr. Darwin, and I accordingly wrote to him on the subject, saying that I ventured to differ from Delsarte, and should like much to know whether Mr. Darwin’s views on this point were in accordance with mine or not. In compliance with my request, Mr. Darwin favoured me at once with an answer, which I give in his own words :—

“Down, Beckenham, Kent.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your very obliging letter, and for the information in regard to Delsarte’s views respecting the eyes. Although it is very easy to deceive one’s self on such a point, yet after reading over



what I have said, I cannot think that we are in error. Surely the different appearance of the eyes in hectic fever, and during great exhaustion to which Dr. Piderit alludes, cannot be accounted for simply by the position of eyelids and eyebrows. Could you not observe the eyes of some one looking grave, and then smiling? I will endeavour to do so.

“I remain, my dear Sir,

“August 19th.

“C. J. PLUMPTRE, ESQ.

“Yours faithfully,

“CHARLES DARWIN.”

I am very glad to find that the opinion I had formed is confirmed by so eminent an authority as Mr. Darwin.\* Extended observation will, I think, further confirm the fact that the eyes themselves, apart from the adjuncts of any other features, do in themselves vary in brightness and expression under the influences of various emotions. In the recently published volume of the “Life of the Eminent Tragedian, Charles Young,” by his son, the Rev. Julian Young, the author, speaking personally of what he had noticed in the great actor, Edmund Kean, says: “When kindled by real passion off the stage, or by simulated passion on it, his eye gleamed with such scorching lustre as to make those who stood beneath its rays quail.”

Sir Walter Scott, in the accounts he gives to Lockhart of his interview with Burns, says: “There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say *literally glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, although I have seen the most distinguished men of my time.†

In Meister’s account of Diderot, contained in the 13th volume of Grimm’s “Correspondance Littéraire,” I find it stated that “Diderot’s eyes were habitually kindly and sympathetic in expression; but as he grew excited in conversation, they literally sparkled like fire.” Many more similar instances might be given in support of the opinion I hold, that the eyes in themselves have the power of growing bright or becoming dull under the influence of different emotions. Addison in “The Spectator” for June 8, 1711 (No. 86), says, “I have seen an eye curse for half-an-hour together, and an eyebrow call a man a scoundrel.” And again, “The Spectator” for November 26, 1712 (No. 541), says, “But the fact is, the face is the epitome of the whole man, and the eyes are the epitome of the face.” No. 250 of the same journal for December 17, 1711, has also a very amusing paper on the eyes.‡

It appears to me, then, in regard to the expression of the various emotions, we are warranted in saying that the eyes sparkle, and, as it were, dance in mirth; that they beam with a tender light in love and

\* Since this letter was written, now more than four years ago, Mr. Darwin has favoured me with another communication, stating that further observation has in no way altered his opinion.

† Life of Burns by Principal Shairp, pp. 50, 51.

‡ In Mr. R. Brudenell Carter’s excellent work “On Good and Bad Eyesight” (London, Macmillan), just published, will be found some very interesting remarks on the emotions that cause the eyes to grow bright or dull in appearance.