

THE
ACTOR'S EPITOME.

IF comprehension best can pow'r express,
And that's still greatest which contains the less;
No rank's high claim, can make the player's small,
Since acting each, he comprehends them all.

Off, to due distance, half the stalking train!
Blots of a title, your low tastes profane!
No dull, cold moulder shares the actor's plea,
Rightly to *seem*, is transiently to *be*.

Arduous the task, and asks a climbing brain,
A head for judgment, and a heart for pain;
Ere sense impress'd reflects adopted forms,
And changeful nature shakes with borrow'd storms.

Ten strong-mark'd passions, signs external bear,
And stamp assum'd distinctions on the Play'r;
Joy, Grief, Fear, Anger, Pity, Scorn, and Hate,
Wonder, Shame, Jealousy, and Love's soft weight.

These, when he paints, did he but fit conceive,
Each, on his fancy, would its image leave;
Thence, ductile fibres catch th' expressive spring,
And the eyes dart it, and the accents ring.

You, who would JOY's triumphant pride express,
What most you wish, imagine you possess.
Strait flames th'idea to the kindling eye,
And every nerve, in concord, braces high:
Treading on air, each joint a soul displays;
The looks, all, lighten; and the limbs, all, blaze.

But you, who act unhoping GRIEF's distress,
Touch fancy, with some home-felt wretchedness.
Then, slack'ning nerves the loose impression take;
Each sad look sickens; the shock'd spirits break;
Dim falls the faded eye; the steps drag, slow,
And every heedless gesture heaves with woe.

FEAR is but active grief, avoiding pain,
Yet flies, too faintly, and avoids, in vain:
While stagnate spirits, thick'ning as they spread,
O'er the cold heart crawls slow the living lead.
What, tho' the eye's prompt ray keen lightning dart!
'Tis fruitless:—loos'ning fibres lame the heart.

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ANGER is pride provok'd beyond control,
 When some felt insult fires the smarting soul:
 Then the will's warmth, repelling fancy'd shame,
 Strings the nerves hard, and bids the eye balls flame:
 Then marks of menace, air, and face deform;
 And short, thick breathings, paint the in-felt storm.

PITY is active sense of alien grief;
 Think some dear, dying sufferer begs relief:
 Aidful idea springs to succor woe,
 And ev'ry quiv'ring sinew learns to glow;
 While mild, as sighing saints, the sadd'ning face,
 Clouds into anguish, with relenting grace.

SCORN is cold anger, careless and at ease,
 Calm sense of wrongs, too harmless to displease,
 Bold, in undoubted safety, 'twould disclaim
 Defiance, and with proud remissness, flame.
 Now smiles, now frowns; yet, both with eye serene;
 And lets the nerves play loose, with painless spleen.

HATRED is sullen fury, long retain'd;
 'Tis willing mischief, warily restrain'd:
 This to paint strong, the back-braced nerves should toil,
 In fetter'd strain, and heave in curv'd recoil;
 While, with impatient frown, th' averted eye
 Shuns the loath'd object, it disdains too nigh.

Pain-seeking **JEALOUSY** feels doubtful rage,
 Which trustful pity struggles to assuage:
 Thence, frets uncertain pain, with pensive glow,
 And look, and action, share divided woe.
 Sad, in the face, the heart's felt softness reigns,
 While each tugg'd sinew angry vengeance strains.

WONDER is curious fear—Suppose, by night,
 Some pale, met spectre cross'd the moon's dim light!
 Sudden, the back'ning blood, retreating swift,
 Swells the press'd heart; each fibre fails to lift;
 Lost, in short pause, arrested motion lies,
 And sense climbs, doubtful, to the straining eyes.

LOVE is, at once, intense and slack desire:
 There, hope inflames, while reverence cools the fire.
 Fear of repulse, bold sense of joy withdraws;
 Sighs in each accent; ev'ry movement awes—
 Soft, earnest looks blush o'er th' inclining face,
 And sinewy transport borrows shade from grace.

Aaron Hill

1685 – 1750

An Essay on the Art of Acting

1753

APPLICATION I. Of JOY.

DEFINITION.

JOY is Pride, possessed of Triumph.

Joy is expressed by muscles intense, and a smile in the eye.

—————“ Oh Heaven! she pities me.
“ And pity, still, fore-runs approaching love;
“ As lightning does the thunder.—Tune your harps,
“ Ye angels! to that sound: and thou my heart!
“ Make room—to entertain the flowing joy!

APPLICATION II. Of GRIEF.

DEFINITION.

GRIEF is Disappointment, void of Hope.

Grief, by neither muscles nor eye intense, but both languid.

“ But, I have been in such a dismal place!
“ Where joy ne'er enters, which the sun ne'er cheers,
“ Bound in with darkness, overspread with damps,
“ Where I have seen—if I could say, I saw—
“ The good old king—majestic, ev'n in bands!
“ And, 'midst his griefs, most venerably great!
“ By a dim, winking lamp, that feebly broke
“ The gloomy vapors, he lay, stretch'd along,
“ Upon th' unwholesome ground, his eyes cast low;
“ And, ever and anon, a silent tear
“ Stole down, and trickled from his aged cheek.”

APPLICATION III. Of FEAR.

DEFINITION.

FEAR is Grief, discerning and avoiding Danger.

Fear, by muscles and look both languid, with an alarm in eye and motion.

“ O! I have pass'd a miserable night!
“ So full of fearful dreams! of ugly fights!
“ That, as I am a christian faithful man,
“ I would not spend another such a night,
“ Tho' 'twere to buy a world of happy days!
“ So full of dismal terror was the time!”

APPLICATION IV.

Of ANGER.

DEFINITION.

ANGER is Pride provoked beyond Regard of Caution.

Anger, by muscles intense, and a frown in the eye.

“ Now imitate the action of a tiger ;
“ Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood ;
“ Lend fierce and dreadful aspect to the eye :
“ Set the teeth close, and stretch the nostril wide,
“ Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit,
“ To its full height.”

APPLICATION V.

Of PITY.

DEFINITION.

PITY is active Grief for another's Affliction.

Pity, by muscles intense, and a sadness in the eye.

“ Oh ! could I feel no misery but my own,
“ How easy were it for this sword, to free me,
“ From every anguish that embitters life !
“ —But, when the grave has given *my* sorrows rest,
“ Where shall my miserable *wife* find comfort ?
“ Unfriended, and alone, in want's bleak storm,
“ Not all th' angelic virtues of her mind
“ Will shield her from th' unpitying world's derision.
“ Can it be kind to leave her so exposed ?”

APPLICATION VI.

Of SCORN.

DEFINITION.

SCORN is negligent Anger.

Scorn, by muscles languid, and neglected, with a smile in the eye, to express the *light*, or a frown in the eye, for the *serious* species.

“ Bear back thy fulsome greeting, to thy master ;
“ Tell him, I'll none on't.—

*Had he been a *god*,

“ All his omnipotence could not restore
“ The radiancy of majesty eclips'd.*
“ For ought besides, it is not worth my care :
“ The giver, and his gifts are both *despis'd* !”

APPLICATION VII.
Of HATRED.

DEFINITION.

HATRED is restrained, yet lasting Anger.

Hatred, by muscles intense, and aversion in the eye.

“ The Tartar is my bane—I cannot bear him,
“ One heaven and earth, can never hold us, both.
“ Still shall we hate, and, with defiance deadly,
“ Keep rage alive—till one be lost, forever.
“ As if two suns should meet, in the meridian,
“ And strive, in fiery combat, for the passage.”

APPLICATION VIII.
Of JEALOUSY.

DEFINITION.

JEALOUSY is doubtful Anger, struggling against Faith and Pity.

Jealousy, by muscles intense, and the look pensive; or the look intense, and muscles languid, interchangeably.

—————“ Why dost thou echo me?
“ As if there were some monster in thy thought!
“ Too hideous to be shewn!—Thou dost mean something.
“ —I heard thee say but now, thou lik’dst not *that*!
“ When Cassio left my wife.—What did’st not like?
“ And, when I told thee, that he was my *friend*,
“ And went a *wooing* for me—with thy brow
“ Bent and purs’d up, thy answer was—*Indeed!*
“ If thou dost love me, tell me—what thou thought’st.”

APPLICATION IX.
Of WONDER.

DEFINITION.

WONDER is inquisitive Fear.

Wonder, by muscles intense, and an awful alarm in the eye.

“ O, day, and night !—but this is wond’rous strange !

And, again :

“ Angels! and ministers of grace! defend me!

“ Be thou a spirit of light—or goblin damn’d;

“ Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell;

“ Be thy intents wicked or charitable,—

“ Thou com’st in such a questionable *shape*,

“ That I *will* speak to thee!”

APPLICATION X.
Of LOVE.

DEFINITION.

LOVE is Desire kept temperate by Reverence.

Love, by muscles intense, and a respectful attachment in the eye.

“ Why have those piercing eyes, so ill distinguish’d
“ The reverence of my ardor?—Licence and Freedom
“ Would, in *your presence*, be dissolv’d to *awe*,
“ And flow in sighs, to soften you.—This hand!
“ Oh! give it me—and I will swear upon it, “ 7

“ That my charm’d spirits never rose, till now,

“ In such a tide of ecstasy!—that heaven

“ Has left your *sex* in shade, to light up *you*,

“ With every grace, that swells desire in mortals,

“ Or gives your guardian angel pride to view you!”

Gilbert Austin

1753–1837

Chironomia, or a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery

1806



terror

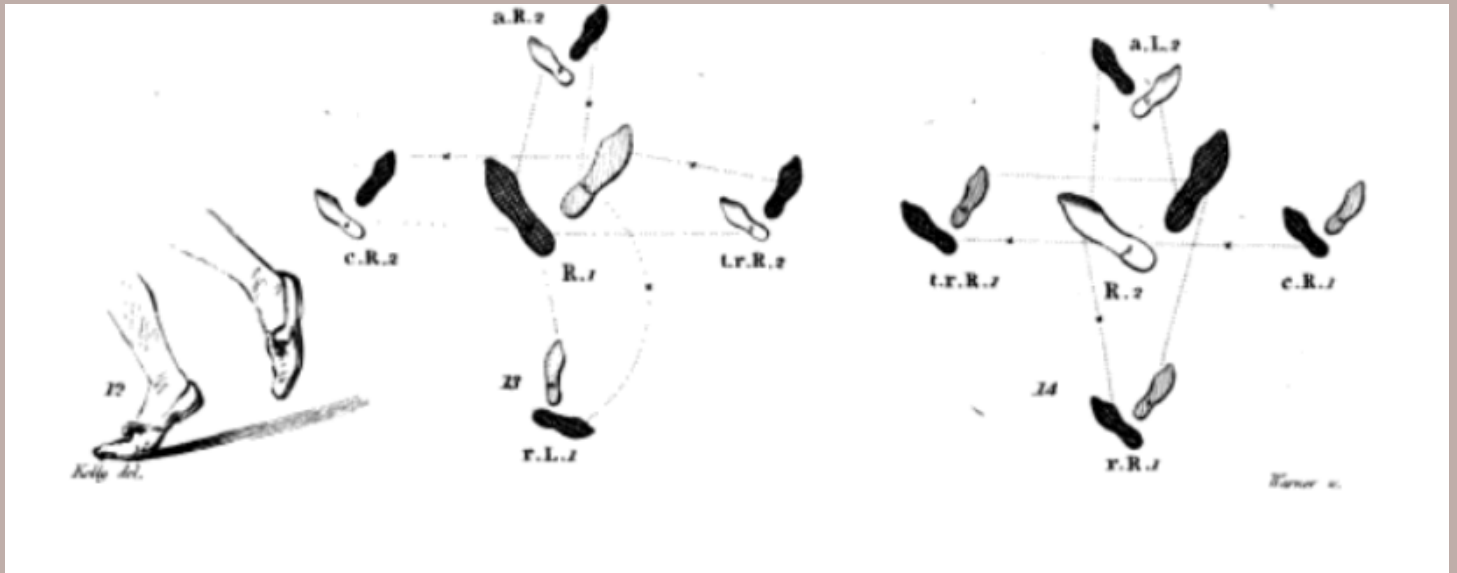


horror



joy, surprise

Position of the Feet



R1 - Right foot forward, weight on left foot

R2 - Right foot forward, weight on right foot

L1 - Left foot forward, weight on left foot

L2 - left foot forward, weight on right foot

(a) - advancing

(r) - retiring

(tr) - traverses

(st) - starts

(sp) - stamps

Position of the Arms

R - at rest
d - down
h - horizon
e - elevated
Z - zenith
c - across
f - forwards
q - oblique
x - extended
b - backwards



Position of the Hands

Fingers	Palm	Motion
(x) - extended	(p) - prone	(n) - noting
(c) - clinched	(s) - supine	(p) - pushing
(l) - collected	(n) - inwards	(w) - waving
(w) - hollow	(o) - outwards	(fl) - flourish
(i) - index	(v) - vertical	(sw) - sweep
(h) - holding		(bk) - beckoning
(m) - thumb		(rp) - repressing
(g) - grasping		(ad) - advancing
		(sp) - springing
		(st) - striking
		(rc) - recoiling
		(th) - throwing
		(cl) - clinching
		(ll) - collecting
		(sh) - shaking
		(pr) - pressing



Position of the Head

Head

I - inclined

E - erect

AS - assenting

DN - denying

SH - shaking

TS - tossing

S - aside

Eyes

F - forward

A - averted

D - downwards

U - upwards

R - around

V - vacancy



The first letter relates to the position of the hand.
 The second to the elevation of the arm.
 The third to the transverse situation of the arm.
 The fourth to the motion or force of the gesture.

AN ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH YARD.

GRAY.

I.

^{Ls} ^{veq-vhx}
 The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
_{aR2}

^F ^{phf- q x}
 The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
_{rR1}

^{..... -phf- q} ^{B veq}
 The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
^V ^{H nef- d B.R}
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

veq-vhx

vertical, elevated, oblique (right), vertical, horizontal, extended (left)

B pef ... d

moving to prone, elevated, forward (both) moving to down (both)

phf- ... q ... x

prone, horizontal, forward (right) moving to oblique, to extended

..... -phf ... q

prone, horizontal, forward (left) moving to oblique

B veq

vertical, extended, oblique (both)

B nef ... d ... B.R.

inwards, extended, forward (both), moving to down, moving to both at rest.