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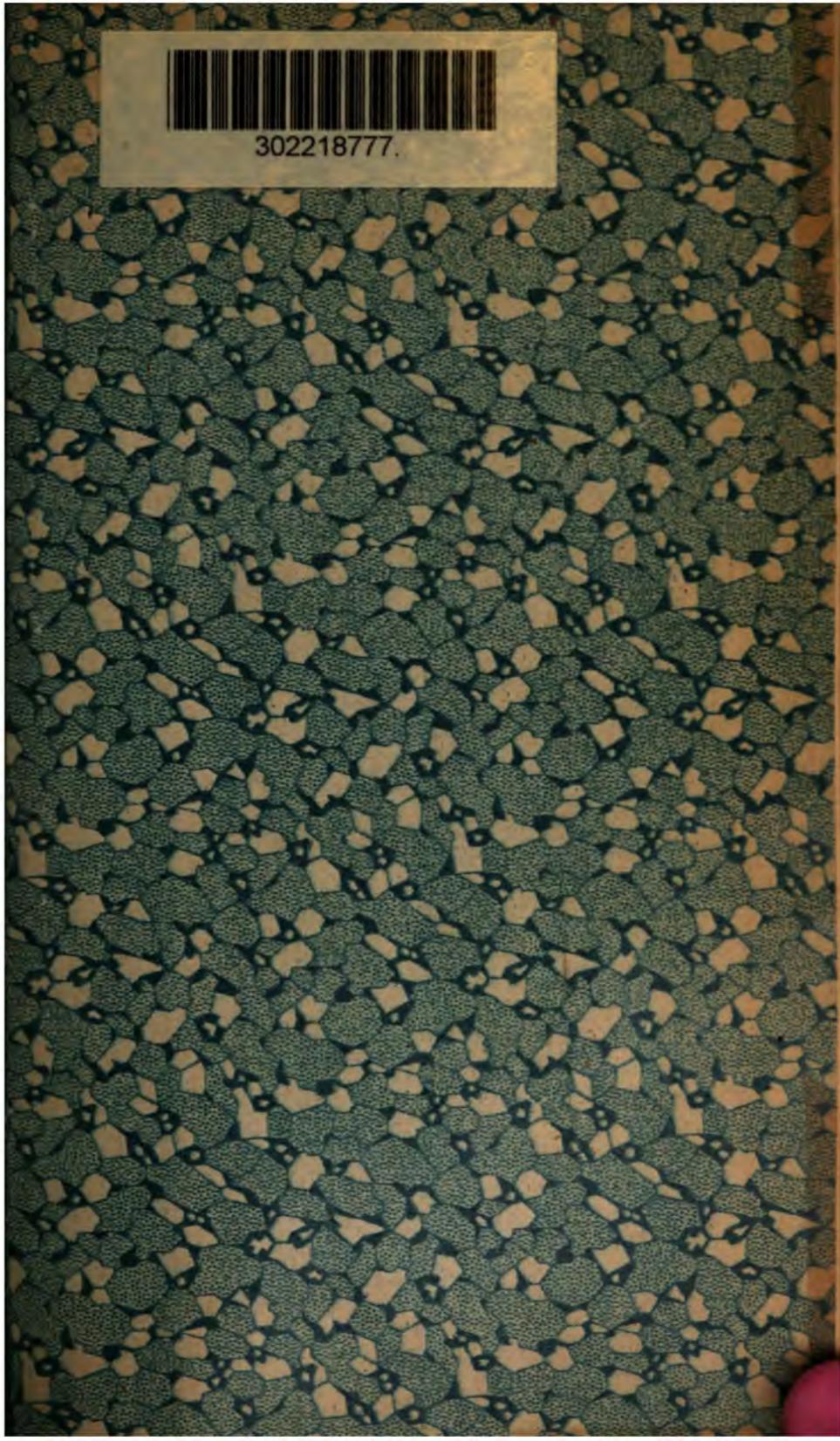


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LAOCOON;

OR

THE LIMITS OF POETRY AND PAINTING.

Translated from the German of

G. E. LESSING,

BY

WILLIAM ROSS,

Τῆς καὶ τρωκοῖς μιμησῶς διαφρησῆς. — Πλουτ. κ. ΑΣ.



LONDON:

J. RIDGWAY & SONS.

MDCCCXXXVI.



TO HER GRACE
THE DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND,
ETC., ETC.

MY LADY DUCHESS,

Belonging, as you do, to a Family in which a taste for Poetry and Painting seems almost to be hereditary, and which counts among its kindred one of the greatest of modern Bards,—connected too, as you are, by the tenderest ties, with one of Britain's most distinguished VIRTUOSI, it might be difficult to select an individual whose name could, with greater propriety than yours, be associated with such a work as the Laocoon of Lessing.

I esteem it, therefore, most fortunate, that, in availing myself of your flattering permission to dedicate this volume to your Grace, I am at once enabled to secure for it a distinction so appropriate to the merits of the original, and to gratify my feelings by this public testimony of the deep respect and lively gratitude which must ever be entertained towards your Grace, by,

My Lady Duchess,

Your Grace's ever faithful and devoted Servant,

WILLIAM ROSS.

GLASGOW, May, 1836.

Glasgow.—Printed at the University Press by E. Knull.

THE translator had nearly completed his task when his attention was directed to an English version of a portion of Lessing's *Laocoon* which appeared several years ago in a popular magazine. On reference to that work, however, he found that it was not of a nature to induce him to renounce the undertaking he had commenced. Though evidently written by one well qualified to do full justice to the merits of the original, he found that it partook too much of the character of an abridgment to entitle it to be considered, had it even been completed, as a satisfactory translation of Lessing's work. This circumstance, added to the gratifying confirmation of the judiciousness of his selection afforded by the

fact of this very work having been made choice of, not only to exhibit the most striking specimen of Lessing's powers, but to form a fitting commencement to a series of specimens of the best German literature, determined the translator to proceed. In selecting this work as his *coup d'essai*, he has been less guided by the apparent suitability of the Laocoon to the prevailing taste of the public, than by the acknowledged merits of the work itself, and by the probability of its proving, not only interesting and instructive to the critical reader, but even in some degree practically useful in the prosecution of the Fine Arts.

The points of resemblance between the sister arts of Poetry and Painting have employed the pens of various writers. The object of Lessing, on the contrary, is to indicate the features in which they differ, and to mark the boundary line which forms the limit of their respective territories. This object has been much facilitated by the circumstance of the same story

having furnished the subject for one of the greatest masterpieces both in sculpture and in poetry, and the author has in consequence very ingeniously illustrated his arguments by a reference to the different mode of treatment adopted by the professors of the respective arts. These differences he attributes, not to mere accident or caprice, but to the powers peculiar to the arts themselves, and which are probably all ultimately referrible to the obvious distinction existing between the means employed by them,—those of the one consisting in images, and of the other in descriptions. The immediate consequence of this distinction is, that the arts of design are much more rapid in their effects than poetry, in as much as the successive description of the various component parts of an object must necessarily be a much slower process than the actual exhibition of the thing itself, in its real form and lineaments ;—

*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.*

Thus, in the imitation of bodily objects, the representation of form, the delineation of beauty, and, in short, in rendering all the varied aspects of the face of nature, painting has a decided advantage over poetry ; while, on the other hand, in tracing actions from their commencement to their final conclusion, in developing the causes which led to them and the circumstances which have affected them, or in portraying the still more mysterious workings of the soul, poetry possesses powers which painting can never enjoy. It must be observed, too, that though the delineation of objects is, properly speaking, beyond the legitimate province of poetry, yet this art has the power, by means of a single well-chosen trait, operating on the imagination of the hearer, to suggest conceptions which may even surpass the embodied realities of the painter.

Such are the grounds of distinction by which Lessing has been guided in his observations in the following Essay. His object has been to

show that, since the means of the two arts differ so materially, their aims should differ also,—that the painter should confine his efforts to those points in which his art gives him the advantage over poetry, and the poet, on the other hand, should employ his genius in that direction in which the painter's power fails. In obedience to this rule, the judicious painter avoids the imaginative effects and successive descriptions of Homer and Milton, while those passages which make but little figure in the poets are often selected by him as capable of the best effect. It will be found, too, that the poet has equally failed in attempting to compete with the painter in those points which fall within the legitimate range of the latter alone. This is particularly illustrated in reference to the delineation of corporeal beauty, of which no adequate idea can be formed from any detailed verbal description. On the same principle Lessing seems inclined to maintain that all delineations of visible objects should, as far as

possible, be avoided by the poet, or, when necessarily introduced, should be so intimately combined with the progress of an action as to account satisfactorily in the hearer's mind for the delay occasioned in the completion of the image by its successive details. There is no doubt, however, that Lessing would have considerably modified the application of this general rule had he followed out the subject to its full extent. His reasoning has been confined almost exclusively to single objects, of such a nature as to be readily comprehended by the eye at once. On the other hand, the descriptions which seem to form an exception to the rule belong to a more extended sphere of vision, in which the Poet may, with perfect propriety, be supposed to keep pace with the observer, who can only direct his view at intervals to the successive portions of the whole.

It is much to be regretted that Lessing never fully completed the work of which a translation is here submitted to the public. He seems to

have contemplated a Second Part, for which, however, he left little beyond the heads of sections and some detached observations which have been published in the form of an Appendix to the work, but which have been thought of too desultory a character to suit the purposes of a translation. The Appendix has, therefore, been entirely omitted in this publication. The numerous notes which occur throughout the original, and which, however useful and explanatory in themselves, are apt, when inserted in the body of a work, to interrupt the chain of argument, have been thrown together at the end of the volume; while the quotations from classical and other authors so frequently interwoven with the text have been adapted to the English reader as far as could conveniently be done, either by translating the prose extracts, or by adopting the most approved versions of those which are poetic. For the general execution of his task the translator must entreat the indulgence of his reader. He is perfectly aware that in many

respects it might have been performed by far abler hands; yet he would fain hope that, however incapable he may have been of conveying the spirit and energy of the author's style, he has at least not failed to render correctly his meaning.

GLASGOW, *May*, 1836.

P R E F A C E.

THE relationship between Poetry and Painting may be viewed in different ways by different individuals.—One, a person of delicate taste, feels a similar effect produced upon his mind by both the arts. He finds that they both represent things absent as if present, and appearances as if realities. Both aim at illusion, and the illusions of both are productive of pleasure.—Another seeks to penetrate into the nature of this pleasure, and he discovers that it flows from the same source in both. This source is beauty, which, though its idea is first drawn from corporeal objects, is yet governed by general rules,

which may be very variously applied,—to thoughts and actions as well as to forms.—A third, reflecting on the value and distribution of these rules, and observing that some prevail more in poetry, and others in painting, concludes that according as one set or the other is brought into operation, Painting may serve as an auxiliary to Poetry, or Poetry to Painting, by way of illustration and example.—The first of these individuals is the amateur; the second the philosopher; and the last, the critic.

The two former of these could scarcely make an injurious use either of their feelings or of their conclusions. In the remarks of the critic, on the contrary, every thing depends on the correctness of their application to each particular case. When, therefore, we consider that, for one judicious critic, there are fifty whose object is only to show their ingenuity, it would be astonishing indeed if these applications were always made with the requisite degree of caution.

If Apelles and Protogenes, in their treatises

on Painting, which are unfortunately lost to us, confirmed and illustrated the rules of that art by the previously-determined rules of poetry, we may safely conclude that they executed their task with the same moderation and accuracy which has been shown by Aristotle, Cicero, Horace and Quintilian, in applying the principles and practice of painting to eloquence and poetry. It is the privilege of the ancients, whatever subject they treat, to enter upon it with that spirit of calm inquiry which preserves them steadily in the middle line between the vice of exaggeration on the one hand, and of culpable negligence on the other. Instead of taking example by this prudent spirit, we moderns too often labor to amplify all that we draw from them. We fancy we have improved on the ancients in converting their little pleasure-ways into great high-roads, forgetting that these, though shorter and securer in themselves, may open into other paths, leading to trackless wildernesses.

The brilliant antithesis of the Greek Voltaire, that "Painting is mute Poetry, and Poetry speaking Painting," was uttered in no didactic spirit. It was one of those striking thoughts, so frequent in Simonides, the truer portion of which is so apparent that we readily overlook whatever of indefinite or false is mingled with it. Yet the ancients did not overlook the inaccuracy of the saying of Simonides; but, confining its application simply to the *effect* of both the arts, they were careful to inculcate that, notwithstanding their complete similarity in this respect, they yet differed as well in the objects as in the modes of their imitation,—*ἴλη καὶ ἔπος*.

How often do we see modern critics, on the contrary, most absurdly dwelling altogether on the resemblance between poetry and painting, just as if no such difference existed. At times they would confine poetry within the narrower limits of painting, and at times extend painting throughout the wider sphere of poetry. Whatever is the privilege of the one, they would also have

conceded to the other; whatever either charms or displeases in the one, must also, in their idea, produce the same effect in the other. Impressed with this notion, they are betrayed into the most inaccurate decisions. The variations discoverable between the works of the poet and the painter in treating the same subject, they hesitate not to set down as faults, which they charge to one or the other art, according as their taste or fancy guides their preference. This spurious criticism has even partly misled the professors themselves. It has engendered in poetry the love of delineation, and in painting, allegorical display. The poet seeks to make his work like a speaking picture, without properly knowing what it is that his art has the power and the privilege to paint. The painter, on the other hand, labors to produce a mute poem, not considering to what extent his art is capable of expressing general ideas without abandoning its legitimate destination, and degenerating into a mere delineation of arbitrary signs.

To counteract the effect of this false taste and this shallow criticism, is the great object of the following essay. The sections of which it is composed were commenced in a casual way, and were continued rather in the order of my own reading, than in that of any methodical development of general principles. They consequently form rather the disconnected materials for a work, than a work itself. I flatter myself, however, with the hope that this will not be held as a reason for despising them. Of regular systematic works, we Germans have, in general, abundance. In the talent of deducing from two or three given words whatever line of argument or illustration may be desired, we yield to no nation in the world.

Baumgarten acknowledged that he was indebted to Gesner's Dictionary for a great part of the examples in his work on *Æsthetics*. If my reasoning be not so conclusive as Baumgarten's, my examples will at least savor more of the source from which they are drawn. Having

made the Laocoon, as it were, my starting-point, and having afterwards recurred repeatedly to it, I have thought it fitting to give the name itself a place on my title-page. Other little digressions on several points connected with ancient art, contribute less to the general object in view, and are left where they stand only because I have no hope of ever being able to give them a better place.

Finally, it is proper to mention that under the general term "Painting," I desire to be understood the arts of design in all their departments, in the same way as I would employ, if it were necessary, the name of "Poetry," to designate those arts in general whose imitation consists in the progressive principle.



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LAOCOON.

FIRST SECTION.

Consideration of Winkelmann's Theory, that the primary Law of the Arts of Design among the Ancients consisted in a noble Simplicity and tranquil Grandeur, both in Attitude and Expression.

THE general characteristics of the Grecian masterpieces in Painting and Sculpture, are held by Winkelmann to consist in a noble simplicity, and a majestic composure, both of attitude and expression. "As the depths of the ocean," he observes,* "remain always at rest, let the surface be ever so agitated, even so the expression in the figures of the Greeks denotes,

* Von der Nachahmung der Griechische Werke in der Mahlerey und Bildhauerkunst.

through every variety of emotion, a great and tranquil soul."

" This grandeur of soul, combined with the most vehement affliction, is visible in the countenance of the Laocoon ; and not in the countenance alone. The pain which displays itself in every muscle and sinew of the body, and which fancy might almost detect in the very contractions of the abdomen, independent of the countenance and other parts, is yet expressed without extravagance either in the face or in the attitude. He does not, like the Laocoon of Virgil, give utterance to a terrific shriek ; the aperture of the mouth does not admit of this. The sound he breathes is rather, as Sadoletto describes it, the stifled sigh of anguish. Bodily pain and grandeur of soul are divided with equal strength and accurate balance throughout the whole construction of the figure. Laocoon suffers, but he suffers like the Philoctetes of Sophocles. The spectacle of his affliction, while it penetrates the soul ; inspires us with a wish that we too might be able to bear affliction with equal magnanimity."

“ The expression of this grandeur of soul far exceeds the representation of beautiful nature. The artist must have felt within himself the same strength of spirit which he impressed upon his marble. Greece possessed artists and philosophers united in the persons of the same individuals, and could boast of more than one Metrodorus. Knowledge gave a helping hand to art, and infused a superior spirit into her productions.” * * *

The observation on which this reasoning is founded, namely, that pain is not expressed in the countenance of Laocoon with that violence which its intensity might lead us to expect, is perfectly correct. It is equally undeniable that in this very peculiarity, for which a tasteless pretender to criticism might presume to censure the sculptor as not having reached the true expression of nature, is the skill of the artist most eminently developed.

It is only on the reasons to which Winkelmann attributes this skill, and on the generality of the rule which he deduces from those reasons, that I venture to differ from him in opinion.

I was first startled, I confess, by the condemnatory glance which he casts on Virgil; and my attention was next arrested by the comparison made with Philoctetes. From this latter point I shall set out, and communicate my ideas in the order in which they occur to my mind.

“Laocoon suffers like the Philoctetes of Sophocles.”—And how does the latter suffer? It is singular that his sufferings should have impressed us so differently. To me, loud lamentation seems the invariable characteristic of his grief. The shrieks and wild imprecations with which, in the agony of his pain, he filled the camp, interrupted the sacrifices and other sacred rites, and re-echoed no less direfully through the desert island, to which they were the cause of his banishment. Such are the lamentations—such the accents of misery and despair, which, in the mimic representation of the poet, resounded through the theatre. The third Act of this drama has been found to be considerably shorter than the rest. This is a proof, say the critics,* that the ancients placed

* Brumoy, *Theat. des Grecs.*

little importance on the equal length of the dramatic acts. This I am quite willing to believe, but, at the same time, I should like to have better reasons to give for my opinion. The piteous lamentations, groans, broken ejaculations, and entire lines filled with interjectional exclamations, which occur so frequently in this act, and which must be delivered with long pauses and separations unnecessary in a connected discourse, had doubtless the effect of rendering the third act in the representation nearly as long as the others. It appears much shorter on paper, to the eye of the reader, than it must have done to the audience who witnessed its performance.

A shriek is the natural expression of bodily pain. Homer's wounded warriors not unfrequently fall to the earth with a shriek. Venus screams aloud when scratched.* Not that a scream is meant as characteristic of the effeminate goddess of pleasure, but rather as the appropriate expression of suffering nature; for

* Iliad, E. v. 343. Ἡ δὲ μίγν' ἰσχυροῦσα.

even brazen-faced Mars, when he feels the lance of Diomede, terrifies both armies with a "shriek as loud as that of ten thousand raging warriors."*

Elevated as is the character of Homer's heroes above human nature, they yet remain true to it as far as regards the sensation of pain and suffering, or the expression of that sensation by cries, by tears, or by execrations. In their actions they are beings of a superior mould; in their feelings they are simple men.

I am aware that we Europeans, tutored in the refinements of a more artificial age, are better able to hold dominion over the external evidence of our feelings. The rules of politeness and decorum forbid the utterance of cries, and the shedding of tears. The active courage of the first rude ages of the world has in modern times been converted into a passive virtue. Even our forefathers, barbarians as they were, were more distinguished in the latter than the former quality. —To suppress all expression of pain, to meet the stroke of death with unflinching eyes, to

* Iliad, E. v. 859.

expire with a smile beneath the adder's sting, to shed not a tear, whether of remorse for sins committed, or of sorrow for the loss of dearest friends, are characteristics of the ancient Northern heroism.* Palnatoko commanded his Jomsburgers not only to fear nothing, but never even to utter the name of fear.

Not so the Greek! He both felt and feared; he gave expression to his sufferings and his sorrows. Ashamed of none of the frailties of human nature, he yet permitted none of them to stay his progress on the path to honour, or to withhold him from the fulfilment of his duty. What in the savage was the effect of a wild and stubborn nature, in the refined Greek was the result of principle. His heroism was like the fiery spark which, till awakened by some external power, lies concealed and dormant beneath the surface of the flint, yet leaves to the stone its natural coldness and transparency. The heroism of the barbarian, on the contrary, was a fierce and brilliant flame, incessantly raging, and

* Th. Bartholinus de causis contemptæ à Danis adhuc gentilibus mortis, cap. i.

consuming, or at least obscuring, every other good quality within him. When Homer makes the Trojans rush to the fight with wild outcries, and the Greeks, on the other hand, advance in steady silence, it is because the poet, as his commentators have justly observed, intended to depict the former as barbarians, and the latter as civilized people. I am astonished that those who have remarked this circumstance should have suffered an equally characteristic contrast to escape their notice in another part of the poem.* It is where the hostile armies, having established a truce, are occupied in burning the ashes of their dead, a ceremony which is performed not without tears on either side; *δακρυα θερμα χειρις*. Priam, however, forbids the Trojans to weep; *'εδ' εια κλαιεν Πριαμος μεγας*. He forbids them to weep, says Madame Dacier, lest their feelings should be too much softened, and they should return on the morrow with less vigour to the fight.—But, I would ask, if this be the reason, why should Priam alone show so much solicitude

* Iliad, H. v. 421.

on the subject? Why does not Agamemnon issue the same order to his Greeks? The truth is, the poet's meaning lies deeper than this. He wishes to indicate that it was the polished Greek alone who might weep and yet be valiant; while the uncivilized Trojan could only preserve his courage by stifling the dictates of humanity. *Νηπισσόμεαι γὰρ μὲν οὐδὲν κλαίειν*, are the words which, on another occasion,* he puts into the mouth of the sage Nestor's intelligent son.

It is remarkable that, among the few tragedies which have been preserved to us from antiquity, there are two in which bodily pain is not the least of the misfortunes with which the suffering hero is assailed. Besides the *Philoctetes*, we have the *Dying Hercules*, who is likewise represented by Sophocles as moaning, weeping, and shrieking with pain. Thanks to our elegant neighbours, the French, those masters of the rules of gentility, a moaning *Philoctetes*, or a screaming *Hercules*, would now-a-days be the most ridiculous and most insufferable character

* *Odys.* Δ. 195.

on the stage. One of their modern poets* has, it is true, ventured to try his genius on Philoctetes; but has he dared to delineate the true Philoctetes to his countrymen? * * *

Even the story of Laocoon furnished the subject of one of the tragedies of Sophocles now lost. How much it is to be regretted that this work has not been spared to us! From the slender notices made of this tragedy by the ancient critics, it is impossible to determine how the subject was treated by the poet. Of this, however, I am convinced, that he did not make Laocoon more stoical than Philoctetes and Hercules. All stoicism is undramatic, and our sympathy is always commensurate with the suffering exhibited by the object of interest. The man who bears his afflictions without a murmur, may indeed command our admiration for his magnanimity, but will take no hold upon our hearts. Admiration is a cold and passive affection, excluding each warmer emotion, and leaving behind no definite impression on the mind.

* Chataubrun.

And now I have arrived at the inference I purposed to draw.—If it be true that to give utterance to the expression of pain is perfectly compatible, at least according to the notions of the ancient Greeks, with grandeur of soul—it follows that it could not have been from the fear of diminishing this elevation of character that the artist refrained from tracing on his marble the outward indications of painful shrieks. He must then have had some other motive for departing, in this instance, from the line adopted by his rival, the poet, who has chosen deliberately to express those shrieks.

SECOND SECTION.

The primary Law of the Arts consists in Beauty. This Principle at once explains the Difference observable in the Treatment of the Laocoon between the Poet and the Painter.

WHETHER the pretty story of Love having made the first attempt in the Fine Arts, is an ingenious fable, or an historical fact, I shall not now take the trouble to inquire ; this at least is certain, that the young god never ceased to guide the pencils of the great masters of antiquity. For painting, which now-a-days is carried to the utmost range of its applicability in the imitation of nature, was by the skilful Greek confined within much narrower limits, and was appropriated to the delineation of beautiful objects alone. The Greek artist portrayed nothing but beauty ; and even beauty, when of an ordinary or inferior character, could only occasionally allure him, or served him for practice

and recreation alone. He aimed at enchanting the beholders by embodying in his work the perfections of the chosen object of imitation. His genius was of too lofty a cast, to permit him to offer to his spectators the mere cold enjoyment which springs from the contemplation of a well-caught resemblance, or from admiration of the artist's skill. The dearest and noblest end of his ambition, in the prosecution of his art, was to attain what he considered its only legitimate object.

“Who would be at the pains to paint you, when nobody would choose to look at you?”—is the address of an ancient epigrammatist* to an individual notorious for his deformity. Many a modern artist would say,—“No matter how ugly the man is, I am ready to paint him. Though nobody wants to see the object itself, my picture will still be looked at; not, I grant, on account of the subject it exhibits, but as a specimen of my skill, in delineating with accuracy so hideous a creature.”

* See Note 1, end of the volume.

The propensity to this ostentatious display of dexterity, undignified by any value in its object, is indeed so natural, that it can scarcely be matter of surprise that even the Greeks had their Pauson and Pyreicus. Yet, mark the estimation in which they held them. Pauson, who aspired not to the beauty even of ordinary nature, whose depraved taste delighted in depicting whatever was defective, or hideous in the human form,* passed his life in the most abject poverty.† Pyreicus, who laboured with all the minuteness of a Dutch artist on such rare and charming subjects as barbers' rooms, dirty shops, asses, and kitchen herbs, was distinguished by the contemptuous appellation of the *Rhyparographos*,‡ or *Dirt Painter*; though the rich and ostentatious voluptuary, it is true, did not scruple, from motives of vanity, to purchase the depraved productions.

Even the government did not consider it beneath its notice to endeavour to confine the artist

* See Note 2, end of volume.

† Aristoph. *Plut.* v. 602, et *Acharnens.* v. 854.

‡ *Plin. lib. xxx. sect. 37.*

to his proper sphere. The law of the Thebans ordaining the imitation of the beautiful alone, and punishing by a fine the delineation of anything offensive to the sight, is well known. This law was not, as has been commonly supposed, and as even Junius* imagines, directed only against the bungling imitator. Its aim was to discourage the Grecian Ghezzi†—to repress the unworthy artifice of catching a resemblance by exaggerating the deformities of the model; in one word, the object of its condemnation was caricature.

The same admiration of beauty is discernible in one of the regulations which governed the erection of statues to the victors at the Olympic games. To each of them this honour was paid; but it was only to the warrior who had thrice borne away the laurel, that an Iconic, or portrait-statue was dedicated.‡ The delineation of indifferant forms was thus prevented from too

* *De Pict. Vet.*, lib. ii., cap. iv., sect. 1.

† Pier Leone Ghezzi was a celebrated Italian caricaturist.
—*Note of Translator.*

‡ *Plin. lib. xxxiv.*, sect. 9.

often engaging the attention of artists; and this on the just principle, that, though portraiture does not altogether exclude ideality, yet identity of resemblance must there necessarily prevail over the ideal. A portrait may present the ideal of an individual man, but can never exhibit that of mankind in general.

Many may be disposed to smile at the idea of the ancients subjecting the arts to the dominion of civic laws; but that does not prove the ancients to have been wrong. The pursuit of science, undoubtedly, should be unfettered by regulations; for the object of science is truth. Truth is necessary to the soul of man, and to impose the smallest restraint on the acquirement of this essential requisite, would be an act of tyranny. The aim of the arts, on the contrary, is pleasure; and pleasure is a superfluity, which it becomes the legitimate office of the lawgiver to control and direct.*

* I cannot permit this sentiment to pass without entering my protest against it. Though not prepared to go so far as to say that there may not be particular cases in which a government might exercise with advantage a salutary restraint over the productions of genius, I cannot bring myself to sub-

The arts of design, in particular, besides the influence which they infallibly exercise over the character of a nation, are also calculated to produce an effect which merits the closest attention

scribe to the doctrine here broadly laid down, that those arts whose object is pleasure, should be entirely subjected to the control of the state. Besides, is Lessing correct in saying that the object of the Fine Arts is pleasure? I doubt it much. To some they may offer food for a craving appetite for pleasure alone—and on all, perhaps, their effect is produced through the medium of pleasurable emotions. But the ultimate object of art, if I mistake not, is of a more elevating, a more ennobling character, than the mere enjoyment of pleasure. It would appear that Lessing has been betrayed into a sentiment so unworthy of his capacious mind by a too blind admiration of whatever has been sanctioned by the practice of the ancients. It arises also partly from the vagueness of the term beauty, which he here lays down as the primary law of the arts, and which he limits to one single application. But who is he who can point to his standard and say,—“*There is beauty?*” Beauty is not one—it is a hundred and a thousand-fold. It is as varied as Nature herself. It is modified by all the different qualities and capabilities of Nature’s creations. There is beauty in a smile—there is beauty in a tear. There is beauty in the spreading oak and lofty pine, and there is beauty in the humblest shrub that creeps beneath our footsteps. This is the broad view which I think we are entitled to take of the principle on which the power of the arts is grounded, and under this point of view we shall be able to justify our admiration of Rembrandt as well as Raphael, of Van Huysum as well as Michael Angelo.—*Note of the Translator.*

of the legislature. While, on the one hand the natural symmetry of the sons of Greece furnished the rules of proportion for the sculptor, the beautiful works of the latter, on the other hand, operated by a natural reaction on the former. The sensitive imagination of the Grecian matrons was directed to the maintenance of beauty; while with us its effects are too often visible only in the production of deformity.

And this idea leads me to detect a latent truth in certain ancient stories, which have hitherto been regarded as altogether fabulous. It is said that the mothers of Aristomenes, of Aristodemus, of Alexander the Great, of Scipio, of Augustus, and of Galerius, all dreamed, during pregnancy, that they had lain with a serpent. This reptile was held by the ancients* as an attribute of Divinity; and the beautiful statues of Bacchus, Apollo, Mercury, and Hercules, were seldom represented without the symbol. It is no very extravagant idea, therefore, to suppose that the good ladies, after feasting their eyes the whole day on the statue of the god, by a

* See Note 3, end of volume.

natural association of ideas reproduced in their dreams at night the image of the reptile which accompanied it. Thus would I vindicate the reality of the dream, and give value to the interpretation which the pride of the son and the flattery of his dependants established; for it could not have been without a cause that the adulterous phantasm assumed in each case the form of a serpent.

But I am wandering from the object I had in view, which was merely to show that, among the ancients, Beauty was the supreme law of the arts of design. This point being settled, it necessarily follows, that every other object in art must be sacrificed at once when incompatible with beauty, and in any case must be rendered subordinate to it. I shall illustrate my idea by referring to the subject of expression. There are certain kinds and degrees of passion which exhibit themselves in the countenance by the most frightful contortions, and throw the whole body into such violent attitudes, that all those beautiful lines which its forms developed in a more tranquil position, become lost. These the

ancient artists either altogether avoided, or they expressed them in such a modified degree as might not be unsusceptible of a certain proportion of beauty. The expression of rage and despair disfigured none of their works, and I would venture to affirm that they never even made choice of a Fury as a subject of art.* Anger they softened into severity. Jupiter hurling his thunderbolt was fierce with indignation in the song of the poet; in the sculptor's image he was simply grave.

In like manner lamentation was tempered into grief; and in a case which would not admit of this softening, and where yet the expression of anguish would have been both derogatory to dignity and destructive of beauty—what course did the artist pursue? In his picture of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, after apportioning to each of the by-standers a suitable share in the scale of grief, Timanthes threw a veil over the countenance of the father, which otherwise must have exhibited that emotion in its uttermost extent. The story of this picture is well known, and

* See Note 4, end of volume.

many fine things have been said of it. One writer supposes* that the artist had so exhausted his talents in delineating the various shades of grief in other parts of his picture, that he despaired of being able to give a still stronger expression of anguish to the countenance of the father. Another † takes the incident to amount to a confession on the part of Timanthes, that to portray a father's agony under such distressing circumstances is beyond the reach of art. For my own part, I can perceive, in the artifice alluded to, neither the inability of the artist, nor the insufficiency of art. It is plain that the more violent the degree of any mental emotion, the stronger and more decided must be the lineaments which express it in the countenance, and consequently the easier will be the task of imitation. But Timanthes was acquainted with the boundary line within which the graces have encircled his art. He knew that the affliction which would become Agamemnon as a father, expresses itself in distortions which are always

* See Note 5, end of volume.

† See Note 6, end of volume.

disagreeable to the sight. As far as beauty and dignity might be combined with expression, to that extent he did not scruple to carry it. The hideousness of anguish he would fain have modified, if not altogether omitted; but since his subject admitted of neither of these expedients, what else remained for him to do but to conceal it? What he dared not exhibit, he left to the imagination to supply. In short, the stratagem of the veil was a sacrifice made by the artist to beauty. It affords an example, not, as has sometimes been pretended, of an unworthy trick employed to urge expression beyond the legitimate limits of art, but of the propriety of keeping it in due subordination to art's primary law—that of beauty.*

* So much has already been written on this subject that it is almost tedious to refer to it again. Yet I cannot help remarking that the critics seem to me to have made a great deal of work about nothing at all, and to have gone far out of their way to find a reason and an excuse for that which renders the one obvious in itself, and stands in no need of the other. Two very good reasons may be given for the action of Agamemnon; the first, that it is perfectly natural—and the second, that it is admirably effective. Either of these is sufficient to justify Timanthes.—*Note of the Translator.*

Now, let us apply this principle to the Laocoon, and the motive I have sought to investigate becomes apparent. The sculptor had to exercise his skill in embodying the highest degree of beauty, exhibited under circumstances of bodily pain; a combination which it would have been utterly impossible to effect, had the latter been depicted in all its hideous violence. His only alternative, then, was to mitigate its vehemence; to soften down the shriek of agony into a sigh;—not from any idea that a shriek would have betrayed an ignoble soul, but simply because it would have exhibited the countenance under a repulsive aspect. In order to appreciate properly the judgment of the artist in the line of conduct he has pursued, let us suppose him to have adopted an opposite course. Let us imagine Laocoon with his mouth wide open, shrieking with agony; and see what the effect would be! The figure which formerly awakened our sympathy, from the admirable union which it presented of the expression of beauty and of pain, is instantly converted into a hideous and unseemly image, from which the spectator will

turn away his eyes in disgust. His feelings will be shocked by the violent expression of anguish, unmodified by any of that beauty which previously engaged his sympathy and compassion.

But independently of the violent and hideous distortion which it produces in the rest of the countenance, a mouth drawn widely open is in itself an unseemly spot upon the canvass, and an ugly hollow in the marble, presenting the most disagreeable effect imaginable. Montfaucon showed but little taste in passing off an old bearded head, with an outstretched mouth, for a Jupiter pronouncing an oracle.* Is it necessary that a God should bawl out his prophecies at the top of his throat? Or, was there reason to fear lest a more pleasing turn of the mouth should render his declarations suspicious? As little do I credit the statement of Valerius, that in the picture of Timanthes, already alluded to, Ajax was represented crying aloud.† Masters of far less excellence in the period of the decline

* *Antiq. expliq.*, t. 1, p. 50.

† See Note 7, end of volume.

of Art, have never represented even the rudest barbarians, though crouched in terror of their lives beneath the conqueror's sword, shrieking aloud with their mouths wide open.*

It is certain that this depression of extreme bodily pain to a more subdued expression, is evident in many of the ancient works of art. The Hercules suffering in the poisoned tunic, the work of an ancient master whose name is unknown, is not the Hercules of Sophocles, who shrieks so frightfully that "the Locrian hills and the Eubœan rocks re-echo to his cries." He displays more of the melancholy of affection, than the boisterous expression of violent agony.† Another instance may be referred to in the Philoctetes of Pythagoras Leontinus, who seemed, we are told, to impart his sufferings to the spectator; an effect which would certainly have been destroyed by the slightest trace of the horrific. If it be asked from what authority I learn that this master executed a statue of Philoctetes, I reply that it is from a passage in Pliny, so

* Bellori Admiranda, tab. 11, 12.

† Plinius, lib. xxxiv., sect. 19.

palpably mutilated or interpolated, that I am surprised that the task of amending the reading should have been reserved for me.*

* See Note 8, end of volume.

THIRD SECTION.

It is impossible that Truth and Expression can form the primary Law of Art, as the Artist's Imitation is confined to a single Moment, and the Painter is, moreover, limited to one single Point of View.—The Delineation of the utmost extent of Expression confines the Imagination of the Spectator.—All transitory Effects become permanently fixed by Art, and an extreme Expression, when too long continued, becomes disgusting.—On the Diversity of the Signs employed by the Fine Arts depends the Facility, and even the Possibility, of combining several of them in Order to produce a common Effect.

IN modern times, as I have already observed, art has assumed a far wider range than that within which the ancients restricted it. Its field of imitation, we are told, extends over the whole face of visible nature, of which beauty forms but a small component part. Truth and expression, it will be said, are its primary law, and as Nature herself does not hesitate to sacrifice beauty to qualities of higher importance, it behoves the

artist likewise to keep it in subordination to the grand principle of his art, and to pursue it no further than truth and expression will permit. It will be sufficient if, by means of truth and expression, that which is offensive to the sight in nature, is converted into what is beautiful in art.

Leaving uncontested in the mean time the accuracy or inaccuracy of these notions, it will be necessary to seek elsewhere that explanation which they certainly do not afford of the principle which should lead the artist notwithstanding to moderate the expression of passion, and not to adopt for imitation its utmost limit of effect. I am inclined to think we shall find a ready clue to this inquiry in this one circumstance, that all the representations of Art are necessarily restricted by its material limits to a single instant of time.

If it be true that the artist can adopt from the face of ever-varying nature only so much of her mutable effects as will belong to one single moment, and that the painter, in particular, can seize this single moment only under one solitary

point of view ;—if it be true also that his works are intended, not to be merely glanced at, but to be long and repeatedly examined ;—then it is clear that the great difficulty will be to select such a moment and such a point of view as shall be sufficiently pregnant with meaning. Nothing however can possess this important qualification but that which leaves free scope to the imagination. The sight and the fancy must be permitted reciprocally to add to each other's enjoyment. There is not, however, throughout the whole process of a mental affection, any one moment less favourable for this purpose than that of its highest state of excitement. Beyond this point there is nothing ; and to exhibit the extremity of expression to the eye is to chain down the pinions of fancy beneath the range of the given effect, which forms the boundary beyond which she cannot pass. Thus, when Laocoon sighs, the imagination may hear him shriek ; but when he shrieks, the fancy can neither advance beyond this extreme point, nor descend below it, without viewing him under circumstances of less urgent distress, and con-

sequently of diminished interest. In the one case, a plaintive moan would suffice to tell his gentler suffering; in the other, his vehement affliction will have terminated in the cold sleep of death.

It is further to be observed, that as the moment selected by the Artist acquires through his operations a permanent durability, it should express nothing that does not bear an otherwise than transitory character. All appearances which, according to our ideas of their nature, suddenly appear and suddenly vanish, and which, in their actual state, are but of an instant's duration—all such appearances, be they agreeable or otherwise, acquire through the prolonged existence conferred on them by art, a character so contrary to nature, that at every successive view we take of them, their expression becomes weaker, till at length we turn from the contemplation in weariness and disgust. La Mettrie, who had his portrait engraved and painted in the character of Democritus, laughs only on the first view. Look at him again, and the philosopher is converted into a buffoon, and

his laugh into a grimace. Thus it is likewise with the expression of pain. The agony which is so great as to extort a shriek, either soon abates in violence, or it must destroy the unhappy sufferer. When torture so far overcomes the enduring fortitude of a man's nature as to make him scream, it is never for any continued space of time; and thus, the apparent perpetuity expressed in the representations of art, would only serve to give to his screams the effect of womanish weakness or childish impatience. This effect at least it was the duty of the sculptor of the Laocoon to guard against, had even the expression of a shriek been in no way prejudicial to beauty, and had even the delineation of suffering unblended with beauty been permitted to his art.

Among the ancient painters, Timomachus appears to have most delighted in selecting subjects of intense passion. His distracted Ajax and his Medea murdering her children, were celebrated pictures. But, from the descriptions we possess of these works, the artist appears to have admirably succeeded in combining the two

important requisites I have been occupied in investigating; having selected that point of the subject which rather suggested than expressed the extreme of passion, and which was not of so essentially evanescent a character as to render its prolongation in art displeasing. Medea was not represented in the very act of murdering her children, but some moments before, while the struggle was yet fierce between maternal love and jealousy. Too well do we foresee how this struggle is to end. Shuddering, we anticipate the sight of the inhuman mother employed in her work of destruction, and our imagination quickly transports us far beyond any representation that the painter could have given of that moment of horror. But, for this very reason, the prolonged hesitation of the pictured Medea is so far from displeasing, that it rather leads us to wish that it had continued as long in reality—that the conflict of passions had never been decided in her breast, or had at least continued until time and reflection had diminished her fury, and secured a triumph to the feelings of the mother. The skill displayed by Timomachus

in the management of this subject obtained for him great and repeated applause, and raised him in estimation far above another painter, now unknown, who was so injudicious as to represent Medea in her highest state of phrensy, thus giving to this evanescent degree of extreme excitement a durability altogether revolting to nature. The poet* who censures him for this ill-judged treatment, thus, with great justice, apostrophizes the principal figure of the picture : —“ Is then thy thirst after the blood of thy children unquenchable? Is there another Jason and another Creusa for ever before thine eyes, exasperating thee to madness?—Away! accursed murderess,” he indignantly adds, “ for accursed art thou, even in the picture !”

Of the distracted Ajax of Timomachus we may form an opinion from the description of Philostratus.† Ajax was not represented under the influence of his madness, attacking and slaughtering the flocks of goats and oxen, which he mistook for men. On the contrary, Timo-

* See Note 9, end of volume.

† Vita Apoll., lib. ii. cap. 22.

machus painted him after the fit was past, exhausted by his feat of insane heroism, and gloomily meditating his own destruction. And this is in truth the distracted Ajax ; not, indeed, in the moment of his phrensy, but with a clear indication of his past excitement and of its extent in the shame and despondency with which the recollection of it overwhelms him. The fury of the storm, though past, is indicated by the fragments it leaves strewed upon the ground.

FOURTH SECTION.

The Range of the Poet is unlimited.—The whole Realm of Perfection lies open to his Imitation.—He is not obliged to concentrate his Subject into one single Moment.—Observations on the Drama, which may be viewed as a speaking Picture.—Illustration of the Philoctetes of Sophocles.

ON reviewing the reasons by which I have endeavored, in the foregoing chapters, to explain the principle which guided the Sculptor of the Laocoon in moderating the expression of bodily pain, I find that they are entirely drawn from the inherent principles of art, and from the limits and necessities on which it depends. It is consequently evident that there is scarcely one of these reasons which would be applicable to Poetry.

Without stopping to inquire to what extent the poet may succeed in delineating corporeal beauty, this at least is indisputable that, since

the immeasurable realm of perfection lies open to his imitation, the visible appearance which that perfection assumes in beauty can be but one amongst many resources—and those the least powerful—by which he is enabled to interest us in his actors. In fact, he frequently neglects this means altogether, satisfied that, when once his hero has secured our affections, his nobler qualities either so engage us that we think not of his outward form, or so prejudice us in his favour that the imagination spontaneously invests him with a suitable exterior. Least of all will he deem it necessary to employ this resource on any particular trait which is not expressly intended for the sight. When Virgil's Laocoon shrieks, who pauses to reflect that a shriek necessarily produces a wide mouth, and that a wide mouth is a disagreeable object? It is sufficient that his

“ *Clamores horrendos ad sidera tollit,*”

presents a striking effect to the ear, whatever it may do to the eye; and he who seeks for a beautiful image in this passage, has failed to receive the impression the poet intended to convey.

In the next place, it is not at all necessary for the poet to concentrate his picture into a single moment of time. He takes up each action at his will, from its very commencement, and traces it, through all its various changes, to the conclusion. Each of these changes, which would cost the artist a separate work, is given by the poet in a single trait; and though this trait, separately considered, might be offensive to the imagination of his reader, yet its effect will be so modified both by that which precedes, and that which follows it, that it is completely deprived of its individual impression, and, by its combination with the rest, produces the most striking result. Thus,—though it might in reality be unbecoming in a man to shriek from excessive pain,—who would suffer so trifling a fault to prejudice him against one, whose virtues had already secured his esteem?—Virgil's Laocoon screams; but we cannot in the moment of his agony forget that he is the same individual who has already won our admiration and love, as the prudent patriot and the affectionate father. We impute his screams, not to any

effeminacy inherent in his character, but solely to the insupportable nature of his sufferings. The piteous tale of anguish is all that we hear in his shrieks, and by no other means could the poet have told it. Can we then censure him? Nay, must we not rather acknowledge that, while the sculptor does well in not representing Laocoon screaming, the poet evinces equal judgment in pursuing an opposite mode of treatment?

But Virgil, we shall be reminded, is a narrative poet; is the justification provided for him to be extended also to the dramatic poet? The description of a scream produces a totally different impression from the scream itself. The drama, it may be said, which is destined for what may be called the animated painting of the actor, ought, for this very reason, to conform more closely to the laws which govern material painting. It is not merely in imagination that we now see Philoctetes and hear him shriek;—we do in reality both hear and see him. The nearer, therefore, the actor approaches to nature, the more sensibly should our eyes and ears be offended; for it is undeniable that such is the

effect of loud and violent expressions of pain in nature. Besides, bodily pain does not in general awaken the sympathy which other misfortunes excite. Our imagination is so little able to distinguish its true nature and extent, that the mere sight of it cannot produce in us any thing like a corresponding sensation. Sophocles may, therefore, possibly have transgressed, not a mere arbitrary rule of propriety, but one grounded in the very existence of our sentiments, when he represented Philoctetes and Hercules weeping, moaning and screaming. The by-standers could not possibly participate so largely in their sufferings, as these extravagant bursts of lamentation would seem to demand. They will consequently appear to us spectators comparatively cold, while at the same time we cannot do otherwise than regulate the extent of our sympathy by theirs. It must also be borne in mind that the actor can scarcely ever, if at all, carry the representation of bodily pain to the extent of illusion; and when all these objections and difficulties are taken into consideration, may it not be fairly doubted whether the modern dramatic

poets are not rather to be commended than blamed for either avoiding them altogether, or at least approaching them with caution?

How plausible, how incontrovertible appears many an ingenious theory, till the whole fabric on which it is raised is overturned by one stubborn fact! The foregoing reflections are by no means without foundation, yet the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles still remains a masterpiece of the drama. Part of them, indeed, are not peculiarly applicable to Sophocles; and it is only because he rises above the level of the remainder that he has attained to beauties of which the timid critic, but for this example, would never have dreamed. This will be more clearly shown by the following observations:

In the first place, let us remark how admirably the poet has contrived to strengthen and exalt the idea of bodily pain. In making choice of the circumstance on which to ground the interest of his drama, (for, as the story must have been chosen with reference to the incidents, those incidents themselves may fairly be said to have been the object of his choice,) he selected

a wound rather than an internal malady, though equally painful: conceiving the former to be the most susceptible of an impressive representation. Thus, the sympathetic fire which consumed Meleager when his mother sacrificed him to her sisterly rage by throwing the fatal brand into the flames, would be less appropriate to the drama than a wound. Besides, the wound which the poet selected, was the effect of divine judgment. A supernatural poison raged incessantly within it, while each paroxysm of pain was succeeded at stated intervals by a stupifying slumber, destined only to repair the exhausted energies of the unhappy sufferer, and prepare him, on awaking, for a renewal of his tortures.—Injudiciously seeking to attribute to mere human agency an effect so preternatural, Chataubrun has made the wound of his Philoctetes proceed from the poisoned dart of a Trojan. But how inconsistent is this contrivance! What extraordinary effect could be expected from an event of such frequent occurrence? Every individual soldier was exposed to an accident of this kind; how then should it happen that it was visited with

such dreadful consequences in the case of Philoctetes alone? It need hardly be added that the absurdity of supposing a natural poison to operate for nine entire years without destroying life, exceeds in extravagance all the improbable wonders with which the Greek has invested the tale.

In the second place, great and excruciating as the poet represented the bodily sufferings of his hero to be, he yet felt that those sufferings were not alone sufficient to excite any considerable degree of sympathy. He therefore combined them with other misfortunes, equally unlikely of themselves to touch the heart, but producing, in combination with the rest, a degree of melancholy interest which none of them possessed alone. These misfortunes consist in an utter want of all human society, in hunger, and all the inconveniences of life to which a man must naturally be exposed, beneath an inclement sky, under circumstances of such painful destitution.* We may, it is true, imagine a human

* See Note 10, end of volume.

being in such a situation, and if we give him but health, and strength, and industry, we shall have a mere Robinson Crusoe ; who, while we are not indifferent to his fate, will make but a slender appeal to our sympathy. It is seldom indeed that we are so fond of human society, as not to feel the attraction of the tranquillity to be enjoyed beyond its pale, particularly as each individual is disposed to flatter himself with the notion that he might gradually learn to dispense altogether with extraneous assistance. Again, we may imagine a man afflicted with the most painful and incurable disease, yet surrounded, at the same time, by kind and attentive friends, who allow him to feel no privation, and who endeavour to alleviate, as far as lies in their power, those sufferings which are the occasion of his complaints and lamentations ; though there is no doubt that we should sympathize with this unfortunate being, yet our sympathy would not be of long continuance ; we should soon grow weary of his complaints, and content ourselves with recommending the miserable sufferer to be patient. It is only when both these

cases come to be combined ;—when the solitary being is deprived of the use of his limbs,—when the sufferer can neither receive the assistance of others, nor is able to assist himself, while his cries of anguish are wasted on the desert air ;—it is then, when we behold all the misery which human nature can bear, accumulated on the head of one unhappy being, each thought which places us, though but for a moment, in his situation, awakens in our breasts feelings of shuddering and horror. We behold the image of despair in its most frightful form before us, and no sympathy is stronger, none more completely subdues the soul, than that which is awakened by the spectacle of despair. Of this nature is the sympathy which we feel towards Philoctetes, and which the poet has wound to the highest pitch at the moment when he exhibits him to us deprived of his bow—his last remaining means of prolonging a miserable existence. Alas ! for the French poet, who had neither the sense to discern this, nor the heart to feel it ! Or who, possessing both, was contemptible enough to sacrifice these traits of interest to the paltry

taste of his nation! Chataubrun has thought it necessary to enliven with society the dreary solitude of Philoctetes, who is made to receive a visit from a princess, his daughter. Nor is the princess alone; she is attended by her *gouvernante*, a companion of whom it is not easy to determine whether the princess or the poet stood most in need. The whole of the admirable acting with the bow is omitted by him, and the *jeu des beaux yeux* is substituted in its stead. A bow and arrows would, no doubt, appear a comical enough incident to the youthful French heroes; while the wrathful expression of a pair of fine eyes is with them an affair of the most serious importance. The Greek poet agitates us with the dreadful apprehension that Philoctetes is to be left without his bow on the desert island, to perish in miserable helplessness. The Frenchman knows a surer way to our hearts; he excites our fears lest the son of Achilles should be obliged to depart without his princess. This is the admirable conception which was celebrated as a triumph over the ancients by the Parisian critics, one of whom even went so far as

to propose that the Philoctetes of Chataubrun should be entitled "la difficulté vaincue!"*

From this glance at the general effect of the whole, let us now turn to notice those particular scenes which represent Philoctetes no longer in the character of a solitary sufferer, but as enjoying the hope of soon quitting the cheerless wilderness, and returning to repossess his kingdom. In these scenes, consequently, the whole of his misery reduces itself to the painful wound, and under the influence of its agony, he wails, he shrieks, and falls into the most frightful convulsions. This, then, comes peculiarly within reach of the objection to an offence against decorum, made by an English writer who cannot easily be suspected of false delicacy. As has already been hinted, he gives a very good reason for this objection. He remarks that all those feelings and emotions with which others can sympathize only in a moderate degree, become offensive when they are too powerfully expressed.†

* *Mercure de France*. Avril, 1755, p. 177.

† Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, part i., sect. 2, chap. i.

“ It is for the same reason that to cry out with bodily pain, how intolerable soever, appears always unmanly and unbecoming. There is, however, a good deal of sympathy even with bodily pain. If, as has been already observed, I see a stroke aimed, and just ready to fall on the leg or arm of another person, I naturally shrink and draw back my own leg or my own arm; and when it does fall, I feel it in some measure, and am hurt by it as well as the sufferer. My hurt, however, is no doubt excessively slight, and upon that account, if he make any violent outcry, as I cannot go along with him, I never fail to despise him.” Nothing is more likely to mislead, than an attempt to lay down general rules for our emotions. Their texture is so exquisitely fine and so exceedingly complicated, that it is scarcely possible for the most cautious speculator to take up a single filament and trace it through all the ramifications of which it forms a part. But grant that this difficulty were overcome—where would be the use of it? There is no such thing in nature as a distinct independent emotion; each one is

combined with a thousand others, the smallest of which is sufficient to change altogether the character of the leading emotion. Thus exception after exception must be made, until at last the supposed general rule sinks down into a mere experimental observation, applicable only to a few solitary instances. "We despise the man," says the writer already quoted, "whom we hear screaming aloud under the influence of bodily pain." Surely, not always; not when we witness his agony; not when we behold the sufferer striving to suppress his anguish;—not when we know him to be otherwise a man of firmness;—still less, when we see him, even in the midst of his sufferings, giving evident proofs of that firmness; when we perceive that the pain he suffers, while it forces him to scream aloud, cannot urge him to the slightest abandonment of his principles and resolutions, though by such a concession he might hope to procure a final release to his sufferings. Now, all this is to be found in Philoctetes. Moral grandeur, among the ancient Greeks, consisted as much in an unalterable affection for friends, as in a perse-

vering hatred of enemies. This grandeur is evinced by Philoctetes in the midst of all his torments. His anguish has not so withered up the fountain of his tears, but that he has still some drops to shed for the fate of his ancient friends; neither has it so subdued him that, to obtain relief, he could forgive his enemies, and render himself subservient to their selfish views. And were the Athenians, then, to despise this man because, forsooth, the angry billows of misfortune extorted a wailing sound from the rocks whose firmness they could not shake?—I confess I have no great taste for Cicero's philosophy in general; but least of all do I admire his observations in the Second Book of the Tusculan Questions, with reference to the endurance of bodily pain. One would suppose his object was to form a gladiator, so zealously does he condemn all outward expression of pain. This he seems to consider a sign of impatience alone; forgetting that it is often extorted from us entirely against our inclination, and can therefore never be taken as indicating a want of true courage, the presence or absence of

which can only be estimated by reference to those acts which are purely voluntary. He hears only the shrieks and moanings of the hero of Sophocles, and altogether overlooks his firm bearing in other respects. Had he done otherwise, indeed, he would have had no pretence for indulging in the rhetorical flourish in which he accuses the poets of "rendering us effeminate, by exhibiting the bravest men weeping." Weeping!—and why not? A theatre is surely not an arena. It was the business of the condemned or hired gladiator, it is true, to display a calm exterior through all his actions and sufferings. No mournful cry was to escape his lips,—no painful writhing was to be exhibited in his body. His wounds, his death, were to prove a source of enjoyment to the spectators, and it was therefore a part of his education to learn to conceal his emotions. The slightest expression on his part would have awakened sympathy in the beholders, and the frequent repetition of this sympathy would soon have brought about the abolition of these cold-hearted, barbarous spectacles. But that very emotion which was not.

in this case admissible, is the peculiar object of the tragic muse, whose heroes must exhibit a totally opposite bearing. They must manifest their feelings, give expression to their pains, and give full play to their natural emotions. The moment they appear to act under the influence of constraint and rule, they lose at once the power of touching our sensibilities, and bare admiration is all that we can award to the stoic gladiator of the sock. Such is the title which may with propriety be given to all the personages of what are called the tragedies of Seneca ; and I am decidedly of opinion that the gladiatorial shows were the chief cause of the Romans remaining so far below mediocrity in their tragic compositions. In the sanguinary scenes of the Amphitheatre, where a Ctesias might, indeed, study his art with some advantage, but where a Sophocles could certainly never have been trained, the spectator was infallibly led to misconceive all natural character and expression. The best tragic genius, accustomed to these artificial death-scenes, could not avoid being betrayed into bombast and rodomontade. But

while on the one hand the example of such inflated heroics can never have the effect of inspiring genuine courage, neither will the plaintive cries of Philoctetes, on the other hand, tend to excite an unworthy excess of sensibility. While his lamentations are those of a man, his actions are those of a hero. Both combined form the heroic man, whose feelings are neither too effeminately tender, nor too stoically callous, but incline alternately between either extreme, according as the dictates of nature, or his feelings of duty gain the ascendant. His character, in short, is of the most elevated kind which wisdom could conceive, or art could embody.

Nor was Sophocles satisfied with merely securing the sensibilities of his Philoctetes from contempt; he has also been careful to obviate all the objections which might have been urged against him in the spirit of the English critic. For, though it does not always follow as a necessary consequence that we must "despise the man who screams aloud under the influence of bodily pain," yet this is undeniable, that we never feel so much sympathy for him as his

lamentations would seem to demand. What kind of emotion, then, should be exhibited by those individuals by whom the screaming Philoctetes is surrounded? To throw themselves into a high degree of excitement would be contrary to nature. To exhibit the same cold and abstracted demeanour which is so usual under such circumstances, would produce a discordant effect most ungrateful to the feelings of the spectator. Now, mark how Sophocles has obviated the difficulties of this dilemma. He has imparted to the by-standers an interest peculiar to themselves. He has so contrived, that the impression which the shrieks of Philoctetes produce on them, is not the only object with which they are occupied; and consequently the spectator's attention is directed, not so much to the disproportion which exists between the lamentations of Sophocles and the sympathy of his companions, as to the change brought about in their own dispositions and plans under the influence of that sympathy, whether strong or weak. Neoptolemus and the Chorus have practised a deceit on the unhappy Philoctetes; they

are witnesses to the despair into which its effects are likely to plunge him ; at the same moment he falls into one of his dreadful convulsions before their eyes, and if this spectacle calls forth no remarkable expression of sympathy on their part, it may, at least, compel them to reflect on what may be the consequences of their conduct, —to respect the affliction with which the sufferer is overwhelmed, and to abstain from adding to it by their treachery. This is what the spectator looks for ; and his expectation is not disappointed by the noble Neoptolemus. Had Philoctetes succeeded in disguising his sufferings, he would have confirmed Neoptolemus in his treacherous intentions. But the agony which renders him incapable of all dissimulation, highly necessary as it appears to him, at the same time forbids his future fellow-traveller to repent of the promise he has given to bear him away from the desert island. Philoctetes, all nature himself, restores Neoptolemus also to nature. This change is admirably managed, and is the more touching from the circumstance of its being brought about by the operation of purely human

feelings. Here again the French poet has recourse to the influence of a pair of fine eyes, to which he attributes a share in this revolution of feeling.*—But let us think no more of this unworthy parody.

The same artifice of combining in the breasts of the by-standers another affection along with the sympathy excited by the shrieks of the sufferer, has also been employed by Sophocles in his *Trachiniæ*. The suffering of Hercules is not an exhausting pain; it drives him even to madness, under the influence of which he parts after revenge. He has already seized Lichas, during his fit of phrensy, and dashed him against the rocks. The Chorus is composed of females, in order to give a more natural effect to the dread and horror with which they are seized. This circumstance, and the suspense occasioned by the doubt as to whether a Deity will come to the assistance of Hercules, or whether he is doomed to sink under the weight of his misfortunes, constitute the general feature of the

* Acte ii., sc. iii. “De mes déguisemens que penserait Sophie?” says the son of Achilles.

dramatic interest, to which the sympathy excited by the spectacle of the hero's sufferings gives but a slight additional shade. No sooner is the final issue determined by reference to the oracle, than Hercules becomes tranquil, and admiration of his resolution takes the place of all other emotions. In comparing the suffering Hercules, however, with the suffering Philoctetes, it must always be borne in mind that the former was a demi-god, while the latter was simply a man. The one is not ashamed of his tears and lamentations, while the other naturally feels humiliated that the mortal should so far triumph over the immortal part of his nature, as to compel him to weep and wail "like a tender maiden."*— We moderns are no believers in demi-gods, yet the least important hero among us is expected to feel and act like one.

Whether it be possible for the actor to carry his imitation of the shriekings and writhings of pain to the extent of illusion, I shall not pretend

* Trach. v. 1073—74.

. . . . ὅστις, ὡς τι παρσίως,
βίβρυχα κλαίων. . . .

to determine. If I were even satisfied that my own countrymen are incapable of it, I should next wish to ascertain whether a Garrick has not attained that perfection; and should even he have failed to do so, I must still continue to be of opinion that the declamatory art and dramatic effect, among the ancients, exhibited a degree of finished excellence of which it is totally impossible for us to form any idea.

FIFTH SECTION.

Of the Laocoon of Virgil, and the sculptured Group of the same Subject.—It seems more probable that the Artist imitated Virgil, than that the latter took the Group for his Model.

It is the opinion of some antiquarian connoisseurs that the group of Laocoon, though the work of Greek artists, was executed in the time of the Emperors, and this conjecture they ground on the belief that the Laocoon of Virgil furnished the model for it. Of those learned writers who have entertained this opinion, I shall mention only Bartolomeo Marliani,* among the more ancient, and Montfaucon,† among the moderns. They were, doubtless, struck with the coincidence which exists between the work of the Artist and the Poet's description, and it

* See Note 11, end of volume.

† See Note 12, end of volume.

seemed to them impossible that both could accidentally have hit on precisely the same circumstances, which are of a nature very unlikely to occur spontaneously to the imagination. Thus, having satisfied themselves that one of the parties must have been the imitator, they seem to have had no hesitation in deciding that the honor of the original invention, in all probability, lay on the side of the Poet, rather than that of the Sculptor.

These writers seem to have entirely overlooked the possibility of a third contingency,—namely, that neither the Poet nor the Artists may have copied each other; but that both may have drawn from one and the same ancient source. From what we learn from Macrobius,* it is possible that Pisander may have been this common source. The works of this Greek poet were then in existence; and it was known, it seems, to every school-boy, “*pueris decantatum*,” that Virgil had, not merely imitated, but faithfully translated from him the whole of his description

* See Note 13, end of volume.

of the sacking and burning of Troy ; the whole, in fact, of his Second Book. If, then, Pisander were Virgil's prototype in the story of Laocoon, it is evidently not necessary that the Greek sculptors should have had recourse to the Roman poet for their subject, and the conjecture thus formed of the period to which they belonged must consequently, fall at once to the ground.

Were I, however, inclined to maintain the opinion of Marliani and Montfaucon, I should offer this defence for it. Since Pisander's poems are lost, it is impossible for us to conjecture how the story of Laocoon was narrated by him. The probability, however, is, that it was given with the same details as those of which we still find traces among the Greek writers. Now, these do not in the least correspond with Virgil's narrative, and the Roman poet must, therefore, have completely remodelled the Greek tradition. In describing the unhappy fate of Laocoon, he follows, then, his own invention ; consequently, if the sculptors' representation coincide with that poet's description, it is scarcely possible to

doubt that they must have lived subsequently to him, and have taken him for their model.

Quintus Calaber, it is true, makes Laocoon evince the same suspicion of the wooden horse as Virgil does; but the wrath of Minerva is testified in the former writer in a totally different manner. The earth trembles under the feet of Apollo's priest, as he utters his words of warning; a sudden fit of terror and anxiety comes over him; a burning pain rages in his eyes; his brain is affected; he raves; he becomes blind. On his still persisting, notwithstanding these dreadful inflictions, to recommend the conflagration of the wooden horse, Minerva sends two fierce serpents to seize upon his children. In vain do the innocent sufferers stretch out their helpless hands towards their father; the poor blind man is incapable of rendering them assistance. The reptiles tear them in pieces, and then glide into the earth, while Laocoon himself remains untouched. That this incident is not peculiar to Quintus,* but

* Paralip., lib. xii., v. 398—408, et v. 439—474.

may rather be considered the popular version of the story, is shown by a passage in Lycophron,* where these snakes are called the “ children-eaters.”

Now, if this had really been the general version of the story among the Greeks, Greek artists would scarcely have ventured to depart from it; or if they had, it is not very likely that the alterations they made in it would have coincided precisely with those of a Roman Poet, unless they had actually been acquainted with his work, and had been perhaps expressly commissioned to follow it. This, in my opinion, is the point on which the defenders of Marliani and Montfaucon should rest. Virgil is the first† and only writer who makes the serpents destroy the father as well as the children. This the sculptors have likewise done; and since, viewing them in the character of Greek artists, drawing from purely Grecian sources, their

* I should rather have said, *snake*; for Lycophron speaks in the singular number:—

Και παιδοβρωτες αρχωνος υησους διπλας.

† See Note 14, end of volume.

treatment of the subject would naturally have been different, the probability is that they have been guided by Virgil's description.

I am perfectly aware that this probability, strong as it may be, is destitute of the confirmation of historical proof; but as my object is not to draw any historical conclusion from it, I think it may at least be received as a conjecture capable of assisting the reflections of the critic. At all events, whether I have said enough to show that the sculptors have copied Virgil or not, I shall in the mean time assume that they have, simply with the view of ascertaining in what way they may have copied him. On the subject of Laocoon's shrieks I have already sufficiently treated; it is possible that a further comparison of the two works may lead to no less instructive reflections.

The idea of uniting the father and both his sons in one bond, as it were, formed by the folds of the fatal serpents, is undoubtedly a very happy one, and evinces a very pictorial fancy. To whom, then, is this idea to be attributed;—to the poet or to the sculptors?

Montfaucon* cannot find it in the poet; but I suspect Montfaucon has not perused him with sufficient attention. Let us turn to the *Æneid* and see:—

“ We fled amazed ;—their destined way they take,
 And to Laocoön and his children make :
 And first around the tender boys they wind,
 Then with their sharpen'd fangs their limbs and bodies grind.
 The wretched father, running to their aid
 With pious haste, but vain, they next invade.”

The poet having already depicted the serpents of a prodigious length, describes them as twining themselves first around the boys, and then seizing the father as he hastens to their rescue. Now, as their size would naturally prevent them from disentangling themselves all at once from the children, there must necessarily have been an instant during which they had commenced an attack upon the father, while still holding his sons enveloped in the folds of their posterior extremities. This moment is necessary to the progression of the poetic picture. The poet allows it to be sufficiently

* See Note 15, end of volume.

felt; a more minute delineation would have been out of place. That the ancient expositors felt it, seems to be shown by a passage in Donatus.* How much less likely, then, was it to have escaped the notice of artists, who with such ready judgment perceive and adopt whatever is calculated to be advantageous to the effect they aim at.

From the scaly folds of the serpents, in which the poet envelopes the figure of Laocoon, he carefully excludes the arms, so as to leave the hands entirely free for action:—

“ With both his hands he labours at the knots.”

In this particular the sculptor could not do otherwise than follow him. Nothing contributes more to give expression and life than the motion of the hands. In passionate expression, in particular, the most speaking countenance is insignificant without them. To have confined the arms close to the body by the folds of the serpents, would have spread frigidity and life-

* See Note 16, end of volume.

lessness over the whole groupe. We see these members, therefore, in full activity both in the principal figure, and in those which accompany it, and this activity is most conspicuous in that in which the severest pain is felt.

Beyond this single circumstance, however, the sculptor found nothing in the convolutions of the serpents which he could advantageously borrow from the poet. Virgil describes the snakes as folded twice around the waist and the neck of Laocoon, and stretching out their heads high above him.

“ Twice round his waist their winding volumes roll'd ;
And twice about his gasping throat they fold.
The priest thus doubly choked—their crests divide,
And tow'ring o'er his head in triumph ride.”

What a striking picture is this !—The noblest parts of the body are compressed even to suffocation, and the reptiles are just preparing to dart their venom in the very face of their victim. Yet, striking as the picture is, it is not one which could be adopted by the artist, whose object was to delineate the operation of the poison and of the pain on the body. In order

to give proper effect to this, it became necessary to leave the most important parts as unincumbered as possible, and to allow no external pressure to influence them so as to change and weaken the play of the suffering nerves and laboring muscles. The double folds of the serpents would have concealed the waist altogether; and that painful contraction of the abdomen, in which so much expression lies, would have been entirely lost to the eye. Whatever portion of the waist might have been seen above, beneath, or between the convolutions, would have been accompanied by swellings and depressions, caused, not by the internal pain, but by the external pressure. Again, the double winding round the throat would entirely have destroyed the pyramidal character of the groupe, which is so agreeable to the sight; while the heads of the snakes issuing from the protuberance, and projecting detached into the open air, would have looked so disproportionate in size, as to render the effect of the whole exceedingly offensive to the sight. In spite of these objections, however, some artists have

actually been so unwise as to adhere to the poet's description. The frightful effect thus produced is sufficiently shown in one instance out of several that might be referred to,—that of a plate by Francis Kleyn,* in the splendid English edition of Dryden's Virgil. The ancient sculptors saw at a glance that their art demanded in this instance a totally different treatment. They transferred all the foldings of the serpents from the waist and the throat to the legs and feet, where, however much they might compress and conceal the parts, they could not interfere with the expression. This arrangement likewise serves to suggest the idea of the arrested flight of the victims, and of a certain immobility in the groupe which materially assists the artificial permanence of the situation.

I cannot understand how it has happened that the striking difference which thus exists between the two works, in the arrangement of the serpents, has passed altogether unnoticed

* See Note 17, end of volume.

by the critics. In my opinion it serves to exalt the skill of the artist quite as much as the other variation which they all unite in remarking, but which they rather attempt to excuse than venture to commend,—I mean the difference in point of costume. Virgil's Laocoon is arrayed in his sacerdotal garments, while in the sculptured groupe he appears, along with his two sons, entirely naked. It is said that there have been persons fastidious enough to object that there is an absurdity in representing a king's son and a priest stark naked on the solemn occasion of a sacrifice. I have heard, too, that there are critics who have gravely replied to this objection, that the mode of treatment complained of is nothing more than an offence against usage, which the sculptor was constrained to commit, from his inability to give the figures any appropriate clothing. Sculpture, say these sapient critics, is incapable of imitating the texture of stuffs; thick folds produce a bad effect, and thus the sculptor is compelled to make choice of the least of two evils, and rather to offend against truth itself, than expose himself to censure in the

execution of the draperies.* If the ancient artists would have laughed at the criticism, I do not know what they would have said to the reply. For, even allowing that sculpture were capable of imitating the various materials of which garments are composed, just as well as painting, does it necessarily follow that Laocoon should be clothed? Should we lose nothing beneath this clothing? Does a garment, the production of servile hands, possess an equal share of beauty with an organized body, the work of Eternal Wisdom? Does the imitation of the one demand the same abilities, claim the same merit, or obtain the same praise, as that of the other? Do we require nothing beyond a mere ocular deception, without heeding the means employed in producing that deception?

A garment in the hands of the poet differs from a real dress in this,—it conceals nothing; the imagination sees all that is beneath it. Whether Virgil's Laocoon be clothed or not, his sufferings are as visible throughout every part

* See Note 18, end of volume.

of his body as in the work of the sculptor. The sacerdotal bandage encircles, without shrouding his brow ; in fact, far from injuring, it is rather made to strengthen the idea we are led to form of the agonies of the wearer ;—

“ His holy fillets the blue venom blots.”

We see that the dignity of his priestly character itself avails not to preserve him from destruction ; its very emblem of distinction, that which, above all, procured for him consideration and respect, is profaned and soaked with the poisonous slime of the serpents.

But the idea thus beautifully suggested by the poet, the artist was compelled to renounce, if he would preserve uninjured the effect of his work. Had he placed this bandage on his Laocoon, he would have considerably weakened the expression. The brow must have been partially covered ; and the brow is the very seat of expression. Therefore, as he had elsewhere sacrificed expression to beauty, so here he sacrificed usage to expression. In fact, generally speaking, the laws of usage were but lightly

regarded by the ancients; they felt that the highest object of their art led them entirely to dispense with it. This object of paramount importance was beauty;—necessity invented clothing, and what has art to do with necessity? I do not mean to deny that there may be beauty even in clothing, but what is it in comparison with the beauty of the human form? And will he who has the power to achieve the higher grade of excellence, voluntarily occupy himself on the lower? I am very much inclined to suspect that the most perfect master in draperies betrays the deficiency of his genius by his very skill.

SIXTH SECTION.

The Supposition that the Sculptor of the Laocoon has imitated the Poet, conveys no Imputation derogatory to the Genius of the former.

My conjecture that the Sculptor has imitated the Poet, by no means tends to disparage the skill of the former. On the contrary, this imitation serves to display his judgment in the most favorable light. In taking the Poet for his guide, he has not permitted himself to be led by him in every trifling particular. He selected a model, it is true; but, as it was his business to transfer this model from one art to another, he had abundant opportunities of thinking for himself. And so judiciously has he availed himself of these opportunities, that the very points in which he departs from his model, prove that, however distinguished the Poet was in his

own art, the Sculptor was no less eminent in his.

I shall now proceed to show the fallacy of the supposition that the Poet was the imitator of the Artist. Some writers* seem to consider this idea as certain. I do not know that they have any historical grounds for their opinion, which they appear to rest solely on the idea that the work of Art is of too great excellence to have been the production of a period comparatively late. In short, they pretend that it could have belonged to no other age than that in which art had attained its highest perfection, because its merits are sufficient to place it on a level with the most admired works of antiquity.

It has already been shown that, admirable as is the picture drawn by Virgil, it contains some features which the artist could not with propriety adopt. It is evident, then, that the proposition so often maintained, that a good poetical representation must necessarily produce a good picture, and that the poet's description is excel-

* See Note 19, end of volume.

lent only when it can be in every point adopted by the artist, admits of some limitation. Indeed, the necessity for this limitation will be sufficiently apparent, even without the confirmation of examples, when we reflect on the extensive sphere over which poetry holds dominion, the boundless range of the imagination, and the spirituality of its images, which may be crowded into the closest contact with each other, without any of that mutual concealment or injury which would necessarily result from a similar arrangement of the things themselves, or of the natural symbols of those images within the narrow limits of space or time.

But though, to use a mathematical phrase, the less cannot include the greater, yet there is clearly no absurdity in holding that the greater may contain the less. My meaning is, that, though it does not necessarily follow that every image of the descriptive poet should produce a good effect on the canvass or the marble, yet each trait expressed with success by the Artist will certainly be effective when transferred to the work of the Poet. The beauties developed in a work of art are not approved by the eye itself,

but by the imagination through the medium of the eye ; and so long as the same images are presented to the imagination, whether by means of arbitrary or natural signs, the same pleasure will always be awakened, though not, perhaps, in the same degree.

This point being settled, I must confess that it seems to me much more difficult to believe that Virgil imitated the Sculptor, than that the contrary was the case. In supposing that the Sculptor has imitated the Poet, I can at once account satisfactorily for all the alterations he has made. He was under the necessity of departing from his model, since to have followed him too slavishly would have occasioned inconveniences in his work, which do not appear in the other. But where was the necessity for variation on the part of the Poet ? What had he to do, in order to produce a splendid picture, but simply to copy the groupe faithfully in each and every particular ? * I can, indeed, very well conceive how the operations of his fancy

* See Note 20, end of volume.

might lead him to introduce some additional features of his own, but I can by no means understand why he should think it necessary to substitute these for the beautiful lineaments already before his eyes.

I am even inclined to think that, had Virgil taken the groupe as his model, he would scarcely have remained satisfied with merely hinting at the entanglement of all the three bodies in one knot. The idea must have struck him too forcibly,—its admirable effect must have been too apparent, not to have induced him to make it a more prominent feature in his narrative. I have already said that a more minute delineation of it would have been out of place. True; but a single word more would perhaps have been sufficient to have given it a more decided expression, even amidst the obscurity in which the poet found it necessary to leave it. If the artist, without this additional help, could detect the latent idea, surely the poet, when he beheld it fully developed in the artist's work, would never have left his own without it.

Again, the Artist had the strongest possible

reasons for not allowing the sufferings of Laocoon to appear to break out into a scream. But what powerful inducement could the Poet have had, with so striking a combination of pain and beauty in the work of art before him, to pass over unnoticed the idea of patience and fortitude suggested by this combination, and scare our ears instead with the frightful shrieks of his Laocoon? Richardson endeavours to account for this mode of treatment by supposing that the object of the Poet was, not so much to awaken sympathy for Laocoon among the Trojans, as horror and dread. This I am willing to admit; although Richardson does not seem to have considered that the Poet does not narrate the story in his own person, but represents Æneas as describing it, and that to Dido, whose sympathy he was so anxious to excite. It is not, however, the shrieking that surprises me, but the absence of all gradation of emotions leading to it, which would have been so naturally suggested by the sculpture, if Virgil had taken it for his model. Richardson next goes on to say,* that, as the

* See Note 21, end of volume.

story of Laocoon was only intended to lead to the pathetic description of the final destruction of Troy, the poet was properly solicitous that it should not in itself possess so high a degree of interest as to divide on the misfortunes of an individual that attention which the recital of the last catastrophe demands entire. This, however, is an artist-like view of the subject, of which it will not in reality admit. Had Virgil depicted the misfortunes of Laocoon and the destruction of Troy in juxta-position, some caution might have been necessary to have prevented the imagination from dwelling more upon the agonies of Laocoon than on the horrors of the burning city. But he has made these narratives consecutive; and I really do not see why the circumstance of the first having powerfully affected us should operate to the prejudice of the second; or if it did, that it would prove anything more than that the latter was in itself deficient in interest.

Still less occasion would the poet have had to alter the arrangement of the serpents, which in the sculpture are so managed as to leave the

hands quite free, while they confine the feet. This arrangement is not only agreeable to the eye, but produces a vivid impression on the imagination. The image is so distinct and palpable, that it may be presented with almost the same force in words, as through the medium of natural signs.

* * * Micat alter, et ipsum
Laocoonta petit, totumque infraque supraque
Implicat, et rabido tandem ferit ilia morsu.

* * * * *
At serpens, lapsu crebro redeunte subintrat
Lubricus, intortoque ligat genus infima nodo.

These are Sadoletto's verses; but the idea they convey would doubtless have been still more effective, had Virgil expressed it after his fancy had been excited by the contemplation of the work of art. At least, it cannot be doubted that such a preparation would have produced far better lines than those he gives us:—

Bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum
Terga dati, superant capite et cervicibus altis.

The imagination is, undoubtedly, filled with these traits, but it must not be permitted to dwell on them too long, or to seek to embody

them too distinctly. The mind's eye must rest alternately on Laocoon and on the serpents, without attempting to embrace the effect of both combined; for the instant this is done, the Virgilian picture is sure to displease, and becomes in the highest degree unpictorial.

But, granting even that the alterations made by Virgil on his presumed prototype were not injudicious, they were at all events quite arbitrary. The object of imitation is to produce resemblance; but what resemblance can exist where the most essential points are altered? On the contrary, the natural inference in such a case must be that no resemblance was intended, and consequently that no attempt at imitation was made.

We may be told, however, that some of the separate parts may be imitated, without any intention of copying the whole. Granted;—but let us see, then, what are these separate parts which so exactly coincide, both in the poem and the sculpture, as to justify the idea that the poet might have borrowed them from the artist. The great leading features of the

subject,—the father, the children and the serpents, the story gave to the poet as well as to the sculptor ; and the only other point in which they agree is that of connecting the parent and sons by means of the convolutions of the serpents. This idea, however, arose from the change introduced into the story, by which the father was made to share the misfortune of his sons ; a change which, as I have before observed, seems to have been made by Virgil, who differs entirely from the Greek tradition in this respect. Consequently, if there be any imitation here on either side, we may with greater reason ascribe it to the artist than to the poet. In every other point they differ from each other ; but it is important to observe this distinction, that the variations made by the artist are the necessary consequence of the limits and necessities of his art, and cannot therefore be taken as any evidence against his intention to imitate ; while, on the contrary, all those points in which, as we have already seen, the poet differs from the artist, go clearly to show that he was not the imitator. In short, I am convinced that those

who maintain an opposite opinion can only do so with the view of establishing their favorite doctrine, that the work of art is more ancient than the poetical description. .

SEVENTH SECTION.

On the two different Kinds of Imitation, that of the Artist of Genius, and of the servile Copyist.—Caution to the Critics not to be too ready to attribute Imitation to the Poet, a Propensity which has led Spence and Addison to do much undeserved Injury to the Reputation of the ancient classical Authors.

To say that the artist has imitated the poet, or the poet the artist, may be understood in two very different senses. Either the one has made the work of the other the actual object of his imitation, or else, both having made choice of the same model, the one has borrowed from the other his mode of imitating it.

When Virgil, for instance, describes the shield of Æneas, he imitates the sculptor who executed that shield in the first sense. The work of art itself is the immediate object of his imitation; the representations it contains

are described by him, not as if he were narrating the occurrences themselves, but simply as forming a part of the shield. If, on the other hand, Virgil had chosen the groupe of Laocoon for his model, he would have produced an imitation of the second kind. He would have copied the subject which the groupe represents, and not the groupe itself, which would have furnished him only with the leading features of his imitation.

In the first class of imitations the poet is original; in the second, he is but a copyist. The former is a part of the general system of imitation which constitutes the character of his art; and his genius is equally engaged in the labor, whether the model he has selected be the work of another art or of nature. The latter, on the contrary, degrades him altogether from the high station which it should be his ambition to maintain; instead of the objects themselves, he copies their imitations, and presents us with frigid traces of another's genius, instead of giving us original traits of his own.

It is important, however, to observe that,

since the poet and the artist must often inevitably view their subjects from precisely the same point, it cannot but happen that their representations must in many cases correspond without the least attempt at imitation or rivalry on one side or the other. Such coincidences between contemporary artists and poets, may often serve mutually to throw light on objects now no longer in existence. At the same time, to attempt to establish a design in each accidental coincidence, or to show, on every trifling occasion, that the poet has had in view some particular statue or painting, is rendering a very equivocal service, not only to the poet, but to his reader; to whom the most beautiful passages will, through such explanations, lose in originality and force whatever they may gain in clearness.

This is at once the object and the defect of a celebrated English work, the *Polymetis** of Spence, which exhibits a great degree of classical learning, and a very intimate acquaintance with the remains of ancient art. In his attempt to

* See Note 22, end of volume.

make the works of the ancient poets and artists throw a mutual light on each other, the author has often admirably succeeded; but I cannot help thinking, notwithstanding, that his work must prove a very fatiguing one to every reader of taste.

It is natural enough that the passage in which Valerius Flaccus describes the winged lightning on the Roman shields,

*Nec primus radios, miles Romane, corusci
Fulminis et rutilas scutis diffuderis alas,*

should be rendered more intelligible by the sight of such a shield on an ancient monument.* It is possible, too, that Mars may have been represented by the ancient armorers on the helmets and shields, in the position in which Addison fancied he saw him † on a medal, hovering over Rhea, and that it was to a helmet or shield of this description that Juvenal alluded in a phrase which has puzzled so many commentators. I will even admit that the passage in

* Val. Flaccus, lib. vi., v. 55, 56. Polymetis, Dial. vi., p. 50.

† See Note 23, end of volume.

Ovid where the weary Cephalus invokes the cooling breezes,

Aura ————— venias —————
 Meque juves, intresque sinus, gratissima, nostros!

and where his enamored Procris mistakes *Aura* for the name of a rival, appears more natural when we find that the ancients did actually personify the soft breezes in their works of art, and venerated a kind of female Sylphs under the name of *Aura*.* I will grant, too, that when Juvenal, addressing a lazy patrician, compares him to a statue of Hermes, it is not easy for the reader to perceive the propriety of the comparison, unless he has previously seen a statue of the kind, and knows it to be a simple column, consisting of nothing but the head and trunk of the God, and strongly exciting the idea of inactivity from the want of both hands and feet.† Illustrations of this kind are by no means to be despised, though they be not *always either necessary, or entirely satisfactory. In some cases, the poet has regarded the work

* See Note 24, end of volume.

† See Note 25, end of volume.

of art, not as an imitation, but as an independent existence ; while, in other cases, the artist and the poet having both adopted the same ideas, their representations naturally exhibit a degree of resemblance, attributable only to the universality of the ideas which each had selected to work on.

But when Tibullus delineates Apollo, as he appeared to him in a dream ; when he sings to us of the “ lovely youth whose brows are encircled with the chaste laurel ; whose golden hair, floating around his slender neck, is redolent of Syrian perfumes ; and whose body is tinged throughout with brilliant white and purple red, mingling like the blush on the tender cheek of the bride, when conducted to the presence of her beloved,”—what reason is there to infer that the poet has borrowed his description from celebrated ancient pictures ? Echion’s “ nova nupta, verecundiâ notabilis” may have been seen in Rome, and may have been copied-over and over again, but are we therefore to conclude that the “ bridal blush” itself was no longer to be found in nature ? When once it

had been expressed by the Painter, was the Poet doomed never to behold it, except through the medium of the picture? * Again, when another poet describes Vulcan wearied with his work, and with his countenance of a fiery redness from the heat of the forge, are we to believe that he had learnt for the first time from the work of a painter that the natural effect of labor is to fatigue, and of heat to redden? † Or, when Lucretius describes the variation of the seasons, and all the consequences of their operations in the sky and on the earth, is it necessary to suppose that he was obliged to borrow all his ideas from a procession in which the statues of the seasons were carried about;—as if, like an ephemeron, his own life had been too brief to witness for himself the changes of a year?—Are we to conclude that the sight of these statues made him for the first time acquainted with the old poetical artifice of embodying such abstract images in material forms? ‡ And

* Tibullus, Eleg. 4, lib. iii. Polymetis, Dial. viii., p. 84.

† Statius, lib. i., Sylv. 5, v. 8. Polym., Dial. viii, p. 81.

‡ See Note 26, end of volume.

Virgil's "Pontem indignatus Araxes,"—that admirable poetical picture of a river overflowing its banks, and sweeping away in a mighty torrent the bridge which had been thrown across it,—does it not at once lose all its beauty, if we are obliged to believe that the poet is merely describing a work of art, in which the river god was actually represented breaking down a bridge by force of hand?*

Such illustrations as these are a mere waste of time; their only effect is to supplant some of the clearest passages of the poet by the corresponding idea of an artist.

It is much to be regretted that a work so capable of being rendered useful as Polymetis, should have been so much injured by the tasteless conceit of attributing to the ancient poets an acquaintance with other men's fancies, rather than a reliance on their own; a blemish which has rendered it far more injurious to the character of the classical writers than the insipid expositions of the dullest commentator could

* Æneid, lib. vii., v. 725. Polym., Dialog. xiv., p. 230.

ever have proved. But it is still more lamentable, that Addison himself should have set the example to Spence in this respect, when, with a laudable desire to convert an acquaintance with the ancient works of art into a means of illustration, he equally neglects to distinguish the cases in which the imitation of the artist is advantageous to the poet, from those in which it is prejudicial.*

* In various passages of his *Journey*, and his *Essay on Ancient Medals*.

EIGHTH SECTION.

Difficulties and Inconsistencies into which Spence has been led by the System deprecated in the foregoing Section.

SPENCE seems to have formed the most extraordinary notion of the resemblance which exists between the arts of Poetry and Painting. He fancies that the two arts were so intimately blended by the ancients, that they went always hand in hand, and that neither the Poet nor the Painter ever lost sight of each other. That the dominion of the Poet extends over a wider sphere than that of the Painter,—that he can command beauties which painting can never attain,—that he may frequently have good reason to prefer unpictorial beauties to those of an opposite character,—are circumstances on which our author does not seem to have reflected; and the consequence is, that whenever any little difference is observable

between the ancient poets and artists, he is completely at a loss to explain it in any thing like a rational way.

It is usual with the ancient poets, for instance, to describe Bacchus with horns, and Spence is therefore quite puzzled to account for these accompaniments being so seldom seen on his statues.* He first hazards one conjecture, and then another; he attributes it to the ignorance of the antiquary, or to the smallness of the horns themselves, which might have lain concealed under the clusters of grapes and ivy-leaves, which form the invariable head-gear of the god. He goes round and round about the true cause, without ever once suspecting it. The horns of Bacchus were not like those of the Fauns and Satyrs, natural excrescences; they were a kind of ornament for the head, which could be worn and removed at pleasure. Thus, in Ovid's solemn invocation to Bacchus,† the passage

“ ————— Tibi, cum sine cornibus adtas,
Virgineum caput est,”

* Polym., Dial. ix., p. 129.

† Metamorph., lib. iv., v. 19, 20.

clearly indicates that he could appear when he chose without horns, and that, in fact, he did so appear whenever he wished to exhibit himself in his virgin beauty. Under this aspect the artist would naturally desire to represent him ; and in order that he might do so with proper effect, he would find it necessary to avoid all such accompaniments as might operate disadvantageously. Of this nature were the horns, which were in reality attached to the tiara, as may be seen on a head in the Royal Cabinet at Berlin.* Of this nature, too, was the tiara itself, which tended to conceal the beautiful brow, and which therefore appears as seldom in the statues of Bacchus as the horns, though the poets represented him equally often with both. These accessories furnished the poet with many pretty allusions to the deeds and character of the god ; while in the eyes of the artist, on the contrary, they presented obstacles to the exhibition of important beauties. And if a conjecture I have formed be correct, that Bacchus obtained

* Bayeri Thesaurus, Brandenb., vol. iii., p. 242.

the surname of *Biformis* (*Διμορφος*) from the power he possessed of exhibiting himself both under a beautiful and a repulsive aspect, it is surely but natural that the artists should have given the preference to that appearance which best suited the nature and objects of their art.

Again, Minerva and Juno are frequently described by the Roman poets as hurling the thunderbolt. Why have not the artists followed their example? Here is another difference which seems to have puzzled Spence; and he attempts to account for it, by supposing that the cause of the peculiar privilege granted to these two goddesses was known only to those who had been initiated into the Samothracian mysteries; and that, as the artists were looked upon as a meaner sort of people by the Romans, and were therefore seldom admitted to these mysteries, they, no doubt, knew nothing about them, and consequently could not represent them. But did Spence suppose that these "common people" worked only from their own suggestions, and not under the direction of persons of superior rank, who must themselves have been acquainted

with the mysteries? Did he believe that the artists were held in equally low estimation among the Greeks;—or, was he ignorant that the Roman artists were for the most part Greeks by birth? * * *

Statius and Valerius Flaccus describe Venus in a moment of irritation, and in such frightful lineaments, that one would rather be inclined to take her for a Fury than for the Goddess of Love. Spence seeks in vain for such a Venus among the ancient works of Art; and how does he account for this circumstance? Does he attribute it to the greater degree of license which the Poet enjoys in preference to the Painter and Sculptor? This would have been the natural conclusion; but, unfortunately, he had once for all laid down the principle that “Scarce anything can be good in a poetical description which would appear absurd if represented in a statue or picture,”* and the poets, consequently, must have been to blame. Statius and Valerius, he reminds us, belonged to a

* Polym., Dial. xx., p. 311.

period when Roman poetry was on the decline. He insinuates that they evince on this occasion a corrupted taste, and a perverted judgment ; and consoles himself with the reflection that, among the poets of a better age, such an offence against pictorial expression is not to be met with.* This is really a very easy mode of getting rid of the difficulty !

In the mean time I shall content myself with making one general observation without particular reference either to Statius or Valerius. It is this, that the gods and spiritual beings, such as they are represented by the artist, are not precisely the same as those which the poet employs. With the artist they are personifications of abstract ideas, which must always retain the same characteristics in order to be recognisable. With the poet, on the contrary, they are really active beings, possessing, over and above their general character, other qualities and affections, which, though in themselves subordinate, may, under certain circumstances, even become

* Polym., Dial. vii., p. 74.

the most prominent. For instance, Venus is to the sculptor simply the image of love ; his object must therefore be to endow her with all that beauty and modesty, and all those attractive charms which enchant us in the object of our adoration, and which we are therefore accustomed to associate with the abstract idea of love. The smallest departure from this ideal might prevent us from recognising the image. The beauty we behold may be perfect, but if it possess more of majesty than modesty, it will remind us, not of Venus, but of Juno. There may be abundance of charms, but if they be rather of a haughty and masculine than an attractive character, they will present to us a Minerva instead of a Venus. It is for this reason that an angry Venus,—a Venus inflamed with rage and fury, would be viewed by the sculptor as a complete incongruity ; for love, abstractedly considered, holds no communion with rage or anger. To the poet, on the other hand, Venus is not only love itself, but she is the goddess of love, possessing her own individual character in addition to the more general

one, and consequently the impulse of aversion must be as capable of influencing her breast as that of sympathy. Is it then surprising that the poet should describe her as burning with rage and fury, particularly on an occasion when she is the representative of outraged love itself?

It is true that in compositions the artist as well as the poet may represent Venus, or any other divinity, as a really active being, as well as an abstract personification. But, in that case, the actions of such divinities must at least not be in opposition to their character, if indeed they do not naturally arise out of it. Venus arming her son is an action which the artist may portray as well as the poet. There is nothing here to prevent his endowing her with all the grace and beauty which belong to her as the goddess of love; nay, this particular situation will rather serve to render her more recognisable in his work. But Venus taking vengeance on the men of Lemnos for their insults,—descending in fury on a dark cloud, with a black robe drawn around her, and a torch in her hand,—her features fierce and swollen,—her cheeks

flushed, and her hair dishevelled; is not a subject for an artist, because it presents no traits which would lead the spectator to recognise the fair divinity. This is a situation for the poet alone, by whom it may be so closely connected with another, in which Venus may appear entirely in her own peculiar character, that even while we behold the fury we do not lose sight of the goddess of love. This is the course adopted by Flaccus,

————— “ Neque enim alma videri
 Jam tumet; aut tereti crinem subnectitur auro,
 Sidereos diffusa sinus. Eadem effera et ingens
 Et maculis suffecta genas; pinumque sonantem
 Virginibus Stygiis, nigramque simillima pallam.”*

Thus Statius also,

“ Illa Paphon veterem centumque altaria linquens,
 Nec vultu nec crine prior, solvisse jugalem
 Ceston, et Idalias procul ablegasse volucres
 Fertur. Erant certe, media qui noctis in umbra
 Divam, alios ignes majoraque tela gerentem,
 Tartarias inter thalamis volitasse sorores
 Vulgarent; utque implicitis arcana domorum
 Anguibus, et sæva formidine cuncta replevit
 Limina.”†—————

* Argonaut, lib. ii., v. 102—106.

† Thebaid, lib. v., v. 61—64.

Or, it may be said that the poet alone possesses the power of describing by means of negative traits, and by the combination of these with positive lineaments, combining two apparently dissimilar appearances, so as to produce a unity of effect. Thus, he tells us, "It is no longer the beauteous Venus that we see, her tresses bound with golden clasps; she is now without her girdle and her azure scarf; she is armed with other flames and heavier darts than those of love, and accompanied by the Furies, whom she now resembles." But, because the artist must necessarily dispense with this artifice, is the poet also to deny himself the privilege he possesses? If Painting must needs be the sister of Poetry, let her at least not prove herself a jealous sister. Let not the younger deny to the elder the use of those ornaments which she cannot wear herself.

NINTH SECTION.

In estimating the Works of the ancient Artists, a Distinction must be made between those which they have executed as mere Specimens of Art, and those which have been destined for religious Purposes.

IN making comparisons between the Painter and the Poet, it is essential to observe whether they have each enjoyed the same unlimited freedom, and been unrestrained by the operation of any extraneous circumstances, in their efforts to attain the highest point of effect in their respective arts.

An extraneous restraint of this nature was frequently imposed upon the ancient artist by his religion. His work, when destined for adoration and worship, could not always be so perfect as when the sole object he had in view was to charm the beholder. Superstition over-

loaded the gods with symbols, and those deities who were accounted the most beautiful were not always worshipped under the most agreeable aspect.

Thus the statue of Bacchus, in his temple at Lemnos, from whence the pious Hypsipile carried off her father under the form of the god,* appeared with horns, and thus he was doubtless represented in all his temples, as the horns were a symbol which denoted his character. It was only the artist whose Bacchus was not destined for a temple, and who was therefore unrestrained in its execution, who could omit this symbol; and if, among the still existing statues of Bacchus we find none with horns, † it is perhaps a proof that none of them are of the number of those consecrated figures, under whose form he was actually worshipped. In fact it is very probable that these last were particularly singled out in the first ages of Christianity as sacrifices to the fury of the pious Iconoclasts, who, if they occasionally spared a

* Valerius Flaccus, lib. ii., Argonaut, v. 265—273.

† See Note 27, end of volume.

work of art, did so only because they considered it uncontaminated by adoration.

As there are specimens of both descriptions among the works of art which have been from time to time discovered, I could wish that the title of work of art were assigned only to those in which the sculptor appears in his true character as an artist, and in which the delineation of beauty has been from first to last the object of his labors. All those works, on the contrary, which bear too obvious marks of having served the purposes of worship, are undeserving of that title; for in such cases art was employed, not for its own sake, but as an aid to religion, whose object in the representations she demanded was rather the significant than the beautiful. At the same time, I will not pretend to deny that on many occasions beauty may have been made to express all the meaning which religion required, or that a feeling of respect towards art and the finer taste of the age may have remitted so much of the significant as to make the beautiful alone appear to predominate.

If this distinction be not made, the connoisseur

and the antiquary will be constantly at variance, from not understanding each other. When the former, impressed with his high conceptions of the true object of art, affirms that such and such things were never done by the ancient artist, meaning that they were never done by him spontaneously, in his true character of an artist,—the latter, understanding the assertion in its literal sense, takes it to mean that the artist, as a mere artificer, has never been influenced by any circumstance of religion, or otherwise to adopt the mode of treatment in question. He will immediately triumphantly refer, in refutation of this supposed opinion, to what he considers to be the best figures of antiquity, which, however, the connoisseur, to the great scandal of the learned world, would unhesitatingly condemn to the shade from whence they had been drawn.*

On the other hand, the influence which religion exercises over art is very apt to be exaggerated. Of this Spence affords a singular example.

* See Note 28, end of volume.

Learning from Ovid that Vesta was not worshipped in her temple under a personified image, he thought himself warranted in concluding that no statues of this goddess ever existed, and that all those which had hitherto been regarded in that light, were not statues of Vesta, but of Vestals.* Strange conclusion!—Here is a being to whom the poets have given a determinate personification, whom they have described as the daughter of Saturnus and Ops, whom they represent as in danger of suffering maltreatment from Priapus, and of whom many other circumstances are related; and yet this being, thus distinctly embodied by the poets, the artist must renounce his privilege of personifying, because, forsooth, Vesta was worshipped in one of her temples under the symbol of fire alone. Spence's mistake consists in applying, what Ovid says of one particular temple of Vesta, namely, that at Rome,† to all the temples of that goddess without distinction, and to her worship in general. The mode of worship

* Polym., Dial. vii. p. 81.

† See Note 29, end of volume.

established to her honor in that temple was not the same as was generally adopted, nor even that which prevailed in Italy until Numa built the temple in question. That ruler would acknowledge no divinity under the form of man or beast; and herein, doubtless, consisted the improvement made by him in the worship of Vesta, that he banished all personal representation from its service. Ovid himself informs us that, before the time of Numa, there were images of Vesta in her temple, which, when Sylvia the priestess became a mother, the virgins held up before their eyes in token of modesty.* We may infer also from several ancient inscriptions, in which mention is made of a *Pontifex Vestæ*, that in the temples dedicated to the goddess in the Roman provinces, beyond the limits of the city, her worship was not exactly of the kind established by Numa.† At Corinth, too, there was a temple of Vesta without any kind of image, and with a simple altar, on which offerings were made to the god-

* See Note 30, end of volume.

† Lipsius de Vesta et Vestalibus, cap. 13.

dess ; * but are we to conclude from this that the Greeks had no statues of Vesta? Why, there was one in the Prytaneum at Athens, close to the statue of Peace. † On the island of Jasus there was another, standing in the open air, on which the inhabitants boasted that neither snow nor rain ever fell. ‡ Pliny also mentions one in a sitting posture, the work of Scopas, which was placed in the Servilian Gardens at Rome. § Even allowing that it might be difficult for us to distinguish the statue of a Vesta from that of a mere Vestal, does it therefore follow that the ancients were either unable or unwilling to distinguish them? There are certain symbols which would readily assist the decision; the sceptre, the lamp, the palladium, could only be looked for in the hand of the goddess herself. As for the tympanum, which Codinus attributes to her, it probably accompanied her only when

* Pausanias Corinth, cap. xxxv. p. 198. Edit. Kulm.

† Idem. Attic, cap. xviii. p. 41.

‡ Polyb. Hist., lib. xvi. § 11. Op. t. ii. p. 443. Edit. Ernest.

§ See Note 31, end of volume.

she was intended to represent the Earth; or possibly Codrus may have mistaken what he saw. *

* See Note 32, end of volume.

TENTH SECTION.

Those Objects which are addressed solely to the Eye, must not be employed by the Poet.—Among these Objects may be reckoned all the various Attributes of Divinities.—Misapprehension of Spence on this Point.

I SHALL now take notice of another passage in Spence, which plainly shows how little that author had reflected on the relative limits of Poetry and Painting. It is this:—"As to the muses in general, it is remarkable that the poets say but little of them; much less than might indeed be expected for deities, to whom they were so particularly obliged."*—What is this but an expression of surprise that the poets do not employ the mute language of the painter? Urania is with the poet the muse of astrology;

* Polym., Dial. viii. p. 91.

her name, her operations, at once inform us of her office. The artist, on the other hand, in order to render this cognizable, is obliged to represent her pointing with a wand to a celestial sphere; this wand, this sphere, this action, are the only characters he can give us wherewith to decipher the name of Urania. But, when the poet tells us of Urania foretelling her death from the stars,

Ipsa diu positis lethum prædixerat astris
Urania,*—————

do we expect him to open his narration, out of consideration for the painter, by a pompous description of the Muse, with a wand in her hand, and a globe by her side? Such a proceeding would be as great an absurdity as if a man who had the complete command of language were to accompany all his words with the signs which the mutes of a Turkish seraglio adopt as a substitute for speech.

Similar surprise is expressed by Spence on the subject of the moral beings, or those deities

* Statius, Theb. viii. v. 551.

who presided, according to the ancients, over the virtues and the conduct of human life. "It is observable," says he,* "that the Roman poets say less of the best of these moral beings, than might be expected. The artists are much fuller on this head; and one who would settle what appearances each of them made, should go to the medals of the Roman emperors."—"They (the poets) speak of them often as persons, but they do not generally say much of their attributes or dress, or the appearance they make."†

When the poet personifies abstract ideas, they are sufficiently characterized by their names and their operations. The artist wants these means, and is therefore obliged to add certain symbols to his personified abstracts, in order to render them intelligible. These accompanying symbols being necessarily of a different nature and different signification in themselves, convert them at once into allegorical figures.

A female with a bridle in her hand, and another leaning on a pillar, are allegorical

* Polym., Dial. x., p. 137.

† Polym., Dial. x., p. 139.

figures. But with the poet, temperance and prudence are not allegorical beings, but simply personified abstracts. It was necessity that invented the symbols employed by the artist in depicting these beings; for he had no other means of rendering their signification obvious. But the influence of this necessity is unknown to the poet, and it would therefore be absurd in him to adopt, without the smallest pretext, the artifice to which the painter is compelled to resort.

The very course at which Spence expresses his surprise deserves to be recommended as a rule of conduct to the poet. He must beware of converting the indigence of the painter into a source of riches to himself. The means which art has discovered for embodying the thoughts of poetry, ought not to be regarded by him as beauties of which he has any reason to be jealous. In decorating a figure with symbols, the artist elevates it to a higher state of existence; but, when the poet employs these pictorial garnishings, he degrades a superior being to the level of a puppet.

While this rule is carefully observed in the practice of the ancients, its wilful transgression is, on the contrary, a favorite vice of the modern poets. All their imaginative beings appear *en masque*, and those who show the greatest ingenuity in these masquerades, are generally least acquainted with what should be their legitimate aim,—namely, to make the creatures of their fancy act, and to characterize them by their actions.

It must be observed, however, that among the attributes which the artist employs to designate his abstract personifications, there are some of a kind more worthy of the poet, and better suited to his use. I allude to those which have properly nothing of an allegorical nature about them, but are to be considered in the light of implements, of which the beings they accompany would or could with propriety make use, if they were to act as real persons. The bridle in the hand of Temperance, the column on which Prudence leans, are purely allegorical, and therefore useless to the poet. The balance in the hand of Justice is still more unfit for his purpose, as the

proper use of the balance is in itself a part of justice. But the lyre or the flute in the hand of a Muse, the lance in the hand of Mars, the hammer and pincers in the hands of Vulcan, are by no means symbols, but simply instruments, without which these beings could not perform the actions which we attribute to them. Of this kind, too, are the attributes which the ancient poets occasionally interweave with their descriptions, and which might, therefore, in contradistinction to those which are allegorical, be termed poetic. The latter denote the object itself; the former only something which resembles it.*

* See Note 33, end of volume.

ELEVENTH SECTION.

Similar Mistake of the Comte de Caylus.—Invention the pre-eminent Merit of the Poet—Execution that of the Artist.

THE Comte de Caylus also seems to desire that the poet should embellish with allegorical attributes the beings created by his fancy.* On this point I shall only observe that the Count is a better judge of painting than of poetry. But, in the same work in which this wish is expressed, I have found matter for more important reflections, and I shall here proceed to notice those observations which have most particularly struck me.

The Count recommends the artist to make himself thoroughly acquainted with Homer, that

* See Note 34, end of volume.

greatest of all pictorial poets,—that faithful follower of nature. He directs his attention to the rich, and still unemployed, store of materials for admirable pictures contained in the story treated by the Greek poet, and assures him that his execution of them will be the more perfect, in proportion to his intimacy with the minutest details of the poet's description. The effect of the system here recommended would be to unite the two kinds of imitation which I have already distinguished from each other. The painter would not only have to imitate that which the poet had imitated before him, but he would also require to do so with the identical lineaments which the other had employed. He would require to make use of his prototype, not only in his character of narrator, but in that of Poet likewise.

But how does it happen that this second kind of imitation which is so derogatory to the poet, is not equally so to the artist? If such a series of pictures as that which the Comte de Caylus gives from Homer, had been in existence before the poet wrote, and if we knew that he had

drawn his story from those materials, would not our admiration of him be infinitely diminished? How then does it happen that we withhold none of our approbation from the artist, even when he does nothing more than embody the poet's words in forms and colours?

The reason appears to consist in this:—in the works of the artist, the execution seems to us more difficult than the invention; while in those of the poet, on the contrary, the very reverse appears to be the case. Had Virgil delineated the fate of Laocoon and his sons from the sculpture, he would have forfeited the merit which we consider the greatest and the most difficult of attainment, and would have been entitled only to that which is of comparatively smaller importance; for the first creation of such a work in the imagination is a far higher effort of genius than its description in words.—But had the artist, on the contrary, borrowed his subject from the poet, our admiration of him would scarcely have been diminished, though the merit of the conception would not have been his own; for, to impart expression to the marble

is infinitely more difficult than to give expression in words; and in comparing the relative value of invention and execution, we are always disposed to excuse the sculptor's deficiency in the one to the same extent in which we require his excellence in the other.

In some instances, it is even a greater merit in the artist to have imitated nature through the medium of the poet's imitation than without it. The painter who has delineated a beautiful landscape after the description of a Thomson, has performed a higher task than he who has copied it directly from nature. The latter has the original immediately before his eyes; the former must exert the powers of his imagination until he fancies he sees it before him. The one produces a beautiful imitation of distinct and palpable lineaments; the other has to arrange a discretionary effect from faint and fleeting images.

The readiness with which we are thus disposed to remit to the artist the merit of invention, must naturally give rise to a corresponding remissness towards it on his part. For, as he

perceives that his reputation must mainly depend, not on his invention, but on his execution, he will be indifferent as to whether his subject is old or new, whether it is fresh or hackneyed, whether it is his own or another's. Thus he is induced to keep within the limited range of subjects already familiar to himself and the public, and confines his ingenuity to the mere modification of what is already known, or the new arrangement of old materials. This, in fact, is the idea which the Treatises on Painting connect with the word invention. For, while they divide it into Pictorial and Poetical, they make the latter apply, not to the actual conception of the subject, but solely to its arrangement or design.* It is invention, not of the whole, but of individual parts, and their relative bearings. It is, in short, invention of that inferior kind recommended by Horace, when he thus addresses the tragic poet,†

“ With more success
You may from Homer take the tale of Troy,
Than on an untried plot your strength employ,”

* *Betrachtungen über die Mahlerey*, p. 159, &c.

† *Ad Pisones*, v. 28.

recommended, I say, but not prescribed ; recommended as easier, more convenient, more advantageous,—not prescribed as better or nobler in itself.

The poet, indeed, enjoys a great advantage who treats a story, or a character already known. He may afford to dispense with a thousand frigid details which would otherwise be absolutely necessary for the proper understanding of the whole ; and the more promptly he can make himself intelligible to his hearers, the more readily will he also succeed in interesting them. The same advantage is possessed by the painter when his subject is not unknown to us ; when we can perceive at a single glance the meaning and intention of his whole composition, and when we not only see his actors speaking, but may even be said to hear what they say. It is on the first glance at a work of art that the greatest effect depends, and whenever the spectator is obliged to take the trouble of reflecting and deliberating on it, he soon ceases to be interested. In revenge for his disappointment at the unintelligible work, he disregards even the skill

displayed in the expression ; and should the unfortunate artist have sacrificed beauty in order to attain this quality, his case is desperate indeed ! There will then be no inducement to linger for a moment before his work, and the spectator will turn away from it in displeasure and disgust.

Now, keeping both these circumstances at once in view, first, that the invention and novelty of the subject is not, by any means, the most important point required of the artist,—secondly, that a well known subject promotes and facilitates the effect of his work ; I think we shall find that the reason of his so seldom directing his labors to the delineation of new subjects does not consist in his indolence, in his want of skill, or in the incessant attention and application which the mechanical department of his art demands, but that it resides in a deeper-seated principle, which, instead of circumscribing the application of art, and diminishing our enjoyments, may perhaps prove to be founded on a feeling of discretion on the part of the artist, prudent in itself, and advantageous to those to

whom his works are addressed. I doubt not that experience will prove the correctness of my views. I believe it will be found that the painter will feel grateful to the Count for his good intentions, but that he will make use of his work less frequently than he has expected. But grant it were otherwise, and what would be the consequence? Why, that every century another Caylus will be required to recall the old subjects from oblivion, and to lead the artist back into the field where others before him have gathered such immortal laurels. Or is it expected that the public should be as deeply read as the book-learned critic, and be familiarly acquainted with all those scenes of history and fable, which are calculated to produce fine pictures? * * *

Protogenes painted the mother of Aristotle. I know not what the philosopher paid him for the picture; but whether by way of remuneration, or over and above the price, he gave him a piece of advice worth more than any sum he could have bestowed; for I cannot imagine that his counsel was intended as a mere courtly compliment, but rather that it proceeded from

his conviction of the necessity for every subject being as intelligible as possible. He recommended him to paint the deeds of Alexander; deeds which were at that time the theme of the whole world, and of which he could foresee that generations then unborn would not be forgetful. But Protogenes had neither the providence nor the firmness to follow this advice. "Impetus animi," says Pliny, "et quædam artis libido,"* a certain wantonness of art, a longing after whatever was singular and unknown, led him to the selection of totally different subjects. He preferred painting the story of Jalysus, † or Cydippe, and similar tales, the meaning of which we are now-a-days unable to discover.

* Lib. xxxv., sect. 36, p. 700. Edit. Hard.

† See Note 35, end of volume.

TWELFTH SECTION.

Further Misapprehensions of Caylus.—Visible and invisible Actions.

HOMER delineates two kinds of beings and actions; the visible and the invisible. This distinction is beyond the power of painting, where everything is necessarily visible, and that, too, only in one particular way. Yet the Comte de Caylus does not scruple to arrange the pictures of the invisible actions in a uniform series along with the visible; nay, he even gives the pictures of the mixed actions, in which both visible and invisible beings partake, without attempting to explain,—what perhaps it was beyond his power to do,—how the latter are to be introduced so as to appear to be visible to the spectator alone, and not to the other actors in the picture. Thus it is evident that the

whole series, as well as many individual portions of it, must necessarily be extremely confused, inconsistent and incomprehensible.

But a reference to the book itself will be sufficient to correct this fault ; the worst effect of which is simply this, that by the pictorial annihilation of the distinction between the visible and invisible beings, all those characteristic traits are at once lost by which the latter class are elevated above the standard of the former.

For example, when the gods, divided in opinion regarding the fate of the Trojans, at length come to personal conflict with each other, the whole action is represented by the poet* as invisible, and this very circumstance leaves room for the imagination to enlarge the scene, and to picture the persons, as well as the deeds, of the gods, as great and as far elevated above those of mortals as may be desired. The painter, however, is compelled to place his actors on a visible scene, the several parts of which necessarily become the standard for their

* Iliad. §. v. 385.

measurement, and this standard being always present to the eye, its natural effect will be to give to those beings of a higher order, which in the poet were of large dimensions, a stature comparatively gigantic.

Minerva, whom Mars first attacked in this contention, drew back, we are told, and with a mighty hand lifted from the ground a large, black, rough stone, which had in former times been set up as a land-mark by the combined efforts of men:—

“ Then heaved the goddess in her mighty hand
A stone, the limit of the neighboring land,
There fix'd from eldest times; black, craggy, vast.” *

In order to estimate properly the size of this stone, it must be borne in mind that Homer makes his heroes as strong again as the strongest

* It is necessary that I should here remark that though, for the sake of those of my readers who may be unacquainted with Greek, I have preferred referring to the Iliad through the medium of Pope's version, yet the lines here quoted do not bear out the observations of Lessing so strongly as the original. The words of Homer are “*Τὸν δ' ἀνδρῶν κείνων ἐπέθηκεν Σίωνα*,”—“Which ancient men had placed.”

Note of the Translator.

men of his day, while at the same time he describes them as far surpassed in strength by the men who were known to Nestor in his youth. Now, if Minerva were capable of lifting a stone which had been erected as a land-mark, not by one, but by several of Nestor's early contemporaries, if she were capable of lifting this stone and hurling it against Mars,—what kind of stature must we ascribe to the goddess? If her dimensions be proportioned to that of the stone, the miracle at once disappears;—a creature who is three times as big as me, must naturally be able to throw a stone three times larger than any I could lift. But if, on the other hand, the stature of the goddess be not made proportionate to the size of the stone, there will exist an evident improbability in the picture, the offensive effect of which will not be removed by any abstract reflection on the necessity for a goddess being endowed with superhuman strength. Wherever a more than ordinary effect is perceived, we must also expect to find more powerful agents than usual.

Mars, struck to the earth by this prodigious

stone, is described as covering "seven hides of land," in his fall;—

"Thundering he falls; a mass of monstrous size,
And seven broad acres covers as he lies."

It is totally impossible for the painter to give this extraordinary size to the figure of the god; yet, without it, it will not be Mars that lies prostrate, at least not the Mars of Homer, but an ordinary warrior.*

It has been said by Longinus, that Homer might almost be supposed to have aimed at elevating his men to the height of gods, and degrading his gods to the level of men. Painting accomplishes this degradation. All that in the poet distinguishes the god above the hero, with the painter disappears. Size, strength, activity,—qualities which Homer has always in store for his gods in a higher and more admirable degree than that which he allots to his most distinguished heroes,† must in painting sink to the level of the ordinary human standard; and Jupiter and Agamemnon, Apollo and

* See Note 36, end of volume.

† See Note 37, end of volume.

Achilles, Ajax and Mars, become beings of the same class, and are undistinguishable from each other except through the medium of certain external signs.

It is usual for painters to indicate the persons or things which they desire to be supposed invisible, by enveloping them in a transparent cloud. This contrivance seems to have been borrowed from Homer himself, who, when any of his more distinguished heroes, in the tumult of the battle, is placed in a situation of danger, from which nothing but divine aid can rescue him, represents the protecting deity as enveloping him in a thick mist, or in the shades of night, and bearing him away. It is thus that Paris is carried off by Venus,* Idæus by Neptune,† and Hector by Apollo.‡ In tracing the compositions of these subjects, Caylus never omits to recommend particularly to the artist the use of this cloud or mist. But, is it not evident that this contrivance is in Homer merely a poetical mode of expressing that the persons

* Iliad, Γ. v. 381.

† Iliad, Ε. v. 23.

‡ Iliad, Γ. v. 444.

of the heroes were rendered invisible? I have always been surprised, therefore, when I have found this poetical expression realized, and an actual cloud introduced into the picture, behind which the hero stands concealed, as if behind a screen. This was not the meaning of the poet. It is in truth an artifice which oversteps the boundaries of painting; for the cloud becomes in the picture an actual hieroglyphic, a mere symbolical mark, which, instead of rendering the rescued hero invisible, seems to say to the spectator, "this figure must be supposed not to be seen." It is not a whit better than the clumsy expedient of the written labels which we see issuing from the mouths of the figures introduced into pictures executed in the earliest periods of art.

Achilles, it is true, is described by Homer as thrusting his lance three times into the dense mist, after Apollo had interposed it between him and Hector;—

"Thrice struck Pelides, with indignant heart,
Thrice in impassive air he plunged the dart."*

* Iliad, x. v. 446.

But this is nothing more than saying, in the language of the poet, that Achilles was so blinded by his fury as to continue striking with his lance three times before he discovered that his enemy was no longer before him. No cloud was actually seen by Achilles; and the artifice by which the deities produced the invisibility consisted, not in the interposition of any kind of screen, but in the sudden carrying off of the heroes. To indicate that this operation was so sudden that no human eye could follow it, the poet first envelopes the body in mist; not meaning that this mist was actually seen in place of the transported body, but simply because we attach the idea of invisibility to whatever is enclosed in it. Thus, we find that the poet occasionally inverts this position of affairs, and, instead of rendering the object invisible, represents one of the actors as struck with blindness. For instance, Neptune thus dims the eyes of Achilles, when he snatches Æneas from his mortal stroke, by transporting him at once from the middle of the fray to the rear of the army.*

* Iliad, t. v. 321.

Yet, the eyes of Achilles are not in reality darkened in this case, any more than the figure of Hector is actually enveloped in a cloud in the other ; but the artifices are in both instances employed by the poet simply to indicate that extreme suddenness of disappearance, to which we apply the term *vanishing*.

But the Homeric cloud has not only been appropriated by the painter in those cases in which Homer himself has employed, or would have employed it, namely, in the sudden disappearance or vanishing of bodies, but in every instance in which the spectator beholds in the picture what is supposed to be concealed either from the whole or a part of the actors. Minerva was visible to Achilles alone, when she restrained him from giving offence to Agamemnon by his impetuosity, and Caylus says he knows no other mode of expressing this effect than by introducing a cloud between her and the other members of the council. This is totally at variance with the spirit of the poet. Invisibility is the natural condition of his divinities ; no blinding of eyes, no interruption of the rays of

light was required to prevent them from being seen,* but an effulgence and an elevation of countenance above that which belongs to mortal men, was necessary to distinguish them when they were intended to be visible. It is therefore no sufficient excuse to tell us that the cloud of the painter is not a natural, but an arbitrary sign, since this arbitrary sign possesses not that definite distinctness which ought, as such, to belong to it; for the artist employs it indiscriminately, both to render the visible invisible, and, *vice versâ*, to exhibit the latter to the sight.

* See Note 38, end of volume.

THIRTEENTH SECTION.

The poetical Pictures of Homer far surpass all the Attempts of the Artist to embody them ; while those Passages, on the Contrary, in which but little Description is introduced, frequently present admirable Subjects for Painting.

If the works of Homer had been entirely lost, and if we possessed no traces of his Iliad and Odyssey, but such a series of pictures as Caylus has drawn from them, should we, I would ask, have formed from these pictures, though they were even executed by the most perfect master of his art, the same idea which we now have,— I will not say of the whole of the poet's qualifications,—but simply of his pictorial talents ?

Let us try the effect of some of the best subjects. Suppose we take the picture of the plague as an example.* What does the canvass

* Iliad, A. v. 44—53. Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade, p. 70.

present to our eyes? The corpses of the victims, the burning funeral piles, the dying performing the last sad offices for the dead, and the irritated god discharging his arrows from the midst of a cloud. In attempting to make a restoration of Homer from this picture, what should we suppose him to have said?—"Hereupon Apollo became furious in his wrath, and shot his darts into the midst of the Grecian army. Many of the Greeks were killed, and their dead bodies were afterwards burnt by their friends." Now, let us turn to Homer himself:—

“————— The fav’ring power attends,
 And from Olympus’ lofty tops descends.
 Bent was his bow, the Grecian hearts to wound;
 Fierce as he moved, his silver shafts resound.
 Breathing revenge, a sudden night he spread,
 And gloomy darkness roll’d around his head.
 The fleet in view, he twang’d his deadly bow,
 And hissing fly the feather’d fates below.
 On mules and dogs th’ infection first began,
 And last the vengeful arrows fix’d in man.
 For nine long nights, through all the dusky air,
 The pyres thick-flaming shot a dismal glare.”

The poet is here as far above the artist as reality is above painting. Apollo, armed with

his bow and quiver, descends, enraged, from the summit of Olympus. His movement is not only seen, but heard. At each step he takes, the arrows rattle on the shoulders of the wrathful god. He goes forth like mysterious night. Now we behold him seated over against the ships; and drawing his silver bow, which rings with a fearful sound, he discharges his first arrow at the mules and dogs. He next attacks the men themselves with his poisonous darts; till at length, as the work of destruction proceeds, the funeral piles are seen in every direction blazing around. It is quite impossible to render adequately into another idiom the musical picture which is conveyed in the words of the poet. Equally impossible would it be to form any conception of this quality from an inspection of the material picture, though it is in reality the least important advantage possessed over it by the poetic description. Its great superiority lies in this, that the poet leads us through a whole gallery of paintings before he arrives at that which alone is represented by the material picture.

But perhaps the plague does not furnish an advantageous subject for a painting. Here, then, is another, presenting greater attractions for the eye;—the gods sitting in full council, and refreshing themselves with nectar.* Here we have a spacious, golden palace, and varied groupes of the most beautiful as well as the most venerable forms, with their chalices in their hands, attended by the ever-youthful Hebe. What splendid architecture! What masses of light and shadow! What admirable contrasts! What infinite variety of expression! Where shall I begin, where shall I cease to feast my eyes? If the painter thus delights me, how much more shall I be enchanted with the poet!—I turn to the book, but, how greatly do I find myself mistaken! I read only four simple Greek lines, which might answer very well for the explanatory inscription of a picture, and which contain the materials for one, though they certainly are not a picture in themselves:—

* *Iliad*, Δ. v. 1—4. Tableaux tirés de l'*Iliade*, p. 30.

“ And now Olympus' shining gates unfold;
The gods, with Jove, assume their thrones of gold:
Immortal Hebe, fresh with bloom divine,
The golden goblet crowns with purple wine:
While the full bowls flow round, the powers employ
Their careful eyes on long contended Troy.”

There is nothing here but what might have been equally well expressed by an Apollonius, or any still more indifferent poet; and Homer in this instance falls as far below the painter, as in the former case the painter falls short of him.

With the exception of the subject contained in these few lines, Caylus could not discover a single picture in the whole fourth book of the Iliad. Much, says he, as it is distinguished by the exciting energy of its warlike exhortations, by its richness in brilliant and varied characters, and by the art with which the poet indicates the multitudes whom he is about to set in motion, yet it is totally unfit for painting. Rich as it is, he might have added, in what we call poetic pictures; for these certainly are to be found as perfect and in as great abundance in the fourth book as in any of the others.

Where is there a more finished, or more illusive picture than that of Pandarus breaking the armistice, at the instigation of Minerva, and discharging his arrow at Menelaus? Or that of the advance of the Grecian host? Or that of the mutual assault of both armies? Or that of Ulysses avenging the death of Leucus?

Since, then, it is evident that not a few of the finest pictures of Homer offer no subject for the painter;—that the artist can sometimes on the contrary, extract a picture from the poet, where the latter presents none;—and that those which we find in Homer, and which are at the same time of a nature for the artist to make use of, would make but paltry pictures, did they contain no more than the canvass is able to exhibit;—what conclusion are we to draw from these considerations? What, but that the question put at the commencement of this section can only be answered in the negative? It is clear that no conception can be formed of the pictorial talent of Homer, from any pictures for which his poems have furnished the subjects, let them be ever so numerous, or ever so admirably executed.

FOURTEENTH SECTION.

Continuation of the Subject.—Refutation of Caylus's Censure of Milton.

IF the conclusion to which we have arrived in the preceding section be correct; if it be true that a poem, unpictorial in itself, may yet be abundantly rich in subjects for the painter, while, on the contrary, another which is highly pictorial, may be totally unfit for the purposes of art;—then is there no foundation whatever for that idea of the Comte de Caylus which would make the test of a poem its fitness for painting, and would determine its place in the rank of merit according to the number of pictures which it may furnish to the artist.*

* See Note 39, end of volume.

I cannot suffer such an idea to pass unnoticed, lest, by my silence, I should seem to regard it with the respect due to a well-grounded rule. Milton would be the first to fall an innocent sacrifice to it; for it would really appear that the contemptuous judgment which Caylus pronounces on that poet is not so much the effect of national taste, as a necessary consequence of his pretended rule. The loss of his eye-sight, he says, was probably the chief point of resemblance between Milton and Homer! It must be confessed that Milton is not well adapted to fill galleries with pictures. But if the sphere of internal vision is thus to be bounded by the narrow range of the external organs of sight, so long as they endure, then might we hail the loss of these as a blessed relief from a thralldom which must miserably contract the circle of our enjoyments!

The *Paradise Lost* is no less the first epic poem after Homer, though it yields but few pictures, than the history of the sufferings of Christ is unfit to be called a poem, though we can scarcely place the head of a needle on any

part of it without hitting on some passage which has given employment to a host of the greatest artists. The Evangelists relate the facts with the greatest simplicity and plainness possible, and the artist employs the various parts of their relation, though they have not, on their part, exhibited the smallest traces of pictorial genius. An historical fact may either be suitable or unsuitable for painting; and it is as possible for the historian to relate those details which are best adapted for that purpose in an unpictorial manner, as for the poet to give a pictorial effect to those which are least so.

We are only misled by the equivocal signification of the word, when we view the thing otherwise. A poetical picture is not necessarily that which may be converted into a material picture; but what we call pictorial, what we designate a picture, is any single trait, or combination of several traits, through which the poet renders the thing described so palpable to our sense, that our perception of it is more distinct than that of his words. We call it pictorial because it brings us more nearly to that degree of illu-

sion of which the material painting is in particular susceptible, and which it so quickly and so easily imparts.*

* See Note 40, end of volume.

FIFTEENTH SECTION.

The essential Difference between the Painter and the Poet.

—Time is the Sphere of the Poet, and. Space that of the Painter.

WE have seen that the poet can work up to the illusive point other things besides those which are visible. Whole classes of pictures which are open to the poet, must consequently be wanting to the artist. Dryden's Ode on St. Cecilia's Day is full of musical pictures which can never give occupation to the pencil. But it is unnecessary to advert to such examples as this, from which, in fact, little more is learned in the end, than that colors are not tones, any more than ears are eyes.

I shall confine my observations to the pictures of visible objects alone, which are common both to the poet and the painter. How does it

happen that so many poetic pictures of this description are unfit for the artist's use, and, on the other hand, that so many works of the painter lose the greater part of their effect when treated by the poet?

Examples may serve to lead us to the cause. Let us examine the picture of Pandarus, in the Fourth Book of the Iliad, which, I repeat, is one of the most finished and most illusive pictures in the whole poem. Each moment is delineated, from the grasping of the bow to the flight of the arrow; and these moments are all so closely connected, and yet so distinct one from another, that were we unacquainted with the use of the bow, we might learn it from this picture alone.* We see Pandarus drawing forth his bow; he fastens on the string, opens his quiver, and chooses a new and well-feathered arrow. He adjusts the arrow to the string, and draws back the string with the channelled end of the arrow till they come in contact with his breast, while the iron head of the arrow ap-

* See Note 40, end of volume.

proaches the bow.—The large rounded bow now strikes asunder with a mighty noise,—the string vibrates with a ringing sound;—off springs the arrow, and flies swiftly to its mark!

This admirable picture could not have been overlooked by Caylus. Why then did he think it unfit for the artist's use? And what induced him to consider the scene of the carousing gods in council assembled more proper for this purpose? In both cases the subjects consist of visible objects, and what more than these does the painter require in order to fill his canvass?

The question must thus be solved. Though both, in so far as they are visible subjects, are equally adapted for painting, yet there is this essential difference between them, that the one is a progressive action, the several parts of which develop themselves one by one in the course of time, while the other, on the contrary, is a fixed subject, the various parts of which are exhibited closely connected in space.—If then the signs which painters employ as their means of imitation can only be combined in space, and are totally inapplicable to time, it

follows that progressive actions, as such, cannot be included among the subjects proper for the pencil, which must be confined to actions which are simultaneous, or to mere figures which indicate an action by their positions. I shall examine this matter more closely in the next section.

SIXTEENTH SECTION.

Further Consideration of the Subject.—Illustrations drawn from the Practice of Homer.

My view of the matter is this. In the first place I presume it will scarcely admit of dispute that the imitations of painting are effected by means entirely different from those of poetry; the former employing figures and colors in space, and the latter articulate sounds in time. Now, as it is evident that the signs employed must bear a suitable relation to the things represented, it follows that those signs which are arranged in juxta-position with each other, can only express co-existent objects, or an object whose parts are co-existent, while those signs which are consecutive, can only express things which, either of themselves, or in their component parts, are consecutive.

Those objects which are co-existent, or whose

parts are co-existent, are called bodies ; consequently bodies, with their visible properties, are the legitimate subjects of painting. Those things, on the contrary, which are consecutive, or whose parts are consecutive, are termed, generally speaking, actions. Actions are therefore the legitimate subjects of poetry.

All bodies, however, exist in time as well as space. It is their nature to endure, and at each separate moment of their duration, they may appear under a different aspect, and in new combinations. Each of these momentary appearances and combinations is the effect of one which has preceded, and may be the cause of one which is to follow ; it will thus form the centre of an action. Painting may, therefore, represent actions, but it can only be by intimation, through means of bodies.

Actions, on the other hand, cannot exist of themselves, but must depend on certain conditions. In so far then as these conditions are bodies, or are regarded as such, poetry also delineates bodies, but it will only be by intimation, through means of actions.

The painter can only employ, in his compositions of co-existing bodies, one single moment of the action, and he must therefore select, as far as possible, that which is at once expressive of the past, and pregnant with the future.

In like manner the poet, in his consecutive imitations, can employ but one single attribute of bodies, and must therefore select that which awakens the most sensible image of the body under that particular aspect which he has chosen to represent. On this principle is founded the rule of unity in the pictorial epithets of the poet, and of parsimony in his delineations of bodily objects.

I should place less confidence in this dry series of conclusions, did I not find them completely confirmed by the practice of Homer, if indeed I should not rather say that it was the practice of that great poet which has led me to form them. Such principles alone will enable us to define and explain the grandeur of Homer's style, as well as to estimate as it deserves the opposite practice of so many modern poets, who vainly seek to compete with the painter on a

point on which they must of necessity be surpassed by him.

I find that Homer paints nothing but progressive actions; and each body, each individual thing which he introduces, he delineates only on account of the part it bears in these actions, and even then, in general, with but a single trait. Is it then surprising that the painter can find little or nothing to do where Homer has employed his powers of delineation, and that the only field he can find to work on is where the story brings together a number of beautiful bodies, in fine positions, and within a space advantageous to art, however slight the poet's delineation of all these circumstances may be?

An examination of the whole series of pictures, drawn by Caylus from Homer, would fully illustrate the truth of these remarks. But I shall here take leave of the Count, who would have the painter's success to form the test of the poet's merits, and proceed to illustrate more particularly the style of Homer.

I have said that, for any single object, Homer employs in general but a single trait. A ship

is with him sometimes the "dark ship," sometimes the "hollow ship," sometimes the "rapid ship," or at most the "well-rowed dark ship." In the delineation of the object itself, he goes no farther. But of the embarkation, the sailing and the landing, he draws a highly-finished picture, a picture from which the artist must make five or six separate paintings, if he would transfer the whole of it to his canvass.

If at any time particular circumstances render it necessary for Homer to fix our view longer than usual on one single object, even then it will be found that no picture is presented which the painter could follow with his pencil. He contrives, by numberless artifices, to place this single object in a series of successive moments, each of which exhibits it under a different aspect, and in the last of which the painter must await to see it, before he can fully exhibit what has been described by the poet. For instance, if Homer wishes to delineate the car of Juno, he makes Hebe put it together bit by bit before our eyes. We see the wheels, the axles, the seat of the car, the braces and the reins, not so much

in actual combination, as in the progress of combination, under the hands of Hebe. The wheels are the only part on which Homer bestows more than one trait, delineating the eight brazen spokes, the golden circles, the bands of brass, and the silver naves, each separately and particularly. One would almost be inclined to think that the poet had chosen to dwell so much longer on the wheels than the other parts, out of deference to the more important service required from them in reality;*

Bright Hebe waits; by Hebe, ever young,
 The whirling wheels are to the chariot hung.
 On the bright axle turns the bidden wheel
 Of sounding brass; the polished axle steel.
 Eight brazen spokes in radiant order flame,
 The circles gold, of uncorrupted frame,
 Such as the heavens produce: and round the gold
 Two brazen rings of work divine were roll'd.
 The bossy naves of solid silver shone;
 Braces of gold suspend the moving throne:
 The car behind an arching figure bore;
 The bending concave form'd an arch before.
 Silver the beam, th' extended yoke was gold,
 And golden reins th' immortal coursers hold.†

* Iliad, E. v. 722—731.

† I must here again observe, once for all, that, though for the convenience of the reader, I give, wherever it is possible,

Again, when Homer desires to tell us how Agamemnon was clothed, he exhibits the king putting on his dress bit by bit before our eyes. We see him draw on the soft tunic, throw the broad mantle around him, fasten his elegant sandals, gird on his sword, and lastly seize the regal sceptre. We see the clothes, as it were accessorially, while the poet is describing the action of dressing; another would have delineated the dress itself, to its minutest fringe, and left us entirely without the action :— *

First on his limbs a slender vest he drew,
 Around him next the royal mantle threw.
 Th' embroider'd sandals on his feet were tied;
 The starry falchion glitter'd at his side;
 And last his arm the massy sceptre loads,
 Unstain'd, immortal, and the gift of gods.

And of this sceptre, which in the Greek is simply termed the “paternal, imperishable sceptre,”—as a similar one is, in another place

the most approved English, versions of the classical quotations introduced by Lessing, yet it often happens, as is the case in the present instance, that they do not serve to illustrate the argument of our author so forcibly as the original.—*Note of the Translator.*

* Iliad, B. v. 43—47.

styled, with equal brevity, χρυσοῖς ἡλοῖσι πεπασταμένον, “the sceptre studded with golden knobs,”—of this important sceptre to give us a more full and exact description,—what does Homer do? Does he delineate, not only the golden nails, but the particular wood it was made of, and the manner in which the head was carved, with such herald-like precision that a precisely similar one might be made from his description in after-times? Certain I am that many a modern poet would have described it in this king-at-arms style, believing, in the simplicity of his heart, that he was painting for the artist to paint after him. But what cared Homer how far he left the artist behind him? Instead of a description, he gives us the history of the sceptre; first, it is the work of Vulcan; then, it glitters in the hands of Jove; next, it marks the dignity of Mercury; now, it forms the baton of the warlike Pelops, and now, the pastoral staff of the peaceful Atreus, &c.— *

The golden sceptre, of celestial frame,
By Vulcan form'd, from Jove to Hermes came:

* Iliad, B. v. 101—108.

To Pelops he th' immortal gift resign'd ;
Th' immortal gift great Pelops left behind
In Atreus' hand ; which not with Atreus ends,
To rich Thyestes next the prize descends ;
And now the mark of Agamemnon's reign,
Subjects all Argos, and controls the main.

Such a description as this makes me better acquainted with the sceptre, than if a painter had shown me a drawing of it, or a second Vulcan had placed its model in my hands. I can easily conceive indeed that something more than the mere history of the sceptre might lie hidden in these lines, and I should not even be surprised to find that one of the old expositors of Homer had admired this passage as the most perfect allegory of the origin, progress, confirmation and final succession of the kingly power among men. I should indeed be very much inclined to smile if I were to be told that the maker of the sceptre, Vulcan, under the character of fire (the element which is most necessary for the preservation of man), represents the provision for the necessity felt in general by men to subject themselves to the authority of an individual ;—that the first king was a son of

time (*Zeus kronion*), and was a venerable old man, who chose either to share his power with a dexterous and eloquent man, (*Διακτερω Αργυφοντη*), or to transfer it entirely to his hands;—that the skilful orator in his turn, when the infant state was threatened by external foes, delivered over his sovereignty into the hands of the bravest warrior (*Πελοσι πληξιαπρω*);—that the bold warrior, after subduing the enemy and securing the kingdom, shifted the crown to the brow of his son, who, being a peaceful ruler, and beneficent shepherd of his people (*Ποιμην λαων*), had made them acquainted with luxury and superfluity, thus paving the way for the richest of his kindred (*πολυαρι Θυεστη*) to acquire by means of bribery and corruption, and to secure as an heir-loom to his family, that which before confidence had bestowed, and merit had received, rather as a charge than as an honor.— I should certainly be tempted to smile at all this, but it would still have the effect of confirming my respect for the poet, to whom so much may be attributed. But this lies entirely out of my way, and the only light in which I at

present view this history of the sceptre is as a poetic artifice by which the reader is detained to contemplate a particular object, without being wearied by the frigid details of its various parts. Thus, when Achilles swears by his sceptre to revenge himself for the contempt with which Agamemnon treats him, Homer gives us a history of this sceptre likewise. We see it growing green upon its native mountains, where the steel of the workman separates it from the parent stock, strips it of its leaves and bark, and fits it to be borne by the judges of the land as a token of their god-like dignity :— *

Now by this sacred sceptre hear me swear,
 Which never more shall leaves or blossoms bear,
 Which, sever'd from the trunk (as I from thee)
 On the bare mountains left its parent tree ;
 This sceptre, form'd by temper'd steel to prove
 An ensign of the delegates of Jove.

It was not so much Homer's object to give us the description of two sceptres of different materials and form, as to present us with a distinct image of the different nature of the powers

* Iliad, A. v. 234—239.

of which those sceptres were the emblems. The one was the work of Vulcan; the other was carved on the hills by some obscure artificer. The one was the birthright of an illustrious house; the other was destined to fill whatever hand was found most worthy of it. The one was extended by a monarch over the whole of Argos and its neighboring isles; the other was borne by an individual chosen, along with others, from the whole body of his citizens, for the purpose of maintaining the laws. This was in reality the distinction which existed between the position of Agamemnon and Achilles; a distinction which Achilles himself, with all his blind fury, could not avoid admitting.

Not only does Homer combine such ulterior objects as these with his descriptions, but even where he has nothing beyond a simple image to represent, he disperses it, as it were, throughout a sort of history of the object, whose several parts, though united in nature, seem in his picture naturally to follow each other, and to keep pace, if I may so express myself, with the flow of the discourse. For instance, when he

wishes to delineate the bow of Pandarus as made of polished horn, of an uncommon length, and tipped with gold plate at each end,—what method does he pursue? Does he thus drily enumerate these peculiarities one after the other? By no means; this would have been a description, not a picture of the bow. He commences with the chase of the wild goat, out of whose horns the bow was made. Pandarus had waylaid and killed the animal on the rocks. The horns were of an extraordinary size, and he therefore chose them for a bow. They were placed in the hands of a workman, who bound them together, polished them, and tipped them with gold. And thus, as I have already said, we behold in the work of the poet the progressive construction of that which the painter could represent in its completed state alone.*

'Twas form'd of horn, and smooth'd with artful toil;
A mountain goat resign'd the shining spoil,
Who, pierced long since, beneath his arrows bled;
The stately quarry on the cliffs lay dead,
And sixteen palms his brow's large honors spread:

* Iliad, Δ. v. 105—111

The workman join'd, and shaped the bended horns,
And beaten gold each taper point adorns.

I should have enough to do if I were to attempt to extract all the passages which furnish examples of this kind; but they will readily occur to all who are intimate with Homer.

SEVENTEENTH SECTION.

Further Illustrations of the Impropriety of detailed Delineations of bodily Objects in Poetry.

BUT, it will be objected to my argument, that the signs employed by poetry are not only consecutive, but likewise arbitrary, and therefore perfectly capable of delineating bodies as they exist in space. Homer himself, it will be said, furnishes instances of this; his shield of Achilles alone presents the most decided example of the possibility of picturing a particular object by a successive description of all its various component parts, circumstantially and yet poetically.

I must reply to this twofold objection; twofold, I call it, because, in the first place, a conclusion, if correct in itself, must be allowed its due weight, even though unsupported by any

example ; and, in the second place, the example of Homer would be of importance in my eyes, were I even unable to vindicate it by any conclusive argument.

I admit then at once the truth of the proposition ; I grant that, since the signs of speech are arbitrary, it is very possible by their means to delineate the different parts of a body, one after the other, with the same precision as they are found combined in nature. But this is a property of speech and of its signs in general, and not in so far only as they are applicable to the purposes of poetry. The object of the poet is not simply to be intelligible, or to render his representations merely clear and distinct ; this is equally the aim of the prose writer. The poet seeks to render the ideas which he awakens within us so vivid, that we may instantly fancy we perceive the real and sensible impressions of the objects they refer to ; and, in that moment of illusion, we cease to be conscious of his words, that is to say, of the means by which he produces his effect. This is the amount of the explanation already given of the poetical picture.

But the poet, we are told, is a genuine painter ; and now let us see how far the delineation of the various component parts of bodies is suitable for his painting.

And first I would ask, what is the process by which we arrive at a distinct conception of any object in space ? It is this ; we first contemplate each separate part, then the combination of those parts, and lastly, the whole together. Our senses perform these various operations with such amazing rapidity that they appear to us but as a single one ; and this rapidity is indispensably necessary to enable us to form a conception of the whole, which in fact is nothing more than the result of our conceptions of the parts and of their combination. Taking it for granted, then, that the poet may lead our ideas in the most beautiful order from one part of the object to the other ; and taking it also for granted that he is able to render the combination of those parts equally clear to us ; what space of time will he require in order to perform this ? Those combined effects which the eye perceives at a glance, he is obliged to enumerate

in tedious detail, and it not unfrequently happens that by the time we arrive at the last of his traits, we have already forgotten the first. Nevertheless, it is from these successive traits alone that we can form any conception of the whole. To the eye, the parts contemplated remain constantly present, and may be recurred to over and over again; on the contrary, when the ear is the channel of perception, the parts described are lost, if they are not preserved in the memory. And even supposing them to be all correctly remembered,—what an effort, what an exertion would it require to revive their impressions all in the same order and with the same distinctness, and to think them over again with even moderate rapidity, so as to form a tolerable idea of the whole!

Let the experiment be tried on an example which may be considered a masterpiece of its kind;*

Dort ragt das hohe Haupt vom edeln Enziane
Weit uebern niedern Chor der Poselkraeuter hin,

* See M. Von Haller's "Alpen."

Ein ganzes Blumenvolk dient unter seiner Fahne,
 Sein blauer Bruder selbst bueckt sich, und ehret ihn.
 Der Blumen helles Gold, in Strahlen umgebogen,
 Thuermt sich am Stengel auf, und kroent sein grau Gewand.
 Der Blaetter glattes Weiss, mit tiefem Gruen durchzogen,
 Strahlt von dem bunten Blitz von feuchtem Diamant.
 Gerechtestes Gesetz! dass Kraft sich Zier vermaehle,
 In einem schoenen Leib wohnt eine schoenre Seele.

Hier kriecht ein niedrig Kraut, gleich einem grauen Nebel,
 Dem die Natur sein Blatt im Kreuze hingelegt;
 Die holde Blume zeigt die zwey vergoldten Schnaebel,
 Die ein von Amethyst gebildter Vogel traegt.
 Dort wirft ein glaenzend Blatt, in Finger ausgekerbet,
 Auf einen hellen Bach den gruenen Widerschein;
 Der Blumen zarten Schnee, den matter Purpur faerbet,
 Schliesst ein gestreifter Stern in weisse Strahlen ein.
 Smaragd und Rosen bluehn auch auf zertretner Heide,
 Und Felsen decken sich mit einem Purpurkleide.*

* The Translator is indebted to the kindness of a literary friend for the following poetic version of the above beautiful lines:—

There shoots the noble gentian's lofty head
 Far o'er the common herd of vulgar plants;
 Beneath his flag a host of flowers is led,
 And e'en his azure brother homage grants.
 In circling rays his flowers of golden sheen
 Tower from the stem and crown its vestment grey,
 His leaves of glossy whiteness, streaked with green,
 Vie with the diamond in its varying ray.
 Most righteous law!—that Might consort with Grace,
 —In each fair form a fairer soul we trace!—

Here we see plants and flowers painted with the greatest skill and the greatest fidelity by the poet ; yet this painting is altogether destitute of illusive effect. I will not go so far as to say that one who had never beheld these plants and flowers could form little or no conception of them from this picture ; though it is possible that all poetic pictures demand a previous acquaintance with their objects. Nor will I deny that, where this previous knowledge exists, the poet may possibly awaken in the hearer's mind a more vivid idea of some particular parts of an object. I would merely ask him, how does the poetic description affect his idea of the whole ? In order to render this more vivid, it would be necessary that none of

Here, like grey mist, a humble earth-plant steals
Whose leaf by nature like a cross is made ;
His lovely flower two gilded beaks reveals,
Like those by bird of amethyst displayed.
There, finger-formed, a glancing leaf imprints
Its verdant image on a lucid stream,
Its flower's soft snow, enriched with rosy tints,
A striped star harbors in its pallid beam.
Emeralds and roses on the bare heath bloom,
And rocks themselves a purple robe assume !

the separate parts should be more prominent than the rest, but that all should equally share the same degree of light; the imagination must be able to glance with equal rapidity over the whole, so as to compose at once from the poet's description that effect which is seen at once in nature. Now, is this actually the case here? And if it be not, how can it with any truth be said that "the most exact imitation of a painter would be dull and insipid in comparison with this poetic delineation?"* There is no doubt that it is infinitely below the effect which lines and colors can produce in painting, and the critic who bestowed on it this exaggerated praise, must have viewed it under a totally false light. He must have bestowed a greater share of attention on the adventitious embellishments which the poet has interwoven with his description, on the exalted view of vegetable life, on the development of the internal perfections to which the external beauty serves but as a covering, than on that beauty itself, or on the

* Breitinger's *kritische Dichtkunst*, pa. ii. p. 807.

relative degree of liveliness and resemblance in the image which the poet and the painter can present. It is the representation of the former alone, however, that we are at present concerned with, and that man must either have neglected to consult his perceptions, or must wilfully pervert them, who would pretend that the following lines can vie, in respect of the impression they produce, with the imitations of a Huysum :

Der Blumen helles Gold, in Strahlen umgebogen,
 Thuermt sich am Stengel auf, und kroent sein grau Gewand,
 Der Blaetter glattes Weiss, mit tiefem Gruen durchzogen,
 Strahlt von dem bunten Blitz von feuchtem Diamant.

They would certainly furnish a very beautiful recitation, accompanied by a view of the plant described ; but in themselves they say little or nothing. I perceive in every word the effort of the poet, but the object which he labors to describe, I look for in vain.

This, then, is the view I take of the matter ; —I do not deny to speech in general the power of delineating a bodily whole, by means of its separate parts ; this it possesses, because its signs, although consecutive, are yet arbitrary

signs. But I deny that this power is possessed by speech, considered as the mechanical means of poetry, because such verbal delineations of bodies would be deficient in that illusion on which poetry mainly rests; and for this plain reason, that the integrality of the body being destroyed by the consecutive nature of the discourse, and an analysis of the whole into its parts being thus effected, the ultimate re-union of those parts in the imagination, must always be a work of very great difficulty, and in many cases will even be impossible.

Wherever, therefore, no illusive effect is required, where the understanding of the reader is alone addressed, and where the only aim of the author is to convey distinct, and, as far as possible, complete ideas, those delineations of bodies which are excluded from poetry, properly so called, may, with perfect propriety, be introduced, and may be employed with much advantage, not only by the prose writer, but by the didactic poet, who is, in fact, no poet at all. An instance of this kind may be found in Virgil's description of a cow fitted for breeding:—

The mother-cow must wear a low'ring look,
 Sour-headed, strongly neck'd, to bear the yoke.
 Her double dewlap from her chin descends,
 And at her thighs the pond'rous burden ends.
 Long are her sides, and large ; her limbs are great ;
 Rough are her ears, and broad her horny feet.
 Her color shining black, but fleck'd with white ;
 She tosses from the yoke ; provokes the fight ;
 She rises in her gait, is free from fears,
 And in her face a bull's resemblance bears :
 Her ample forehead with a star is crown'd,
 And with her length of tail she sweeps the ground.

Another example is furnished by his picture
 of a handsome colt :—

Dauntless at empty noises ; lofty-neck'd ;
 Sharp-headed, barrel-bellied, broadly-back'd.
 Brawny his chest, and deep : his color grey ;
 For beauty, dappled ; or the brightest bay.*

Is it not evident that to give a separate description of each part is of more importance with the poet in these passages, than to present a picture of the whole? His object is to enumerate the marks of a handsome colt, and of a brood cow, in order to enable his readers, when they meet with more or less of such marks

* Georg., b. iii., v. 51 and 79.

in nature, to form a proportional estimate of the animals. Whether or not these marks could be readily combined so as to form a vivid image of the animals in the reader's mind, must have been a question about which Virgil was totally indifferent.

Except in such cases as these, the detailed delineation of bodily objects, without the Homeric artifice of rendering the coexistent parts actually consecutive, to which I have already alluded, has always been regarded by the best critics as an uninteresting and trifling performance, for which little or no genius is required. When the poetaster feels himself at a loss, he sets to work, as Horace tells us, to delineate a grove, an altar, a rivulet meandering through pleasant meadows, a rapid stream, or perhaps a rainbow :— *

Here in labor'd strain
 A sacred grove, or fair Diana's fane
 Rises to view; there, through delicious meads,
 A murmuring stream its winding water leads;
 Here pours the rapid Rhone; the wat'ry bow
 There bends its colors.

* Hor. De Arte Poet., v. 16.

When the judgment of Pope had become matured by years and experience, he looked back, we are told, with great contempt on the pictorial essays of his youthful muse. He insisted that it was indispensable for any one who desired to render himself really worthy of the name of a poet to renounce as early as possible the taste for dry delineation, and compared a merely descriptive poem to a feast composed of nothing but sauces.* Of M. Von Kleist I can myself testify that his poem on "Spring" was that which he esteemed the least. Had his life been longer spared, he would have entirely remodelled it. He was, in fact, occupied, before his death, in laying down a plan for this purpose, and meditated on the means by which he might be enabled to reduce to some natural arrangement and consecutive order, the multitude of images which he appeared to have designed almost at random, from the boundless space of renovated nature. He would at the same time have done what Marmontel, no doubt, with

* See Note 41, end of volume.

reference to his Eclogues, has recommended to the German poets in general; he would have converted a series of images with which sentiments are but sparingly interwoven, into a series of sentiments with but a slight admixture of images. *

* See Note 42, end of volume.

EIGHTEENTH SECTION.

Some Degree of Latitude must be allowed, both to the Poet and the Painter, in interpreting the Limits of their respective Arts.—Reflections on the Shields of Achilles and Æneas in Homer and Virgil.

AND shall we then be told that Homer himself has been guilty of these frigid delineations of bodily objects?—I trust that there are but few passages which can be appealed to in support of such an assertion, and I am convinced that even these few will be found of such a nature as to confirm the rule, to which they may appear at first sight to form exceptions.

It may, I presume, be taken for granted, that succession of time is the sphere of the poet, as space is that of the painter. The union of two necessarily distinct points of time in one and the same picture,—as, for instance, when Fra

Mazzuoli represents the Rape of the Sabine women on the same canvass with their reconciliation to their husbands and kindred, or when Titian gives in one piece the whole story of the Prodigal Son, his dissolute life, his misery, and his repentance,—is an encroachment made by the painter on the territory of the poet, of which good taste can never approve. In like manner the successive enumeration of several parts, or things, which, if they form a whole, must necessarily be perceived at once in nature, for the purpose of enabling the reader to conceive an idea of the whole, is an encroachment committed on the territory of the painter by the poet, who at the same time commits the folly of lavishing without effect the resources of his imagination.

Nevertheless, the mutual relation which exists between poetry and painting may be likened to the rational policy of two neighboring and friendly states, which, while they forbid all unreasonable liberties in the heart of their dominions on the part of each other, yet tacitly permit on their extreme boundaries a sort of mutual indulgence, to compensate on both sides

for the little encroachments which occasional circumstances may suddenly oblige the one to make on the territory of the other. I need not enumerate examples of the practice, which is almost universally prevalent in large historical pictures, of somewhat extending the limits of the moment to which the subject refers. There is probably no instance of a composition, where a great number of figures are introduced, in which each actor bears the precise situation and attitude which would have belonged to him in the moment of the principal action; some being shown at an earlier and others at a later period than is strictly correct. This is a freedom which the master must justify by certain contrivances in the arrangement; by bringing his figures forward, or throwing them into the distance, whereby they may be made to take a more or less immediate share in the action. I shall content myself with quoting an observation of Mengs* on the Draperies of Raphael.—“Every one of his folds,” he says, “has a

* Thoughts on Beauty and Taste in Painting.

cause, either in its own weight, or in the action of the limbs beneath, and it is often easy to know from the actions of Raphael's figures, the positions in which they were previously placed. Indeed, this is an indication which he aimed at expressing. Thus, it may be perceived by the folds of the drapery whether an arm or a leg was placed before or behind previous to the action in which it is represented;—whether the limb which we now see extended, or in the act of extension, was formerly bent, or whether, being now bent, it was formerly in a state of extension.”—There is no doubt that in this case the Artist unites two distinct moments in one. For, since the foot in moving forward immediately draws along with it that part of the drapery which rests upon it, it is evident that, unless the cloth be formed of some material, so stiff as to be quite unfit for painting, at no single moment of its passage could it form any fold in the smallest degree different from that which the actual position of the limb requires; otherwise we should have the drapery in its former, and the limb in its present state. Yet, who

would censure the artist if he finds it advantageous to indicate both these moments at once? Who would not rather give him credit for having had the sense and the courage to commit a trifling fault like this, in order to attain a greater perfection of expression?

A similar indulgence must also be extended to the poet. The progressive nature of his imitation only permits him, with propriety, to indicate at once a single aspect, or a single quality of his bodily objects. But if, through the felicitous mechanism of his language, he is enabled to perform this with a single word, why should he not occasionally add a second such word; or, if desirable, a third, or even a fourth? —I have already stated that Homer's epithets are single, or, at most, but double; as, for example, in speaking of a ship, it is either the "dark ship," or the "hollow ship," or the "rapid ship," or, at most, the "well-rowed dark ship." This, however, is to be understood of his manner generally. Some passages may be found here and there in which he adds a third descriptive epithet, as, *καμπυλα κυκλα, χαλ-*

κια, οκτακνημα,* the round, brazen, eight-spoked wheels. In some we find even a fourth, as, ἀσπίδα παντός ἴση, καλή, χαλκήνη, ἐξηλασθῆν,† the smooth, beautiful, brazen, embossed shield. But who would think of censuring the poet for this? Should we not rather feel indebted to him for this slight luxuriance of imagery, when we perceive the good effect which a judicious application of it may produce?

But I would not pretend to justify the practice either of the poet or the painter by the comparison I have drawn between them and two neighboring states. A mere comparison of that sort can never stand in the place of either proof or vindication. Their justification consists in this, that, in the case of the painter, the two separate moments border so closely and so immediately on each other, that they may without any difficulty be considered as belonging to one and the same point of time; while, in the case of the poet, the various traits corresponding to the separate parts and qualities in space,

* Iliad, E. v. 722.

† Iliad, M. v. 295.

follow each other so rapidly, and are so compressed, as it were, together, that they seem to strike the ear simultaneously, and convey at once a single image to the mind.

And here let us pause for a moment to observe how admirably the language in which Homer composed his poems was calculated to give effect to such passages. Not only does it allow the greatest possible latitude in the accumulation and composition of adjectives, but it admits of so happy an arrangement of these epithetical terms as to counteract the prejudicial effect which in other languages might be produced by the suspension of the word to which they refer. In one or more of these advantages modern languages are universally deficient. Those which, like the French, are obliged to have recourse to circumlocution, translating, for instance, *καμπυλα κυκλα, χαλκισα, οκταννημα*, by—“the round wheels, which were of brass, and had eight spokes,” succeed, it is true, in expressing the sense, but they totally annihilate the picture. In such a case as this, however, the sense is as nothing, while the picture is every

thing, and the former without the latter converts the lively imagery of the poet into the most tedious prosing; a fate to which good old Homer has too often been subjected under the pen of the precise Madame Dacier. The German language, it is true, is capable of rendering the Homeric adjectives by words of equal brevity and force, but the happy arrangement of the Greek it is unable to imitate. We say, indeed, "the round, brazen, eight-spoked——" but the substantive "wheels," the thing referred to, is dragged in last of all. Can it be denied that three separate epithets, thus introduced before the subject to which they apply, must tend to weaken and confuse the image? The Greek poet unites the subject directly with the first epithet, and makes the rest to follow; he says, "round wheels, brazen, eight-spoked." We thus know at once of what he is speaking, and are made acquainted, as happens in the natural arrangement of our thoughts, first with the object, and afterwards with its contingencies. This advantage is not possessed by the German; or, I should rather say, that though it is pos-

sessed, it can but seldom be employed without ambiguity. For, when the adjectives are placed last in German, they must necessarily be in *statu absoluto*, in which case they exactly correspond with adverbs, and would, if referred as such to the verb governed by the thing spoken of, at all times distort, and sometimes even falsify, the sense.

But I am occupying myself with trifles, and seem to forget the shield of Achilles, that celebrated picture, in consideration of which in particular Homer was of old regarded as a master of poetic painting.* But this shield, I may be reminded, is a single bodily object, the successive description of whose component parts ought not to be permitted to the poet. And yet Homer has composed upwards of a hundred magnificent verses in describing every circumstance connected with it,—its form, the material of which it was composed, and the figures with which its immense surface was covered, so minutely and so exactly that modern sculptors

* Dionys. Halicarnass. in Vita Homeri apud Th. Gal. in Opusc. Mythol., p. 401.

have found no difficulty in executing imitations of it corresponding in every particular.

To this objection I may reply, that it has already been answered by anticipation. Homer, it is to be observed, delineates the shield, not as an actually completed work, but as one which is progressively becoming so. He has therefore in this instance also employed the artifice I have already commended, of converting the coexistent parts of his object into a consecutive detail, and thus substituting the lively description of an action for the tedious delineation of a body. He brings before our eyes, not so much the shield itself, as the divine artist who is employed in making it. We see him approach the anvil with his hammer and pincers, and when he has finished forging the plates out of the rough ore, we perceive the figures, destined for their embellishment, rising one after the other from the surface, beneath the judicious strokes of his hammer. We never once lose sight of the workman, until his labor is completed, and then the amazement with which we regard his work is mingled with the

confident faith of eye-witnesses to its execution.

The same thing cannot be said of Virgil's shield of *Æneas*. Either the Roman poet did not perceive the skilful delicacy of his prototype, or else the objects which he purposed to introduce into his shield appeared to him to be of such a nature as would not very well admit of their being executed before our eyes. They consist of prophecies, which it certainly would have been unseemly in the god to have disclosed in our presence with as much distinctness as the poet afterwards expounds them. Prophecies, viewed simply as inspired predictions, demand a mysterious style of language, in which the names of the persons referred to remain shrouded in the veil of that futurity to which they belong. But it seems probable that the mention of the real names in this place was of importance to Virgil both as a poet and a courtier;* and though this view of the matter may furnish some excuse for him, yet it does not obviate

* See Note 43, end of volume.

the bad effect produced by his departure from the Homeric plan. Every reader of taste will, I am sure, acknowledge this. The preparations made by Vulcan for his work are nearly the same in Virgil as in Homer. But instead of exhibiting to our view, as Homer does, the progress of the work itself, as well as the preparations for it, Virgil first gives us a general description of the god busied with his Cyclopes,*

* * * their artful hands a shield prepare,
 Alone sufficient to sustain the war.
 Sev'n orbs within a spacious round they close.
 One stirs the fire, and one the bellows blows.
 * * * * *
 By turns their arms advance in equal time ;
 By turns their hands descend, and hammers chime.
 They turn the glowing mass with crooked tongues,
 The fiery work proceeds, with rustic songs.

And then suddenly letting the curtain fall, he carries us to a totally different scene, from whence we are gradually led to the vale where Æneas is joined by Venus with the arms which are supposed to have been prepared in the interval. These the goddess rests against the

* Æneid., lib. viii. 447—54.

trunk of an oak, and after the hero has sufficiently inspected, and admired, and handled them, the description, or painting of the shield is given; and this is rendered so tame and tedious by the constant repetition of the demonstrative phrases, "here is," and "there is," "hard by this," and "not far from that," that it required all the poetic adornment which the skill of Virgil could impart to it, to prevent it from becoming insupportable to the reader. Besides, it is not Æneas who delineates this picture, for he knows nothing of the meaning of the figures which he admires,

———— rerumque ignarus imagine gaudet;

nor is it Venus, though she probably knew as much of the future fate of her beloved grandson as did her liberal spouse; but it is the poet himself who describes it, and the action consequently remains suspended during the description. Not one of his characters takes any part in it, nor is it of the slightest importance to what follows whether one thing, or another, is represented on the shield. We see throughout

the dexterous courtier, intent on garnishing his subject with flattering allusions,—not the great genius, relying on the innate vigor of his work, and disdaining all external means of exciting interest. The shield of *Æneas* is consequently a mere episode, destined solely to flatter the national pride of the Romans; a separate streamlet, which the poet has guided into the current of his song, to render it more lively. The shield of *Achilles*, on the contrary, is the produce of its own fruitful soil; since it was requisite that a shield should be made, and since the labors of divinity are never limited to the production of the useful alone, unaccompanied by the agreeable, it became necessary that this shield should be ornamented. The art consisted in treating these ornaments merely as ornaments,—in incorporating them with the subject so as to make their introduction appear to arise out of it; and this can be done only after the manner of *Homer*. That great poet makes *Vulcan* elaborate the decorations of his shield, because he desires to produce a piece of workmanship worthy of his skill. *Virgil*, on

the contrary, would lead us to imagine that the shield was executed for the sake of the ornaments, since he has deemed the latter of sufficient importance to demand a separate description, long after the shield which bore them was completed.

NINETEENTH SECTION.

The Ancients were not acquainted with the Science of Perspective.—Pope has committed a Mistake in this Particular.

THE objections made by the elder Scaliger, Perrault, Terrasson and others, to Homer's shield of Achilles, are well known, as are likewise the replies made to them by Dacier, Boivin and Pope. It appears to me, however, that these last have often gone too far, being led away, by their confidence in the justice of their cause, to make assertions which are as incorrect in themselves, as they are ill calculated to vindicate the poet.

In order to meet the chief objection, that Homer has filled his shield with a vast crowd of figures, for which there could not possibly be room within its circumference, Boivin undertook to make a delineation of it in conformity with

the requisite dimensions. His idea of the several concentric circles is very ingenious, though it is not borne out in the smallest degree by the words of the poet; nor do we anywhere else find the least indication of the ancients having employed shields divided in this manner. Since Homer himself describes the shield as “*σακος παντος διδαιδαλμενον*,”—labored in every part with art—I should rather be inclined, if it were necessary to gain room, to take in the concave surface also; for it is well known that the ancient artists were not in the habit of leaving this part empty, as is shown in the shield of Minerva by Phidias.* Boivin, however, not only neglects to take advantage of this example, but he even increases unnecessarily the number of the representations; dividing what is plainly a single picture in the poet into two and even three separate compositions, thus diminishing his space by at least one half. I am perfectly well aware of the motives which induced him to do this, but I think he ought not to have yielded

* See Note 44, end of volume.

to those motives; for, instead of taking the trouble to satisfy the exactions of his opponents, he should have shown them that those exactions were unjustifiable.

My meaning will be better shown by considering the following passage,* in which Homer describes a scene in one of the towns represented on the shield:—

“ There, in the Forum, swarm a numerous train;
 The subject of dispute, a townsman slain:
 One pleads the fine discharged, which one denied,
 And bade the public and the laws decide:
 The witness is produced on either hand;
 For this, or that, the partial people stand;
 Th’ appointed heralds still the noisy bands,
 And form a ring with sceptres in their hands;
 On seats of stone, within the sacred place,
 The reverend elders nodded o’er the case;
 Alternate, each th’ attending sceptre took,
 And rising solemn, each his sentence spoke.
 Two golden talents lay amidst, in sight,
 The prize of him who best adjudged the right.”

In this passage I conceive the poet to have intended to give but a single picture, that of a public law-process relative to the disputed pay-

* Iliad, ɔ. v. 497—508.

ment of a pecuniary fine for a homicide. The artist who would treat this subject, can employ but a single moment of it at once; that of the arraignment, for instance, or of the examination of witnesses, or of the delivery of judgment, or any other that he may prefer, whether before, after, or between these different points of time. But he will endeavor to render this single moment as pregnant with interest as possible, and will employ in its execution all those illusive charms which give to painting the supremacy over poetry in the representation of visible objects. Finding himself thus infinitely surpassed in this respect, what can the poet do in treating this subject, but employ in like manner those advantages which are peculiar to his own art? And in what do these consist? In the freedom with which he can expatiate both on that which is past and that which is to come, with relation to the single moment represented by the painter; and in the power which he thereby possesses of indicating, not only all that the artist has exhibited, but all that he leaves the spectator to guess at besides. It is by

means of this freedom and this power alone that the poet is enabled to equal the artist; and the greatest degree of resemblance between the works of both exists, not when the one follows the other so closely as to present to the mind through the ear precisely the same images neither more nor less, as are presented by the other through the eye, but when the effect of both is found to be equally vivid. This is the principle on which Boivin should have formed his judgment of this passage of Homer, and he would not then have subdivided the subject, as he has, into the same number of pictures as the separate points of time he believed it to contain. The whole of Homer's narration, it is true, could not well be combined in a single picture;—the accusation and the reply, the presentation of witnesses and the acclamations of the divided populace, the efforts of the heralds to silence the tumult, and the delivery of the arbiters' opinions, are all circumstances which follow one another, and could not exist together. But what was not actually contained in the picture, was, if I may be allowed the expression, virtually

to be found there, and the only true mode of imitating a material picture by means of words is to combine with what is really expressed, all that is left to be conceived. By confining himself within the mere limits of art, the poet may indeed furnish the materials for a picture, but he will never succeed in producing one himself.

In like manner Boivin divides the description of the besieged town* into three separate pictures. He might as reasonably have divided it into a dozen. For, since he did not catch the spirit of the poet, but considered it necessary that he should subject himself to the unities of material painting, he might have discovered so many more violations of these unities, as to render it almost necessary to devote a separate compartment of the shield to each particular trait of the poet. In my opinion, however, Homer has but ten separate pictures on the whole shield, each of which he introduces with the expression *ἐν μὲν ἑρσιζῆς*, or *ἐν δὲ ποίησας*, or *ἐν δ'*

* *Iliad*, x. v. 509—580.

ἰαθῆι, or *ἰ ὁ πακίλλε Ἀμφίγυνη*. * Where these introductory words do not appear, we have no right to suppose a separate picture; while, on the contrary, the whole description included within any two of these phrases, must be regarded as complete in itself, and as wanting only that arbitrary concentration into a single point of time, which the poet was not by any means bound to give. Nay, had he really thus confined himself, had he excluded from his description the smallest trait which was not calculated to enter into the actual execution of the picture, had he, in short, treated the subject according to the wishes of his critics, those gentlemen, it is true, would have found nothing to censure, but at the same time no person of taste would have seen anything to admire.

Pope not only approves of Boivin's subdivision and design, but seems to think he is doing something of vast importance in showing that each of his separate pictures is executed conformably to the strictest rules of painting

* See Note 4b, end of volume.

now in use. Contrast, perspective, and the three unities,—all these he finds observed in the utmost perfection, and knowing that the testimony of those who are best able to give an opinion on the subject concurs in describing painting as having been still in its infancy at the period of the Trojan war, he concludes that, either the divine genius of Homer led him rather to imagine the perfections of which painting is capable, than to confine his conceptions to the particular stage of advancement prevalent in his days, or else that the testimony alluded to must yield in credibility to the evidence furnished by the shield of Achilles. Let who will believe the former of these alternatives, the latter at least will be admitted by nobody who is acquainted with anything beyond the mere dates in the history of art. The better informed critic founds his belief of the infancy of painting during Homer's time not merely on the statements of Pliny or any other writer, but more particularly from the conclusion which the works of art mentioned by the ancients lead him to draw, that no considerable improvement had

been made for many centuries after, and that the pictures of Polygnotus, for example, were far from reaching the standard which Pope ascribes to the compositions on the Homeric shield. The two large works by this master at Delphi, of which Pausanias has left us so circumstantial a description,* were evidently destitute of any perspective effect. The ancients are not allowed to have had any knowledge whatever of this department of art; and all that is said by Pope with the view of showing that Homer possessed some knowledge of it, serves only to prove that he himself had but a very imperfect idea of the science.† The observations I allude to are as follows: “that he (Homer) was not a stranger to aërial perspective appears in his expressly marking the distance of object from object; he tells us, for instance, that the two spies lay a little remote from the other figures, and that the oak, under which was spread the banquet of the reapers, stood apart: what he says of the valley sprinkled all

* Phocic. cap. 25—31.

† See Note 46, end of volume.

over with cottages and flocks, appears to be a description of a large country in perspective. And indeed, a general argument for this may be drawn from the number of figures on the shield, which could not be all expressed in their full magnitude: and this is therefore a sort of proof that the art of lessening them according to perspective was known at that time." The mere observance of that rule of optics by which an object is required to appear smaller when at a distance than when near at hand, is far from being sufficient to render a picture true in perspective. Perspective demands a single point of sight, and a determinate horizon, and it was in these respects that the ancient paintings were deficient. The ground-plane of the pictures of Polygnotus was not horizontal, but inclined, so that the figures which should have appeared as standing behind each other, seemed to be placed over each other's heads. Now, since this position of the several figures and their groupes was generally prevalent, as may be concluded from the ancient bas-reliefs, in which those intended to be in the back-ground always stand higher

than those in the front, and seem to be looking over their heads, it is but natural to suppose a similar arrangement to have governed Homer's description, and it is therefore unnecessary to separate those images which he has united in a single picture. The description of the peaceful city, through whose streets the joyous procession of a marriage festival passed, while in the market-place an important process was under arbitration, does not therefore presuppose two separate pictures ; for Homer might very naturally regard it as a single one, by choosing his imaginary point of sight from so elevated a station, that he could command a free view over the whole of the town, and take in its streets and market-place at a single glance.

I am of opinion that the attainment of the true perspective effect in pictures was brought about only very gradually through the intervention of scene-painting ; and even when this branch of art had attained a great degree of perfection, it would appear that it was not found so easy to transfer the rules which governed it to a flat surface, for in the pictures of later

periods, among the antiquities of Herculaneum, so various and frequent are the errors in perspective, that one would hardly forgive them now-a-days even in a beginner.*

I shall, however, refrain for the present from making any further observations on a point on which I may look for the fullest satisfaction in the forthcoming History of Art by Winkelmann.†

* Betracht : ueber die Mahlerey.

† This was written in the year 1763.

TWENTIETH SECTION.

The Poet must abstain from the Delineation of corporeal Beauty.—Homer's Conduct in this Respect contrasted with that of some other Poets.

THE observations which I have already made in relation to bodily objects generally, will apply with still greater force to beautiful objects in particular. Corporeal beauty springs from the harmonious effect of multifarious parts which the eye surveys at one and the same instant. It is therefore necessary that the parts should lie in juxta-position with each other, and since objects thus relatively placed are peculiarly subjects for painting, it follows that corporeal beauty can be imitated by that art alone.

The poet, who can indicate the elements of beauty only consecutively, abstains therefore altogether from the delineation of corporeal beauty, as an abstract quality. He feels that

these elements, when arranged in succession, cannot possibly produce the same effect as when brought into immediate contact with each other; —that the concentrating glance which the reader throws backwards after their enumeration, cannot ensure the production of an harmonious image. He perceives that it will exceed the powers of human imagination to conceive the combined effect of the separate features detailed by him, except through the recollection of a similar composition of such parts in nature or in art.

In this respect also does Homer stand pre-eminently a model for imitation. He simply tells us that Nireus was beautiful, Achilles was still more so, and that the beauty of Helen was divine. Nowhere do we find him entering into a circumstantial delineation of these examples of beauty. Yet the beauty of Helen is the very pivot on which the whole fabric of his poem turns. How luxuriantly would one of our modern poets have dwelt on its details!

Constantinus Manasses has attempted to enrich his dry chronicle with a picture of Helen. I owe him my thanks for this attempt, for I

know not where I could have found a more striking example of the absurdity of venturing on ground which Homer has so prudently avoided. Here is the passage :— *

Ἦς ἡ γυνὴ κραιναλλῆς, ἰσφρὺς, ἰσχροῦστατη,
 Ἐσπαρμῖος, ἰσπρῶστος, βῶσπις, χροισχροῦς,
 Ἐλιπεβλήφαρος, ἄβρα, χαρῶται γὰρ οἱ ἄλλοι,
 Λινοβραχίων, τρυφίρα, καλλὸς ἀντιφρῆς ἱμῶντος,
 Τὸ πρῶστος καταλιπὸς, ἡ παρῖα βδοχροῦς,
 Τὸ πρῶστος ἰσυχρῆς, τὸ βλήφαρος ἄρμῖος,
 Καλλὸς ἀντιφρῆς, ἄβραπτιστος, ἀντοχροῦς,
 Ἐβρατι τὴν λινοσῆτα βδοχρῖα κυρῖνη,
 Ὅς ἢ τις τοῖς ἰλιφῶντα βῶψι λαμῶρα πρῶφρα.
 Διὸ μῆρα, καταλιπὸς, ἰδὲν ἰμοδουρῆθη
 Κυρῖογινη τῆν ἰσῶντος Ἐλιπὸς χροματιζῖν. †

In reading these lines I could fancy that I see a number of stones which had been brought together with a vast deal of labor to the summit

* See Note 47, end of volume.

† It would not be easy to give any thing like a tolerable translation of these lines. They consist altogether of the most common-place phrases, being composed of a tautological string of epithets expressive of the learned monk's ideas of the points of beauty in a lovely woman. The result of it all is that Helen was a "most beautiful woman," with "exquisite eyebrows and color," "lovely rosy cheeks," "large eyes," "snowy skin, like ivory tinged with crimson," "white arms" and "swan-like neck."—*Note of the Translator.*

of a hill for the purpose of erecting a splendid building, all rolling away down again of their own accord. What sort of impression does this crowd of words leave upon the mind? What idea does it give of Helen's appearance? Read this passage to a thousand different men, and would not each one of the thousand form a different conception of the subject of it?

But we need not, it is true, look for poetry in the political verses of a monk. Let us see then how Ariosto has delineated his enchanting Alcina:—*

Di persona era tanto ben formata,
 Quanto mai finger san Pittori industri:
 Con bionda chioma, lunga ed annodata,
 Oro non è che più risplenda e lustri;
 Spargeasi per la guancia delicata
 Misto color di rose e di ligustri.
 Di terso avorio era la fronte lieta,
 Che lo spazio finia con giusta meta.

Sotte due negri e sottilissimi archi
 Son due negri occhi, anzi due chiari soli,
 Pietosi à riguardare, à mover parchi,
 Intorno à cui par ch' Amor scherzi, e voli,
 E ch' indi tutta la faretra scarchi,
 E che visibilmente i cori involi.

* Orlando Furioso, canto vii., st. 11—15.

Quindi il naso per mezzo il viso scende,
 Che non trova l'invidia ove l'emende.

Sotto quel sta, quasi fra due vallette,
 La bocca sparsa di natio cinabro :
 Quive due filze son de perle elette,
 Che chiude ed apre un bello e dolce labro ;
 Quindi escon le cortesi parolette
 Da render molle ogni cor rozzo e scabro ;
 Quivi si forma quel soave riso,
 Ch' apre à sua posta in terra il paradiso.

Bianca neve è il bel collo, e'l petto latte ;
 Il collo è tondo, il petto è colmo e largo ;
 Due pome acerbe, e pur d'avorio fatte,
 Vengono e van, come onda al primo margo,
 Quando piacevol aura il mar combatte.
 Non potria l'altre parti veder Argo :
 Ben si può giudicar che corrisponde
 A quel ch'appar di fuor, quel che s'asconde.

Mostran le braccia sue misura giusta ;
 E la candida man spesso si vede
 Lunghetta alquanto, e di larghezza angusta,
 Dove nè nodo appar, nè vena eccede.
 Si vede alfin della persona angusta
 Il breve, asciutto e ritondetto piede,
 Gli angelici sembianti nati in cielo
 Non si ponno celar sotto alcun velo.

It has been said by Milton with reference to Pandemonium, that some praised the work, and some the author of the work. Admiration of

the one is thus not always necessarily identified with admiration of the other. A work of art may merit all our approbation without contributing materially to the artist's fame. On the other hand, an artist may be justly entitled to applause, though his work may not be altogether satisfactory. If this is borne in mind, we shall be at no loss to reconcile many contradictory opinions, such, for instance, as those entertained in reference to the example just quoted. Dolce, in his *Discourse on Painting*, makes Aretino express an extraordinary admiration of these stanzas of Ariosto; * I, on the contrary, select them as an example of the failure of an attempt at producing a picture. We are neither of us wrong. Dolce admires the proofs they contain of the poet's acquaintance with corporeal beauty; while I, on the contrary, look only at the effect which this knowledge, expressed in words, is calculated to produce on my imagination. Dolce infers, from the skill displayed, that good poets are equally good painters; while I conclude

* See Note 48, end of volume.

from the effect produced, that what is best expressed by forms and colors is worst expressed by words. Dolce recommends the delineation of Ariosto to every painter as the most perfect model of a beautiful woman; and I would recommend it to every poet as a most instructive warning to him not to attempt, with still smaller chance of success, that which has failed in the hands of Ariosto. It may be very true that, in telling us that his Alcina

*Di persona era tanto ben formata
Quanto mai finger san Pittori industri,*

Ariosto displays his thorough acquaintance with those rules of proportion which the assiduous artist always makes it his business to study in nature and from the antique.* He may even, by the simple sentence,

*Spargesi per la guancia delicata
Misto color di rose e di ligustri,*

prove himself to be a most perfect colorist,—“a very Titian.”† With equal correctness may it be concluded that because, instead of calling

* See Note 49, end of volume.

† See Note 50, end of volume.

Alcina's hair "golden," he merely compares it with gold, the poet disapproves of "the use of real gold in coloring." * We may perhaps even discover in the formation of her nose,

Quindi il naso per mezzo il viso scende,

that style of profile employed by the ancient Greeks, and borrowed from them by the Romans. † This may be all very possible; but what signifies all this learning and knowledge to his readers, who desire only to conceive the image of a beautiful woman, and to experience some indication of that soft emotion which accompanies the actual contemplation of beauty? Though the poet may be acquainted with the true proportions of a beautiful form, does it follow that we should know them likewise? And even if we did, does he really indicate them? Does he spare us in the smallest degree the effort to recall them distinctly and perceptibly to the imagination? He tells us of a forehead included within its proper limits,

* See Note 51, end of volume.

† See Note 52, end of volume.

Che lo spazio finia con giusto metà ;

of a nose in which envy herself could find nothing
to improve,

Che non trova l'invidia, ove l'emende ;

of a hand, somewhat long and narrow,

Lunghetta alquanto, e di larghezza angusta ;

—but what sort of an image do these general expressions convey? From the lips of a drawing-master, anxious to direct the attention of his pupils to the beauties of the academic model, they might indeed bear a very intelligible import; as a single glance towards the model would at once show the true limits of the open brow, the exquisite chiselling of the nose, and the delicate proportions of the pretty hand. But in the poet we behold nothing; and we feel vexed and disappointed at experiencing the utter fruitlessness of our best endeavors to create a palpable image from his words.

In cases such as this Virgil has, with tolerable success, followed the example of Homer, by imitating his abstinence. Dido is described by him only as *pulcherrima Dido*. When he is

desirous to introduce some more circumstantial detail regarding her, he dwells on her rich attire or her splendid appearance, *

“ The queen at length appears * *
 * * * * *
 A flower'd cymār with golden fringe she wore,
 And at her back a golden quiver bore .
 Her flowing hair a golden caul restrains ;
 A golden clasp the Tyrian robe sustains.”

Had Virgil been addressed, as the student was of old, by the painter whose opinion he asked of his picture of Helen,—“ If you have not succeeded in making her handsome, you have at least made her fine enough,” his answer would doubtless have been,—“ It is not I who am to blame for not being able to delineate her beauty ; the fault lies in the limits of my art. The praise I desire to obtain, is that of having restrained my imagination within those limits.”

I must not here lose sight of the two songs of Anacreon in which he analyzes the beauty of his mistress and of Bathyllus. † In these instances, it will be observed, the practice is

* *Æneid.*, iv., v. 136.

† *Od.*, xxviii. xxix.

justified by the plan which the poet adopts. He is supposed to be addressing himself to a painter, who is executing a picture under his directions. "It is thus," he says, "you must paint me her hair, thus her forehead, and thus her eyes, her mouth, her neck and bosom, her waist and hands!"—What the artist can execute only by means of a successive arrangement, the poet can, of course, describe to him only in a similar manner. His aim is not, by means of these oral directions to the painter, to make us acknowledge and feel all the beauty of the beloved object; he perceives himself the insufficiency of a verbal description, and for that very reason calls in to his aid the expression of art. So highly are the illusive charms of painting exalted by the poet, that the whole song seems more like a poem in praise of art than of his mistress; till at length, in the enthusiasm of his admiration, he sees not the image which has been formed under his directions, but the living object of his affection herself;—

"Enough—'tis she! 'tis all I seek;
It glows, it lives, it soon will speak!"

In like manner, in his delineation of Bathyllus; the praise of the beautiful youth is so interwoven with that of the work of art that it might seem doubtful which of them the song is intended to celebrate. He selects the most beautiful parts from various figures; he borrows the neck from Adonis, the hands from Mercury, the thigh from Pollux, and the breast from Bacchus, until he at length beholds his Bathyllus endowed by the artist with the form of an Apollo:—

His neck of ivory splendor trace,
 Moulded with soft but manly grace;
 Fair as the neck of Paphia's boy,
 Where Paphia's arms have hung in joy.
 Give him the winged Hermes' hand,
 With which he waves his snaky wand;
 Let Bacchus then the breast supply,
 And Leda's son the sinewy thigh.

* * * * *
 * * but, hold—fobear—
 I see a godlike portrait there;
 So like Bathyllus!—sure there's none
 So like Bathyllus but the Sun!

In like manner Lucian knew no other mode of conveying an idea of the beauty of Panthea, but by a reference to the most beautiful female

statues of the ancient artists.* What is this but an acknowledgment that language is, of itself, powerless on such an occasion;—that poetry is inexpressive, and eloquence is mute, if art be not in some measure made to serve as their interpreter?

* *Ensay*, sect. 3, t. ii.

TWENTY-FIRST SECTION.

Continuation of the Subject.—Though the Poet cannot delineate Beauty in Detail, he possesses other Means of impressing his Readers with the Idea of Beauty.

BUT it must not be supposed that I would deprive poetry altogether of the power of exciting the idea of corporeal beauty. My object has been simply to point out the mistake of supposing that that object can be attained by any detailed delineation of it, which must necessarily fall short of the effect produced by the painter. I am still willing to allow that, by pursuing a different course, the poet may not only equal, but even surpass the impression of beauty conveyed by art.

Even Homer, who has so carefully abstained from all detailed delineation of corporeal beauty—who scarcely deigns to inform us, in passing,

that Helen had white arms* and beautiful hair, †
—even he has nevertheless conveyed to us an
idea of her beauty which far surpasses all that
art could accomplish of a similar kind. Look
at the passage in which Helen appears before
the assembled elders of the people of Troy:
When the venerable old men beheld her, they
said to one another, ‡

————— No wonder, such celestial charms
For nine long years have set the world in arms !
What winning graces ! what majestic mien !
She moves a goddess, and she looks a queen !

What could convey to our imagination a more
exalted idea of beauty than the fact, that frigid
old age acknowledged it to be a sufficient excuse
for a war which had been the occasion of so
much blood and so much sorrow ?

Thus we see that what Homer was not able
to describe by a detail of its component parts,
he has rendered palpable to us by its effect.
Ye, then, who would aspire to the character of
poets, imitate his practice ;—paint to us the

* Iliad, T. v. 121.

† Iliad, T. v. 319.

‡ Iliad, T. v. 156—158.

pleasure, the affection, the love, the transport which beauty excites, and you will have painted beauty itself. When we read of the object of Sappho's love, at sight of whom she declares that her senses and her reason abandon her, who can imagine him to be ugly? Who does not picture to himself the most beautiful, the most perfect of forms, the instant he sympathizes with the feelings which such a form is calculated to excite? When we read Ovid's enthusiastic verses on his Lesbia,

Quos humeros, quales vidi tetigique lacertos!
 Forma papillarum quam fuit apta premi!
 Quam castigato planus sub pectore venter!
 Quantum et quale latus, quam juvenile femur!

it is not because he describes her beauties in detail, but because he gives his description with that air of wanton voluptuousness by which the imagination is so readily excited, that we fancy ourselves enjoying the spectacle which the poet enjoyed.

Another way in which poetry is enabled to surpass art in the delineation of corporeal beauty, is by converting beauty into grace.—

Grace is beauty in movement, and is consequently less adapted for the painter than the poet. The painter can only hint at movement, but his figures are in reality without it. Consequently gracefulness is with him grimace.* In poetry, on the contrary, it appears what it really is, a transitory beauty, which, when it is past, we long to see again. It comes and goes; and as the recollection of a movement is generally more ready and more distinct than that of mere forms or colors, in the same proportion will the charms of gracefulness operate on us more powerfully than mere beauty. Now, whatever in Ariosto's picture of Alcina charms or touches us, may be traced to this source. The impres-

* This idea may appear, at first sight, somewhat startling, but I believe on reflection it will be found to be correct. The grace of the poet is that of beauty in actual movement; we see it commence and pass away before our eyes. The grace of the painter, on the contrary, from the fixed character essential to his art, is incapable of the same continuity of motion. Grace is in nature of only momentary endurance, and when this moment becomes perpetuated by art, were it not for the corrections naturally suggested by the imagination of the spectator, its charm would degenerate into mere attitude or grimace.—*Note of the Translator.*

sion which her eyes produce does not arise from their being black and brilliant, but from their being

Pietosi à riguardar, à mover parchi,

gentle of regard, and slow to turn away. Her mouth enchants us, not because the lips, tinged with their native Cinnabar, enclose two rows of exquisite pearls; but because it is the birthplace of “that lovely smile which opens spontaneously a paradise on earth;”—because it is from thence that “those gracious accents flow which soften each rude and stubborn heart.” Her bosom charms us, less from the comparisons which its delicate form and color may lead us to make, than from its “gentle swelling motion, like the undulations exhibited on the margin of the shore, when a playful zephyr agitates the surface of the sea;”—

*Due pome acerbe, è pur d'avorio fatte,
Vengono è van, come onda al primo margo,
Quando piacevole aura il mar combatte.*

I am persuaded that if Ariosto had simply compressed these traits of gracefulness into one

or two stanzas, they would have been far more effective than the whole five throughout which he has dispersed them, interweaving them at the same time with frigid details of beauty of form, far too profound to affect our feelings.

Even Anacreon chose rather to fall into the apparent impropriety of demanding an impossibility of the painter, than to omit to animate with gracefulness the countenance of his beloved;—

“ Then beneath the velvet chin,
Whose dimple shades a love within,
Mould her neck with grace descending,
In a heaven of beauty ending ;
While airy charms, above, below,
Sport and flutter on its snow.”

And how is this to be accomplished? According to the literal acceptation of the words? This is beyond the reach of painting. The artist might give to the chin its soft roundness, its lovely dimple, “*amoris digitulo impressum*,” (for this is evidently the meaning of the expression *ισω*) he might impart to the throat its exquisite tints,—but more he could not do. The elegant movements of that beautiful neck,

the ever changing play of the surrounding muscles by which the dimple is rendered more or less distinctly visible, the peculiar charm of gracefulness, surpassed the limits of his skill. The poet employed the utmost extent of those means by which his own art attempts to render beauty palpable to our senses, in order to induce the painter to aim at the strongest expression of which the sister art is capable. This is another illustration of the observation I have previously made, that the poet, even when speaking of works of art, is not bound to restrain his description within the limits of painting.

TWENTY-SECOND SECTION.

Judgment evinced by the ancient Artists in their Selection of Subjects from Homer.

ZEUXIS, we are told, painted a picture of Helen, and had the courage to place beneath it those celebrated lines of Homer, in which the enraptured elders manifest their admiration at the sight of her beauty. Never were painting and poetry brought into more complete rivalry with each other; the victory remained undecided, and both were judged worthy of the palm.

The skilful poet has conveyed to us, by its effect alone, an idea of that beauty which he felt he could not delineate by any description of its component parts; while the no less ingenious painter exhibited it by means of those component parts alone, feeling it to be unworthy of his art to have recourse to any other expedient.

His picture consisted of the simple figure of Helen, exposed to view unrobed; at least if we may conclude, as was in all probability the case, that the picture in question was the same which was at Crotona.*

Let us now compare with this the picture which Caylus has drawn for the modern artist from those lines of Homer:—"Helène," he says, "couverte d'un voile blanc, parait au milieu de plusieurs vieillards, du nombre desquels est Priam, distingué par les marques de la Royauté. L'Artiste doit s'attacher à faire sentir le triomphe de la beauté par l'avidité des regards, et par tous les témoignages d'admiration marqués sur le visage de ces hommes glacés par l'âge. La scène se passe sur le haut d'une des portes de la Ville. Je crois que le fond du Tableau établi sur le Ciel, sera plus heureux que sur les bâtimens de la Ville; il sera du moins plus hardi, mais l'un est aussi convenable que l'autre."

Let us imagine this picture executed by the

* Val. Maximus, lib. iii. cap. 7.

greatest master of our times, and placed by the side of the work of Zeuxis. Which of them would exhibit the real triumph of beauty?— This, in which I actually feel its power, or that, in which I am left to infer it from the grimaces of a groupe of excited old men? “*Turpe senilis amor;*” an amorous expression renders the most venerable countenance ridiculous, and an old man who betrays youthful passions is an object of aversion. This objection is not applicable to the Homeric elders; the emotion they feel is but a momentary burst of feeling which their prudence instantly checks; it serves only to do homage to Helen’s charms, and not to disgrace themselves. They at once acknowledge their feelings, but immediately afterwards express a hope that such dangerous charms may not be permitted to remain, to work mischief to themselves and their children:—

“Yet hence, O heaven! convey that fatal fact,
And from destruction save the Trojan race!”

Had they not come to this conclusion, they would have shown themselves to be the old dotards which the picture of Caylus makes them

appear. And what is the object towards which they are made to direct their amorous looks?— A figure muffled up in a veil! Is it thus that Helen is presented to us?—It is inconceivable to me how Caylus could ever think of leaving the veil upon her. Homer, it is true, distinctly gives her one,

“O'er her fair face a snowy veil she threw,”

but this is only to conceal her from the vulgar gaze while passing through the streets; and though he makes the old men testify their admiration even before the veil appears to have been removed, or thrown back, yet it must be remembered that this was not the first time they had seen her. Their acquaintance with her appearance was not therefore confined to the view they obtained of her at that particular moment, but they must frequently have felt before, what they for the first time acknowledged that they felt on that occasion. Nothing of all this is to be found in the picture. When we behold a parcel of old men thrown into ecstasies of admiration, we are naturally desirous to see

at the same time what it is which excites their rapture; and we should be exceedingly astonished to find that they are gazing with so much ardor at nothing more than a figure wrapped up in a veil. What is there of Helen in this object? All that we can perceive is her white veil, and something of her well-proportioned outline, so far as an outline can be made visible beneath the folds of drapery. But perhaps it was not the Count's intention that her face should be concealed, and he mentions the veil merely as a part of her attire? If this be the case, which however his words, "*Helène couverte d'un voile blanc,*" will scarcely permit us to suppose, then we shall, on the other hand, be equally surprised to find that, while he takes the greatest pains to instruct the artist in the proper expression for the faces of the old men, he says not one word on the subject of the beauty of Helen's countenance. He dwells not for an instant on the finished picture of attractive beauty which Homer draws when he describes her as timidly approaching, with the expression of conscious shame upon her features, and a repentant tear.

just trembling in her eye.—What! are our artists so intimately conversant with the highest perfection of beauty, that they do not even require to have their memories refreshed on the subject? Or is it that expression is superior to beauty? And is it in pictures as on the stage, where we must be content to look upon the plainest actress as an enchanting princess, if her lover do but testify a sufficiently ardent passion for her? Verily, the picture of Caylus is as much to be compared with that of Zeuxis as is pantomime with the sublimest poetry.

There can be no doubt that Homer was far more assiduously read by the ancients, than he now is. Nevertheless there are many subjects which the ancient artists might have taken from Homer, which we do not find mentioned as having been made the materials for pictures.* His allusions to particular corporeal beauties they seem alone to have diligently employed. These they painted, and they felt assured that these were the only subjects in which they could

* Fabricii Biblioth. Græc., lib. ii. cap. 6.

compete with the poet with any chance of success. Zeuxis painted Penelope as well as Helen; and the Diana of Apelles was that of Homer, surrounded by her nymphs; though I must here observe, by the way, that the passage in Pliny, in which this picture is mentioned, requires some correction.* To paint subjects from Homer merely on account of their affording a rich composition, striking contrasts, or skilful arrangements of chiaroscuro, appears not to have been the taste of the ancient artists; nor could it be, so long as art remained within the narrow limits of its highest destination. They animated their genius with the spirit of the poet; they filled their imaginations with his sublimest traits; the fire of his enthusiasm gave ardor to their own; they learned to see and feel as he did; and thus did their works become the representatives of those of Homer, not in the relation of a portrait to an original, but in that of a father to his son;—like, yet different. The resemblance frequently lies only in one

* See Note 53, end of volume.

single feature; the remaining parts have nothing in common beyond the relative harmony which they bear towards that feature, both in the poem and in the picture.

Moreover, since the poetic master-pieces of Homer were more ancient than any of the finest works of art; since Homer earlier regarded nature with a painter's eye than Phidias or Apelles; it cannot be matter of surprise that painters should have eagerly seized on many hints, of particular advantage to their art, which they found in Homer, long before they had time to deduce them from nature herself, whom they thus imitated through the medium of the poet. Thus Phidias acknowledged that those lines* of Homer in which he alludes to the sublime expression of Jupiter's countenance,—

“ He spoke, and awful bends his sable brows;
Shakes his ambrosial curls, and gives the nod,
The stamp of fate, and sanction of the god,”

served him as the model for his Olympian Jupiter, and that it was only through their assistance

* Iliad, A. v. 528.—Valerius Maximus, lib. iii. cap. 7.

that he was enabled to portray the divine majesty of the god, "propemodum ex ipso cælo petitum." To view this acknowledgement merely as a confession that the fancy of the artist was kindled by the sublime image of the poet, so as to become capable of forming an equally sublime representation, would, I think, be overlooking the most essential point, and would be attributing a degree of vagueness to that which contains a distinct and specific allusion. So far as I can judge, Phidias intended to acknowledge that he was first led by this passage of Homer to observe how much expression lay in the eye-brows, "quanta pars animi."* It is possible, too, that it may have induced him to bestow more labor on the hair, so as in some degree to express what Homer has termed "ambrosial locks." It is certain that the ancient artists previous to Phidias had but little skill in giving expression to the countenance, and were particularly careless in their execution of the hair. Myron was faulty in both particulars, as

* Plinius, lib. x. sect. 51.

Pliny observes;* and according to the same authority, Pythagoras Leontinus was the first artist who distinguished himself by his nicety in the execution of the hair. † What Phidias had learned from Homer, other artists learned from the works of Phidias.

I shall here adduce another example of this nature, with which I have always been greatly pleased, and I shall illustrate it by quoting Hogarth's remarks on the Apollo of Belvedere, ‡ "These two masterpieces of art," he says, "are seen together in the same apartment at Rome, where the Antinous fills the spectator with admiration only, whilst the Apollo strikes him with surprise, and, as travellers express themselves, with an appearance of something *more than human*, which they of course are always at a loss to describe; and this effect, they say, is the more astonishing as, upon examination, its disproportion is evident even to a common eye. One of the best sculptors we have in England, who lately went to see them,

* Lib. xxxiv. sect. 19.

† Ibidem.

‡ Analysis of Beauty.

confirmed to me what has been now said, particularly as to the legs and thighs being too long and too large for the upper parts. And Andrea Sacchi, one of the great Italian painters, seems to have been of the same opinion, or he would hardly have given his Apollo, crowning Pasquini the musician, the exact proportion of the Antinous (in a famous picture of his now in England) as otherwise it seems to be a direct copy from the Apollo. Although in very great works we often see an inferior part neglected, yet here it cannot be the case, because in a fine statue, just proportion is one of its essential beauties: therefore it stands to reason that these limbs must have been lengthened on purpose, otherwise it might easily have been avoided. So that if we examine the beauties of this figure thoroughly, we may reasonably conclude that what has been hitherto thought so unaccountably *excellent* in its general appearance, hath been owing to what hath seemed a *blemish* in a part of it."—All this is very evident, and I would add that Homer had, long before Phidias, perceived and shown that an appearance

of exaltation and dignity is produced, simply from this addition of size in the dimensions of the legs and thighs. When Antenor wishes to compare the form of Ulysses with that of Menelaus, he is made to say,— *

“Erect, the Spartan most engaged our view,
Ulysses, seated, greater reverence drew.”

Since Ulysses gained, as much as Menelaus lost, in sitting, it is easy to determine the relative proportion which the upper part of the body of each bore to their lower extremities. Ulysses had the advantage of height in the former, and Menelaus in the latter.

* *Iliad*, r. v. 210—11.

TWENTY-THIRD SECTION.

Deformity may be a fit Subject for the Poet, but not for the Painter.—Observations on the Deformity of Thersites.

A SINGLE discordant part may interrupt the harmonious operation of several in the production of beauty. But the object does not on that account become deformed. Deformity requires the existence of a number of discordant parts, which the eye must, moreover, be able to comprehend at a single glance, in order to awaken in us the opposite sensations to those which beauty excites.

It would seem, then, that deformity, in its essence, is not a fit subject for poetry; yet Homer has not only delineated the extreme of deformity in his Thersites, but he has even dwelt on its separate component parts. Why

was it allowable in him to adopt that practice with regard to deformity, which he so judiciously avoided with regard to beauty? Is not the effect of deformity as much impeded as that of beauty, by the consecutive enumeration of its separate elements?—There can be no doubt that it is; and in this very circumstance lies Homer's justification. It is precisely because deformity, in the poet's delineation, presents a less adverse appearance of corporeal imperfections, and, in regard to its effect, ceases, as it were, to be deformity, that it is available to the poet; so that what he cannot turn to use on its own account, he employs with advantage as an ingredient in producing and strengthening certain mixed sensations, with which he is obliged to provide us, in default of those which are more exclusively agreeable. These mixed sensations are the ridiculous and the terrific.

Homer makes Thersites deformed in order to render him ridiculous. It is not, however, his mere deformity which excites our ridicule; for deformity is merely an imperfection, and the ridiculous requires a contrast of perfections and

imperfections.* To this observation of Mendelssohn, I might add that the contrast must not be too sudden and cutting; that the opposed tints, to use the language of the painter, should be of such a kind as will readily blend into each other. The sage and honest *Æsop* does not appear ridiculous in our eyes because the deformity of *Thersites* is attributed to him, with the silly view of transferring to his person the *Γάλαρος* (ridiculous) of his instructive tales. A misshapen body and a beauteous soul are like oil and vinegar, which, let them be ever so much shaken together, will always remain distinct to the taste. They admit of no third state; the body excites aversion, and the soul pleasurable emotion; each affecting the mind in its own peculiar way. When, however, the misshapen body is at the same time feeble and sickly, so as to impede the operations of the soul, and to become the source of prejudices unfavorable to her—then aversion and pleasure glide one into the other, and the new product of this

* Mendelssohn's Philosophical Essays, part 2.

sensation is, not ridicule, but sympathy, and the object which otherwise could only have commanded our respect, now awakens our interest. The deformed and sickly Pope must have been far more interesting to his friends than the stout and handsome Wycherley. But while it is true that Thersites would not have been rendered ridiculous by the mere effect of his deformity, it is no less certain that he would never have been so without it. The deformity itself,—the accordance of this deformity with his character,—the contrast which both of them form with the idea which he entertains of his own importance,—the harmless effect of his mischievous prating, injurious to himself alone,—all are equally required to assist in working out this end. The last circumstance is the *ἐν φθασίῳ* which Aristotle* holds to be indispensable to the ridiculous; and in like manner Mandelssohn makes it a necessary condition that the contrast should neither be too important in its nature, nor interest us too highly. For, let it only be sup-

* De Poetica, cap. v.

posed that Thersites had suffered more severely for his malicious detraction of Agamemnon than he actually did,—that instead of receiving merely a few bruises, he had paid for his folly with his life,—let this be supposed, and he will cease at once to be an object of ridicule. For we cannot divest ourselves of the feeling that this hideous object is still a human being, whose destruction must always seem a greater evil than the endurance of his imperfections and vices. To feel convinced of the truth of this, it is only necessary to peruse the account of his end given by Quintus Calaber.* Achilles is mourning over the fate of Penthesilea, slain by his own hand ; the sight of the beautiful Amazon, weltering in her blood so bravely shed, awakened the esteem and sympathy of the hero,—and esteem and sympathy are love. The slanderous Thersites reproaches him with this love as criminal, and inveighs against that passion which leads even the boldest into the commission of follies,

* Paralipom., lib. i. v. 720—775.

————— ἢ τ' ἀφρονά φωνα εἶδης
 Καὶ κείνου σὺς ἰστυα. —————

The fury of Achilles is excited, and without replying a single word, he strikes the scoffer so rude a blow on the neck, as at once to deprive him of life. This is too barbarous! The passionate and sanguinary Achilles is here more hateful in my eyes than the malicious and snarling Thersites. The shout of joy raised by the Greeks on witnessing this action outrages my feelings. I range myself on the side of Diomede, who instantly draws his sword to avenge the murder of his kinsman; for I feel that the sufferer is a fellow-being, and is therefore akin to me.

Suppose, however, that Thersites had succeeded in exciting a mutiny among the troops; that the seditious multitude had really gone on board the ships, and treacherously abandoned their leaders to the tender mercies of a vindictive enemy; while, on the other hand, the vengeance of God had pursued the fleet, and the troops it bore, to their entire destruction;—in what light would the deformity of Thersites in that case strike us?—If harmless deformity

be calculated to excite ludicrous ideas, deformity which delights in mischief must, on the contrary, be an object of horror. I know not how to illustrate this better than by a reference to two admirable passages in Shakspeare. Edmund, natural son of the Earl of Gloucester, in *King Lear*, is no less a villain than Richard, Duke of Gloucester, who, by the most atrocious crimes, paved his way to the throne, which he ultimately possessed under the title of Richard III. How then does it happen that the former does not by any means excite the same horror and disgust as the latter? When Edmund exclaims— *

“ Thou, nature, art my goddess, to thy law
 My services are bound: wherefore should I
 Stand in the place of custom, and permit
 The curtesie of nations to deprive me,
 For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
 Lag of a brother? Why bastard? Wherefore base?
 When my dimensions are as well compact,
 My mind as gen'rous, and my shape as true
 As honest madam's issue?”—————

I hear, indeed, the voice of a demon, but I behold him under the form of an angel of light.

* *King Lear*, act i., sc. vi.

When, on the other hand, I listen to the Duke
of Gloucester, *

“ But I, that am not shap'd for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an am'rous looking-glass ;
I, that am rudely stamp't, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton, ambling nymph ;
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionably,
That dogs bark at me, as I halt by them :
Why I (in this weak piping time of peace)
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun,
And descant on mine own deformity.
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair, well-spoken days,
I am determin'd to prove a villain !”

I not only hear a demon, but I see one too,—
I see him under a form which the devil alone
could wear.

* Richard III., act i., sc. i.

TWENTY-FOURTH SECTION.

The disagreeable Effect of Deformity, though modified in Poetry by the successive Detail of its Parts, in Painting stands forth in all its Hideousness, and the Feeling of Disgust must predominate in the Mind of the Spectator.

SUCH is the use which the poet makes of deformity; let us now consider in what way the artist may be permitted to employ it.—There is no doubt that Painting, considered as a means of mere mechanical imitation, has the power to express deformity; but this power cannot with propriety be exercised in her character as one of the Fine Arts. Under the first of these heads, all visible objects are comprehended within her range; under the last, she confines her operations to those objects alone which awaken agreeable sensations.

But, it may be asked, do not even those which excite disagreeable sensations please in the imita-

tion?—Not all of them, as has already been shown by a sagacious critic,* with regard to those which excite disgust. “The representations,” he says, “of apprehension, of grief, of terror, of compassion, &c., can only excite unpleasant feelings in so far as we regard the suffering as real. Such feelings may therefore be resolved into agreeable sensations by the mere reflection that what we are contemplating is nothing more than an ingenious deception. The disagreeable sensation which accompanies the sight of anything disgusting arises, on the contrary, through the power of the imagination, from the mere mental representation; whether the object which excites it be regarded as real or not. What boots it to the outraged feelings though the artifice of the imitation be ever so much betrayed? The pain they feel arose, not from the supposition that the object of disgust was real, but simply from its representation, which is actually present.”

The same observations are applicable to de-

* Briefe die neueste Litteratur betreffend, part v., p. 107.

formity, which offends our sight, shocks our love of order and harmony, and excites our aversion, without reference to the real existence of the object wherein we perceive it. We would avoid the sight of Thersites whether in nature or in art; and if the picture be less disgusting than the reality, it is not because his deformity has ceased to exist in the imitation, but because we possess the power of abstracting our ideas from that deformity, and of occupying ourselves exclusively with the art of the painter. Yet even this enjoyment is constantly interrupted by the reflection which we cannot avoid making on the unworthy manner in which his art has been employed, and which will seldom fail to excite a feeling of contempt for the artist.

Aristotle * assigns another reason in explanation of the supposition that things which we regard with aversion in nature, yield gratification in even the most faithful copy; namely, the curiosity common to mankind. "We delight," he says, "in learning, through the

* De Poetica, chap. iv.

medium of the copy, the likeness of some unknown object, or in being able to recognise that with which we were previously acquainted." But this cannot be admitted as an argument in favor of deformity in art. The enjoyment arising from the gratification of our curiosity is momentary, and incidental to the object from which it proceeds, while, on the contrary, the dissatisfaction which accompanies the sight of deformity is permanent, and essential to the object which occasions it. How then can the former operate as a counterpoise to the latter? Impossible; and still less will the mental occupation which the contemplation of the resemblance creates, agreeable though it be, suffice to overcome the opposite effect produced by the aspect of deformity. The more closely I compare the deformed imitation with the deformed original, the more strongly will this disagreeable effect exhibit itself to me; so that the satisfaction arising out of the comparison soon disappears, and nothing remains but the sensation of aversion, produced by the twofold deformity. If we may judge from the examples given by Aristotle,

he even seems himself not to have included deformity among those displeasing effects which may, in the imitation, produce agreeable impressions. These examples are wild beasts, and dead bodies. The sight of wild beasts excites terror, even though they be not deformed; and it is this feeling of terror, not the deformity of the animals, which is resolved into an agreeable sensation by means of the imitation. Again, it is the acute sense of sympathy, or the fearful recollection of our own mortality, which renders the sight of a dead body painful in nature. But, in the imitation, that sympathy loses all its bitterness through our consciousness of the illusion; and the fearful thoughts may either be entirely diverted by the introduction of circumstances of a soothing nature, or may be so inseparably combined with such circumstances, that we may be led to view in the image of death something even of an attractive, rather than of a terrific nature.

Since, then, it appears that deformity cannot of itself with propriety afford a subject for painting, considered as one of the Fine Arts,

because the sentiments it awakens are not only disagreeable, but are of such a sort as no imitation can convert into pleasing sensations, it remains to be ascertained whether it may not be employed in painting as well as in poetry, as an ingredient for strengthening other sensations.

Let us then consider whether the painter may be permitted to employ deformity in order to produce images of ridicule or of terror.—This is a question which I would not venture to answer at once in the negative. It is undeniable that an inoffensive kind of deformity may produce an effect of ridicule even in painting; particularly when combined with an affectation of grace and dignity. It is equally certain that deformity of an offensive character may excite terror in painting as well as in nature; and that both these feelings, of ridicule and terror, which are in themselves mixed sentiments, acquire through the imitation an additional degree of intensity.

It must be observed, however, that painting does not, in this respect, stand in precisely the same situation with poetry. In poetry, as I

have already remarked, deformity almost entirely loses its offensive effect by the conversion of its co-existent parts into successive details; it ceases, as it were, to be deformity, and may therefore be the more intimately combined with other appearances, in order to produce a certain new effect. In painting, on the contrary, deformity stands forth in all the collective strength of its features, and its effect is but little weaker than in nature. It is for this reason that deformity, even when of an inoffensive character, cannot long remain merely ridiculous; the feeling of aversion obtains the ascendancy, and what at first seemed ludicrous, becomes in the end an object of disgust. It is the same with deformity of an offensive character; the first feeling of aversion gradually dies away, and gives place to that of disgust at the deformity itself.

This being the case, it must be acknowledged that the Comte de Caylus has acted with perfect propriety in omitting from the series of his Homeric pictures the episode of Thersites. But it does not therefore follow that we should

desire to see it expunged from Homer himself. I regret, however, to find that a learned writer, of otherwise very correct and delicate taste, is of this opinion ;* but I shall reserve what I have further to say on this point for another opportunity.

* Klotzii Epistolæ Homericæ, p. 33.

TWENTY-FIFTH SECTION.

Further Reflections on the Power which Poetry possesses of employing Images of Disgust and Deformity as Ingredients in the Production of mixed Sensations.

THE second point of difference observed by the critic before-mentioned, between the feeling of disgust and the other disagreeable affections of the soul, is founded on the aversion which deformity excites in our minds.

“ Other disagreeable emotions,” he says, * “ may frequently, even in nature, independently of any imitation, convey something soothing to the soul ; for they never excite unmodified disgust, but always mingle their bitterness with pleasure. Our fear is seldom deprived of every ray of hope ; terror gives animation to all our energies to enable us to escape the threatened

* Klotzii Epist., p. 103.

danger; rage is combined with the desire of vengeance, and melancholy with the agreeable image of former happiness, while compassion is inseparable from the tender emotions of benevolence and love. The soul is free to dwell, now on the pleasing, now on the adverse parts of an emotion, and to create for herself a combination of pleasure and pain, which has a greater charm than the most unmixed delight. Those who have paid the smallest attention to their own feelings, must frequently have observed this; how indeed could it otherwise happen that the wrathful man prefers the indulgence of his rage, and the sorrowful man that of his dejection, to all the joyful ideas with which one might attempt to assuage their emotions? It is quite otherwise with the feeling of disgust, and the sentiments allied thereto. In these the soul discerns no perceptible admixture of pleasure. The feeling of dissatisfaction obtains the ascendancy, and therefore it is impossible to conceive any case, whether in reality or in imitation, in which the soul would not recoil with abhorrence from such ideas."

These reflections are perfectly correct ; but since the critic himself acknowledges the existence of other sentiments allied to that of disgust, which are equally indicative of aversion alone, what can be more nearly allied to it than the perception of hideousness of form ? This also is in nature devoid of the smallest admixture of pleasure ; and since it is equally incapable of such admixture through the medium of imitation, it is therefore impossible to conceive any case in which the soul would not recoil with abhorrence from its idea.

In fact, this abhorrence, if I have examined my own feelings with sufficient attention, is altogether of the nature of disgust. The sentiment which accompanies the perception of deformity is disgust, though in a more modified degree. This opinion is opposed, it is true, to another observation of the same critic, which supposes only the obscurest senses, viz., those of taste, smell, and touch, to be exposed to the feeling of disgust. “ The two former,” he says, “ through an immoderate degree of sweetness, and the latter through an excess of softness in

the substances subjected to the operation of the nerves, which thus do not meet with the necessary degree of resistance. Such objects in these cases become likewise intolerable to the sight, but only through the association of ideas, and from our recollection of the aversion which they caused to the taste, the smell or the touch; for, properly speaking, there are no objects disgusting to the sight itself." Yet, if I am not mistaken, such objects may be distinctly pointed out. A hare lip, a flat nose with projecting nostrils, an entire deficiency of the eyebrows, are deformities which can offend neither the smell, taste nor touch. It is nevertheless certain that such defects excite a feeling which approaches much more nearly to disgust than that which we experience at the sight of other bodily deformities, a club foot or a hump back, for instance. It is true this feeling stops short of its complete effect, because the objects which excite it are presented to the eyesight, which perceives along with them, and even in them, a multitude of other realities, whose agreeable appearances so weaken and dim the aversion

excited by the others, as to prevent them from producing so decided an influence on the observer. These additional realities are, on the contrary, unobserved by the obscure senses, such as taste, smell and touch, which are exclusively excited by the individual object actually presented to them. In their case, consequently, the object under inspection operates alone and with its strength undivided, and cannot fail to produce a far more powerful sensation.

Moreover, objects of disgust are in a precisely similar condition in regard to imitation with those of deformity. Indeed, since the disagreeable effect is in them the stronger, they are still less calculated, individually considered, as subjects either for poetry or painting. It is only because they are equally susceptible of the softening of verbal expression that I ventured to assert that the poet might employ at least some traits of a disgusting character as an ingredient in the mixed sensations before alluded to, which he is enabled to strengthen so effectively by means of deformity.

The disgusting may either be employed to

enhance the ridiculous, or images of dignity and propriety placed in contrast with the disgusting, may be made to appear ridiculous. Numerous examples of this may be found in Aristophanes. I shall mention one which immediately occurs to me; that of the cat which interrupted Socrates in his astronomical lucubrations:— *

* * * * DISCIPLE.—Nor is this all;
 Another grand experiment was blasted
 By a curst cat.—STREPSIADES.—As how, good sir? Discuss.
 Disc.—One night as he was gazing at the moon,
 Curious and all intent upon her motions,
 A cat on the house-ridge was at her needs,
 And squirted in his face.—STREPS.—Besrew her for it!
 Yet I must laugh no less to think a cat
 Should so bespatter Socrates. * * * * *

If we suppose nothing disgusting in that which fell into the philosopher's face, the feeling of ridicule vanishes at once. The most comical traits of this kind are to be found in the Hottentot tale of Tquassouw and Knonmquaiha, in the "Connoisseur," a humorous English

* Nubes, v. 170—174.

weekly journal, attributed to Lord Chesterfield. It is well known that the Hottentots are extremely filthy, and that they are accustomed to look upon many things as beautiful, and ornamental, and even sacred, which in us excite only disgust and aversion. Imagine a creature with a flattened nose, and flaccid breasts, anointed all over with a lard composed of the fat of goats and soot, her locks besmeared with melted grease, and her arms and legs entwined with the shining entrails of a heifer,—imagine such a creature to be the object of an ardent, reverential and tender love,—listen to its expression in the noble language of earnestness and admiration, and who is there who can resist laughing at the image! *

The disgusting seems susceptible of a still more intimate combination with the frightful. What we term ghastly, is nothing more than the effect of this union. Longinus † is displeased with the image of Melancholy in Hesiod, “distilling humors from her nostrils,” ‡ but I suspect

* Connoisseur, vol. i. no. 21. † Περὶ ὑψους τμήμα η.

‡ Scut. Hercul., v. 266.

this displeasure is caused, not so much by its being a disgusting trait, as by the circumstance of its being simply disgusting, without any accompanying trait of the frightful; for he does not appear disposed to find any fault with “the long nails projecting far beyond the fingers,”—*μακροὶ δ' ὄνυχες χερῶσιν ὑπῆσαν.* Such nails as these are not much less disgusting than the nose alluded to, but they convey at the same time a frightful idea, for it is these with which she lacerates her cheeks till “the blood flows down upon the ground,”

————— *ix δι σαρμῶν*
Αἷμ' ἀπιλυθεῖ' ἰεῖζι. —————

An example of a similar kind may be seen in the description of the desolate cavern of the unhappy Philoctetes in Sophocles. There we find none of the comforts or the ordinary means of supporting life, except a litter of dry leaves, a rude wooden bowl, and a few materials for kindling a fire. These are all the riches of the deserted sufferer! But how does the poet complete this sad and fearful picture?—By adding a trait of the disgusting. “Ha!” exclaims

Neoptolemus, with a shudder, “here are some rags hanging up to dry, full of blood and matter !” *

*Ἴου, Ἴου καὶ τῶνα γ' ἄλλα θάλασσα
Ράκη, βαρῆς τοῦ νοσήλιος ἄλια.*

In like manner Hector, as described by Homer, dragged along the ground, with his countenance disfigured and his hair clotted with gore and dust, or, as Virgil † expresses it,—

Squallentem barbam et concretos sanguine crines,

is an object of disgust ; but on that very account the image presented is only the more fearful, and the more moving. Who can reflect on the punishment of Marsyas in Ovid without a feeling of disgust ? †

“ All bare and raw, one large continued wound,
With streams of blood his body bathed the ground,
The bluish veins their trembling pulse disclosed,
The stringy nerves lay naked and exposed ;
His entrails, too, distinctly each express'd,
With ev'ry shining fibre of his breast !”

Yet it will readily be allowed that the feeling

* Philoct., v. 31, 34. † Æneid., lib. ii. v. 277.

‡ Metamorph., vi. v. 397.

is here advantageously excited, as it renders that ghastly, which would otherwise be simply frightful; and the ghastly is not altogether disagreeable even in nature, provided our sympathies are interested in it. Much less will it be so in the imitation. I will not multiply examples; but this I must observe, that there is one species of fearful image which the poet can approach only by one way, and that is by the disgusting alone; I mean the fearful image of hunger. Even in common life it is not unusual in those who are suffering from extreme hunger to attempt to excite compassion by enumerating the unwholesome, and especially disgusting things, which at such a time would be grateful to the stomach. Since it is impossible for the sufferer to awaken in us any thing of the sensation of hunger itself, he betakes himself to another disagreeable feeling, which, in the case of severe hunger, we look upon as the less evil of the two. The object in exciting this feeling is to lead us to infer from the pain which it excites, how much greater must be that pain which would make us so readily disregard the

other. Ovid says of the mountain nymph whom Ceres had sent to Hunger,— *

“ This plague the nymph, not daring to draw near,
At distance hail'd, and greeted from afar ;
And though she told her charge without delay,
Though her arrival late, and short her stay,
She felt keen famine, or she seem'd to feel,
Invade her blood, and on her vitals steal.”

This, however, is but an unnatural exaggeration. The mere sight of a hungry person, or even of the personification of hunger itself, could not possess this contagious power; compassion, horror, or disgust may be excited, but not hunger. This feeling of horror has not been spared by Ovid in his picture of *Fames*; and in the hunger of Erisichthon the disgusting traits are the strongest, both with him and with Callimachus. † After Erisichthon had consumed everything, not sparing even the cow which his mother had reared as an offering to Vesta, Callimachus makes him fall to devouring horses and cats, and begging about the streets

* *Metamorph.*, lib. viii. v. 809.

† *Hymn. in Cererem.*, v. 111—116.

for the fragments of broken victuals and the dirty refuse of strange dishes :—

————— *ἰνι σφιδάσει παθήσει*
Ἄσπιζων ἀκόλουσ τι καὶ ἰαβέλα λυμάτα δαιτός.

Ovid, too, makes him at length fix his teeth into his own limbs, and seek to support his body at the expense of his own life's blood ;—

“ At last all means, as all provisions, failed,
 For the disease by remedies prevail'd ;
 His muscles with a furious bite he tore,
 Gorged his own tatter'd flesh, and gulp'd his gore.
 Wounds were his feast, his life to life a prey,
 Supporting nature by its own decay.”

In like manner the filthy appearance of the harpies, and the offensive odor emitted by them, are intended solely to add a greater degree of fearfulness to the hunger of Phineus, who despairingly complains that if by chance a fragment of his food escapes their rapacious claws, it is so polluted by their disgusting touch, that it is scarce possible to bear the stench which comes from it ;— *

Τυτθον δ' ἦν ἄρα δησασ' ἰδητύος ἄμμι λιπασσι,
Πινι τοδὶ μωδαλιον τι καὶ οὐ πλεητον μινος ἰδμης.

* Apollonius, Argonaut, lib. ii. v. 228.

Under this point of view I would fain justify the disgusting exhibition of the harpies in Virgil; but in this case, it is not a real and present hunger which they occasion, but an impending hunger which they prophesy; and besides, the whole prophecy resolves itself into a play of words. Dante, too, not only prepares us for the story of Ugolino's starvation by the very disgusting and ghastly position in which he places him with his former persecutor in hell; but the story itself is not without traits of the disgusting, which are particularly remarkable in that part where the sons offer themselves as food for their father. I shall give in the note a passage from one of Beaumont and Fletcher's dramas, which might indeed have stood in the place of all other examples, were I not compelled to acknowledge it as somewhat overdrawn.*

* The passage to which Lessing here alludes is in the 3d Act of the "Sea Voyage," in which a conversation occurs among the crew of a French pirate, wrecked on a desert island, regarding the sufferings they are enduring from want of provisions. Our author may well acknowledge this picture to be overdrawn; indeed so exaggerated does it appear to

I come now to the objects of disgust in painting. Were it even indisputable, that there are no objects, however disgusting to the sight, which, on their own account, would necessarily be renounced by painting as a Fine Art, yet as a general rule, it would be proper for the painter to avoid such objects, since the association of ideas renders their representations also disgusting. In a picture of the entombment of Christ, Pordenone has represented one of the bystanders holding his nose. This action is censured by Richardson * solely on account of the lapse of time not having been sufficient to produce corruption. In the raising of Lazarus, on the contrary, he considers it allowable in the painter to represent one of the bystanders in such a position, because the history expressly states that his body had become corrupted. To me this representation seems intolerable even here; for our disgust is excited, not merely by the

me, and so gratuitously disgusting throughout, that I have taken the liberty to leave it out altogether.—*Note of the Translator.*

* *Essay on Painting.*

actual presence of an offensive smell, but by the very idea of it. We avoid those things which we know to yield a disagreeable odor, even when our sense of smelling is destroyed by a cold. But the painter, we may be told, makes choice of the disgusting, not on its own account, but with the same view as the poet; namely, to strengthen the ridiculous and the fearful. Let him do so at his peril! The observations I have already made with regard to the hideous in this case, apply with increased force to the disgusting. It loses infinitely less of its effect in an imitation presented to the eye than in one directed to the ear, and is therefore less capable in the former case of an intimate union with the ingredients of the ridiculous and the fearful. As soon as the surprise is over, as soon as the first eager look is satisfied, it becomes instantly separated, and stands out distinct in all its crude deformity.

TWENTY-SIXTH SECTION.

Remarks on Winkelmann's History of Art among the Ancients.
—Reflections on the Author of the Statue of Laocoon.

WINKELMANN'S History of Ancient Art having at length appeared, I determined not to write another line without reading it; for to attempt to philosophize on art from mere general ideas, can only lead to the adoption of fancies of our own, which, sooner or later, may be found, to our confusion, contradicted by the authority of works of art. The ancients were well acquainted with the bonds of union existing between painting and poetry, and these they have been careful not to draw closer than the nature of each art will properly admit. What the ancient artists have done will therefore serve to indicate to me what artists in general should do; and when the torch of history is borne by one so capable

of directing its rays with judgment as the author just named, speculation may boldly follow in its light.

I dipped into the History of Art, as is usual with a voluminous work, before commencing seriously to peruse it. My great curiosity was to know the author's opinion of the Laocoon; not of the science of the work, on which he had already treated in another publication, but of the period at which it was executed. With whom, then, does he concur;—with those who believe Virgil to have had the groupe before his eyes, or those who suppose the artists to have followed the poet?

It has been a gratification to me to find that he is entirely silent with respect to any direct imitation. Where, indeed, is the absolute necessity for such imitation? It is by no means impossible that the resemblances which I have before noticed, between the poetic picture and the work of art, are accidental, and not intentional. Indeed, not only is there room to doubt that the one was the prototype of the other, but there is not even any necessity to suppose that

they must both have been drawn after one and the same model. At the same time, had Winkelmann alluded to an imitation at all, he must have declared himself of the opinion of those who regard the poet as the copyist; for he assumes that the Laocoon belongs to that period in which Grecian art had attained its highest degree of perfection, the period of Alexander the Great.

“The protecting destiny,” he says,* “which still watched over the Fine Arts, even at the moment of their destruction, has preserved for the admiration of the world, a work belonging to that period, which may serve to exemplify the truth of the reported magnificence of so many masterpieces now destroyed. Laocoon, with his two sons, executed by Agesander, Apollodorus, † and Athenodorus of Rhodes, is, in all probability of this period, though it may not be possible to speak decisively on this point, or to fix, as some have pretended to do, the Olympiad in which these sculptors flourished.”

* Geschichte der Kunst, p. 347.

† See Note 54, end of volume.

He adds the following observations in a note : —“ Pliny says not a word of the time at which Agesander and his co-operators lived ; but Maffei, in his *Description of Ancient Statues*, contends that these artists flourished in the eighty-eighth Olympiad, and in this opinion other writers, as Richardson for example, have followed him. But I suspect he has mistaken an Athenodorus, who was one of the pupils of Polycletus, for one of our sculptors ; and, because Polycletus flourished in the eighty-seventh Olympiad, he has placed his presumed pupil an Olympiad later. Maffei can have had no other grounds for his conjecture than these.”

There is no doubt of that ; but Winkelmann ought to have done more than merely notice this supposed ground of Maffei's idea. Is there anything necessarily inconsistent in this idea ? By no means ; for, even unsupported by any other reasons, it presents, at least, some appearance of probability, unless it can otherwise be shown that Athenodorus, the pupil of Polycletus, and Athenodorus, the assistant of Agesander and Polydorus, could not possibly have

been one and the same individual. It happens, however, that this can be proved, by our knowledge of the fact that they were natives of different places. The first Athenodorus was born, according to the express testimony of Pausanias,* at Clitor, in Arcadia; the second, according to Pliny, was born at Rhodes.

Winkelmann could, of course, have had no intention, in withholding this fact, to forbear from refuting the opinion of Maffei. His forbearance must rather be imputed to the importance he attaches to the arguments which, with his usual acknowledged skill, he draws from the style of art displayed in the work, and which rendered him careless as to whether Maffei's opinion possessed any degree of probability or not. He doubtless perceived in the Laocoon too many of those refinements † which were so peculiar to Lysippus, and with which he first enriched the art, to permit him to suppose that it could have been a work produced previous to his time.

* Αθηνοδωρος δι και Δαμιας—ὄντοι δι Αρκαδης εἰσιν ἐκ Κλυτορος.
Phoc., cap. ix. p. 819. Edit. Kuhn.

† Plinius, lib. xxxiv. section 19.

But, though it were proved that the Laocoon cannot be more ancient than the time of Lysippus, does it therefore follow that it belongs to a period closely bordering on his? Is it quite clear that it may not have been the production of much later times? If we even put out of the question those periods during which, up to the commencement of the Roman monarchy, the arts alternately flourished and sank to mediocrity, —why might not the Laocoon have been the happy fruit of the emulation which the lavish magnificence of the early emperors kindled among the artists? Why might not Agesander and his assistants have been the contemporaries of a Strongylion, an Arcesilaus, a Pasiteles, a Posidonius, and a Diogenes? Were not some of the works of these masters equally esteemed with the best which the arts had ever produced? And supposing that we now possessed the undoubted works of those artists, but that we were ignorant of the age of their authors, and had no means of guessing at it but from their style of execution,—by what divine inspiration is the critic to be preserved from attributing them to

that period which Winkelmann considers alone worthy of the Laocoon?

Pliny, it is true, does not expressly state at what period the sculptors of the Laocoon lived. But if I were to form an opinion from the general context of the passage, as to whether he intended that they should rather be reckoned among the ancient or the more modern artists, I must confess the probability seems to me in favor of the latter. Let us see what Pliny says. After speaking more particularly of the most ancient and greatest masters in sculpture, such as Praxiteles and Scopas, and afterwards, without any chronological order, mentioning the names of the others, especially those of whose works some specimens were then in existence at Rome, he proceeds as follows: *—"There are not many more of any celebrity, the reputation of some exquisite works being injured by the numbers of the artists engaged on them; for it is impossible to attribute the merit of such productions to one of the masters alone; while, on the

* Lib. xxxvi. sect. 4.

other hand, it would be very troublesome to refer to the names of them all. This is the case with the Laocoon, in the palace of the emperor Titus; a work which deserves to take precedence of all others, whether in sculpture or painting. The whole of this figure, with the two sons, and the wonderful convolutions of the serpents, was carved out of one stone, and executed in concert by those consummate artists, Agesander, Polydorus and Athenodorus, of Rhodes. In like manner the palaces of the Cæsars, on the Mount Palatine, were filled with most approved statues by Craterus and Pythodorus; Polydectes and Hermolaus; another Pythodorus and Artemon; and Aphrodisius the Trallian, who worked alone. Diogenes the Athenian decorated the Pantheon of Agrippa, and the Caryatides in the columns of his temple are held to be works of rare excellence in their kind; so also are the statues which are placed on the roof, though, on account of the height at which they are placed, they are less generally known."

Of all the artists named in this passage, Diogenes of Athens is the one whose era is

the most indisputably marked. He adorned, we are told, the Pantheon of Agrippa, and consequently he lived under Augustus. But if we examine the words of Pliny a little more closely, I am of opinion that we shall also find the periods of Craterus and Pythodorus, of Polydectes and Hermolaus, of the second Pythodorus and Artemon, as well as of Aphrodisius the Tralian, determined with equal certainty. He says of them:—"Palatinas domus Cæsarum replevere probatissimis signis." Now, I would ask, can this be intended simply to mean that the palaces of the emperors were filled with their admirable works,—that is to say, that the Emperors had collected them for the purpose of adorning their mansions at Rome? Assuredly not. The artists referred to must have executed their works expressly for these palaces, and must have lived at the same period with the Emperors themselves. That they belonged to comparatively late times, and that their labors were confined to Italy, may even be concluded from the circumstance of no mention being made of them in any other quarter. Had their works

been known in Greece in earlier times, Pausanias could not but have seen some of them, and have recorded them. The name of Pythodorus* occurs in his work, it is true, but Harduin commits a great error in supposing it to apply to the Pythodorus mentioned by Pliny. Pausanias designates the statue of Juno (the work of the former, which he saw at Coronea, in Bœotia) *ἀγαλμα ἀρχαῖον*, a term which he never applies except to the works of those masters who lived in the earliest and rudest periods of art, long before Phidias and Praxiteles. With works of this kind, the emperors would certainly not adorn their palaces. Still less weight is there in the other conjecture of Harduin, that Artemon is probably the painter of the same name, who is mentioned by Pliny in another place. Similarity of name affords but slender grounds of probability, and is far from being sufficient to warrant the distortion of the natural sense of a passage, the correctness of which is undoubted.

* Bœotia, cap. xxiv.

If, then, it may be considered as certain that Craterus and Pythodorus, Polydectes and Hermolaus, and the others, lived in the time of the Emperors whose palaces they filled with their admirable works, it appears to me that we must necessarily assign the same period to those artists, from whom Pliny passes with the connecting term, *similiter*, to the mention of the former. Now, those Artists were the sculptors of the Laocoon; and, if we reflect for a moment, it will be difficult to persuade ourselves that, had Agesander, Polydorus and Athenodorus, been such early masters as Winkelmann considers them, a writer with whom precision of expression is a matter of no small importance, should take it into his head to skip all of a sudden from them to the most recent masters, and that, too, with an expression denoting their similarity of circumstances.

But it may be said that this expression, *similiter*, does not apply to any affinity between these different artists in respect to the period at which they lived, but to another circumstance in which, though living at different times, they may have

resembled each other. Pliny, for instance, is speaking of such artists as laboured conjointly, and who, on account of this community of labor, were less known than they deserved to be. For, while on the one hand, no one of them could claim the honor of having produced the entire work, and, on the other, it might be tedious to mention the names of all who had a share in it, (*quoniam nec unus occupat gloriam, nec plures pariter nuncupari possunt,*) the whole of them were very likely to be neglected. It is in suffering this disadvantage that it may be said Pliny has intended to draw the parallel between the masters of the Laocoon, and the various other artists whom the Emperors employed in adorning their palaces.

I have no inclination to dispute this point. But still it is extremely probable that Pliny refers only to some modern artists, who worked in company. Else, why does he mention the masters of the Laocoon alone? Why not others, such as Onatas and Calliteles; Timocles and Timarchides; or the sons of the latter, who conjointly executed a Jupiter which was to be

seen in Rome.* Winkelmann even says, that a long catalogue might be drawn up of such ancient works as were the production of more than a single hand. † Would Pliny have thought of no one besides Agesander, Polydorus and Athenodorus, if he had not expressly intended to confine his observations to the latest times ?

If indeed that conjecture may be allowed to be the most probable, which gets rid of the most numerous and the greatest difficulties, it would be that the sculptors of the Laocoon flourished under the first emperors, though certainly in a very high rank. For, had they executed that work at the period in which Winkelmann places them ; had the Laocoon itself existed of old in Greece, the profound silence observed by the Greeks regarding so splendid a work (*opere omnibus et picturæ et statuariæ artis præponendo*) would be a very extraordinary circumstance. It would be singular indeed if masters of such eminence had executed nothing else, or that, throughout the whole of Greece, Pausanias

* Plinius, lib. xxxvi. sect. 4.

† Geschichte d. k., p. ii. p. 331.

should have seen as little of any of their other works as he did of the Laocoon. In Rome, on the contrary, the greatest masterpiece might remain long in obscurity; and were the Laocoon even executed so early as the time of Augustus, it ought not to excite surprise that Pliny should have been both the first and the last to mention it, when we reflect on what he says of a Venus by Scopas, which stood in a temple of Mars at Rome; * “ In the same building is seen a naked Venus, superior to that of Praxiteles, and calculated to ennoble any other place than Rome, where the magnificence of other works causes it to be overlooked, and the great throng of business and public duties draws people off from the contemplation of such things, which can only be properly enjoyed at leisure and in silence.”

What I have hitherto said will be very much to the taste of those who are inclined to view the groupe of the Laocoon as an imitation of the Virgilian picture. Another idea occurs to

* Plinius, lib. xxxvi.

me, of which they would be equally disposed to approve. It might perhaps be conjectured that it was Asinius Pollio who ordered the Laocoon of Virgil to be executed by Greek artists. Pollio was a particular friend of the poet, whom he survived, and appears even to have written a work expressly on the subject of the *Æneid*; for where, except in such a work, could the isolated observations so naturally have found a place which Servius quotes from him? * Pollio was an amateur and a critic, and not only possessed a collection of the noblest works of the ancients, but also employed the artists of his own times to execute works for him. The spirited character of the groupe of Laocoon would be quite suited to the taste which he displayed in his choice of objects; †—“*ut fuit acris vehementiæ, sic quoque spectari monumenta sua voluit.*” But as the cabinet of Pollio,

* Ad vers. 7, lib. ii. *Æneid.*, and particularly ad vers. 183, lib. xi. It might not therefore be improper to add to the catalogue of the lost writings of this author a work of this kind.

† Plinius, lib. xxxvi., sect. 4.

in the time of Pliny, when the Laocoon stood in the palace of Titus, seems still to have existed entire in its original locality, the probability of this conjecture is diminished. Yet, why might not Titus himself have done what is here ascribed to Pollio?

TWENTY-SEVENTH SECTION.

Criticism on Winkelmann's Remarks on a Passage of Pliny relative to the Inscriptions on ancient Works of Art.

I AM confirmed in my opinion that the masters of the Laocoon flourished under the first emperors, or at least that they could not have been by any means of such ancient date as Winkelmann makes them, by a fact which he has himself been the first to relate. It is as follows :— *

“ At Nettuno, formerly Antium, the Cardinal Alessandro Albani discovered, in the year 1717, within a large vaulted chamber which lay sunk beneath the sea, a pedestal of a dark greyish marble, now called Bigio, on which a figure had formerly been fixed. On this pedestal is engraved the following inscription :—

* *Gesch. d. k.*, pa. ii., p. 347.

ΑΘΑΝΟΔΩΡΟΣ ΑΓΓΕΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΡΟΔΙΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΗΣΕ.

—Athanodorus, of Rhodes, the son of Agesander, made it.—We learn from this inscription that father and son worked together on the Laocoon, and probably Apollodorus (Polydorus) was likewise a son of Agesander; for this Athanodorus can be no other than the individual whom Pliny mentions. This inscription further shows that, notwithstanding what Pliny says, there have been found more than three works of art, on which the sculptors have inscribed the word ‘made’ in the perfect tense, namely, *ἔσκησεν*, *fecit*. That author informs us that modesty induced other artists to employ the less definite expression *ἔσκηον*, ‘was making.’”

There will be no difficulty in allowing the correctness of Winkelmann’s supposition, that the Athanodorus in this inscription could be no other than the Athenodorus whom Pliny mentions as one of the sculptors of the Laocoon. They are both precisely the same name, for the Rhodians made use of the Doric dialect. But I must make some remarks on the observations which follow. The first, that Athenodorus

was a son of Agesander, may pass. It is very probable, though not certain; for it is known that some of the ancient artists preferred designating themselves after their instructor, instead of their father. What Pliny says of the brothers, Apollonius and Tauriscus, will not well bear any other interpretation. *—We are next told that this inscription at once refutes Pliny's assertion, that not more than three works of art have been found, which have been inscribed by the sculptors in the perfect tense (*εποιησε*, instead of *εποιε*). But why should we first learn from this what we might have known long ago from many others? Had we not already found traced on the statue of Germanicus the words *Κλειομωτης εποιησε*? On the apotheosis (as it is called) of Homer, *Αρχελαος εποιησε*? On the well known vase at Gaeta, *Σαλπικων εποιησε*? † &c., &c.

In reply to this it may be said that it only serves to make out a stronger case against

* Lib. xxxvi. sect. 4.

† See the Catalogue of Inscriptions on ancient Works of Art, by Mar. Gudius (ad Phædri fab. 5, lib. i.)—Consult also the emendation of the same by Gronov.

Pliny, since his statement is so much the more frequently contradicted. I am not, however, so certain of that; for, what if Winkelmann puts words into Pliny's mouth which that author never intended to use?—What if the examples in question controvert, not the assertion of Pliny, but Winkelmann's amplification of it? But this is in reality the case, as I shall show by a reference to the passage itself. In his dedication to Titus, Pliny speaks of his own work with the modesty of one who knows better than any body else how far it falls short of perfection, and he alludes to a remarkable example of modesty on the part of the Greeks, which, after dwelling a little on the pompous and high sounding titles of some of their books (inscriptions, *propter quas vadimonium deseri possit*), he thus proceeds to notice: * “ And lest I should seem wholly to disparage the Greeks, I would have it observed that I desire to imitate those founders of the imitative arts whom you will find mentioned in this book, who to their

* Lib. i., p. 5. Edit. Hard.

finished works,—such works as we could never tire of looking at—appended a label inscribed—‘Apelles’ or ‘Polyclletus was making this,’ as if they had still remained in an unfinished state ; so that whatever variety of criticisms might be made upon his work, the artist could always fall back upon that as an excuse, and plead his intention of amending the faults, if he should be spared. It is then a pleasing mark of modesty in those men thus to inscribe their works, making it appear as if they were mere sketches, which they were prevented by death from completing. I think there are no more than three works which are known to have been inscribed in the perfect tense, as such-a-one ‘made this,’ which I shall mention in their proper place. We infer from this that the artist was well satisfied with the perfection of his work, and all such specimens of art are in consequence greatly coveted.”—Now, I must beg the reader to observe particularly the words, “Founders of the imitative arts,” (*pingendi fingendique conditoribus*). Pliny does not say that it was the general custom for artists to

acknowledge their works in the imperfect tense; he does not say that it was a practice observed by all artists, and at all periods. He says expressly that it was only the earliest old masters, those founders of the imitative arts, Apelles, Polycletus, and their contemporaries, who exhibited this judicious modesty. In naming these alone, he leaves it to be tacitly, though clearly enough understood, that their successors, particularly in later times, displayed a greater degree of confidence in themselves.

Be this, however, as it may, there is no difficulty in reconciling the discovered inscription bearing the name of one of the three sculptors of the Laocoon with the assertion of Pliny, that there were only about three works in existence,—meaning of those of more ancient date, of the period of Apelles, Polycletus, Nicias, and Lysippus,—in the inscriptions of which the sculptors have employed the perfect tense. But then Winkelmann cannot be correct in making Athenodorus and his assistants contemporaries of Apelles and Lysippus. On the contrary, if it be true that among the works of the more

ancient artists, there are only about three, in the inscriptions of which the preterite tense has been employed;—if it be true that Pliny has even distinguished these three works by name, * then we must come to the conclusion that Athenodorus, who did not execute any one of these three works, and who yet employed the perfect tense in his inscriptions, cannot have been of the number of those ancient sculptors. He cannot have been a contemporary of Apelles and Lysippus, but must be considered as belonging to a later period.

In short, I look upon it as certain that all artists who have employed the word *ερωμας*, flourished long after the time of Alexander the Great, and shortly before, or even under, the emperors. Of Cleomenes, this is undeniable; of Archelaus it is highly probable; and of Salpion it is at least impossible to show the contrary. The same thing may be said of the others, not excepting Athenodorus.

I am now content to leave this question to

* See Note 55, end of volume.

the judgment of Winkelmann himself. But I must first protest against adopting the inverse proposition. If it were quite certain that all those artists who employed the phrase *sempiternum* belonged to the later periods, it would by no means follow that all who wrote *sempiternum* belonged to the more ancient. Even among the more modern sculptors, some may really have possessed that feeling of modesty so becoming in a great man, while others, who wanted it, may have affected to possess it.

TWENTY-EIGHTH SECTION.

Conjecture regarding the Subject of the Statue commonly known by the Name of the Gladiator.

NEXT to the Laocoon, I was most curious to know what Winkelmann would say of the figure known by the name of the Gladiator. I flatter myself I have made a discovery regarding this statue, and I was afraid that Winkelmann might have anticipated me in it. But I find nothing of the sort in his work; and if anything could make me doubtful of its correctness, it would be the circumstance of my being disappointed in my fear.

“Some persons,” says Winkelmann, * “look upon this statue as a Discobolus, that is, a man throwing the disk, or circular metal plate, and

* *Gesch. d. k.*, pa. ii., p. 394.

this was the opinion of the celebrated Stosch, as expressed in a letter to myself, but without due consideration of the position necessary for such an action. For, when a man is about to throw anything, he finds it necessary to draw his body back, and at the moment of throwing, the whole force falls on the nearest leg, while the left remains inactive; here, however, it is quite the contrary. The whole figure is thrown forward, and rests on the left leg, while the right limb is stretched backwards to its fullest extent.* The right arm is modern, and the hand has been represented grasping part of a lance; on the left arm is seen the strap of the

* It is singular enough that so gross a mistake as is contained in the above passage should have been made by Winkelmann, and it is almost equally surprising that it should have escaped the observation of Lessing. The Gladiator does not rest on the left leg, but on the right, while it is the left which is stretched backwards to its fullest extent. Notwithstanding the intended antithesis, I thought at first the error might be owing to the transcriber, but on reference to the large Italian edition of the "History of Art"—not having a copy of the original at hand—I found the blunder corrected in a note by the translator, which makes it evident that it is attributable to Winkelmann himself.—*Note of the Translator.*

buckler. When it is considered that the head and eyes are turned upwards, and that the figure appears to be warding off with the shield something which is coming from above, this statue might with more propriety be regarded as the representation of some warrior who had particularly distinguished himself in some perilous situation. It is probable that the honor of a statue was never among the Greeks awarded to the public Gladiators; and, moreover, this work seems to be of more ancient date than that of the introduction of Gladiators among the Greeks."

Nothing can be more correct than these observations. This statue has just as little reason to be called a Gladiator as a Discobolus; it is in fact the representation of a warrior in the attitude of defence. But how does it happen that Winkelmann has stopped short in the pursuit of an idea so judiciously formed? How is it that the name of that warrior did not occur to him, who in this very position saved the army from a total rout, and to whose honor his grateful countrymen erected a statue?—In one

word, the statue is that of Chabrias, as is proved by the following passage in the life of that hero, by Cornelius Nepos : *—“ He is also accounted one of the most consummate generals, and he performed many memorable exploits. But what he is most celebrated for is the stratagem fallen upon by him in the battle which took place at Thebes, when he came to the assistance of the Bœotians. On that occasion, the great Agesilaus seeing him deserted by the mercenary troops, felt confident of victory, when Chabrias commanded the remaining phalanx to stand, and pressing his knee firmly against his shield, and advancing his spear, he taught them how to receive the charge of the enemy. Agesilaus perceiving this new movement, had not the courage to advance, and those of his troops who had already rushed forward, were recalled by the trumpet. This event was celebrated throughout Greece to such a degree, that the statue which the Athenians placed in honor of Chabrias in the public forum, was, at his own

* Cap. i.

request, represented in that very attitude. This circumstance gave rise to the custom, ever since adopted by the Athletæ, and other such professional persons, of choosing for their statues those positions in which they had appeared at the moment of victory."

The reader may perhaps hesitate to concur at once in my idea, but I think I can very soon convince him of its correctness. The position of Chabrias does not appear to be identically the same with that in which we behold the Borghese statue. The projected spear is common to both, but the phrase, *obnixo genu scuto*, is explained by the commentators by *obnixo in scutum, obfirmato genu ad scutum*; that is, that Chabrias showed his soldiers how they should plant their knees firmly against their shields, and thus, under cover of the latter, await the enemy. The statue, on the contrary, holds the shield elevated above the head. But, what if the commentators are mistaken? What if the words, *obnixo genu scuto*, should not be taken together, but *obnixo genu* be read alone, and *scuto* either alone also, or in connexion with

the immediately succeeding words, *projectaque hastá?* Make but a single comma, and the similitude is as complete as possible. The statue is that of a soldier who, *obnixó genu, scuto projectaque hasta impetum hostis excipit*; it represents what Chabrias did, and is in fact the statue of Chabrias. That the comma is really wanting, is shown by the conjunction *que* added to *projecta*. This particle would be superfluous had *obnixó genu scuto* been intended to be read together, and it is, in fact, therefore omitted in some editions. *

With the high antiquity which would thus belong to this statue, the form of the characters in the inscription engraved on it by the sculptor completely coincides. Winkelmann himself has inferred from this inscription that it is the most

* I have translated the passage of Nepos, in the preceding pages, according to the common reading. Were the alteration made which Lessing here very ingeniously suggests, the effect would be to convert the words "pressing his knee firmly against his shield," &c., into "pressing his knee firmly forward, he taught them how to receive the charge of the enemy on the shield and projected lance."—*Note of the Translator.*

ancient of the statues now in Rome, to which the sculptor has affixed his name. I would leave it to his acute observation to determine whether he can observe anything in the style of art which could militate against my opinion. Should he honor it with his approval, I may flatter myself that I have pointed out a better example of the felicity with which the classic writers and the ancient works of art reciprocally throw light upon each other, than is to be found in the whole of the ponderous folio of Spence.

TWENTY-NINTH SECTION.

Remarks on some slight Mistakes committed by Winkelmann
in his History of Art.

THE extensive reading and accurate knowledge of art which Winkelmann has brought to the execution of his work, have enabled him to proceed with the noble confidence of the ancient artists, who directed all their energies towards the most important points, and either passed over the subordinate parts with an almost studied negligence, or left them entirely to other hands.

It is no small praise to be censured only for such faults as any one might easily have avoided. They are apparent on the most superficial perusal; and if they are alluded to, it will only be for the purpose of reminding those petulant critics who fancy that nobody has eyes but

themselves, that they do not deserve to be noticed at all.

In his essays on the imitation of the Grecian works of art, Winkelmann had before been occasionally misled by Junius, a writer who is very apt to mislead. His whole work is a Cento, and as he always aims at expressing himself in the words of the ancients, he not unfrequently applies passages extracted from them to the subject of painting, which, where they originally stood, had nothing to do with it. When, for example, Winkelmann would tell us that the mere imitation of nature can never give rise to excellence in art, any more than in poetry, and that the poet as well as the painter should rather choose the impossible, so long as it presents an air of probability, than that which is simply possible, he adds, "this is at the same time not inconsistent with that possibility and truth which Longinus requires from a painter in opposition to the incredible of the poet." But this addition would have been better left alone; for it exhibits the two greatest critics in a state of supposed opposition, for which there

is no occasion. It is not true that Longinus ever thus expressed himself. He says something like it of eloquence and poetry, but not of poetry and painting. "You cannot but be aware," says he, writing to Terentianus, * that the imagery of the orator aims at something very different from that of the poet; nor that its end in poetry is to astonish, and in oratory to convince."—And again, "The examples of imagery among the poets present, as I have already said, an excess of the fabulous, which always oversteps the bounds of credibility; while those of orators are always the best when they are fullest of action, and nearest to truth."

It is Junius who substitutes painting for eloquence in this passage; and it was in Junius, and not in Longinus, that Winkelmann read, † "præsertim cum poeticæ phantasæ finis sit *εμπληξίς*, pictoriæ verò *ιναργυία*. Και τα μεν παρα τοις Ποηταις, ut loquitur idem Longinus, &c."—Bravo, Junius! These are the words of Longinus, but not his meaning! ‡

* Πιε, Ἐψοος, sect. 15. † De Pictura Vet., lib. i., cap. 4.

‡ Lessing is even too lenient towards Junius on this occa-

Winkelmann must have been led into the following observation * in a similar manner: "All those actions and positions of the Greek figures which were not designed with a character of discretion, but were too impetuous and sudden, were considered as falling into an error which the ancient artists called Parenthyrsus." The ancient artists? That could only be shown from Junius. Parenthyrsus was a term of rhetoric, and was probably even peculiar to Theodorus, as the passage in Longinus seems to imply: † "Analogous to this is a third kind of vice, which occurs in pathetic compositions, and which Theodorus terms Parenthyrsus; it consists of a vain and inopportune expression of passion, where none is required, or an immoderate expression where moderate pathos would

sion. The latter not only misrepresents the sense of Longinus, but actually misquotes his words. It will be seen by reference to the original, that Junius converts the *εἰς δὲ μετακλήσεως φαντασίας* of Longinus, into *εἰς δὲ ζωγραφικῆς*, &c.—A more impudent perversion of a text to suit the purpose of a writer never was committed!—*Note of the Translator.*

* On the Imitation of the Grecian Works, &c.

† Περὶ Ἱψους, sect. 3.

be proper." I am even doubtful whether this expression could ever be applicable to painting. What is called pathos in eloquence and poetry may be carried to its highest pitch without becoming Parenthyrsus, which is, in fact, the highest degree of pathos, introduced at the wrong place. In painting, on the contrary, the highest degree of pathos would at all times be Parenthyrsus, even when it might seem justifiable by the circumstances in which the individual who exhibits it is placed.

It is probable that several other inaccuracies in the History of Art have, in like manner, arisen from Winkelmann's having contented himself with the authority of Junius, instead of taking the trouble to consult the sources from which the information of the latter is derived. For instance, when he endeavors to show that whatever was pre-eminent in any department of art or workmanship, was particularly valued by the Greeks, and that the best workman in even the least important branch might expect to attain immortal fame, he introduces the following observation: " We are acquainted with the name of

a manufacturer of very exact scales, or scale-plates ; he was called Parthenius." * Winkelmann can only have read the words of Juvenal to which he appeals, "lances Parthenio factas," in the catalogue of Junius. For, had he taken the trouble to examine Juvenal himself, he could not have been misled by the double meaning of the word *lanæ*, but must have perceived immediately from the context that the poet alludes, not to scales, or scale plates, but to ordinary table plates and dishes. Juvenal is speaking of his friend Catullus, who, during a violent sea-storm, directed his most valuable effects to be thrown into the sea, in order to lighten the ship, and preserve his life. After mentioning some of the articles, he thus proceeds with the rest :—

" Ille nec argentum dubitabat mittere, lances
Parthenio factas, urnæ cratera capacem
Et dignum sitiēte Pholo, vel conjuge Fuscī,
Adde et bascaudas et mille escaria, multum
Celata, biberet quo callidus emptor Olynthi."

" Nor did my friend, with unavailing care,
The curious labors of the sculptor spare ;

* Geschichte der Kunst, pa. i., p. 136.

The dish in silver wrought, the full-sized bowl,
 Fit for the wife of Phœbus, thirsty soul!
 Fit for a centaur at one draught to drain,—
 These my Catullus cast into the main,
 With plates and British baskets, and a store
 Of precious cups, high-chas'd in golden ore,
 Cups that adorn'd the crafty Philip's state,
 And bought his entrance at the Olythian gate."

What other meaning can be attached to the word *lances*, standing here among *cups* and *bowls*, than that of *plates* or *dishes*? And what else can be the meaning of Juvenal's words, but that Catullus directed the whole of his silver dinner utensils, among which were some embossed dishes by Parthenius, to be thrown into the sea. "Parthenius," says the old scholiast, "cœlatoris nomen." But Grangæus must have written at random when he added to this name the words, "sculptor de quo Plinius," for Pliny mentions no such artist.

"Even the name," continues Winkelmann, "of the saddler, as we should call him, who made the leathern shield of Ajax, is preserved." This also he cannot have taken from the source to which he refers his reader, namely, from the

Life of Homer, by Herodotus. In that work we find quoted, it is true, the lines from the Iliad, in which the poet gives to this worker in leather the name of Tychius; but it is at the same time expressly mentioned that a certain leather-worker of Homer's acquaintance was so called, and that it was in token of friendship and gratitude towards that individual, that Homer inserted the name; *—"He had also a friendship for Tychius, the leather-worker, whom he visited at his factory at the 'New Wall,' and was hospitably entertained by him. He has introduced his name into the Iliad in the following lines:—

“ Stern Telamon behind his ample shield,
 As from a brazen tower, o'erlook'd the field.
 Huge was its orb, with seven thick folds o'ercastr,
 Of tough bull hides; of solid brass the last.
 The work of Tychius, who in Hylé dwell'd,
 And all in arts of armory excell'd.”

Now this is precisely the contrary of what Winkelmann would convey. The real fact is,

* Herodotus de Vita Homeri.

that the name of the saddler who had made the shield of Ajax was so entirely forgotten, even in Homer's time, that the poet could take the liberty to substitute another for it at his option.

Several other trifling errors occur in the course of the work, but they are either mere faults of memory, or relate to subjects which are adduced only by way of collateral illustration. For instance, it was Hercules, and not Bacchus, of whom Parrhasius boasted that he appeared to him in the form in which he painted him. *—Tauriscus was not a native of Rhodes, but of Tralles in Lydia. †—The Antigone was not the first tragedy of Sophocles. ‡

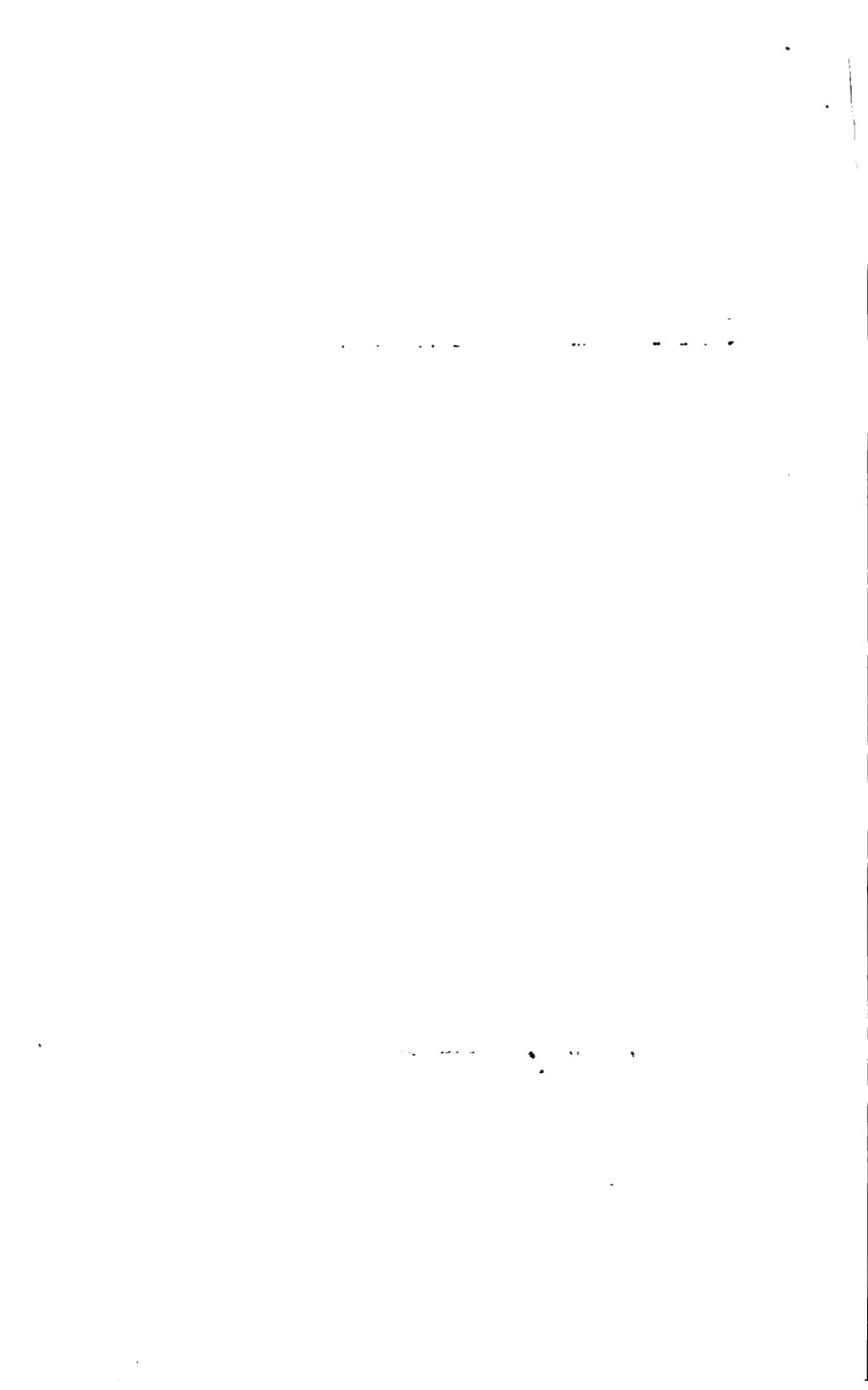
But I shall proceed no further with this list of trifling errors. In the observations I have already made, nobody, I trust, will suppose that I have been influenced by any spirit of cen-

* Geschichte der Kunst, pa. i. p. 176. Plin., lib. xxxv. section xxxvi. Athenæus, lib. xii. p. 543.

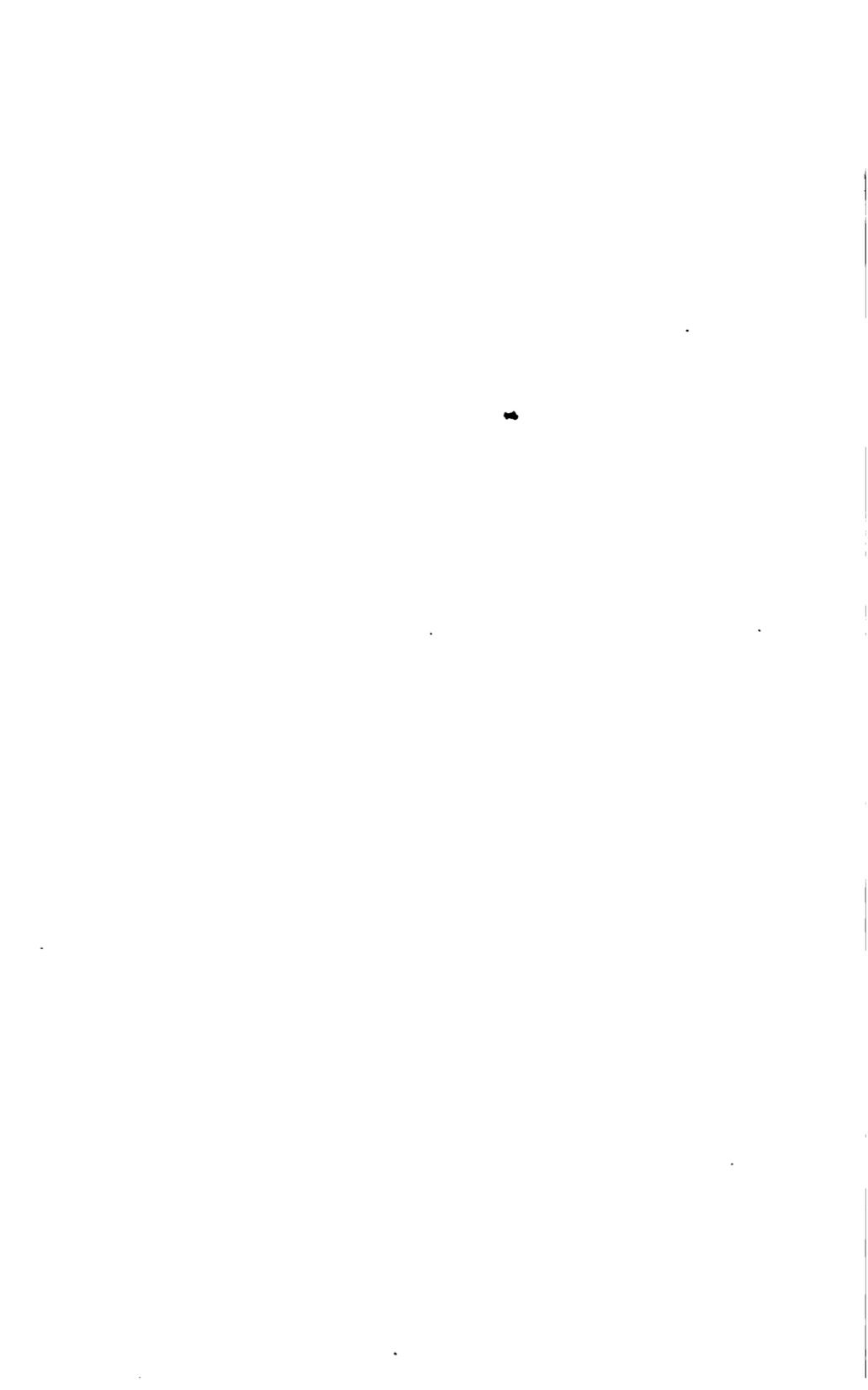
† Geschichte der Kunst, pa. ii. p. 353. Plin., lib. xxxvi. sect. iv. p. 729, l. 17.

‡ See Note 57, end of volume.

seriousness. Those who are aware of the high respect I entertain for M. Winkelmann will attribute my criticisms to very different motives.



NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.



NOTES, &c.

NOTE 1.

ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΣ. (Antholog. lib. ii. cap. 4.) Harduin, in his Commentary on Pliny, (lib. xxxv. sect. 36,) attributes this epigram to a poet of the name of Piso. Among all the Greek epigrammatists, however, there is not one of that name.

NOTE 2.

On this account Aristotle desires that no young people should be permitted to see the works of that painter, in order, as far as possible, to preserve their imaginations from all ideas of deformity. (Polit. lib. viii. cap. 5.) Instead of Pausan, M. Boden would have us read Pausanias in this passage, because the latter is known to have painted immodest pictures, (de Umbra Poetica, comment. i.) Had he taken the trouble to consult the passage in the Art of Poetry, (cap. ii.) he would have altered his opinion. Some

commentators (for example, Kühn on Ælian, Var. Hist. lib. iv. cap. 3.) explain the distinction which Aristotle there draws between Polygnotus, Dionysius and Pauson, by supposing that Polygnotus painted gods and heroes ; Dionysius men ; and Pauson beasts. The fact is, they all painted human figures ; and because Pauson once painted a horse, we have no right to set him down, as Boden does, for an animal painter. The order in which they are named bespeaks the degree of beauty which they imparted to their human figures ; and the reason why Dionysius is said to have painted only men, and received the distinguishing cognomen of Anthropographus, was simply that he copied nature too slavishly, and was unable to attain that ideal standard, beneath which to represent gods and heroes was an offence against religion.

NOTE 3.

It is a mistake to suppose that the serpent is a symbol only of a god of medicine. Justinus Martyr expressly says (Apolog. ii. p. 55. Edit. Sylburg.) *κατα παντι τον θεμιζομενον παρ' ἡμῶν θεον, ἰφισ συμβολον μαγα και μυστηριον αναγραφειναι* ; and there would be no difficulty in referring to numerous monuments in which a serpent is the accompaniment of divinities, who have not the smallest relation to the art of medicine.

NOTE 4.

Among all the works of art mentioned by Pliny, Pausanias, and others, and among all the ancient statues, bas-reliefs, and paintings still in existence, there is not a single instance of the personification of a Fury. I must make an exception in favor of medals, whose images, however, belong less truly to art than to hieroglyphic language. Spence would therefore have done better to have borrowed his furies, if such he must have, from medals, (Seguini Numism. p. 178. Spanhem. de Præst. Numism., dissert. xiii. p. 639,) instead of exercising his ingenuity to discover them in a work where they certainly never existed. The following are his words (Polymet. dial. xvi. p. 272)—“ Though furies are very uncommon in the works of ancient artists, yet there is one subject in which they are generally introduced by them. What I mean is the death of Meleager, in the relievos of which they are often represented as encouraging, or urging Althæa to burn the fatal brand, on which the life of her son depended. Even a woman's resentment, you see, could not go so far without a little help of the devil. In a copy of one of these relievos, published in the Admiranda, there are two women standing by the altar with Althæa, who are probably meant for furies in the original (for who but furies would assist at such a sacrifice?); though the copy scarce represents them horrid enough for that character; but what is most to be observed in that piece is a round, or medallion, about the midst of it, with the evident head of a Fury upon it. This might be what Althæa addressed her prayers to whenever she wished ill to her neighbors; or whenever she was going to do any very evil action. Ovid intro-

duces her as invoking the Furies on this occasion in particular, and makes her give more than one reason for her doing so." Ingenuity like this may turn all things to its own end. "Who but Furies," Spence inquires, "would assist at such a sacrifice?" I reply, Althaea's attendants, whose duty it was to kindle and maintain the fire. Ovid says, (*Metamorph.* viii. v. 460, 461.)

"Protulit hunc (stipitem) genetrix, tædasque in fragmina poni
Imperat, et positis inimicos admovet ignes."

These *tædæ*, or long pieces of pine wood, which the ancients employed as torches, are in fact to be seen in the hands of each of the persons present, one of whom, as her attitude plainly shows, has actually broken one of the sticks. As little do I recognise a fury on the disk, towards the centre of the work. It is a countenance expressive of intense pain. There can be no doubt that it is the head of Meleager himself. (*Metam.* i. c. v. 515.)

"Inscius atque absens flamma Meleagros in illa
Uritur; et oculos torreri viscera sentit
Ignibus; et magno superat virtute dolores."

The sculptor seems to have introduced it by way of transition, as it were, to the subsequent period of the story, which represents the dying Meleager as close at hand. The figures which Spence calls Furies, Montfaucon considers to be Fates (*Antiq. expl.* t. i. p. 162); the head on the disk, however, he agrees in pronouncing a Fury. Bellori himself (*Admirand.* tab. 77) is undecided whether they are Fates or Furies; an alternative which may very fairly be taken as a proof that they are neither. The rest of Montfaucon's exposition might likewise have been more accurate. The female figure who is leaning upon her

elbow by the bed, he should have called Cassandra, and not Atalanta. Atalanta is she who sits absorbed in grief, with her back towards the bed. The artist has, with great judgment, averted her face from the family, as if to show that she was only the betrothed, and not the spouse of Meleager, and that she feared lest her grief for a catastrophe, of which she herself was the innocent cause, might tend to exasperate the relatives.

NOTE 5.

Plinius, lib. xxxv. sect. 35.—“Cum mœstas pinxisset omnes, præcipuè patrum, et tristitiæ omniem imaginem consumpsisset, patris ipsius vultum velavit, quem dignè non poterat ostendere.”

NOTE 6.

“Summi mœroris acerbitatem arte exprimi non posse confessus est.”—Valerius Maximus, lib. viii. cap. ii.

NOTE 7.

This author describes the various degrees of grief depicted by Timanthes in the following series: “Calchantem tristem, mœstum Ulyssem, clamantem Ajacem, lamentan-

tem Menelaum." The crying Ajax must have been a hideous figure ; and as no mention is made of it either by Cicero or Quintilian in their description of the picture, I am inclined to look upon it altogether as an addition suggested by the fancy of Valerius.

NOTE 8.

"Eundem," says Pliny, speaking of Myro, (lib. xxxiv. sect. 19.) "vicit et Pythagoras Leontinus, qui fecit stadiodromon Astylon, qui Olympiæ ostenditur ; et Libyn puerum tenentem tabulam, eodem loco, et mala ferentem nudum. Syracusis autem claudicantem ; cujus hulceris dolorem sentire etiam spectantæ videntur." Observe well the concluding words. Do they not plainly allude to some individual known as the victim of a painful ulcer ? "Cujus hulceris," &c. Will it be pretended that *cujus* refers simply to *claudicantem*, and this again to the still more remote *puerum* ? No one is more celebrated for a misfortune of this kind than Philoctetes. I would therefore read *Philoctetem* instead of *claudicantem*, or at least I conjecture that the former word is represented by the equivalent *claudicantem*, and that, to express the full meaning of the passage, we must read *Philoctetem claudicantem*. Sophocles makes him "ερσην νωτ' ανωγαν ιερων" his sore foot would naturally cause him to limp.

NOTE 9.

Philippus (Anthol. lib. iv. cap. ix. ep. 10.)

'Αἰε γὰρ διψᾷς βριφίω φωνᾷ ἢ τις Ἰησῶν
 Δαυτῆρος, ἢ Γλαυκῆ τις πάλι σοι προφηταί ;
 Ἐββί και ἐν κηρῷ παιδοκτοσί.—————

NOTE 10.

When the sufferings of Philoctetes are viewed by the Chorus in this combination, his helpless solitude seems to them the paramount evil of all. Each word they utter evinces the naturally social character of the Greek. I must here observe, however, that I entertain some doubt as to the correctness of the common reading of one of these passages. It is as follows (v. 691—695) :—

*ἴσ' αὐτὸς ἢ πρότερος, εἴη ἔχων βάσιον,
 οἷδ' εἴ τις ἰσχυρῶν παρογιόσσα,
 παρ' ἧ σθένει ἀντίσταναι
 βαρυβρῶν' ἀπεκλαύσει
 αἰματηρῶν'*

Winshem's translation of this passage runs thus :

Ventis expositus, et pedibus captus,
 Nullum cohabitorem
 Nec vicinum ullum saltem malum habens, apud quem gemitum mutuum
 Gravemque ac cruentum
 Ederet.

The difference between this and Johnson's interlined version differs only verbally :—

Ubi ipse ventis erat expositus, firmum gradum non habens,
 Nec quenquam indigenarum,
 Nec malum vicinum, apud quem ploraret
 Vehementer edacem
 Sanguineum morbum, mutuo gemitu.

One would be inclined to think that the words in which the latter translation differs from the former had been borrowed from the metrical version of Thomas Naogeorgus; for the latter, whose work is extremely rare, thus expresses himself:—

————— Ubi expositus fuit
 Ventis ipse, gradum firmum haud habens,
 Nec quenquam indigenam, nec vel malum
 Vicinum, ploraret apud quem
 Vehementer edacem atque cruentum
 Morbum mutuo.

If these translations be correct, the Chorus here pays the highest possible compliment to the charms of human society. The sufferer, we are told, has no human being near him; he knows of no friendly neighbor; nay, happy were his lot had he even a wicked neighbor! Thomson had probably this passage in his mind when he put the following words into the mouth of Melisander:—

Cast on the wildest of the Cyclad isles,
 Where never human foot had mark'd the shore,
 These ruffians left me—yet, believe me, Arcos,
 Such is the rooted love we bear mankind,
 All ruffians as they were, I never heard
 A sound so dismal as their parting cars.

Melisander too would have found the company of ruffians better than none at all! A striking idea, certainly, if we could only be sure that Sophocles intended to convey it! I am compelled, however, reluctantly to acknowledge

that I find no such meaning in the original, unless indeed, instead of using my own eyes, I choose to look with those of the old scholiast, who thus paraphrases the words of the poet:—*Οὐ μόνον ἴσθαι καλὸν ἔκαστ' εἶχε τινα τῶν ἰγχευμένων γινώσκουσα ἀλλὰ εὐδὲ κακὸν, παρ' ἑνὶ ἀμοιβαίῳ λόγῳ στεναζόντων ἀκούσθαι.* This exposition has not only been followed by the translators already referred to, but has also been adhered to both by Brumoy and by our new German translator. The former says, “sans société, même importune;” the latter, “jeder Gesellschaft, auch der beschwerlichsten, beraubet.” My reasons for differing from them all, are these. In the first place, it is evident that, if *κακογινώσκουσα* be separated from τῶν ἰγχευμένων, so as to make a distinct member of the sentence, the particle *εὐδὲ* must necessarily be repeated before *κακογινώσκουσα*. But since this is not the case, it is plain that *κακογινώσκουσα* belongs to *τινα*, and the comma after *ἰγχευμένων* must be removed. This comma is a corruption which has crept in through the translations, and in fact I find that some entirely Greek editions (for example, that of Wittenberg, of 1585, in 8vo, which was quite unknown to Fabricius) are without it; the comma being first introduced, as it should be, after *κακογινώσκουσα*. In the second place, I would ask, is that an evil neighbor, from whom we might look for *σσοῖον ἀντιτυπῶν, ἀμοιβαίῳ*, as the scholiast expresses it? To share our sorrows is the office of a friend, and not of an enemy. In short, the word *κακογινώσκουσα* has been misunderstood. It has been assumed to be a compound of the adjective *κακός*, while it is in reality derived from the substantive *το κακόν*; it has been translated “an evil neighbor,” whereas it should have been rendered “a neighbor of evil.” In the same way *κακομανῶντις* does not signify an evil, that is, a false, an untrue prophet,

but a prophet of evil ; *κακοτυχος* does not imply an evil, an unskilful artist, but one skilled in evil things. By the expression, a neighbor of evil, the poet means some one who is either afflicted with similar misfortunes to ourselves, or whose friendship leads him to participate in our misfortunes ; so that the words *οὐδ' ἔχων τιν' ἐγγύθεν κακοτύχουσα*, simply mean " neque quenquam indigenarum mali socium habens." The late English translator of Sophocles, Thomas Franklin, is evidently of the same opinion as myself, for he translates *κακοτύχουσα* by " fellow-mourner :"

Exposed to the inclement skies,
Deserted and forlorn he lies ;
No friend or fellow-mourner there,
To soothe his sorrows, and divide his care.

NOTE 11.

Topographiæ Urbis Romæ lib. iv. cap. 14. Et quam hi (Agesander et Polydorus et Athenodorus Rhodii) ex Virgillii descriptione statuam hanc formavisse videntur, &c.

NOTE 12.

Supplem. aux Ant. Expliq. t. i. p. 244. Il semble qu'Agesandre, Polydore et Athenodore, qui en furent les ouvriers, ayent travaillé comme à l'envie, pour laisser un monument, qui répondait à l'incomparable description qu'a fait Virgile de Laocoon, &c.

NOTE 13.

Saturnal. lib. v. cap. 2. " Quæ Virgilius traxit à Græcis, diciturumne me putetis quæ vulgò nota sunt? quod Theocritum sibi fecerit pastoralis operis autorem, ruralis Hesiodum? et quod in ipsis Georgicis, tempestatis serenitatisque signa de Arati Phænomenis traxerit? vel quod eversionem Trojæ, cum Sinone suo, et equo ligneo, cæterisque omnibus, quæ librum secundum faciunt, à Pisandro penè ad verbum transcripserit? qui inter Græcos poetas eminet opere, quod a nuptiis Jovis et Junonis incipiens universas historias, quæ mediis omnibus sæculis usque ad ætatem ipsius Pisandri contigerunt, in unam seriem coactas redegerit, et unum ex diversis hiatibus temporum corpus effecerit? in quo opere inter historias cæteras interitus quoque Trojæ in hunc modum relatus est. Quæ fideliter Maro interpretando, fabricatus est sibi Iliacæ urbis ruinam. Sed et hæc et talia ut pueris decantata prætereo."

NOTE 14.

I am perfectly aware that the picture which Petronius makes Eumolpus describe may be cited in contradiction to this assertion. The destruction of Troy, and particularly the story of Laocoon, was there represented precisely as Virgil narrates it; and as there were other ancient pictures by Zeuxis, Protogenes and Apelles, in the same gallery at Naples in which it hung, it may be conjectured that it was likewise an ancient Greek painting. I must be permitted,

however, to decline awarding to a poet of romance the authority of an historian. In all probability, the whole story is a fiction, and Eumolpus, picture, gallery and all, have never had any existence but in the fancy of Petronius. Indeed, the fictitious character of the whole is sufficiently shown by the manifest traces it exhibits of Virgil's narrative, which is in parts imitated with almost the slavish exactness of a school-boy. It is worth the reader's while to compare the two following passages. First, let us see what Virgil says:—

Hic alaud majus miserisque multoque tremendum
 Objicitur magis, atque improvida pectora turbat.
 Laocoon, ductus Neptuno sorte sacerdos,
 Solemnis taurum ingentem mactabat ad aras.
 Ecce autem gemini a Tenedo tranquilla per alta
 (Horresco referens) immensis orbibus angus
 Incumbunt pelago, pariterque ad littora tendunt:
 Pectora quorum inter fluctus arrecta, jubæque
 Sanguineæ exsuperant undas; pars cætera pontum
 Fosse legit, sinuatque immensa volumine terga.
 Fit sonitus, spumante salo: jamque arva tenebant,
 Ardentesque oculos suffecti sanguine et igni
 Sibilla lambebant linguis vibrantibus ora.
 Diffugimus visu exsangues. Illi agmine certo
 Laocoonta petunt, et primum parva duorum
 Corpora natorum serpens amplexus uterque
 Implicat, et miseris morsu depascitur artus.
 Post ipsum, auxilio subeuntem ac tela ferentem,
 Corripunt, spirisque ligant ingentibus: et jam
 Bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum
 Terga dati, superant capite et cervicibus altis.
 Ille simul manibus tendit divellere nodos,
 Perfusus sanie vittas atroque veneno:
 Clamores simul horrendos ad sidera tollit,
 Quales mugitus, fugit cum saucius aram
 Taurus et incertam excussit cervice securim.

Æneid., lib. ii. 199—224.

And next Eumolpus, of whom it might no doubt be

said, as of all extempore poets, that his verses are as much indebted to his memory as to his imagination :—

*Ece alia monstra. Celsa qua Tenedos mare
Dorso repellit, tumida consurgunt freta,
Undaque resultat scissa tranquillo minor.
Qualis silenti nocte remorum sonus
Longe refertur, cum premunt classes mare,
Fulsumque marmor abiete imposita gemit.
Respicimus, angues orbibus geminis ferunt
Ad saxa fluctus : tumida quorum pectora,
Rates ut alta, lateribus spumas agunt ;
Dant caudæ sonitum ; liberæ ponto jubæ
Coruscant luminibus, fulmineum jubar
Incendit æquor, sibilisque undæ tremunt.
Stupere mentes. Infulis stant sacri
Phrygioque cultu gemina nati pignora :
Laocoonte, quos repente tergoribus ligant
Angues corusci ; parvulas illi manus
Ad ora referunt : neuter auxilio sibi,
Uterque fratri transtulit pias vices,
Morsque ipsa miseris mutuo perdit metu.
Accumulat ecce liberum funus Parens,
Infirmus auxillator ; invadunt virum
Jam morte pasti, membraque ad terram trahunt.
Jacet sacerdos inter aras victima.*

It will be seen that the prominent features of the narrative are identical in both passages, and several parts are expressed in the very same words. These resemblances are obvious at first sight. But there are other indications which, though less easily detected, afford no less certain evidence of imitation. When the plagiarist feels confidence in his own powers, he seldom borrows without attempting to improve ; and his next anxiety is to remove every mark which may lead to the source of his plagiarism ;—like the fox, who slyly brushes out with his tail the foot-prints which would otherwise betray his path. But this vain anxiety to embellish, and this labored attempt to appear

original, are the very things which are sure to expose him. His embellishments are all exaggeration and unnatural refinement. For instance, Virgil says, "sanguineæ jubæ," which Petronius renders "liberæ jubæ luminibus coruscant." Virgil says, "ardentes oculos suffecti sanguine et igni;" Petronius makes it "fulmineum jubar incendit æquor." Virgil says, "fit sonitus spumante salo," Petronius, "sibilis undæ tremunt." Thus the imitator is ever sure to overdo his original; he exalts the great into the monstrous, the wonderful into the impossible. The boys, in Virgil, form but a slightly marked accessory, of which their helplessness and their outcries are the most distinguishing features. Petronius magnifies this incidental adjunct, and makes two little heroes of the children:—

* * * * neuter auxilio sibi,
Uterque fratri transtulit pias vias
Morsque ipsa miseris mutuo perdit metu.

Who would expect from children, or even from men, such noble disinterestedness?—Far better was human nature understood by the Greek, who describes even mothers as forgetting their offspring in their eagerness to preserve themselves from the dreaded serpents:—

————— ἰδὲ γυναικίς
Ὀμοῶζον, καὶ πῶς τις ἴον ἰαίλησθεο τίνων,
Ἄσπερ ἀλιουμένη στυγίρων μορῶν —————

Quint. Calaber, lib. xii. v. 459—61.

One very common plan of concealment adopted by the imitator is to throw a new chiaroscuro over the objects, by bringing forward the shadows and keeping back the lights of the original. For instance, Virgil has been careful to render manifest the enormous size of the ser-

pents, because it is on this that the probability of the subsequent effect hangs; the noise they make is a mere accessory, and is intended only to render more vivid the idea of their magnitude. Petronius completely transposes this arrangement. He makes the accessory the principal idea; describing the noise of the serpents with all the pomp imaginable, and so far forgetting to refer to their magnitude, that but for the inference naturally drawn from the noise they create, we should scarcely know anything about it. It is difficult to believe that he could have fallen into this impropriety had he drawn from his own imagination alone, instead of imitating another, the imitation of whom he was at the same time anxious to conceal. In like manner every poetic picture which in the smaller traits is overdrawn, and in the larger is defective, let it be ever so rich in minor beauties, may be safely set down for an imitative failure, whether the original can be pointed out or not.

NOTE 15.

Sup. aux Antiq. Expl. t. i. p. 243. "Il y a quelque petite différence entre ce que dit Virgile et ce que le marbre présente. Il semble, selon ce que dit le Poète, que les serpens quittèrent les deux enfans pour venir entortiller le père, au lieu que dans ce marbre, ils lient en même tems les enfans et leur père."

NOTE 16.

Donatus, ad v. 227, lib. ii. *Æneid*. "Mirandum non est clypeo et simulacri vestigiis tegi potuisse, quos supra et longos et validos dixit, at multiplici ambitu circumdedisse Laocoontis corpus ac liberorum, et fuisse superfluum partem."—I am also of opinion that either the word *non* at the commencement of this passage is superfluous, or else the whole conclusion is wanting. For, since the snakes were of such a monstrous size, it would be very surprising that they could be concealed beneath the shield of the goddess, unless the shield itself were extremely large, and belonged to a colossal figure. Either the conclusion of the sentence contained an assurance of this fact, or else the *non* is a superfluity.

NOTE 17.

London, 1647, large folio. And even here the snakes are only twisted once around the waist, and scarcely even once around the throat. If an artist of such mediocrity deserves an apology, the only one that can be offered for him is that the plates inserted in a work must be regarded as mere illustrations, and not as independent works of art.

NOTE 18.

De Piles himself is of this opinion in his remarks on Du Fresnoy, v. 210. "Remarquez, s'il vous plait, que

les draperies tendres et légères n'étant données qu'au sexe féminin, les anciens Sculpteurs ont évités autant qu'ils ont pu, d'habiller les figures d'hommes; parcequ'ils ont pensé, comme nous l'avons déjà dit, qu'en Sculpture on ne pouvait imiter les étoffes, et que les gros plis faisaient un mauvais effet. Il y a presque autant d'exemples de cette vérité qu'il y a parmi les antiques de figures d'hommes nus. Je rapporterai seulement celui du Laocoon, lequel selon la vraisemblance devrait être vêtu. En effet, quelle apparence y-a-t'il qu'un fils de Roi, qu'un Prêtre d'Apollon se trouvât tout nud dans la cérémonie actuelle d'un sacrifice; car les serpens passèrent de l'isle de Tenedos au rivage de Troye, et surprirent Laocoon et ses fils dans le tems même qu'il sacrifiait à Neptune sur le bord de la Mer, comme le marque Virgile dans le second livre de son *Enéide*. Cependant les Artistes, qui sont les Auteurs de ce bel ouvrage, ont bien vu qu'ils ne pouvaient pas leur donner de vêtemens convenables à leur qualité, sans faire comme un amas de pierres, dont la masse ressemblerait à un rocher, au lieu des trois admirables figures qui ont été et qui sont toujours l'admiration des siècles. C'est pour cela que de deux inconvéniens, ils ont jugé celui des Draperies beaucoup plus fâcheux, que celui d'aller contre la vérité même."

NOTE 19.

Maffei, Richardson, and more recently M. von Hagedorn. (*Betrachtungen über die Mahlerey*, p. 37.—Richardson, *Traité de la Peinture*, t. iii. p. 513.) De Fontaines

might be added to the list, if he deserved to be mentioned along with these writers. In the "Observations" on his translation of Virgil he maintains the same opinion, but he knows so little about the subject, that he actually calls the sculpture a work of Phidias.

NOTE 20.

I cannot appeal to any testimony more decisive on this point than the poem of Sadoletto. It would do credit even to an ancient poet, and is so true to the model that it might almost serve as a substitute for a copperplate. I therefore think I may venture to insert the whole of it:—

DE LAOCOONTIS STATUA

Jacobi Sadoleti Carmen.

Ecoe alto terræ è cumulo, ingentisque ruinae
 Visceribus, iterum reducem longinqua reduxit
 Laocoonta dies: aulis regalibus olim
 Qui stetit, atque tuos ornabit, Tite, penates.
 Divinae simulacrum artis, nec docta vetustas
 Nobilius spectabat opus, nunc celsa revisit
 Exemptum tenebris redivivis mania Roma.
 Quid primum summumve loquar? miserumne parentem,
 Et prolem geminam? an sinuatos flexibus angues
 Terribili adspectu? caudasque irasque draconum
 Vulneraque et veros, saxo moriente, dolores?
 Horret ad hæc animus, mutaque ab imagine pulsat
 Pectora, non parvo pietas commixta tremori.
 Prolixum bini spiris glomerantur in orbem
 Ardentes colubri, et sinuosis orbitibus errant,
 Ternaque multiplici constringunt corpora nexu.
 Vix oculi sufferre valent, crudele tuendo
 Exitium, casusque feros: micat alter, et ipsum

Laocöonta petit, totumque infraque supraque
 Implicat, et rabido tandem ferit illa morsu.
 Connexum refugit corpus, torquentia sese
 Membra, latusque retro sinuatum à vulnere cernaa.
 Ille dolore acri, et laniatu impulsus acerbo,
 Dat gemitum ingentem, crudosque evelere dentes
 Connixus, lævam impatiens ad terga Chelydri
 Objicit: intendunt nervi, collectaque ab omni
 Corpore vis frustra summis conatibus instat.
 Ferre nequit rabiem, et de vulnere murmur anhelum est.
 At serpens lapsu crebro redeunte subintrat
 Lubricus, intortoque ligat genua infima nodo.
 Absistunt suræ, spirisque prementibus arcum
 Crus tument, obsepto turgent vitalia pulsu,
 Liventesque atro distendunt sanguine venaa.
 Nec minus in natos eadem vis effera sævit
 Implexuque angit rapido, miserandaque membra
 Dilacerat: jamque alterius depasta cruentum
 Pectus, suprema genitorem voce cientis,
 Circumjectu orbis, validoque volumine fulcit.
 Alter adhuc nullo violatus corpore morsu,
 Dum parat adducta caudam divellere planta,
 Horret ad aspectum miseri patris, hæret in illo,
 Et jam jam ingentes fetus, lachrymasque cadentes
 Anceps in dubio retinet timor. Ergo peregrini
 Qui tantum statuistis opus jam laude nitentes,
 Artifices magni (quanquam et melioribus actis
 Quæritur æternum nomen, multoque licebat
 Clarius ingenium venturæ tradere famæ)
 Attamen ad laudem quæcunque oblata facultas
 Egregium hanc rapere, et summa ad vestigia niti.
 Vos rigidum lapidem vivis animare figuris
 Eximii, et vivos spiranti in marmore sensus
 Inserere, aspiciamus motumque iramque doloremque,
 Et pene audimus gemitus: vos extulit olim
 Claræ Rhodes, vestræ jacuerunt artis honores
 Tempore ab immenso, quos rursus in luce secunda
 Roma videt, celebratque frequens: operisque vetusti
 Gratia parta recens. Quanto præstantius ergo est
 Ingenio, aut quovis extendere fata labore,
 Quam fastus et opes et inanem extendere luxum.

(Vid. Leodegarii à Quercu Farrago Poematum, t. ii. p. 63.) Gruter has also inserted this poem, along with others of Sadoleto, in his well-known collection, *Delic. Poet. Italarum*, Parte alt. p. 582; but his copy is full of inaccuracies, as, for example, *vivi* for *bini*, *oram* for *errant*, &c.

NOTE 21.

De la Peinture, t. iii. p. 516. “ C'est l'horreur que les Troiens ont conçue contre Laocoon, qui etait nécessaire à Virgile pour la conduite de son Poëme ; et cela le mène à cette description pathétique de la destruction de la patrie de son Héros. Aussi Virgile n'avait garde de diviser l'attention sur la dernière nuit pour une grande ville entière, par la peinture d'un petit malheur d'un particulier.”

NOTE 22.

The first edition is dated 1747; the second, 1755, and is entitled, “ Polymetis, or an Enquiry concerning the Agreement between the Works of the Roman Poets, and the Remains of the ancient Artists, being an Attempt to illustrate them mutually from one another. In ten Books. By the Rev. Mr. Spence. London: printed for Doddsley.” An abridgment of this work, by N. Tindal, has passed through several editions.

NOTE 23.

It is *possible*, but I could almost venture to say it was not so. Juvenal is speaking of the early ages of the Republic, when splendor and luxury were unknown, and when the soldier employed his booty of gold and silver only to enrich the trappings of his horse, or to adorn his arms.—Sat. xv. v. 100—107.

Tunc rudis et Graias mirari nescius artes
 Urbibus eversis prædarum e parte reperta
 Magnorum artificum frangebatur pocula miles,
 Ut phaleris gauderet equis, calataque cassis
 Romuleæ simulacra feræ mansuescere jussæ
 Imperii fato, genuinos sub rupe Quirinoæ,
 Ac nudam effigiem clypeo fulgentis et hasta,
 Pendentisque dei perituro ostenderet hosti.

The soldier, we are told, broke up the most costly chalices, the master-works of the greatest artists, to get them converted into the effigy of a she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus, with which to adorn his helmet. The whole passage is perfectly intelligible, with the exception of the two last lines, in which the poet proceeds to describe a second image embossed in like manner on the helmets of the ancient soldiers. This at least is plain, that it is a figure of the god Mars he is speaking of; but what is the meaning of the epithet *pendentis* attached to it? In an old commentary, cited by Rigaltius, it is explained by “quasi ad ictum se inclinantis.” Lubinus conjectures that the image was represented on the shield, and that the poet applied the term “pendent” to it as forming part of the shield, which was itself pendent from the arm. This interpretation, however, is not borne out by the construction of the sentence, for *ostenderet* is

governed, not by *miles* but by *cassis*. Britannicus supposes the term to mean, that the image was in high relief, either on or over the helmet. Some are for reading *pendentis*, in order to produce an antithesis with the subsequent *perituro*, an arrangement of which the discoverers are alone qualified to discern the beauty. And what does Addison make of the difficulty? He tells us that the commentators are all in the wrong, and that the true meaning of the passage is undoubtedly as follows. (Addis. Remarks, &c., Rome.) "The Roman soldiers, who were not a little proud of their founder, and the military genius of their republic, used to bear on their helmets the first history of Romulus, who was begot by the god of War, and suckled by a wolf. The figure of the god was made as if descending upon the priestess Ilia, or, as others call her, Rhea Silvia. * * * * * As he was represented descending, his figure appeared suspended in the air over the vestal virgin, in which sense the word *pendentis* is extremely proper and poetical. Besides the antique basso relievo, that made me first think of this interpretation, I have since met with the same figures on the reverses of a couple of ancient coins which were stamped in the reign of Antoninus Pius," &c. As Spence considers this discovery of Addison so extraordinarily happy as to be a model of its kind, and cites it as the strongest example that could be shown of the advantage of a knowledge of the works of the ancient artists in explaining the classic Roman poets, I cannot refrain from examining it a little more closely. (Polym., Dial. vii. p. 77.)

In the first place I must observe, that the bas-relief and the medal would scarcely of themselves have brought the passage of Juvenal into Addison's mind, if he had not

likewise recollected to have found in the old commentary, the word *fulgentis* in the last line but one replaced by *venientis*, and explained by "Martis ad Iliam venientis ut concumberet." Now, leaving this reading entirely out of sight, and taking that which Addison himself adopted, is there the slightest reason to suppose that the poet had Rhea in his thoughts at all? Would it not have been a piece of strange irregularity on his part, first to mention the young children themselves, and afterwards to allude to the adventure to which they owed their birth? It would be as if he had told us that Rhea had not yet become a mother, while at the same time he pointed out her children lying at the foot of the rock! The representation of a stolen amour would have been a pretty emblem truly for the helmet of a Roman soldier! The warrior was proud of the divine origin of the founder of his empire; that is sufficiently shown by the wolf and the children. Was there any occasion to delineate Mars also, under circumstances in which he would have appeared in any other light than in his own appropriate character as the terrible god of war? Though his surprisal of Rhea were delineated a thousand times on sculptures and medals, does it follow that it should therefore be thought a fitting subject to adorn a piece of armor? And what are these bas-reliefs and medals on which Addison found the story represented, and on which he discovered Mars in this suspended position? The ancient bas-relief to which he appeals, we are told, was in Bellori's possession; yet it will be looked for in vain in the "Admiranda," his collection of the finest ancient bas-reliefs. I, at least, have not been able to find it, and Spence, I suspect, never saw it, either there, or any where else, since he passes it by in

utter silence. We have then nothing but the medal to refer to, and let us see what we can make of this according to Addison's own account of it. First, we have a recumbent figure of Rhea, and then, as there was not room for the die-sinker to place Mars on the same plane with her, he has introduced him a little higher up. This is the whole affair ; nothing more of a "suspended Mars" than this. I grant that in the engraving given of the medal by Spence, this "suspended" effect is very decidedly expressed. The upper part of the figure projects very far forward, in such a position that it is quite evident it could not stand, and unless it is actually a falling figure, it must be intended for one that is suspended or floating in the air. Spence informs us that this medal was in his own possession. It is a hard thing to question a man's honesty, though it be but in a trifle, yet every one knows how much a favorite prepossession often influences even the evidence of our senses. Besides, he might naturally enough think himself entitled, for the benefit of his reader, to strengthen in the engraving those features which he fancied he himself perceived, in order that others might have as little hesitation on the subject as himself. This at least is certain, that both Spence and Addison refer to the same medal, and that it must either be very much disfigured by the latter, or very much embellished by the former. But I have one more objection to urge against this pretended floating position of Mars. It is this ; that a floating figure, without the indication of some manifest reason to counteract the effect of its gravity, is an incongruity quite unexampled in the ancient works of art. Even in modern painting it is almost never introduced without the addition of wings, or without some apparent support, if it be even

nothing more than a cloud. In treating of that passage of Homer in which he describes Thetis as rising from the shore to Olympus,

Τῆν μὲν ἄρ' Ὀβλυμπόνδι πάδις φέρον·

Iliad, 2. v. 148,

Count Caylus understood the necessities of art too well to recommend the painter to represent the goddess striding through the air. No; he places her on a cloud (*Tableaux tirés d'Iliade*, p. 91), as on another occasion he introduces her seated in a car (p. 131), though no such thing is mentioned by the poet. What else, in fact, could be done? Though the poet introduces the goddess under a human form, he at the same time divests that form of all the grossness naturally belonging to matter, and endows it with a power which exempts it from the control of the laws by which the movements of mortal beings are governed. Painting could not thus distinguish the divine from the human form, and yet avoid offending the eye by the difference observable between the laws which govern respectively the movements, the gravity, and the balance of each, without the aid of some concerted signs, such, for instance, as a cloud or a pair of wings. But of these more hereafter. I shall content myself at present with challenging the supporters of Addison's opinion to point out another figure on any of the remains of ancient art suspended thus freely in the open air. Is it likely that this figure of Mars could be the only one of the kind? Why should it form the solitary exception? Did the tradition commemorate any circumstance which could render this suspended effect necessary? Not the least trace of such a circumstance can be discovered in Ovid, (*Fast.* lib. i.) On the con-

trary, it is evident that no such necessity existed, for in other ancient works of art representing the same story, Mars is not seen suspended, but on foot. Look, for instance, at the bas-relief in Montfaucon, (Supplem. t. i. p. 183,) which is placed, if I mistake not, in the Mellini palace at Rome. Rhea is lying asleep under a tree, while Mars approaches her with light steps and with his right hand stretched out behind him, with that significant expression which is employed either to restrain another from following, or to warn him to advance gently. His attitude is precisely the same as on the medal, only that in the latter the lance is placed in the right hand, while in the bas-relief it is in the left. We frequently meet with celebrated statues and bas-reliefs copied on ancient medals, and it is very likely this may be an instance of the practice; for the slight variation may easily have been caused by the die-sinker not having properly felt the expression of the right hand, and fancying he could employ it better with the lance. All these circumstances considered, what degree of probability remains on the side of Addison? Little, it must be confessed, beyond a mere possibility. But where are we to look for a better explanation, if this will not do? Perhaps a better may be found among those deprecated by Addison. But if not—what then? Why, we must just content ourselves with supposing that the text of the poet is corrupted; and corrupted it will remain in spite of all the conjectures that may be formed concerning it. One, however, I will hazard, useless as it may be. It is, that *pendentis* should be taken in its figurative sense, as meaning uncertain, irresolute, undecided. *Mars pendens* would thus be equivalent to *Mars incertus*, or *Mars communis*. “*Dii communes sunt*,” says Servius,

(ad v. 118, lib. xiii. *Æneid.*) "Mars, Bellona, Victoria, quia hi in bello utrique parti favere possunt." Thus the line,

Pendentisque Dei (effigiem) perituro ostenderet hosti,

would mean that the Roman soldier was in the habit of displaying to his fallen enemy the image of the neutral god; a peculiarly subtle trait, serving to imply that the ancient Romans were indebted for victory rather to their own valor than to the partial protection of their founder.

NOTE 24.

"Till I got acquainted," says Spence, (*Dial.* xiii. p. 208) "with these *Auræ* (or Sylphs) I found myself always at a loss in reading the story of Cephalus and Procris, in Ovid. I could never imagine how Cephalus's crying out "*Aura venias*," (though in ever so languishing a manner,) could give any body a suspicion of his being false to Procris. As I had been always used to think that *Aura* signified only the air in general, or a gentle breeze in particular, I thought Procris's jealousy less founded than the most extravagant jealousies generally are; but when I had once found that *Aura* might signify a very handsome young lady, as well as the air, the case was entirely altered, and the story seemed to go on in a very reasonable manner." I have no intention to withdraw in my note the approbation which I have already expressed in the text for this discovery on which Spence plumes himself so highly, but I cannot help observing, that even without it the passage in question is perfectly natural and intelligible. The simple fact that *aura* was a common

name among the ancients for a waiting-woman, explains it at once. Such, for instance, is the name of the nymph (Nonnus. Dion. lib. 48) in the train of Diana, who, as a punishment for her presumption in exalting her virgin charms above those of the goddess herself, was consigned, while sleeping, to the arms of Bacchus.

NOTE 25.

Juvenal. Sat. viii. v. 52—55.

* * * * * At tu
 Nili nisi Cecropides; truncoque simillimus Hermæ;
 Nullo quippe alio vincis discrimine, quam quod
 Illi marmoreum caput est, tua vivit imago.

Had Spence included the Greek writers in the plan of his work, he might probably have chanced to light upon an old Æsopian fable which throws a much prettier and far more satisfactory light on the formation of a statue of Hermes than this passage of Juvenal. "Mercury," as Æsop relates, "would fain learn the estimation in which he was held among men, so he disguised his divinity, and went to a sculptor. Seeing a statue of Jupiter in the artist's shop, he asked the price of it. A drachma, was the answer.—Mercury smiled.—And this Juno, continued he, what do you ask for her?—About the same price, replied the artist.—Then, catching a glimpse of his own image, he bethought himself; 'I am the messenger of the gods, and the author of all gain; men must necessarily place a much higher value on me.' Here, said he, pointing to the figure, how high a price do you put upon this god?—This? replied the sculptor, oh! if you'll buy the

ther two of me, you shall have that into the bargain."— Mercury was no doubt sorely disappointed ; but as the sculptor did not know him, and could consequently have had no intention to wound his vanity, his reason for valuing the last statue so low as to be ready to make a present of it, must have arisen from the nature of its execution. The inferior worth of the god whom it represented could have had nothing to do with it, as the sculptor would value his works according to the skill, care, and labor bestowed upon them, and not according to the rank and estimation of the beings they represented. It may therefore be inferred that a statue of Mercury must have required less skill, less care, and less labor than one of Jupiter or Juno, since it was valued lower. And this was in reality the case. The statues of Jupiter and of Juno exhibited the entire figures of those divinities, while that of Mercury was merely a square shaft, supporting nothing but a bust. It is not so surprising, therefore, that the sculptor could afford to give it into the bargain. Mercury overlooked this circumstance, having only his own surpassing merit before his eyes, and thus his mortification was as natural as it was deserved. In vain will the reader seek for the smallest trace of this explanation among the commentators, translators, and imitators of *Æsop's Fables* ; but I could readily cite a whole list of them, if it were worth my while, who have understood the story in a literal sense ; that is to say, who have not understood it at all. They have either not felt, or else they have greatly overrated the incongruity which results from supposing the statues to have been all of equal execution. Perhaps the most puzzling part of the story is the price which the artist set on his Jupiter. No potter could make a puppet for the

value of a drachma ; we must therefore suppose it in this case to stand as a general expression for a small sum. (Fab. Æsop. 90. Edit. Haupt. p. 70.)

NOTE 26.

Lucretius de R. N., lib. v., v. 786—747.

It Ver, et Venus, et Veneris præmuntius ante
 Pinnatus graditur Zephyrus ; vestigia propter
 Flora quibus mater præspargens ante viai
 Cuncta coloribus egregia et odoribus opplet.
 Inde loci sequitur Calor aridus, et comes una
 Pulverulenta Ceres ; et Etesia flabra Aquilonum.
 Inde Autumnus adit ; graditur simul Evius Evan ;
 Inde alia tempestates ventique sequuntur,
 Altitonans Voltumnus et Auster fulmine pollens.
 Tandem Bruma nives adfert, pigrumque rigorem
 Reddit, Hyems sequitur, crepitans ac dentibus Alga.

Spence considers this passage one of the finest in the poem of Lucretius. It is at least one of those on which the reputation of Lucretius as a poet rests. But it is certainly detracting very much from this reputation, or rather depriving him of it entirely, to tell us that the whole description appears to have been taken from an ancient procession of the seasons. And what reason is there for supposing so? Because, as Spence informs us, "such processions of their deities in general, were as common among the Romans of old as those in honor of the saints are in the same country to this day." And because "all the expressions used by Lucretius here come in very aptly, if applied to a procession." *Come in very aptly if*

applied to a procession; an admirable reason truly! Why, the very epithets which the poet applies to his personified abstractions, such as *Calor aridus*, *Ceres pulverulenta*, *Voltumnus altitonans*, *fulmine pollens Auster*, *Algius dentibus crepitans*, prove that they have derived their being from him and not from the sculptor, who must have characterized them in a totally different manner. Spence seems to have caught his idea of a procession from Abraham Preigern, who in his remarks on this passage of Lucretius says, "Ordo est quasi Pompæ cujusdam, Ver et Venus, Zephyrus et Flora," &c. Further than this, however, Spence should not have carried it. The poet describes the seasons going as if in procession;—this is all very well. But to pretend that in order to do so he must have actually copied a procession, is absurd.

NOTE 27.

The figure called Bacchus, in the Medicean gardens at Rome (Montfaucon, *Suppl. aux Ant. t. i. p. 254*), has a pair of small horns sprouting out from the forehead; but some connoisseurs are of opinion that it should rather on this account be considered a Faun. In fact, these horns are a blemish to the human form, and could only beseem such beings as held a middle place between men and beasts. The very position of the figure, looking up with a longing eye at the clustering grapes above him, is more befitting an attendant of the god of wine, than the god himself. I cannot help noticing here, too, what Clemens Alexandrinus says of Alexander the Great (*Protrep. p. 48. Edit. Pott.*)

*ἔβουλετο δὲ καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρος Ἀρμῆος οἷος ἕσσειν, καὶ προσφε-
ροι ἀναπαύσασθαι πρὸς τῶν ἀγάλμασιν αὐτῶν, τοσαύτην ἐκείνου
ἴδρῳσι σπουδὴν ποιεῖν.* It was the express desire of Alex-
ander that the sculptor should represent him with horns ;
he was well contented that his manly beauty should be
thus degraded, so long as it encouraged the belief of his
divine origin.

NOTE 28.

In hazarding the assertion which I formerly made, that
the Furies were never represented by the ancient artists,
I was not unmindful that those goddesses had more than
one temple, which must undoubtedly have contained their
statues. In fact, Pausanias mentions some wooden statues
of them in the temple at Cerynea. These were neither
large, nor otherwise very remarkable, and it would appear
as if the powers of art, for which they were deemed unfit-
ting subjects, had been exhibited with greater effect on the
statues of their priestesses, which stood in the hall of the
temple, and which were of stone, and of much finer execu-
tion. (Pausanias Achaic. cap. xxv.) Neither did I forget
that their heads are supposed to be seen on an Abraxas,
which Chifflet has made known to us, and on a lamp given
by Licet. (Dissert. sur les Furies par Bannier. Mem. de
l'Acad. d'Inscriptions, t. v. p. 43.) Nor was I unac-
quainted with the Etruscan vase, given by Gori, (Tab.
151, Musai Etrusci) on which Pylades and Orestes are
represented urged forward by two Furies with torches in
their hands. I spoke only with reference to works of art,

a title which I considered inapplicable to the whole of these works. And even were I convinced that this opinion were unjust with regard to the last of these, it would still serve rather to confirm than to confute my theory. For, heedless as were the Etruscan artists, generally speaking, of beauty, they appear to have been in this instance solicitous to delineate the Furies, rather by their garb and attributes, than by hideousness of feature. Their countenances are so calm, while flaring their torches in the eyes of Pylades and Orestes, that they would almost seem to be merely frightening them in sport, were it not for the terror exhibited by the young princes. Thus, they are, and they are not, Furies; they perform the office of Furies, but without any of that rage and ferocity which we are accustomed, in imagination, to associate with their names,—not certainly, with the brow which, as Catullus has said, *expirantis præportat pectoris iras*. It is not very long since Winkelmann fancied he had discovered, on a carnelian in the cabinet of Stosch, a Fury running, with flying drapery and hair, and with a dagger in her hand. (Bibliothek. der sch. Wissensch. v. i. p. 30.) Hagedorn hereupon recommended the artists to take advantage of this example, and to represent the Furies in a similar manner in their pictures. (Betrachtungen ueber die Mahlerey, p. 222.) But Winkelmann himself subsequently threw a doubt on this his own discovery, not being able to find that the ancients ever armed the Furies with daggers, instead of torches. (Descript. des Pierres gravées p. 84.) Of course, the same reason must lead him to acknowledge that the figures on the coins of the cities Lyrba and Massaura, which Spanheim takes for Furies, (Les Césars de Julien, p. 44,) are not Furies, but a

Hecate triformis, or else we have here a Fury holding a dagger in each hand, and it is singular that this figure also appears with her hair unconfined, while in the others it is covered with a veil. But, even supposing that it was really as Winkelmann at first conjectured, it would still have been the same with the gem as with the Etruscan vase,—the minuteness of the design would prevent the features from being distinguished. Moreover, these precious stones in general, on account of their use as seals, might be said to belong to the class of hieroglyphic devices, and their figures were probably very often rather the capricious symbols of the wearer, than the freely-chosen works of the artist.

NOTE 29.

Fast. lib. vi. v. 295—298.

Esse diu stultus Vestæ simulacra putavi ;
 Mox didici curvo nulla subesse tholo.
 Ignis inextinctus templo celatur in illo,
 Effigiem nullam Vesta, nec ignis habet.

Ovid is speaking only of the temple of Vesta at Rome ; that temple which Numa had built, and of which he says a little before (v. 259, 260),

Regis opus placidi, quo non metuentius ullum
 Numinis ingenium terra Sabina tulit.

NOTE 30.

Fast. lib. iii. v. 45, 46.

*Sylvia fit mater: Vestæ simulacra feruntur
Virgineis oculis opposuisse manus.*

It is thus that Spence should have compared Ovid with himself. The poet is speaking of different times; in this case, of the times previous to Numa, in the other, of the times after him. In the former, Vesta was worshipped in Italy under personified images, as was the case also in Troy, from whence Æneas had introduced her worship into Italy.

* * * *Manibus vitta, Vestamque potentem
Æternumque adytis effert penetralibus ignem.*

Thus speaks Virgil of the ghost of Hector, after he had counselled Æneas to take to flight. In this passage the eternal fire is expressly distinguished from Vesta herself, or her image. Spence has certainly not read the Roman poets with sufficient attention for his purpose, when he could allow such a passage as this to escape him.

NOTE 31.

Plinius, lib. xxxvi. sect. 4.—“*Scopas fecit—Vestam sedentem laudatam in Servilianis hortis.*” Lipsius must have had this passage in his thoughts when he wrote, (*de Vesta, cap. iii.*) “*Plinius Vestam sedentem effingi solitam ostendit, à stabilitate;*” but he ought not to have given as a generally received character, what Pliny says of one

particular work of Scopas. He observes, too, that on medals Vesta appears as frequently standing as sitting; but in this he does not improve upon Pliny, but only on his own mistaken notion.

NOTE 32.

Georg. Codinus de Originib. Constant. Edit. Venet. p. 12. *Τη γὰρ λεγούσιν Ἔστιαν, καὶ ἀλαττούσι αὐτῆς γυναικα, τυμπάνου βασταζούσας, ἰσχυρὰ τοῦ ἀέρος ἡγήσθ' ἑαυτῆς συγχαλι.* Svidas, following him, or both perhaps following some older author, writes thus under the word Ἔστιαν:—"The earth is pictured, under the name of Vesta, as a woman, bearing a tympanum, as it were to mark that she kept the winds shut up within herself." The reason is sufficiently absurd. It would have been more to the purpose had he said that the tympanum was given to her, because the ancients thought it suited her figure; *σχῆμα αὐτῆς τυμπανουειδὲς εἶναι* (Plutarchus de placitis Philos. cap. 10, id. de facie in orbe Lunæ.) But it is not even certain that Codinus has not been mistaken, either in the figure, or in the name of the instrument, or perhaps in both. Probably he did not know better what name to give the instrument than tympanum; or perhaps, having found it called a tympanum, he could understand nothing else by the term, but what we call a drum. But tympana were also a kind of wheels; thus Virgil, (Georgic. lib. ii. v. 44.)

Hinc radios trivere rotis, hinc tympana plaustis
Agricolæ————

The instrument held by the Vesta given by Fabretti,

(ad tabulam Iliadis, p. 384), and which that learned writer supposes to be a hand-mill, appears to me to be a wheel of this kind.

NOTE 33.

In Horace's picture of Necessity, the richest, perhaps, in attributes, of any to be found in the ancient poets (lib. i. od. 35),

*Te semper anteit sæva Necessitas,
Clavos trabales et cuneos manu
Gestans ahenea: nec severus
Uncus abest liquidumque plumbum—*

the nails, the cramps, and the liquid lead, inasmuch as they may be regarded as the means of securing, or as instruments of torture, belong rather to the class of poetical than of allegorical attributes. But even considered in this character, they are by far too numerous, and the passage is one of the most frigid in Horace. Sanadon thus criticises it:—"J'ose dire que ce tableau pris dans le détail serait plus beau sur la toile que dans une ode héroïque. Je ne puis souffrir cet attirail patibulaire de clous, de coins, de crocs, et de plomb fondu. J'ai cru en devoir décharger la traduction, en substituant les idées générales aux idées singulières. C'est dommage que le Poète ait eu besoin de ce correctif."—Sanadon possessed a correct and delicate taste; but the grounds on which he seeks to confirm his opinion are not the true ones. His objections to the passage ought not to have been on

account of the *attirail patibulaire*, for he had only to adopt another exposition of the text, and convert the patibulary paraphernalia, into materials for building;—they should have been founded on the principle that all attributes are, properly speaking, intended for the eye, and not for the ear, and that all such ideas as we should receive through the medium of the eye, require an additional degree of strength, and are less capable of clear expression, when addressed to the ear. The sequel of the Horatian strophe cited above reminds me moreover of some blunders of Spence, which give anything but a favorable idea of his accuracy in examining the passages of the ancient poets which he refers to. He is speaking of the form under which the Romans represented honesty or fidelity. (Dial. x. p. 145.) “The Romans,” he says, “called her *Fides*; and when they called her *sola fides*, seem to mean the same as we do by the words, downright honesty. She is represented with an erect, open air; and with nothing but a thin robe on, so fine that one might see through it. Horace therefore calls her thin-dressed in one of his odes, and transparent in another.” In this short passage there are not less than three pretty gross errors. First, it is not true that *sola* is a particular epithet attached by the Romans to the goddess *Fides*. In both the passages of Livy which he cites as examples, (lib. i. § 21, lib. ii. § 3,) the word signifies no more than it generally does,—the exclusion of all others. In the one passage the word *soli* is suspected by the critics, and is thought to have crept into the text by an error of the copyist, occasioned by the adjacent *solenne*. In the other passage it is not Honesty, but Innocence (*Innocentia*) that is spoken of. Secondly, Horace, he tells us, gives

the epithet *thin-dressed* to Honesty in one of his odes, namely, in that above cited, the 35th of the first book :—

Te spes, et albo rara fides colit
Velata panno.—————

Rarus, it is true, sometimes signifies *thin*; but here it simply means *rare*, or that which seldom appears, and is an epithet applied to Honesty herself, and not to her dress. Spence would have been right, had the poet said, “Fides raro velata panno.” Thirdly, we are told that Horace in another place calls Honesty *transparent*, in the same sense in which we say, in our ordinary professions of friendship and sincerity, “I wish you could see into my breast;” and this passage is said to be the following line (lib. iii. od. 18)—

Arcanique Fides prodiga, pellucidior vitro.

How can a writer suffer himself to be so misled by a mere word? Does “Fides arcani prodiga” mean honesty? Does it not rather signify faithlessness? It is this, and not honesty, that Horace describes as being transparent as glass, because the secrets intrusted to her keeping are revealed to all.

NOTE 34.

Apollo delivered the corpse of Sarpedon, purified and embalmed, to the care of Death and Sleep, to carry it to his native country :—(Il. α . v. 681—682.

Πήματα δὲ πομπάσιν ἄρα κραιπνοῖσι φέρονται
“Ταύτη καὶ Θανάτῳ Διδυμάσειν.

Caylus recommends this fiction to the painter, but adds :—“ il est facheux qu' Homère ne nous a rien laissé sur les attributs qu'on donnait de son tems au sommeil : nous ne connaissons, pour caracteriser ce Dieu, que son action même, et nous le couronnons de pavots. Les idées sont modernes ; la première est d'un médiocre service, mais elle ne peut être employée dans le cas présent, où même les fleurs me paraissent déplacées, surtout pour une figure qui groupe avec la mort.” (Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade, de l'Odyssée d'Homère, et de l'Énéide de Virgile, &c., &c., à Paris, 1757-8.) This is requiring from Homer one of those petty embellishments which are totally at variance with the grandeur of his style. The most ingenious attributes he could have connected with the personification of Sleep, would not by any means have characterized it so perfectly, or excited so lively an image in our minds, as the single trait by which he describes him as the twin-brother of Death. Let but the artist endeavor to express this trait, and he will be able to dispense with attributes of every kind. The ancient artists did in fact represent Death and Sleep with the same sort of resemblance to each other as we naturally expect to find between twins. On a chest of cedar-wood in the temple of Juno at Elis, they were both represented as children reposing in the arms of Night. The only difference was that the one was white, and the other black ; the former slept, and the latter only seemed to sleep, while the feet of both lay one over the other. It is thus that I would translate the words of Pausanias (Eliac. cap. xviii. p. 422, edit. Kuhn) ἀμφοτέρους διανοταμίζουσιν τοὺς πόδας, rather than “with crooked feet,” or, as Gedoyne has rendered it, “les pieds contrefaits.” What

earthly meaning could a pair of crooked feet convey? The ordinary position of persons sleeping is, on the other hand, with the feet lying one over the other, and it is thus that we find sleep represented in Maffei (*Raccolt.* pl. 151). Modern artists have totally departed from this resemblance between Sleep and Death which prevailed among the ancients, and the usual practice now is to represent Death as a skeleton, or, at the most, as a skeleton covered with skin. On this occasion Caylus ought, above all things, to have explained to the artist whether he was to follow the old or the new practice in the delineation of Death. We may infer, however, that he is an advocate for the modern personification, as he looks upon Death as a figure which would not groupe very harmoniously with another crowned with flowers. But how could he omit to observe the unsuitableness of this modern idea in a Homeric picture;—or how could he fail to be disgusted with the loathsomeness of the image it presents? I cannot bring myself to believe that the small metal figure, in the ducal gallery at Florence, of a skeleton lying on the ground, and resting one arm on a funeral urn (*Spence's Polymetis*, pl. xli.) is a real antique. At all events it cannot be intended for the image of Death, as that was otherwise represented by the ancients. Even their poets never described him under the disgusting figure of a skeleton.

NOTE 35.

Richardson cites this picture for the purpose of illustrating the rule that the attention of the spectator should

not be withdrawn from the principal figure by any other object, however important it may be. "Protogenes," he observes, "introduced a partridge into his celebrated picture of Jalysus, and painted it with so much skill, that it actually appeared to be alive, and was the admiration of all Greece; but finding that it drew off the eye of the spectator, to the prejudice of the principal figure, he obliterated it entirely." (*Traité de la Peinture*, t. i. p. 46.) Richardson made a mistake. The partridge was not in the picture of Jalysus, but in another by Protogenes, called the reposing, or the weary satyr, *Σατυρός ἀναπαυόμενος*. I should scarcely have thought of noticing this error, which has arisen from a misinterpreted passage of Pliny, had I not also observed a similar mistake in Meursius (*Rhodi. lib. i. cap. 14, p. 38*):—"In eâdem (tabulâ) in quâ Jalysus, Satyrus erat, quem dicebant Anapavomenon, tibias tenens." Winkelmann takes the same view of it (*Von der Nachahmung d. Gr. W. in d. Mahl. and Bildh.*, p. 56). Strabo, the only writer who corroborates this incident of the partridge, expressly distinguishes the Jalysus from the Satyr leaning against a pillar, on which the partridge was sitting (*lib. xiv. p. 750. Edit. Xyl.*). The passage in Pliny (*lib. xxxv. sect. 36, p. 699*) has been misunderstood by Meursius, Richardson, and Winkelmann, from their not having observed that it refers to two different pictures; first, that which induced Demetrius to raise the siege of the town, lest so exquisite a work should sustain an injury; and secondly, that which Protogenes was painting at the time of the siege. The first was the Jalysus, and the second, the Satyr.

NOTE 36.

This invisible skirmish among the gods has been imitated by Quintus Calaber (Book xii. v. 158—185), and evidently under the idea that he was improving on his model. The grammarian, it appears, considered it somewhat unseemly that a god should be struck to the ground by a stone. He therefore hits on the grand expedient of making the gods tear huge fragments of rock from Mount Ida, and hurl them at each other; but, unfortunately, these rocks are instantly shattered to pieces on their immortal limbs, and fall, like sand, in harmless showers around them,—

————— 'Οι δὲ κολωνας
 Χερσιν ἀπορρηξάντες ἀπ' ἰδίου Παιῖο
 Βαλλόν ἰσ' ἀλλήλους· αἱ δὲ φαρμαδίαι ἴμοισι
 Ρυμὰ δισπιδάντο· θῖον περὶ δ' ἀχίνα γυμνὰ
 Ρηγγυμνὰ διατυτθῶν, —————

a refinement which mars the principal feature in the picture. It exalts our conception of the bodies of the gods, while at the same time it renders their weapons ridiculous. When the gods think fit to throw stones at each other, we naturally expect to see them hurt, or else we may chance to take them for a groupe of idle school-boys, pelting each other with lumps of clay. It is thus that we find old Homer always turns out after all to be the most skilful, and all the faults which the cold critic would attribute to him, and all attempts at competition with him, serve only to render his skill the more apparent. At the same time, I will not pretend to deny that the imitation of Quintus displays some very admirable traits which are peculiarly his own. But they are traits which

would not so well besem the sober grandeur of Homer as the impetuous ardor of a modern poet. The clamor of the gods, which resounded through the heavens above, and the gulf below, and which shook the hill, the city and the fleet, and which is described notwithstanding as unheard by human ears, seems to me a very admirable thought. The clamor was too loud for the minute organs of human hearing to apprehend.

NOTE 37.

In regard to their strength and activity, nobody who has but once even cursorily glanced through Homer will dispute this assertion. It is possible, however, that the reader may not so readily recall to his memory any instance of Homer having given to his gods a stature far exceeding the human standard. I beg therefore, in addition to the passage above referred to relating to Mars, to remind him of the helmet of Minerva (Iliad, E. v. 744),

Κυτιη ἰκατοι πολιοι προλιισ' ἀκερικυαν'

beneath which the warriors of a hundred cities might conceal themselves; of the tremendous stride of Neptune (Iliad, N. v. 20); but, particularly, of those lines in the description of the shield, in which Mars and Minerva lead away the troops of the besieged city, (Iliad, X. v. 516—19.)

——— *"Ἐρχι δ' ἄρα σφι "Αρης και Παλλὰς 'Αθήνη,*

" Ἀμφυ χερσίοι, χροβυα δι εἰματα ἰσθνη,

Καλα και μεγαλω σὺν τιύχισσιν, δε τι θιόωτιε,

' Ἀμφις ἀριζήλων' λαοι δ' ὄπολιζοις ἦσαν.

Even the expositors of Homer, both ancient and modern, do not always seem to have borne sufficiently in mind this astonishing stature of his gods, if we may judge from the manner in which they think it necessary to explain away the size of Minerva's helmet. (See Clarke's *Ernesti's* edition of Homer at the above-cited passage.) We should lose infinitely on the score of sublimity, if we were always to regard the gods of Homer as of no greater size than that in which they usually appear on the canvass by the side of mortals. If it be not permitted to painting to give them these exalted proportions, yet sculpture may at least do it to a certain degree, and I am persuaded that the ancient masters borrowed from Homer, not only the general aspect of their gods, but also the colossal dimensions which they so often give to their statues. (Herodot. lib. ii. p. 130. Edit. Wessel.) I shall reserve for another opportunity some remarks on this colossal system in particular, and on the reason why it produces so great an effect in sculpture, and so little in painting.

NOTE 38.

Homer, it is true, occasionally envelops his divinities in a cloud, but this is only when they are desirous not to be seen by others of their own kind. For example, when Juno and Sleep *ἔπειτα ἰωάνησιν*, betake themselves to Ida, (*Iliad*. §. v. 282), the crafty goddess made it her peculiar care that she should not be discovered by Venus, from whom she had borrowed her girdle under pretence of making a totally different journey. In the same book

(v. 333), a golden cloud is drawn around the enamored Jupiter and his spouse;

Πῶς κ' ἴα, εἴ τις κῆρ' Διὸν αἰγιονόκον
 ἔβλεν' Ἀθηναίου. * * *

She was not afraid of being observed by men, but by the gods. And though, a few lines further on, Homer makes Jupiter say,

"Ἐγὼ, μήτις Διὸν τόγχι δίδουσι, μήτις εἰς' ἀνθρώπων,
 "Ὅψιθαι· ταῦτ' ἐν ἰγῶ' ἴφους ἀμφικαλύψω
 Σθένειον· * * * * *

yet we are not to understand from this that the cloud was required to hide her from mortal eyes, but only that it was to render her as invisible to the gods as she always was to men. Thus also, when Minerva puts on the helmet of Pluto (Iliad. E. v. 845), it is not to render herself invisible to the Trojans, (who either did not see her at all, or saw her only under the form of Sthenelus,) but merely to prevent Mars from recognising her.

NOTE 39.

Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade. Avert. p. v. "On est toujours convenu que, plus un Poëme fournissait d'images et d'actions, plus il avait de superiorité en Poësie. Cette reflexion m'avait conduit à penser que le calcul des differens Tableaux, qu'offrent les Poëmes, pouvait servir à comparer le mérite respectif des Poëmes et des Poëtes. Le nombre et le genre des Tableaux que presentent ces

grands ouvrages, auraient été une espèce de pierre de touche, ou plutôt une balance certaine du mérite de ces Poèmes et du génie de leurs Auteurs."

NOTE 40.

What we call poetic pictures, were termed by the ancients Phantasies, as we learn from Longinus; and what we call the illusion of those paintings, they called Enargia. It was on this account, as mentioned by Plutarch (Enot. t. ii., edit. Henr. Steph. p. 1351), that some one said, that poetic phantasæ were, from their enargia, like waking dreams; *ἀνὰ πικρῆναι φαντασίας διὰ τῆς ἐναργίας ἰσχυροτέρων ἰσχυρῶν ἔστιν*. I wish the modern writers on poetry had employed this term, and left the word picture alone entirely. They would thus have spared us a multitude of rules, half true, half false, which are chiefly grounded on the coincidence of an arbitrary name. Poetic phantasæ would not have been so readily subjected to the limits of a material picture; but to bestow on them the title of poetic pictures was the sure way to give rise to mistakes.

NOTE 41.

Prologue to the Satires, v. 340.

That not in Fancy's mase he wander'd long,
But stoop'd to truth, and moraliz'd his song.

Prologue to the Satires, v. 148.

* * * Who could take offence,
While pure description held the place of sauce?

The observation which Warburton makes on the latter passage may be considered as good as an authentic explanation by the poet himself: "he uses *pure* equivocally, to signify either chaste or empty; and has given in this line what he esteemed the true character of descriptive poetry, as it is called, a composition, in his opinion, as absurd as a feast made up of sauces. The use of a picturesque imagination is to brighten and adorn good sense; so that to employ it only in description is like children's delighting in a prism for the sake of its gaudy colors, which, when frugally managed and artfully disposed, might be made to represent and illustrate the noblest objects in nature." * Both the poet and his commentator appear, certainly, to have regarded the subject rather on its moral than its technical side. This, however, is an advantage, since the practice condemned by them appears equally absurd in both points of view.

 NOTE 42.

Poétique Française, t. ii. p. 501. "J'écrivais ces réflexions avant que les essais des Allemands dans ce genre (l'Éclogue) fussent connus parmi nous. Ils ont exécuté ce que j'avais conçu; et s'ils parviennent à donner plus au moral et moins au détail des peintures physiques, ils excelleront dans ce genre, plus riche, plus fécond, et infiniment

plus naturel et plus moral que celui de la galanterie champêtre."

NOTE 43.

I find that Servius makes another excuse for Virgil ; for Servius has also remarked the difference between the two shields,—“ sane interest inter hunc et Homeri clypeum : illic enim singula dum fiunt narrantur ; hic verò perfecto opere noscuntur : nam et hic arma priùs accipit Æneas, quam spectaret ; ibi postquam omnia narrata sunt, sic a Thetide deferuntur ad Achillem.” (ad. v. 625, lib. viii. Æneid.) Servius means that, as not only the more unimportant events which the poet relates, but

* * * Genus omne futura
Stirpis ab Ascanio, pugnataque in ordine bella,

were pictured on the shield, it would have been impossible for the poet, with the same celerity with which Vulcan performed his task, to have designated each individual of the long race of Ascanius, and to have mentioned all the wars carried on by them in their proper order. This is the signification of the somewhat obscure words of Servius ; “ Opportunè ergo Virgilius, quia non videtur simul et narrationis celeritas potuisse connecti, et opus tam velociter expediti, ut ad verbum posset occurrere.” The comparative brevity of Virgil’s explanation of the “ non enarrabile textum clypei,” he felt would have been but an inappropriate illustration of Vulcan’s labors during their progress, and he therefore thought it proper to reserve what he had

to say until the work was entirely completed. I should rejoice for Virgil's sake that this argument of Servius were entirely without foundation. The excuse I have offered would be far less discreditable to him; for who obliged him to introduce the whole Roman history within the space of a single shield? By means of a very few pictures, Homer contrived to make his shield convey an abstract of all that is passing in the world. Does it not seem as if Virgil, unable to excel the Greek in the subjects and the execution of the pictures, sought to surpass him at least in their numbers? Could anything be more puerile?

NOTE 44.

“*Scuto ejus, in quo Amazonum proelium cœlavit intumescente ambitu parmæ; ejusdem concavâ parte deorum et gigantum dimicationem.*” Plin. lib. xxxvi. sect. iv. p. 726. Edit. Hard.

NOTE 45.

	Line	Line
The first picture begins at	483d,	and ends at 489th,
- second	— 490th,	— 560th,
- third	— 510th,	— 549th,
- fourth	— 541st	— 540th,
- fifth	— 550th,	— 509th,

	Line		Line
The sixth picture begins at	561st,	and ends at	572d,
— seventh	— 573d,	—	586th,
— eighth	— 587th,	—	589th,
— ninth	— 590th,	—	605th,
— tenth	— 606th,	—	608th.

The third picture alone wants the introductory phrase, but it is sufficiently evident, both from the second, *ἡ δὲ δὴν κρητὴς πάλαι,* and from the nature of the thing itself, that it must have formed a separate picture.

NOTE 46.

This is by no means speaking in stronger terms than the occasion warrants. Pope has here committed a complete blunder in his use of the expression *aërial perspective*, which has nothing whatever to do with the diminution of objects on account of their distance from the eye, but applies solely to the weakening and alteration of the colors of objects by reason of the air, or the medium through which they are viewed. Nobody who knew anything at all of the subject, could ever have committed so great a blunder as this.

NOTE 47.

Constantinus Manasses, *Compend. Chron.* p. 20. Edit. Venet. Madame Dacier was very well pleased with this

portrait by Manasses, with the exception of the tautology it exhibits ;—“ de Helenæ pulchritudine omnium optimè Constantinus Manasses, nisi in eo tautologiam reprehendas.” (Ad Dictyn Cretensem, lib. i. cap. iii. p. 5.) The same authoress also quotes from Mezeriac (Comment. sur les Eptres d’Ovide, t. ii. p. 361,) the descriptions given by Dares Phrygius and Cedrenus of the beauty of Helen. In the former of these there occurs an expression which sounds rather oddly. Dares describes Helen as having a mark between her eyebrows, “notam inter duo supercilia habentem.” There was surely nothing beautiful in this? I wish the fair writer had given us her opinion on this point. For my part I look upon the word *nota* in this sentence as a corruption, and am of opinion that Dares alluded to what the Greeks called *μισοφρον*, and the Romans *glabella*. The eyebrows of Helen, he would say, did not run into each other, but were separated by a small space. The taste of the ancients was divided on this point. Some required a division of this kind, others did not. (Junius de Pict. Vet. lib. iii. cap. ix. p. 245.) Anacreon chose a middle course. The eyebrows of his beloved mistress were neither remarkably divided, nor did they quite run into each other. He thus directs the artist to paint them (Ode 28) :—

Το μισοφρον δι μη μοι
 Διαποσει, μητι μισγι,
 Εχισω δ’ ἴσως ἰκτινη
 Το λιληθστας σποφρον
 Βλιφκρον ἴτον κιλαινη.

Which is thus rendered according to Pauw’s reading,

though even with a different reading the signification is the same, and has not been missed by Stephanus :

Supercilli nigrantes
 Discrimina nec arcus,
 Confundito nec illos :
 Sed junge sic ut anceps
 Divortium relinquis,
 Quale esse cernis ipsi.

In order, then, to catch the true meaning of *Dares*, what word must we substitute for *notam* ? May it not be *moram* ? This at least is certain, that *mora* does not only signify an intervening space with regard to time, but also with reference to place. Thus,

“ Ego in quietâ montium jaceam morâ !”

is the wish which Seneca puts into the mouth of the raving Hercules (v. 1215). This passage is thus satisfactorily explained by Gronovius : “ Optat se medium jacere inter duas Symplegades, illarum velut moram, impedimentum, obicem ; qui eas moretur, vetet aut satis arcte conjungi, aut rursus distrahi.” In like manner we find the term “ lacertorum moræ,” employed by the same poet in the sense of “ juncturæ” (Schroederus, ad. v. 762, Thyest.)

NOTE 48.

Dialogo della Pittura, intitolato l'Aretino ; Firenze, 1735, p. 175. “ Se vogliono i Pittori senza fatica trovare un perfetto esempio di bella donna, leggano quelle stanze dell' Ariosto, nelle quale egli descrive mirabilmente le

bellezze della Fera Alcina ; é vedranno parimente, quanto i buoni Poete siano ancora essi Pittori.”

NOTE 49.

Ibid.—“ Ecco che, quanto alla proporzione, l'ingenuissimo Ariosto assegna la migliore che sappiano formar le mani de' più eccellenti Pittori, usando questa voce *industri*, per dinotar la diligenza che conviene al buono artefice.”

NOTE 50.

Ibid. p. 282. “ Qui l' Ariosto colorisce, é in questo suo colorire dimostra essere un Tiziano.”

NOTE 51.

Ibid. p. 180. “ Poteva l' Ariosto nella guisa che ha detto chioma bionda, dir chioma d'oro : ma gli parve forse che avrebbe avuto troppo del Poetico. Da che si può ritrar, che 'l Pittore dee imitar l'oro, e non metterlo (come fanno i Miniatori) nelle sue pitture, in modo che si possa dire, que' capelli non sono d'oro, ma par che risplendano come l'oro.” The quotation from Athenæus which follows

this passage in Dolce is only remarkable as not being exactly true to the original. I refer elsewhere to this subject.

NOTE 52.

Ibid. p. 182.—“ Il naso, che discende giù, avendo per avventura la considerazione a quelle forme de' nasi, che si veggono ne' ritratti delle belle Romane antiche.”

NOTE 53.

Pliny says of Apelles, (lib. xxxv. sect. 36), “ Fecit et Dianam sacrificantium virginum choro mixtam; quibus vicisse Homeri versus videtur id ipsum describentis.” Nothing could be more just than this compliment. Beautiful nymphs surrounding a beautiful goddess, whose majestic brow stands pre-eminent above them all, form indeed a subject fitter for painting than for poetry. I suspect, however, the word *sacrificantium* is an error. What should the goddess do among the sacrificing nymphs? And is this the employment which Homer allots to the playmates of Diana? By no means; they range with her through groves and over hills, they join in the chase, they play, they dance. (Odys. Z. v. 162—106.)

Ὀη δ' Ἀρταμῖς ἰσοί κατ' ὄψεις ἰσχυαίρα

ἢ κατὰ Τηθύριον περιμηκίον, ἢ Ἐρμῆνδον,

Τις τρωμενὴ κούρην καὶ αἰάνης ἰλαφούς·
 Τὴ δὲ Σ' ἄμα Νυμφῶν, κούρῃ Διὸς Ἀργυροχόου,
 Ἀργυροχόου παίζουσι·—————

It is therefore evident that Pliny did not intend to say *sacrificantium*, but *venantium*, or something of that sort; perhaps *sylvis vagantium*, which would contain about the same number of letters. *Saltantium* would approach nearest to Homer's *παίζουσι*, and, in fact, Virgil in his imitation of this passage, describes Diana as dancing with her nymphs. (*Æneid.* i. v. 497—98.)

Qualls in Eurotæ ripis, aut per juga Cynthi
 Exerret Diana choros.—————

Spence has a singular notion on this subject. (*Polym. Dial.* viii. p. 102.) "This Diana," he says, "both in the picture and in the descriptions, was the Diana Venatrix, though she was not represented either by Virgil, or Apelles, or Homer, as hunting with her nymphs, but as employed with them in that sort of dances, which of old were regarded as very solemn acts of devotion." He adds the following remarks in a note; "the expression *παίζουσι*, used by Homer on this occasion, is scarce proper for hunting; as that of *choros exercere*, in Virgil, should be understood of the religious dances of old, because dancing, in the old Roman idea of it, was indecent even for men in public; unless it were the sort of dances used in honor of Mars, or Bacchus, or some other of their gods." Spence conceives the allusion to apply to those festive dances which, among the ancients, formed part of the religious services. And it is thus that he explains the use of the word *sacrificare*; "it is in consequence of this that Pliny

in speaking of Diana's nymphs on this very occasion, uses the word *sacrificare* of them; which quite determines these dances of theirs to have been of the religious kind." He forgets that Virgil describes Diana herself as joining in the dance; *exercet Diana choros*. If then, it were a religious exercise, in whose honor did Diana perform it, that of herself or of some other divinity? Either way the idea is equally absurd. And though the ancient Romans considered dancing in general as not very becoming to a serious person, does it follow that their poets should attempt to transfer the gravity of their nation to the usages of their gods, which had been established by the ancient Greek poets in a totally different style? When Horace thus sings of Venus,

Jam Cytherea chorus ducit Venus, imminente lunâ ;
 Junctæque Nymphis Gratia decentes
 Alternò terram quatunt pede. ———

Had he any idea of alluding to a sacred religious dance?
 But I have wasted too many words on this idle whim.

NOTE 54.

Not Apollodorus, but Polydorus. Pliny is the only writer who makes mention of this artist, and I was not aware that the manuscripts varied in the spelling of the name. Harduin, one would think, would certainly have remarked this discrepancy, and at all events all the older editions have *Polydorus*. Winkelmann must certainly have made a mistake in this little matter.

NOTE 55.

He at least promises expressly to do so ;—“ quæ suis locis reddam.” But if he has not entirely forgotten this promise, he seems only to have performed it in a cursory way, and not in such a manner as his reader has been led to expect. When, for instance, he writes thus (lib. xxxv. sect. 39) : “ Lysippus quoque Æginæ picturæ suæ inscripsit *ἱκανοῦς* ; quod profectò non fecisset, nisi encaustica inventa,” it is manifest that he cites this expression as an example of a totally different thing. Had it been his intention, as Harduin supposes, to make it at the same time an example of one of those works, the inscription on which is distinguished by the aorist, it would surely have been worth his while to say so. The other two works of this kind are supposed by Harduin to be referred to in the following passage :—“ idem (Divus Augustus) in Curia quoque, quam in Comitio consecrabat, duas tabulas impressit parieti ; Nemeam sedentem supra leonem, palmigeram ipsam, adstante cum baculo sene, cujus supra caput tabula bigæ dependet. Nicias scripsit se inussisse ; tali enim usus est verbo. Alterius tabulæ admiratio est, puberem filium seni patri similem esse, salvâ ætatis differentiâ, supervolante aquilâ draconem complexâ. Philochares hoc suum opus esse testatus est.” (Lib. xxxv. sect. 10.) In this passage are described two different pictures which Augustus caused to be placed in the Senate house. The latter is by Philochares, the former by Nicias. What is said of the work of Philochares is clear and distinct ; but in the notice of the other there are some difficulties. It describes Nemea, sitting on a lion, with a palm branch in her hand, and an old man with a staff in his hand standing beside

her; "cujus supra caput tabula bigæ dependet." What does this mean? That the picture of a two-horse chariot hung upon his head? That is the only sense which can be attributed to these words. Was there then another smaller picture hung upon the principal one? And were both by Nicias? This is the way Harduin must have understood it; else how could he make out two pictures by Nicias, when the second is expressly ascribed to Philochares?" "Inscripsit Nicias igitur geminæ huic tabulæ suum nomen in hunc modum, 'O NIKIÆ 'ENEKATZEN; atque ideo è tribus operibus, quæ absolute fuisse inscripta, ILLE FECIT, indicavit præfatio ad Titum, duo hæc sunt Niciæ." I might here inquire of Harduin whether, supposing that Nicias had employed the imperfect tense, and not the aorist, and that Pliny had merely desired to remark that the artist had used the verb *ἔγραψεν* instead of *γράφειν*,—it would not be perfectly natural for him in such a case to express himself as he does in his own language, "Nicias scripsit se inussisse?" But on this point I will not rest; it may really have been Pliny's intention to distinguish thereby one of the works alluded to. But who will give credit to the two-fold picture, of which one hung over the other? Not I certainly. The words "cujus supra caput tabula bigæ dependet," must be a corruption of the text. "Tabula bigæ," a picture on which a two-horse chariot is painted, does not sound very like Pliny. And what sort of a two-horse chariot are we to understand? Perhaps it may be imagined that vehicles of this kind were employed in the races in the Nemæan games, and that this smaller picture was connected with the principal piece by the subject which it represented? But this cannot be; for in the Nemæan games, not two-

horse, but four-horse chariots were employed. (Schmidius in Prel. ad Nemeonias, p. 2.) It once occurred to me that, instead of the word *bigæ*, Pliny had perhaps made use of a Greek word, which the transcribers did not understand; I mean $\pi\tau\tau\chi\iota\sigma\tau\iota$. We learn from a passage of Antigonus Carystius, given in Zenobius (conf. Gronovius t. ix. Antiquit. Græc. Præf. p. 7,) that the ancient artists did not always inscribe their names on their works, but on separate small tablets which were hung on the pictures or statues. A tablet of this kind was called a $\pi\tau\tau\chi\iota\sigma\tau\iota$. This Greek word was perhaps in some manuscript or other explained by the Latin *tabula* or *tabella*, which was at last brought into the text. $\pi\tau\tau\chi\iota\sigma\tau\iota$ was next converted into *bigæ*, and thus *tabula bigæ* was formed. Nothing could be more agreeable to the sense of the subsequent passage than this word $\pi\tau\tau\chi\iota\sigma\tau\iota$; for there we find the words traced upon it. The whole passage would therefore read thus: "cujus supra caput $\pi\tau\tau\chi\iota\sigma\tau\iota$ dependet, quo Nicias scripsit se inussisse." This correction, however, I must acknowledge, is somewhat bold. But it would be hard to be bound to restore a text simply because one can show it to have been corrupted? I am therefore content to have done the latter, and resign the former to some more skilful hand. But, to return to the point at issue; if Pliny here speaks of only one picture by Nicias, the inscription on which is expressed in the aorist, and if the second picture distinguished in the same way is that of Lysippus above-mentioned, where, then, is the third? This is more than I can tell. If I had to seek it in some other ancient author, I should not be much at a loss. But it ought to be found in Pliny, and, I repeat, where to find it there I cannot tell.

NOTE 56.

Thus Statius says, "obnixa pectora" (*Thebaid*, lib. vi. v. 863),

"rumpunt obnixa furentes
Pectora,"

which the old commentator Barths explains by "summa vi contra nitentia."

NOTE 57.

Pa. ii. p. 328. "He brought out the *Antigone*, his first tragedy, in the third year of the seventy-seventh Olympiad." The period here mentioned is nearly correct, but that this first piece was the *Antigone*, is entirely a mistake. Samuel Petit, to whom Winkelmann refers in the Note, does not say so, but places the production of the *Antigone* expressly in the third year of the eighty-fourth Olympiad. It is well known that Sophocles went the following year with Pericles to Samos, and the period of that expedition can be with certainty determined. I have shown in my *Life of Sophocles*, by reference to a passage of the elder Pliny, that the first tragedy produced by that poet was most probably the *Triptolemus*. Pliny is speaking (*Libr. viii. sect. 12.*) of the different qualities of corn in various countries, and thus concludes; "Hæ fuere sententiæ, Alexandro Magno regnante, cum clarissima fuit Græcia, atque in toto terrarum orbe potentissima; ita tamen ut ante mortem ejus annis ferè cxlv Sophocles poeta

in fabulâ Triptolemo frumentum Italicum ante cuncta laudaverit, ad verbum translâtâ sententiâ :

Et fortunatam Italiam frumento caesere candido.

Now here, it is true, the first tragedy of Sophocles is not expressly mentioned, but its era, which Plutarch and the Scholiast, and the Arundelian Marbles all combine in placing in the seventy-seventh Olympiad, so exactly coincides with the period in which Pliny places the Triptolemus, that it is next to impossible not to feel satisfied that this must have been the work. Alexander died in the hundred-and-fourteenth Olympiad ; a hundred and forty-five years contain thirty-six Olympiads and one year, and this sum being deducted from the former, leaves seventy-seven. Thus we see that the date of the Triptolemus of Sophocles falls in the seventy-seventh Olympiad, and since his first tragedy falls also in the same Olympiad, and even, as I have shown, in the latter year of that Olympiad, the natural conclusion is, that those tragedies are one and the same. I have shown at the same time that Petit might have spared the entire half of the eighteenth chapter of his *Miscellanea*, lib. 3, the very chapter which Winkelmann cites. It is unnecessary, in the passage of Plutarch which he there attempts to improve, to convert the Archon Aphepsion into Demotion, or $\delta\epsilon\mu\psi\iota\omega\varsigma$. He had only to go from the third year of the seventy-seventh Olympiad to the fourth of the same, and he would have found that the Archon of that year was as often, if not oftener, called by the ancient writers Aphepsion as Phædon. He is called Phædon by Diodorus Siculus, by Dionysius Halicarnassensis, and by the anonymous author of the Catalogue of the Olympiads. On the contrary, he is called Aphepsion

in the Arundelian Marbles, and by Apollodorus, as well as by the author who quotes him, Diogenes Laertius. Plutarch, however, calls him by both names, viz. in his Life of Theseus, Phædon, and in that of Cimon, Aphepsion. It is therefore probable, as Palmerius supposes, that "Aphepsionem et Phædonem Archontas fuisse eponymos; scilicet uno in magistratu mortuo, suffectus fuit alter." (Exercit. p. 452.) I may also here observe by the way, that in his first work on the imitation of the Grecian works of art (p. 8,) Winkelmann was guilty of an inaccuracy with regard to Sophocles. "The handsomest youths," he says, "danced naked on the stage; and Sophocles, the great Sophocles, was the first to exhibit this spectacle in his younger days to his fellow-citizens." Sophocles never danced naked on the stage; it was around the trophies that he danced, after the Salaminian war, and even on that occasion he was, according to some authorities, clothed (Athen. lib. i. p. m. 20). Sophocles was among the number of the youths who were brought in safety to Salamis; and it was on that island that the tragic muse delighted to assemble her three favorites in a sort of prefiguring gradation. The bold Æschylus assisted in the ranks of the conquerors,—the blooming Sophocles danced around the trophies,—and Euripides was born on the favored island on the very day that the victory was won.

