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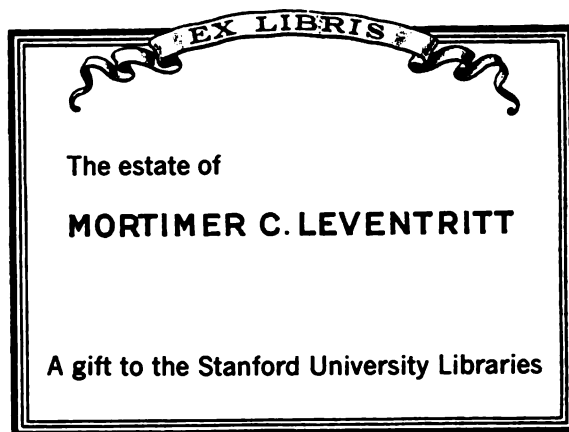
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ESSAY ON PAINTING- WRITTEN IN ITALIAN

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AN ESSAY ON PAINTING

WRITTEN IN ITALIAN

BY COUNT ALGAROTTI

F. R. S F. S. A

Καλὴ τὰ καλὰ.

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TO THE SOCIETY
INSTITUTED IN LONDON
FOR PROMOTING ARTS
MANUFACTURES COMMERCE
FRANCESCO ALGAROTTI

When Rome had extended her empire into Asia, Africa, and almost over all Europe, she saw her citizens arrived at the summit of military glory. In their pretensions to science, however, the Romans gave place to the Greeks, whom they revered

39-112
10

vered as their masters in the School of Arts.

England hath established her dominion by settling as numerous and more distant colonies; while conquest hath displayed the ensigns of her power, and extended her commerce throughout the whole world. Equally respectable in arts and arms, the English nation claims the superiority also in the world of Science; particularly with regard to the cultivation of those arts, which contribute most to the strength and splendour of a state. These are Agriculture and Architecture; one the sovereign mistress of the polite arts, the other a nursing mother to all. Painting, indeed, hath but recently engaged the attention of the English so far as to inspire them with a design of contending with the Italians, for those honours of which
the

the latter have long boasted an exclusive possession. The design is, nevertheless, become formidable, in being promoted by a Society, among whom superiority in place is only the tribute due to superior merit; a Society, instituted by a free people, and composed of the choicest public spirits of their age and country, who, while they generously encourage the best artists, excite emulation in others, by exhibiting the works of all to public view; therein appealing, even from their own judgment, to that of a learned, ingenious and sensible nation.

Under so distinguished a patronage, it is hardly possible this elegant art should not soon flourish in London, as it hath long done in the milder climates of Parma, Venice and Rome.

In the mean time, that I may not be wanting, in my best endeavours, to restore

storepainting to its former splendour in my own country, I have attempted, in this Essay, to investigate its first principles; and to point out those studies, which are requisite to form a compleat painter, all which the ancient masters, therefore, actually cultivated. What benefit may hence result to my countrymen, I presume not to determine: I am not conscious, however, of doing any thing with which I ought to reproach myself, altho', incapable of exciting their zeal, I should awaken so noble a spirit in the breasts of foreigners, or should even furnish them with the means of disputing with us, the prize in view. Motives of universal philanthropy ought, doubtless, to prevail over partial and local attachments to particular men or countries. Permit me also to add, that, if our Italian painters are soon to be excelled by the

the English, in the practice of their profession, it behoves us, at least, to shew that we are not inferior to any people in the world, in the knowledge of its theory: so that even our rivals may willingly be instructed by us in an art, which hath been the delight and study of every polished and ingenious nation, in all climates and in all ages.

Bologna, March 17, 1762.

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AN ESSAY ON PAINTING.

INTRODUCTION.

THAT so few excel in the sciences and liberal arts, must, I imagine, be principally attributed to the two following causes: one, the little care that parents generally take to apply their children to those studies, for which nature seems to have intended them; the other, the misfortune under which young people, even those left to the direction of nature, commonly labour, in not being led by the shortest and easiest roads to that perfection, which they are desirous of attaining.

To remove the first of these obstacles it were to be wished, that the destination of
 B children

2 INTRODUCTION.

children to this or that employment was no longer left to the caprice of simple and illiterate parents. Hence it is that no regard being paid

Al fondamento che Natura pone (1),.

as the poet expresses himself, we see so many men out of their element, and such numbers lost in the common crowd, who, had their genius been properly consulted, might have distinguished themselves greatly, and turned out a light and an ornament to civil society. It cannot, I suppose, be doubted, but that a youth must make the greatest progress in those studies, in which he is seconded by his natural disposition; and the slowest, on the other hand, in those, in which he is opposed by it, and is, of course, obliged to be continually fatiguing himself; working, as it were, against the current. It is evident therefore, that one of the principal objects of every government should be the chusing proper states of life for the major part of the rising gene-

(1) To the foundation laid by Nature.

ration:

INTRODUCTION. 3

ration: And a design of so much importance might, perhaps, in a great measure, be accomplished, were Princes but to place men of penetration in the public schools; in order to examine and trace out the various inclinations of the youth who frequent them. By laying before them, from time to time, instruments of mathematics, of war, of music, and, in short, of all the other arts and sciences; and by repeated trials of them in the use of these instruments, they should be forced and constrained to manifest their several geniusses, in the same manner that the artful Ulysses, by introducing glittering arms as well as precious jewels to the daughters of Lycomedes, found means of discovering Achilles, who lurked amongst them in the habit of a female (2).

THE first obstacle being thus removed, it will be proper to think of removing the second. This might be done by ordering the education of children in such a manner, that,

(2) Such methods, I find, are taken in Berlin, where a philosopher may consider himself at home, and in his own country.

B 2

like

4 INTRODUCTION.

like medicine in the treatment of disorders, it should be nothing more than a continual attention to second the indications of nature; to which end alone every thing should be directed. For, surely, nothing can be more absurd, than, for years together, equally to pursue the self-same method of education with boys destined to the gown, the sword, and the liberal arts; and, as is too commonly the case with us, make them indiscriminately learn those very things, which the greatest part of them ought, perhaps, when become men, to forget. The Romans, if we may believe Tacitus, applied their children wholly to arms, to eloquence, to the law, just as their natural inclinations led them (3). Now, if there is any art, which, besides a natural genius for it, requires a long, uninterrupted, and steady application, it is PAINTING: that art, in which the hand is freely to express the boldest and most beautiful conceptions of the fancy: that art, whose business it is to

(3) Et sive ad rem militarem, sive ad juris scientiam, sive ad eloquentiæ studium inclinasset, id universum hauriret. In Dial. de Orator. sive de causis corruptæ eloquentiæ.

give.

5 INTRODUCTION.

give relief to plain surfaces, light to dark ones, and distance to things under the very hand: to bestow, in a word, life and soul upon a piece of canvas, so as to impose upon our senses, and make us cry out with the poet, in a fit of wonder and amazement,

Non vide me' di me chi vide il vero:

He sees not better, nature's self who sees.

C H A P. I. OF THE FIRST EDUCATION OF A PAINTER.

IT would be madness to place a boy, who, after repeated trials, hath discovered a natural genius for Painting, in the usual track of study, and send him, with the common herd of children, to the Latin school. Instead of Latin, he should be made to learn thoroughly the rudiments of his own tongue; and instead of Cicero's epistles, he should be made to read Borghini, Baldinucci, Vafari. This method would be attended with two advantages; one, that of rendering him master of his mother tongue; and thereby freeing him from the disagreeable

B 3

necessity,

6 OF THE FIRST EDUCATION

necessity, under which many very celebrated painters have laboured, of having recourse to the pen of others, even to write their letters; the other, that of enriching his mind, at the same time, with several branches of knowledge useful to one of his professions. Besides, the frequent mention made in these books, of the great esteem in which Painting has been held by men in the highest spheres of life, by the Masters of the world; and of the great honours and rewards conferred by them, in every age, on the professors of that art, could not but prove a most powerful incentive to the zeal and diligence of a young painter.

It is not a matter of so little importance, as some are, perhaps, apt to imagine, upon what drawings a pupil is first put to exercise his talents. Let the first profiles, the first hands, the first feet given him to copy, be of the best masters, so as to bring his eye and his hand early acquainted with the most elegant forms, and the most beautiful proportions (4). A youth, employed in copying

(4) Stultissimum credo ad imitandum non optima quæque proponere. Plin. Lib. I. Epist. v.
the

OF A PAINTER. 7

the work of a middling painter, in order to proceed afterwards to something of Raphael's, having said in the hearing of a master, that he did it in order to bring his hand in; the master as sensibly as wittily replied, "say rather, to put it out." A painter, who has early acquired a fine stile, finds it an easy matter to give dignity to the meanest features, while even the works of a Praxiteles or a Glycon are sure to suffer in the hands of another. A vessel will ever retain the scent, which it has first contracted.

It would be proper also to make the pupil copy some fine heads from the Greek and Roman medals, not so much for the reasons just now laid down, as to make him

Et natura tenacissimi sumus eorum, quæ rudibus annis percipimus, ut sapor, quo nova imbuas, durat, nec lanarum colores, quibus simplex ille candor mutatus est, elui possunt, & hæc ipsa magis pertinaciter hærent, quæ deteriora sunt. Nam bona facile mutantur in pejora: nunc quando in bonum verteris vitia? Quintil. Instit. Orat. Lib. I. Cap. i.

Frangas citius quam corrigas quæ in pravum induruerunt. Id. ibid. Cap. iii.

B 4 acquainted,

6 OF THE FIRST EDUCATION, &c.

acquainted, if I may use the expression, with those personages, which in time he may have occasion to introduce into his pieces; and, above all, to improve him early in the art of copying from relief. Hence he will learn the rationale of light and shade, and the nature of that *chiaroscuro*, by which it is, properly speaking, that the various forms of things are distinguished. To this it is owing, that a boy will profit more by drawing after things in relief, though but meanly executed, than by copying the most excellent drawings. But, whatever he does, care should be taken to make him do it with delight, and finish it in the most accurate manner. Nothing in the world is so necessary as diligence, especially at the first entrance upon any study. Nor must He ever expect to have the compasses in his eye, who has not first had them for a long time in his hand.

C H A P.

[9]

C H A P. II. O F A N A T O M Y.

TO ask if the study of Anatomy is requisite to a painter, is the same thing as to ask if, in order to learn any science, a man must first make himself acquainted with the principles of it. It would be throwing away time to cite, in confirmation of this truth, the authorities of the ancient masters, and the most celebrated schools. A man, who is not acquainted with the form and construction of the several bones which support and govern the human frame, and does not know in what manner the muscles moving these bones are fixed to them, can make nothing of what appears of them through the integuments with which they are covered; and which appearance is, however, the noblest object of the pencil. It is impossible for a painter to copy faithfully what he sees, unless he thoroughly understands it. Let him employ ever so much time and study in the attempt, it cannot but be attended with many and great

great mistakes; just as it must happen to a man, who undertakes to copy something in a language which he does not understand, or to translate into his own, what has been written in another upon a subject, with which he is not acquainted.

It seldom happens, that nothing more is required of a painter than to copy exactly an object which he has before him. In still and very languid attitudes, in which every member is to appear motionless and dead, a living model may, no doubt, yield for a long time a faithful image, and prove an useful pattern to him. But in regard to gestures any way sudden, motions any way violent, or those momentary attitudes which it is more frequently the painter's business to express, the case is quite different. In these a living model can hold but an instant or two; it soon grows languid, and settles into a fixed attitude, which is produced by an instantaneous concurrence of the animal spirits. If, therefore, a painter possesses not so thoroughly all the principles of Anatomy, as to be at all times able to have immediate recourse to them; if he knows
not

not the various manners in which the several parts of the human body play, according to their various positions; living models, far from proving an useful pattern to him, will rather tend to lead him astray, and make him lose sight of truth and nature, by exhibiting the very reverse of what is required, or at least exhibiting it in a very faint and imperfect manner. In living models we often behold those parts slow which should be very quick; those cold and torpid, which should have the greatest share of life and spirit in them.

Nor is it, as some may be apt to imagine, merely to represent athletic and vigorous bodies, in which the parts are most bold and determined, that Anatomy is requisite: It should be understood, to represent persons of the most delicate frame and constitution, even women and children, whose members are smoothest and roundest, though the parts made known by it are not to be strongly expressed in such subjects; just as Logic is equally requisite under the polished insinuations of the orator, and the rough arguments of the philosopher.

BUT

BUT it is needless to spend much time in proving, that a painter should be acquainted with Anatomy; or in shewing, how far his acquaintance with it should extend. For instance, it is unnecessary for him to enter into the different systems of the nerves; blood vessels, bowels, and the like; parts, which are far removed from the sight, and which therefore may be left to the surgeon and the physician; as being a guide in the operations of the former, and in the prescriptions of the latter. It is enough for the painter to be acquainted with the skeleton: in other words, with the figure and connexion of the bones, which are, in a manner, the pillars and props of the human body; the origin, progress, and shape of the muscles, which cover these bones; as also the different degrees in which nature has clothed the muscles with fat: for this substance lies thicker upon them in some places than in others. Above all, he should know, in what manner the muscles effect the various motions and gestures of the body. A muscle

is

is composed of two tendinous and slender parts, one called the head, the other the tail, both terminating at the bones; and of an intermediate part, called the belly. The action of a muscle consists in an extraordinary swelling of this intermediate part, while the head remains at rest, so as to bring the tail nearer to the head, and consequently the part, to which the tail of the muscle is fixed, nearer to that part into which the head of it is inserted.

THERE are many motions, to effect which several of the muscles (for this reason called co-operating muscles) must swell and operate together, while those calculated to effect a contrary motion (and therefore called antagonist muscles) appear soft and flaccid: Thus, for example, the biceps and the brachizus internus labour, when the arm is to be bent, and become more prominent than usual, while the gemellus, the brachizus externus, and the anconæus, whose office is to extend the arm, continue, as it were, flat and idle. The same happens respectively in all the other motions of the body. When

the

the antagonist muscles of any part operate at one and the same time, such part becomes rigid and motionless. This action of the muscles is called tonic.

MICHAEL Angelo intended to have given the public a complete treatise upon this subject; and it is no small misfortune, that he never accomplished so useful a design. This great man, having observed, as we are told in his life by Condivi, that Albert Durer was deficient on the subject, as treating only of the various measures and forms of bodies, without saying a word of their attitudes and gestures, though things of much greater importance, resolved to compose a theory, founded upon his long practice, for the service of all future painters and statuaries. And, certainly, no one could be better qualified to give anatomical precepts for that purpose, than he, who, in competition with da Vinci, designed that famous cartoon of naked bodies, which was studied by Raphael himself, and afterwards obtained the approbation of the Vatican, the greatest school of the art we are now treating of.

THE

THE want of Michael Angelo's precepts may, in some measure, be supplied by other books written on the same subject by Moro, Cesio, and Tortebat; and lately by Bouchardon, one of the most famous statuaries in France. But nothing can be of equal service to a young painter, with the lessons of some able dissector, under whom, in a few months, he may make himself master of every branch of anatomy which he need to be acquainted with. A course of osteology is of no great length: and of the infinite number of muscles discovered by curious Myologists, there are not above eighty or ninety, with which nature sensibly operates all those motions, which he can ever have occasion to imitate or express. These, indeed, he should closely study; these he should carefully store up in his memory, so as never to be at the least loss for their proper figure, situation, office, and motion.

BUT there is another thing besides the dissection of dead bodies, by which a young painter may profit greatly; and that is, anatomical casts. Of these we have numbers by several

several authors; nay some, which pass under the name of Buonarroti himself. But there is one, in which, above all the rest, the parts are most distinctly and lively expressed. This is the performance of Hercules Lelli, who has, perhaps, gone greater lengths in this kind of study than any other master. We have, besides, by the same able hand, some casts of particular parts of the human body, so curiously coloured for the use of young painters, as to represent these parts exactly as they appear on removing the integuments; and thus, by the difference in their colour as well as configuration, render the tendinous and the fleshy parts, the belly and the extremities, of every muscle surprisingly distinct; at the same time that, by the various direction of the fibres, the motion and play of these muscles become very obvious; a work of the greatest use, and never enough to be commended! Perhaps, indeed, it would be an improvement, to give the muscles various tints; those muscles especially, which the pupil might be apt to mistake for others. For example, though the

the mastoides, the deltoides, the sartorius, the fascia lata, the gastrocnemji, are, of themselves, sufficiently distinguishable, it is not so with regard to the muscles of the arm and of the back, the right muscles of the belly, and some others, which, either on account of the many parts into which they branch, or of their being interwoven one with another, do not so clearly and fairly present themselves to the eye. But let the cause of confusion to young beginners be what it will, it may be effectually removed, by giving, as I have already hinted, different colours to the different muscles, and illumining anatomical figures, in the same manner that maps are, in order to enable us readily to distinguish the several provinces of every kingdom, and the several dominions of every Prince.

THE better to understand the general effect, and remember the number, situation, and play of the muscles, it will be proper to compare, now and then, the anatomical casts, and even the dead body itself, with the living body covered with its fat and skin; and, above all things, with the Greek statues still

18. OF ANATOMY.

in being. It was the peculiar happiness of the Greeks, to be able to characterize and express the several parts of the human body much better, than we can pretend to do; and this, on account of their particular application to the study of naked figures (5), especially the fine living ones, which they had continually before their eyes. It is well known, that the muscles most used are likewise the most protuberant and conspicuous; such as, in those who dance much, the muscles of the legs, and in boatmen the muscles of the back and arms. But the bodies of the Grecian youth, by means of their constant exertion of them in all the gymnastic sports, were so thoroughly exercised, as to supply the statuary with much more perfect models, than ours can pretend to be. It is not to be doubted, but that, for the same reason, the

(5) Græca res est nihil velare; at contra Romana ac militaris, thoraca addere. C. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. XXXIV. Cap. v.

That art, which challenges criticism, must always be superior to that which shuns it. Webb's Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting.

Greek

OF ANATOMY. 19

Greek painters attained the highest degree of perfection in the figures of those pieces of theirs so much cried up by ancient authors; and it is a great pity, that we have not even those copies of nature to direct our studies. For the faults observable in the ancient paintings, which have been dug up in great numbers, especially within these few years, do not so much tend to prove that the Greeks were any way deficient in this art, as the pieces themselves, taken all together, that they had carried it to the highest degree of perfection. For, if in pictures drawn upon walls, which it was therefore impossible to rescue from fire (6), and in little country towns, and at a time when the art was at

(6) Sed nulla gloria artificum est, nisi eorum qui tabulas pinxere: eoque venerabilior apparet antiquitas. Non enim parietes excolebant domus tantum, nec domus uno in loco mansuras, quæ ex incendiis rapi non possent. Casula Protogenes contentus erat in hortulo suo. Nulla in Apellis tectoris pictura erat. Omnis eorum ars urbis excubabat, pictorque res communis terrarum erat. C. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. XXXV. Cap. x.

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its lowest ebb (7), there appears, in the opinion of the best judges, such excellence of

(7) Difficile enim dictum est, quænam causa sit, curæ, quæ maxime sensus nostros impellunt voluptate, et specie prima acerrime commovent, ab iis celerrime fastidio quodam et satietate alienemur. Quanto colorum pulchritudine, et varietate floridiora sunt in picturis novis pleaque, quam in veteribus? quæ tamen etiam primo adspectu nos ceperunt, diutius non delectant; cum iidem nos in antiquis tabulis illo ipso horrido, obsoletoque teneamur. Quanto molliores sunt, et deliciores in cantu flexiones, et falsæ vocalæ, quam certæ, et severæ? quibus tamen non modo austeri, sed si sæpius sunt, multitudo ipsa reclamatur. Cic. de Oratore, Lib. III. Art. xxv.

Ἦν δὲ μᾶλλον ἡ διαφορὰ τῶν ἀνθρῶ γίνεσθαι καλῶς, ἢ καὶ χρῆσθαι τῶν ἡρώδων τῶν. αἱ δὲ τῶν ἀρχαίων γραφαὶ χρώμασι εἰρησμέναι ἀσπλῆς, καὶ ἰσοδύναμοι τοῖς χρώμασι ἔχουσιν ἀσπλῆς, ἀσπλῆς δὲ ταῖς γραμμαῖς, ἢ πάλιν τὸ χρῶμα τοῖς ἀσπλῆς ἔχουσιν, αἱ δὲ μὴ ἰσῆς ἔχουσιν μὴ ἔσθαι, ἔχουσιν δὲ μᾶλλον, οὐκ αἱ δὲ πρὸς ἀσπλῆς, καὶ ἐν τῇ πλάτῃ τῶν μεγάλων τῶν ἰσῆς ἔχουσιν. τούτων μὲν δὲ ταῖς ἀρχαίαις ἰσῆς δὲ ἀσπλῆς καὶ τὸ ἀσπλῆς ἢ τὸ χρῶμα ταῖς δὲ ἰσῆς ἔχουσιν τῇ ἢ τῇ πλάτῃ δὲ ἰσῆς. Dion. Halicarn. in Iudicio de Iſaco, Art. iv.

design.

design, colouring, and composition, that one would be apt to attribute most of them to

Vel quum Pauſiaca torpes insane tabella,
Subtilis veterum iudex & callidus audis.

Horat. Lib. II. Sat. vii.

Sed hæc quæ a veteribus ex veris rebus exempla sumebantur, nunc iniquis moribus improbantur. Nam pinguntur testoriis monstra potius, quam ex rebus finitis imagines certæ. Sed quare vincat veritatem ratio falsa, non erit alienum exponere. Quod enim antiqui insumentes laborem & industriam, probare contendebant artibus, id nunc coloribus, & eorum eleganti specie consequuntur: & quam subtilitas artificis adiciebat operibus auctoritatem, nunc dominicus sumptus efficit ne desideretur. Quis enim antiquorum, non uti medicamento, minio paræ videtur usus esse? At nunc passim plerumque toti parietes inducuntur. Accedit huc chrysocolla, ostrum, armenium: hæc vero cum inducuntur, etsi non ab arte sunt posita, fulgentes tamen oculorum reddunt visus & ideo quod pretiosa sunt, legibus excipiuntur, ut a domino, non a redemptore represententur. Vitruv. Lib. VII. Cap. v.

Et inter hæc pinacothecas veteribus tabulis consuunt

Artes desidia perdidit.

C. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. XXXV. Cap. ii.
Hæc tunc dictum sit de dignitate artis morientia.

Id. ibid. Cap. v.

the

the school of Raphael; what must we think of the pictures drawn at an earlier period, by their ablest masters, and for their most flourishing cities and most powerful monarchs; of pictures admired in a country like Greece, where every art was brought to such a degree of perfection, that no passion could resist their musick, no sentiments escape their mimick arts; of pictures cried up by a Pliny, the soundness of whose judgment in matters of this kind displays itself in so many passages of his works (8); collected at such expence by

Nunc & purpuris in parietes migrantibus, & India conferente fluminum suorum limum, & draconum & elephantorum saniem, nulla nobilis pictura est. Id. ibid. Cap. vii.

Erectus his sermonibus consulere prudentiorem ceppi ætates tabularum, & quædam argumenta mihi obscura, simulque causam desidie præsentis excutere, cur pulcherrimæ artes perissent, inter quas pictura ne minimum quidem sui vestigium reliquisset. T. Petronii Satyr. Cap. lxxviii.

(8) Sicut in Laocoonte, qui est in Titi Imperatoris domo, opus omnibus & picturæ & statuaræ artis præponendum. Ex uno lapide eum, & liberos, draconumque mirabiles nexu de con-
Julius

Julius Cæsar (9), of whose fine taste the works composed by him, and still extant, are a most incontestable proof. But what evinces still better the excellence of the ancients in painting, is that to which they arrived in statuary, her sister art. Both daughters of design, they both enjoyed in common the same models, which, more perfect in the happy climate of Greece than in any other part of the globe, must have been of as great service to the Apelles' and the Zeuxis', in the drawing of their figures, as they were to the Apollonius's, the Glycons, and the Agasies, in carving those statues, which the world has still the happiness of possessing. These masters, being besides assisted by a proper insight into anatomy, and thoroughly acquainted with the various play of the muscles according to the various attitudes of the body, and with the different degrees of

fili sententia fecere summi artifices, Agæfander, & Polydorus, & Athenodorus Rhodii, &c.

C. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. XXXVI. Cap. v.

(9) Gemmas, torcumata, signa, tabulas operis antiqui semper animosissime comparasse.

Sueton. in C. Jul. Cæsare Cap. xlviii.

24 OF ANATOMY.

strength with which each particular muscle was to be expressed in each particular attitude, were thereby enabled to give truth, motion, and life, to all their works.

THERE are a great many exercises, which a young painter should go through while engaged in the study of anatomy, in order to make himself more thoroughly master of that science. For example: the thighs of any figure, a Laocoon for instance, being given, he should add to them legs suitable to that state, in which the muscles of the thighs are represented, I mean, the muscles which serve to bend and extend the legs, and to effectuate in them such a precise position and no other. To the simple contour of an anatomy, or a statue, he should add the parts included by it, and give it a system of muscles conformable to the quality of that particular contour; for every contour denotes some one certain attitude, motion, exertion; and no other. Exercises of this kind would soon establish him in the most fundamental principles of painting, especially if he had an opportunity of comparing his drawings with the statue or cast, from which the parts given him to work
upon

OF PERSPECTIVE. 25

upon were taken, and thereby discovering and correcting his mistakes. This method is very like that used by those who teach the Latin tongue; when, having given their scholars a passage of Livy or Cæsar already translated into their mother tongue, to translate back into Latin, they make them compare their work with the original text.

CHAP. III.

OF PERSPECTIVE.

THE study of Perspective should go hand in hand with that of Anatomy, as not less fundamental and necessary. In fact, the contour of an object drawn upon paper or canvas, represents nothing more than such an intersection of the visual rays sent from the extremities of it to the eye, as would arise on a glass put in the place of the paper or canvas. Now, the situation of an object at the other side of a glass being given, the delineation of it on the glass itself depends entirely on the situation of the eye on this side of the glass, that is to say, on the rules of Perspective; a science, which, contrary

26 OF PERSPECTIVE.

trary to the opinion of most people, extends much farther than the painting of scenes, floors, and what generally goes under the name of *Quadratura*. Perspective, according to that great master da Vinci, is to be considered as the reins and rudder of Painting. It teaches in what proportion the parts fly from, and lessen upon, the eye; how figures are to be marshalled upon a plain surface, and foreshortened. It contains, in short, the whole rationale of design.

SUCH are the terms, which the masters, best grounded in their profession, have employed to define and commend perspective; so far were they from calling it a fallacious art, and an insidious guide; as some amongst the moderns have not blushed to do, insisting that it is to be followed no longer than it keeps the high road, or leads by easy and pleasant paths (1). But these writers plainly shew, that they are equally ignorant of the nature of perspective, which, founded as it is on

(1) *Regula certa licet nequeat Prospectica dici,
Aut Complementum Graphidos; sed in
Arte Juvamen,*

*Et modus accelerans operandi, at corpora falso
Sub visa in multis referens, mendosa labascit:
geometrical*

OF PERSPECTIVE. 27

geometrical principles, can never lead its votaries astray, and of the nature of their art, which, without the assistance of perspective, cannot, in rigour, expect to make any progress, nay, not so much as delineate a simple contour.

THOSE, too, who would persuade us, that the ancient masters of Greece knew nothing of perspective, shew, that they themselves know little or nothing of painting. They allege, as a proof of this their idle assertion, that the rules of perspective are violated in most of the ancient pictures that have reached us; as though the mistakes and blunders of middling artists were a sufficient ground for calling in question the merit of others, who were allowed to excel in their profession. Now, not to insist on the absurdity of such a supposition, which we have already exposed, Pamphilus, the master of Apelles, and the founder of the noblest school of all Greece, has affirmed

*Nam Geometralem nunquam sunt corpora
juxta*

*Mensuram depicta oculis, sed qualia visa:
Du Fresnoy de Arte Graphica.*

See the annotations of Monsieur de Piles on these lines, and every other modern treatise.

in

in the most express terms, that, without geometry, painting must fall to the ground (2). It is well known, besides, that the ancients practised the art of painting in perspective upon walls, in the same way that it is now done by the moderns (3); and that one of the walls of the theatre of Claudius Pulcher, representing a roof covered with tiles, was finished in so masterly a manner, that the rooks, a bird of no small sagacity, taking it for a real roof, often attempted to alight

(2) Ipse (Pamphilus) Macedo natione, sed primus in pictura omnibus litteris eruditus, præcipue Arithmetica, & Geometrica. sine quibus negabat artem perfici posse. C. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. XXXV. Cap. x.

(3) Ex eo antiqui, qui initia expolitionibus instituerant, imitati sunt primum crustarum marmorcarum varietates & collocationes, deinde colorum, & filaceorum, miniacorumque cunorum inter se varias distributiones. Postea ingressi sunt, ut etiam ædificiorum figuras, columnarumque, & fastigiorum eminentes projectiones imitarentur: patentibus autem locis, aut exedris, propter amplitudinem parietum, scenarum frontes Tragico more, aut Comico, seu Satyrico designarent. Vitruv. Lib. VII. Cap. v.

upon

upon it (4). We are likewise told, that a dog was deceived to such a degree, by certain steps in a perspective of Dento's, that, expecting to find a free passage, he made up to them in full speed, and dashed out his brains; thus immortalising by his death the pencil of the artist, which had been the occasion of it. But, what is still more, Vitruvius tells us in express terms, by whom, and at what time this art was invented. It was first practised by Agatharcus, a contemporary of Æschylus, in the theatre of Athens; and afterwards reduced to certain principles, and treated as a science by Anaxagoras and Democritus (5); thus faring like all other arts,

(4) Habuit & scena ludis Claudii Pulcri magnam admirationem picturæ, cum ad regularum similitudinem corvi decepti imagine advolarent. C. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. XXXV. Cap. iv.

(5) Namque primum Agatharchus Athenis Æschylo docente tragediam; scenam fecit, & de eo commentarium reliquit. Ex eo moniti Democritus & Anaxagoras, de eadem re scripserunt, quemadmodum oporteat adiaciem oculorum radiorumque extensionem, certo loco centro constituto ad lineas ratione naturali respondere:

which;

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which existed in practice before they appeared in theory. The thing, I think, may be thus accounted for. Some painter, who happened to be a very accurate observer of nature; first exactly represented those effects which he saw constantly attend the images offered to our eyes by exterior objects; and these effects came afterwards to be demonstrated by geometricians as so many necessary consequences, and reduced to certain theorems: just as from those chef d'œuvres of the human mind, the Iliad of Homer and the Œdipus of Sophocles, both built on the most accurate observations of nature, Aristotle found means to extract the rules and precepts contained in his art of poetry. It is therefore clear, that, so early as the age of Pericles, perspective was reduced into a compleat sci-

uti de incerta re certæ imagines ædificiorum in scenarum picturis redderent speciem: & quæ in directis planisque frontibus sint figuratæ, alia abscedentia, alia prominentia esse videantur. Vitruv. in Præf. Lib. VII. You may likewise consult Discours sur la Perspective de l'antienne peinture ou sculpture, par Mr. l'Abbé Sallier. Tom. viii. Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions.

ence;

OF PERSPECTIVE. 31

ence; which no longer continued confined to the theatre, but made its way into the schools of painting, as an art not less necessary to painters in general, than it had been found to scene-painters in particular. Pamphilus, who founded in Sicily the most flourishing school of design, taught it publickly: And from the time of Apelles, Protogenes, and the other bright luminaries of painting amongst the ancients, it was practised by the Greek painters, in the same manner that it was, so many ages after, by Bellini, Pietro Perugino, and others, down to the days of Titian, Raphael, and Corregio, who put the last hand to painting, and gave it all that perfection it was capable of receiving.

Now, a painter having formed a scene in his mind, and supposed, as is customary, that the capital-figures of this scene lie close, or almost close to the back of his canvas, he is, in the next place, to fix upon some point on this side of the canvas, from which he would chuse his piece should be seen. But in chusing this point, which is called the point of sight, regard should be had to its situation to the

32 OF PERSPECTIVE.

the right or left of the middle of the canvas ; but, above all things, to its distance and its height with respect to the lower edge of the canvas ; which edge is called the base line, and is parallel with the horizontal line that passes through the eye. For by assuming the point of sight, and consequently the horizontal line, too low, the planes, upon which the figures stand, will appear a great deal too shallow, as, by assuming it too high, they will appear too steep, so as to render the piece far less light and airy than it ought to be. In like manner, if the point of sight is taken at too great a distance from the canvas, the figures will not admit of degradation enough to be seen with sufficient distinctness ; and if taken too near it, the degradation will be too quick and precipitate to have an agreeable effect. Thus, then, it appears, that no small attention is requisite in the choice of this point.

WHEN a picture is to be placed on high, the point of sight should be assumed low, and vice versa, in order that the horizontal
ine

OF PERSPECTIVE. 33

line of the picture may be, as near as possible, in the same horizontal plane with that of the spectator ; for this disposition has an amazing effect. When a picture is to be placed very high, as, amongst many others, that of the Purification by Paolo Veronese, engraved by le Fevre, it will be proper to assume the point of sight so low, that it may lie quite under the picture, no part of whose ground is, in that case, to be visible ; for were the point of sight to be taken above the picture, the horizontal ground of it would appear sloping to the eye, and both figures and buildings as ready to tumble head foremost. It is true, indeed, that there is seldom any necessity for such extraordinary exactness, and that, unless in some particular cases, the point of sight had better be rather high than low ; the reason of which is, that, as we are more accustomed to behold people on the same plane with ourselves, than either higher or lower, the figures of a piece must strike us most, when standing on a plane nearly level with that, upon which we ourselves stand. To this it may

D be

34 OF PERSPECTIVE.

be added, that by placing the eye low, and greatly shortening the plane, the heels of the back figures will seem to bear against the heads of the foremost, so as to render the distance between them far less perceptible than it otherwise would be.

THE point of sight being fixed upon, according to the situation in which the picture is to be placed, the point of distance is next to be determined. In doing this, a painter should carefully attend to three things: first, that the spectator may be able to take in, at one glance, the whole and every part of the composition; secondly, that he may see it distinctly; and, thirdly, that the degradation of the figures, and other objects of the picture be sufficiently sensible. It would take up too much time to lay down certain and precise rules for doing all this, considering the great variety in the sizes and shapes of pictures; for which reason I must leave a great deal to the discretion of the painter.

BUT there is a point still remaining, which will not admit of the least latitude. This is,
the

OF PERSPECTIVE. 35

the delineation of the picture, when once the point of sight has been fixed upon. The figures of a picture are to be considered as so many columns erected on different spots of the same plane; and the painter must not think of designing any thing, till he has laid down, in perspective, all those columns, which are to enter his composition, with the most scrupulous exactness. By proceeding in this manner, he may not only be sure of not committing any mistake in the diminution of his figures, according to their different distances, but may flatter himself with the thoughts of treading in the steps of the greatest masters, especially Raphael, in whose sketches (such was his respect for the laws of perspective) we frequently meet with a scale of degradation (6). It is to the punctual observance of these laws, that we are to attribute the grand effect of some paintings by Carpazio and Mantegna, so careless in other respects; whereas a single fault against them is often sufficient entirely to spoil the works of a

(6) Mr. de Pile. *Idée du Peintre parfait*,
Ch. xix.

D 2

Guido,

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Guido, in spite of the sublimity and beauty of his superior stile.

Now, as the demonstration of the rules of Perspective depends on the doctrine of proportions, on the properties of similar triangles, and on the intersection of planes, it will be proper to put an abridgment of Euclid into the hands of the young painter, that he may understand these rules fundamentally, and not stand confined to a blind practice of them: But, then, there is nothing in this author relative to the art of painting, which may not be easily acquired in a few months. For, as it would be of no use to a painter to launch out into the anatomical depths of a Monro or an Albinus, it would be equally superfluous to perplex himself with the intricacies of the higher geometry with a Taylor, who has handled perspective with that rich profoundness, which, I cannot help thinking, does a great deal more honour to a mathematician, than it can possibly bring advantage to a simple artist.

BUT though a much longer time were requisite to become a perfect master of perspective,

OF PERSPECTIVE. 37

perspective, a painter, surely, ought not to grudge it, as no time can be too long to acquire that knowledge, without which he cannot possibly expect to succeed. Nay, I may boldly affirm, that the shortest road in every art is that which leads through theory to practice. It is from theory that arises that great facility, by means of which a man advances the quicker, in proportion as he is surer of not taking a wrong step: whilst those, who are not grounded in the science, labour on in perpetual doubt, obliged, as a certain author expresses it, to feel out their way with the pencil, just as the blind, with their sticks, feel for the streets and turnings, with which they are not acquainted.

As practice, therefore, ought in every thing to be built upon principle, the study of Opticks, as far as it is requisite to determine the degree in which objects are to be illuminated or shaded, should proceed hand in hand with that of perspective. And this, in order that the shades, cast by figures upon the planes on which they stand, may fall properly, and be neither too strong nor too

D 3 light;

light; in a word, that those most beautiful effects of the chiaroscuro may run no risk of ever receiving the lie from truth, which, sooner or later, discovers itself to every eye.

CHAP. IV. OF SYMMETRY.

THE study of Symmetry, it is obvious, should immediately follow that of Anatomy: for it would avail us little to be acquainted with the different parts of the human body, and their several offices, were we, at the same time, ignorant of the order and proportion of these parts in regard to the whole in general, and each other in particular. The Greek statuary distinguished themselves above all others, as much by the just symmetry of their members, as by their skill in anatomy; but Polycletes surpassed them all by a statue, called the Rule, from which, as from a most accurate pattern, other artists might take measures for every part of the human body (7). These measures, to say

(7) *Fecit (Polycletus) & quem Canona artis, sces vocant, lineamenta Artis ex eo petentes,* nothing

nothing of the books which treat professedly of them, may now be derived from the Apollo of Belvedere, the Laocoon, the Venus of Medicis, the Faunus, and particularly the Antinous, which last was the rule of the learned Poussin.

NATURE, which in the formation of every species seems to have aimed at the last degree of perfection, does not appear to have been equally solicitous in the production of individuals. She considers, one would think, those things as nothing, which have a beginning and an end, and whose existence is of so short a duration, that they may be said, in a manner, to come into the world merely to leave it. She seems, in some sort, to abandon individuals to second causes; and if from them there now and then breaks forth a primitive ray of perfection, it is too soon eclipsed by the clouds of imperfection that constantly attend it. Now, art soars up to the archetypes of nature; collects the flowers of every beauty;

velut a lege quadam; solusque hominum artem ipse secisse, artis opere judicatur. C. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. XXXIV. Cap. viii.

D 4

which

which it here and there meets with; combines all the perfect models that come in its way; and proposes them to men for their imitation (8). Thus, the painter, who had before him a company of naked Calabrian girls, traced, as la Casa ingeniously expresses it (9), the respective beauties which they had, as it were, borrowed from one single body; that, by making each of them restore to this imaginary form what she had borrowed from it, he might be furnished with a compleat pattern; rightly

(8) And since a true knowledge of nature gives us pleasure, a lively imitation of it, either in Poetry or Painting, must of necessity produce a much greater. For both these arts, as I said before, are not only true imitations of Nature, but of the best nature; of that which is wrought up to a nobler pitch. They present us with images more perfect than the life in any individual: and we have the pleasure to see all the scattered beauties of Nature united, by a happy Chemistry, without its deformities or faults. Dryden's Preface to his translation of Du Fresnoy's Art of Painting.

(9) In Galatea.—See also the Life of Zeuxis, by Carlo Dati, note xi.

imagining

imagining, that from such an union, and of such beauties, must result the beauty of an Helen. This was likewise the practice of the ancient statuary, when about to form in brass or marble the statues of their Gods or heroes. And, thanks to the hardness of these materials, some of their works, containing united all that possible perfection, which could be found scattered here and there in individuals, subsist to this day as patterns not only of exact symmetry, but of supereminent grandeur in the parts, gracefulness and contrast in the attitudes, nobleness in the characters, they subsist, in short, as paragons in every kind, and the very mirrors of beauty (1).

(1) Ἡ Θιδὴ ἄλλ' ἐπὶ γὰρ εἰς ἑαυτοῦ εἰκόνα διέζωτο,
Φιδία, ἣ σὺν ἔκαστῳ τῶν Θεῶν ἐβόησεν. Anthol.

Nec vero ille artifex, cum faceret Jovis formam, aut Minervæ, contemplabatur aliquem, a quo similitudinem duceret, sed ipse in mente infidebat species pulchritudinis eximia quædam, quam intuens, in eaque defixus, ad illius similitudinem artem & manum dirigebat. Cic. Orator. Art. ii.

Ex ære præter Amazonem supra dictam (fecit Phidias) Minervam tam eximie pulchritudinis, ut formæ cognomen acceperit. C. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. XXXIV. Cap. viii. In

In them we behold precept joined with example; in them we see where the great Masters of Antiquity deviated with a happy boldness from the common rules; or rather made them bend to the different characters they were to represent. In their Niobe, for instance, which was to breathe majesty like Juno, they have altered some parts, that appear more delicate and slender in their Venus, the pattern of female beauty. The legs and thighs of the Apollo of Belvidere, by being made somewhat longer, than the common proportion of these limbs to the rest of the body seems to admit, contribute not a little to give him that ease and freedom, which correspond so well with the activity attributed to that deity, as, on the other hand, the extraordinary thickness of the neck adds strength to the Farnesian Hercules, and gives him something of a bull-like look and robustness.

It is the general opinion of painters, that the ancients were not as happy in representing the bodies of children, as they are allowed to have been in representing those of women and men; especially those of their Gods; in which they excelled to such a degree, that
with

with these Gods were often worshipped the artists who had carved them (2). Yet the Venus of Gnidos by Praxiteles was not more famous than her Cupid, on whose account alone people flocked to Thespiaz (3). To children, say they, the ancients knew not how to impart that softness and effeminacy, which Fiammingo has since contrived to give them by representing their cheeks, hands and feet somewhat swelled, their heads large, and with scarce any belly. But such Criticks seem to forget, that these first sketches of nature very seldom come in the painter's way, and that this puny and delicate state has not in its form even the least glimmering of perfection. The Ancients never undertook to

(2) *προσποιήσας γὰρ ἵσταν μὲν τῶν θεῶν.* Lucian. in Somnio.

(3) Idem, opinor, artifex (Praxiteles) ejusdem modi Cupidinem fecit illum, qui est Thespiis, propter quem Thespiæ visuntur. Nam alia visendi causa nulla est. Cic. in Verrem, de Signis.

Αἱ δὲ θειοτάται ἀρίστην ἰσχυρίσθη δὲ τὸ ἔργον τὸ Πραξιτέλους, &c. Strabo, Lib. IX.

Ejusdem est & Cupido objectus a Cicerone Verri: ille propter quem Thespiæ visebantur; nunc in Octaviæ scholis positus. C. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. XXXVI. Cap. v.

represent

represent children less than four or five years old; at which age the superfluous humours of the body being in some measure digested, their members begin to assume such a contour and proportion, as may serve to point out, what they are afterwards likely to be. This observation is confirmed by the children, which we meet with in ancient basso relievos and paintings, for they are all doing one thing or another, like those most beautiful little Cupids in a picture at Venice, who are playing with the arms of Mars, and lifting up the ponderous sword of that Deity; or that little urchin in the Danae of Caracci, who empties a quiver of its arrows, in order to fill it with the golden shower. Now, what can be a greater blunder in point of Costume than to attribute actions, which require some degree of strength and judgement, to infancy, to that raw and tender age, so totally unable to govern and support itself (4),

LET a young painter consider the Greek statues ever so often, of whatever character

(4) See Bellori in his lives of Fiammingo and Algardi.

or

or age they may be represented, it is impossible he should ever consider them

Che non ci scorga in lor nuova bellezza (5);

It is, therefore, impossible he should copy them too often, according to that judicious motto placed by Marotti on his Print called the School. This truth was acknowledged by Rubens himself; for though, like one bred, as he was, in the foggy climate of the Low Countries, he generally painted from the life; in some of his works he copied the ancients: Nay, he wrote a treatise on the excellency of the ancient statues, and on the duty of a painter to study and imitate them. As to the satirical print or rather pastichade of the great Titian, in which he has represented a parcel of young monkies aping the groupe of Laocoon and his sons, he intended nothing more by it than to lash the dulness and poverty of those artists, who cannot so much as draw a figure without having a statue before them as a model.

IN fact, reason requires, that an artist should be so much master of his art, as sel-

(5) Without discovering new beauties in them.

dom

dom to stand in any need of a pattern. To what other purpose is he to sweat and toil from his infancy, and spend so many days and nights in studying and copying the best models; especially the finest faces of antiquity, which we are still possessed of; such as the two Niobes, mother and daughter; the Ariadne; the Alexander; the young Nero; the Silenus; the Nile; and likewise the finest figures; for instance, the Apollo; the Gladiator; the Venus; and others; all which (as was said of Pietro Fesla,) he should have, as it were, perfectly by heart. With a stock of excellencies like these, treasured up in his memory, he may one day hope to produce something of his own without a model; form a right judgment of those natural beauties which fall in his way, and, when an occasion offers, avail himself properly of them.

It is very ill done to send boys to an academy to draw after naked figures, before they have imbibed a proper relish for beautiful proportions, and have been well grounded in the true principles of symmetry. They should first learn, by studying the precious remains of antiquity, to improve upon life; and

and discern where a natural figure is faulty through stiffness in the members, or clumsiness in the trunk, or in any other respect; so as to be able to correct the faulty part, and reduce it to its proper bounds. Painting, in this branch, is, like Medicine, the art of taking away and adding.

I MUST not, however, dissemble, that the methods, hitherto laid down, are attended with some danger; for by too slavish an attention to statues, the young painter may contract a hard and dry manner; and by studying anatomies too servilely, a habit of representing living bodies as stripped of their skin; for, after all, there is nothing but what is natural, that, besides a certain peculiar grace and liveliness, possesses that simplicity, ease and softness, which is not to be expected in the works of art, or even those of nature when deprived of life (6). Poussin himself has now and then given into one of these extremes, and Michael Angelo very often into the other: But from this we can

(6) See the Discourse by Vasari at the end of his lives.

only

only infer, that even the greatest men are not infallible. It is in short to be considered as one instance, among a thousand, of the ill use those are wont to make of the best things, who do not know how to temper and qualify them properly with their contraries.

BUT no such danger can arise to a young painter from confining himself for a long time to mere design, so as not to attempt colouring, till he has made himself master of that branch. If, according to a great Master (7), colours in painting are in regard to the eye, what numbers in poetry are in regard to the ear, so many charms to allure and captivate that sense; may we not affirm, that design is in the same art, what propriety of language is in writing, and a just utterance of sounds in musick. Whatever some people may think, a picture designed according to the rules of Perspective, and the principles of Anatomy, will ever be held in higher esteem by good judges, than a picture ill designed, let it be ever so well coloured. Another very able

(7) Poussin; in his life by Bellori.
master

master set so great a value upon the art of contour, that, according to some expressions of his which have reached us, he considered almost every thing else as nothing in comparison with it (7). And this his judgment may, I think, be justified by considering, that Nature, though she forms men of various colours and complexions, never operates in their motions contrary to the mechanical principles of Anatomy, nor, in exhibiting these motions to the eye, against the geometrical laws of Perspective; a plain proof, that, in point of design, no mistake is to be deemed trifling. Hence we are enabled to feel all the weight of those words, in which Michael Angelo, after he had considered a picture drawn by the Prince of the Venetian School, addressed Vasari. "What a pity it is, said he, that this man did not set out by studying design (8)." As the energy of nature

(7) Annibal Caracci used to say, Buon contorno, e in mezzo, Give me a good contour, and fill it as you please.

(8) Vasari, in the life of Titian. Which made Tintoret say, that now and then Titian did

E shines

shines most in the smallest subjects, so the energy of art shines most in imitating them.

CHAP. V. OF COLOURING.

IT must likewise be of great service to a painter desirous to excell in colouring, to be well acquainted with that part of Opticks, which has the nature of light and colours for its object. Light, however simple and uncompounded it may appear, is nevertheless made up, as it were, of several distinct substances; and the number, and even dose, of these ingredients has been happily discovered by the moderns. Every undivided ray, let it be ever so fine, is a little bundle of red, orange, yellow, green, azure, indigo, and violet, rays, which, while combined, are not to be distinguished one from another, and form that kind of light called white; so that white is not a colour *per se*, as the learned da Vinci (so far, it seems, the precursor of Newton) expressly

some things which could not be done better; but that some others might have been better designed. Ridolfi nella vita di Tiziani.

affirms,

affirms, but an assemblage of colours (9). Now, these colours, which compose light, though immutable in themselves, and endued with various qualities, are continually, however, separating from each other in their reflection from, and passage through, other substances, and thus become manifest to the eye. Grass, for example, reflects only green rays, or rather reflects green rays in greater number than it does those of any other colour; and one kind of wine transmits red rays, and another yellowish rays; and from this kind of separation arises that variety of colours, with which Nature has diversified her various productions. Man too has contrived to separate the rays of light by making a portion of the sun's beams pass through a glass prism; for, after passing through it, they appear divided into seven pure and primitive colours, placed, in succession, one by the other, like so many colours on a painter's pallet.

Now, though Titian, Correggio, and Vandike, have been excellent colourists, without knowing any thing of these physical subtleties,

(9) Trattato della Pittura, Cap. civ.

E 2

ties,

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ties, that is no reason why others should neglect them. For it cannot but be of great service to a painter to be well acquainted with the nature of what he is to imitate, and of those colours, with which he is to give life and perfection to his designs; not to speak of the pleasure there is, in being able to account truly and solidly for the various effects and appearances of light. From a due tempering, for example, and degrading of the tints in a picture, from making colours partake of each other, according to the reflection of light from one object to another, there arises, in some measure, that sublime harmony, which may be considered as the true musick of the eye. And this harmony has its foundation in the principles of Opticks. Now this cannot happen in the system of philosophy, which holds that colours differ in the intensity of light, but were, on the contrary, more than so many modifications, which went in reflecting from different other substances, the same without end, and variety of appearances. Were it that

OF COLOURING. 53

that the case, bodies could no more receive any hues one from another, nor this body partake of the colour of that, than scarlet, for example, because it has the power of changing into red all the rays of the sun or sky which immediately fall upon it, has the power of changing into red all the other rays reflected to it, from a blue or any other colour in its neighbourhood. Whereas, allowing that colours are, in their own nature, immutable one into another, and that every body reflects more or less every sort of coloured rays, though those rays in greatest number, which are of the colour it exhibits, there must necessarily arise, in colours placed near one another, certain particular hues, or temperaments of colour. Nay, this influence of one colour upon another may be so far traced, that, three or four bodies of different colours, and likewise the intenseness of the light falling upon each being assigned, we may easily determine in what situations and how much they should tinge each other. We may thus, by the same principles of Opticks, account for several other things practiced by painters, such that a person, who has carefully

tics, that is no reason why others should neglect them. For it cannot but be of great service to a painter to be well acquainted with the nature of what he is to imitate, and of those colours, with which he is to give life and perfection to his designs; not to speak of the pleasure there is, in being able to account truly and solidly for the various effects and appearances of light. From a due tempering, for example, and degrading of the tints in a picture, from making colours partake of each other, according to the reflection of light from one object to another, there arises, in some measure, that sublime harmony, which may be considered as the true musick of the eye. And this harmony has its foundation in the genuine principles of Opticks. Now, this could not happen in the system of those philosophers, who held that colours did not originally exist in light, but were, on the contrary, nothing more than so many modifications, which it underwent in reflecting from, or passing through, other substances; thus subject to alterations without end, and every moment liable to perish. Were that

that the case, bodies could no more receive any hues one from another, nor this body partake of the colour of that, than scarlet, for example, because it has the power of changing into red all the rays of the sun or sky which immediately fall upon it, has the power of changing into red all the other rays reflected to it, from a blue or any other colour in its neighbourhood. Whereas, allowing that colours are, in their own nature, immutable one into another, and that every body reflects more or less every sort of coloured rays, though those rays in greatest number, which are of the colour it exhibits, there must necessarily arise, in colours placed near one another, certain particular hues, or temperaments of colour. Nay, this influence of one colour upon another may be so far traced, that, three or four bodies of different colours, and likewise the intenseness of the light falling upon each being assigned, we may easily determine in what situations and how much they would tinge each other. We may thus, too, by the same principles of Opticks, account for several other things practiced by painters; insomuch that a person, who has

E 3

carefully

carefully observed natural effects with an eye directed by solid learning, shall be able to form general rules, where another can only distinguish particular cases.

BUT, after all, the pictures of the best colourists are, it is universally allowed, the books, in which a young painter must chiefly look for the rules of colouring; that is, of that branch of painting, which contributes so much to express the beauty of objects, and is so requisite to represent them as what they really are. Giorgione and Titian seem to have discovered circumstances in nature, which others have entirely overlooked; and the last, in particular, has been happy enough to express them with a pencil as delicate, as his eye was quick and piercing. In his works we behold that sweetness of colouring which is produced by union; that beauty which is consistent with truth; and all the insensible transmutations, all the soft transitions, in a word, all the pleasing modulations, of tints and colours (1).

(1) *In quo diversi niteant cum mille colores,
Transitus ipse tamen spectantia lumina
fallit,*

When

When a young painter has, by close application, acquired from Titian, whom he can never sufficiently dwell upon, that art, which, of all painters, he has best contrived to hide, he would do well to turn to Bassano and Paolo, on account of the beauty, boldness, and elegance of their touches. That richness, softness, and freshness of colouring, for which the Lombard School is so justly cried up, may likewise be of great service to him. Nor will he reap less benefit by studying the principles and practice of the Flemish School, which, chiefly by means of her varnishes, has contrived to give a most enchanting lustre and transparency to her colours. For, though we should agree with

Usque adeo quod tangit idem est, tamen ultima distant. Ovid. Metam. Lib. VI.

*Come procede innanzi dall' ardore
Per lo papiro fuso un color bruno,
Che non è nero ancora, e'l bianco muore.*

As, in burning paper, a brown colour separates the black from the white, though at its extremities it cannot be distinguished from either the black or white. Dante *Inf. Cant. xxv.*

E 4

a certain

a certain ingenious English writer, that it belongs only to the Italians to draw beauty well (2), we are not bound to think, with a certain ancient poet, that a Flemish complexion is any disgrace to a Roman countenance (3).

BUT whatever pictures a young painter may chuse to study the art of colouring upon, he must take great care that they are well preserved. There are very few pieces, which have not suffered more or less by the length, not to say the injuries, of time; and, perhaps, that precious patina, which years alone can impart to paintings, is in some measure a-kin to that other kind, which ages alone impart to medals; inasmuch as, by giving testimony to their antiquity, it renders them proportionably beautiful in the superstitious eyes of the learned. It must, indeed, be allowed, that, if, on the one hand, this patina bestows, as it really does, an extraordinary

- (2) In homely pieces e'en the Dutch excell,
Italians only can draw beauty well.

D. of Buckingh. on Mr. Hobbs.

- (3) Turpis Romano Belgicus ore color.

Proper. Lib. II. Eleg. xvii.
degree

degree of harmony upon the colours of a picture, and destroys, or at least greatly lessens, their original rawness, it, on the other hand, equally impairs the freshness and life of them. A piece, seen many years after it has been painted, appears much as it would do, immediately after painting, behind a dull glass. It is no idle opinion, that Paolo Veronese, attentive above all things to the beauty of his colours, and what is called *strepito* (4), left entirely to time the care of harmonizing them perfectly, and (as we may say) mellowing them. But most of the old masters took that task upon themselves, and never exposed their works to the eyes of the Public, untill they had ripened and finished them with their own hands. And who can say, whether the Christ of Moneta and the Nativity of Bassano have been more improved or injured, (if we may so speak) by the touchings and retouchings of time, in the course of more than two centuries. It is, indeed, impossible to be determined. But

- (4) The literal meaning of this word is, crackling.

the

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the studious pupil may make himself ample amends for any injuries, which his originals may have received from the hands of time, by turning to truth, and to nature which never grows old, but constantly retains its primitive flower of youth, and was itself the model of the models before him. As soon, therefore, as a young painter has laid a proper foundation for good colouring by studying the best masters, he should turn all his thoughts to truth and nature. And it would, perhaps, be well worth while to have, in the academies of painting, models for colouring as well as for designing; that, as from the one the pupils learn to give their due proportion to the several members and muscles, they may learn from the other to make their carnations rich and warm, and faithfully copy the different local hues, which appear quite distinct in the different parts of a fine body. To illustrate still farther the use of such a model, let us suppose it placed in different lights; now in that of the sun, now in that of the sky, and now again in that of a lamp or candle; one time placed in the shade, and another in a reflected light.

Hence

OF COLOURING. 59

Hence the pupil might learn all the different effects of the complexion in different circumstances, whether the livid, the lucid, or the transparent; and, above all, that variety of tints and half tints, occasioned in the colour of the skin by the epidermis having the bones immediately under it in some places, and in others a greater or less number of blood-vessels or quantity of fat. An artist, who had long studied such a model, would run no risk of degrading the beauties of nature by any particularity of stile; or of giving into that preposterous fullness and floridness of colour, which is at present so much the taste. He would not feed his figures with roses, as an ancient painter of Greece shrewdly expressed it, but with good beef; a difference, which the learned eye of a modern writer could perceive between the colouring of Barocci and that of Titian (5). To practise

(5) Opera ejus (Euphranoris) sunt equestre prælium: duodecim dii: Theseus, in quo dixit eundem apud Parrhasium rosa positum esse, suum vero carne. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. XXXV. Cap. xi.

What more could we say of Titian and Barocci? Webb, Dial. V.

in

60 OF COLOURING.

in that manner, is, according to a great master, no better than inuring oneself to the commission of blunders. What statues are in design, nature is in colouring; the fountain-head of that perfection, to which every artist, ambitious to excell, should constantly aspire; and, accordingly, the Flemish painters, in consequence of their aiming solely to copy nature, are in colouring as excellent, as they are wont to be awkward in designing.

CHAP. VI.

OF THE CAMERA OBSCURA.

WE may well imagine, that, could a young painter but view a picture by the hand of Nature herself, and study it at his leisure, he would profit more by it, than by the most excellent performances by the hand of man. Now, nature is continually forming such pictures in our eye. The rays of light coming from exterior objects, after entering the pupil, pass through the crystalline humour, and being there refracted, in consequence of the lenticular form of that part,

OF THE CAMERA OBSCURA. 61

part, proceed to the retina, which lies at the bottom of the eye, and stamp upon it, by their union, the image of the object, towards which the pupil is directed. The consequence of which is, that the soul, by means as yet unknown to us, receives immediate intelligence of these rays, and comes to see the objects that sent them. But this grand operation of Nature, the discovery of which was reserved for our times, might have remained an idle amusement of physical curiosity, without being of the least service to the painter, had not means been happily found of imitating it. The machine, contrived for this purpose, consists of a lens and a mirror so situated, that the second throws the picture of any thing properly exposed to the first, and that too of a competent largeness, on a clean sheet of paper, where it may be seen and contemplated at leisure.

As this artificial eye, usually called a Camera Optica or Obscura, gives no admittance to any rays of light, but those coming from the thing whose representation is wanted, there results from them a picture of inexpressible force and brightness; and, as nothing is more delightful

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delightful to behold, so nothing can be more useful to study, than such a picture. For, not to speak of the justness of the contours, the exactness of the perspective and of the chiaroscuro, which exceeds conception; the colours are of a vivacity and richness that nothing can excell; the parts, which stand out most, and are most exposed to the light, appear surprisingly loose and resplendent; and this looseness and resplendency declines gradually, as the parts themselves sink in, or retire from the light. The shades are strong without harshness, and the contours precise without being sharp. Wherever any reflected light falls, there appears, in consequence of it, an infinite variety of tints, which, without this contrivance, it would be impossible to discern. Yet there prevails such a harmony amongst all the colours of the piece, that scarce any one of them can be said to clash with another.

AFTER all, it is no way surprising, that we should, by means of this contrivance, discover, what otherwise we might justly despair of ever being acquainted with. We

canno-

OF THE CAMERA OBSCURA. 63

cannot look directly at any object, that is not surrounded by so many others, all darting their rays together into our eyes, that it is impossible we should distinguish all the different modulations of its light and colours. At least we can only see them in so dull and confused a manner, as not to be able to determine any thing precisely about them. Whereas, in the Camera Obscura, the visual faculty is brought wholly to bear upon the object before it; and the light of every other object is, as it were, perfectly extinguished.

ANOTHER most astonishing perfection in pictures of this kind is the diminution of the size, and of the intenseness of light and colour, of the objects and all their parts, in proportion to their distance from the eye. At a greater distance the colours appear more faint, and the contours more obscure. The shades likewise are a great deal weaker in a less intense or more remote light. On the other hand, those objects, which are largest in themselves, or lie nearest to the eye, have the most exact contours, the strongest shades, and the brightest colours: all which qualities

are

64 OF THE CAMERA OBSCURA.

are requisite to form that kind of perspective, which is called aerial, as though the air between the eye and external objects, not only veiled them a little, but in some sort gnawed, and preyed upon, them. This kind of perspective constitutes a principal part of that branch of painting, which regards the foreshortening of figures, and likewise the bringing them forward, and throwing them back in such a manner, as to make us lose sight of the ground upon which they are drawn. It is, in a word, this kind of perspective, from which, assisted by linear perspective, arise

Dolci cose a vedere, e dolci inganni (6).

NOTHING proves this better than the Camera Obscura, in which nature paints the objects, which lie near the eye, as it were, with a hard and sharp pencil, and those at a distance with a soft and blunt one.

THE best modern painters among the Italians have availed themselves greatly of this contrivance; nor is it possible they should

(6) Things sweet to see, and sweet deceptions.

have

OF THE CAMERA OBSCURA. 65

have otherwise represented things so much to the life. It is probable, too, that several of the Tramontane Masters, considering their success in expressing the minutest objects, have done the same. Every one knows of what service it has been to Spagnoletto of Bologna, some of whose pictures have a grand and most wonderful effect. I once happened to be present where a very able master was shewn this machine for the first time. It is impossible to express the pleasure he took in examining it. The more he considered it, the more he seemed to be charmed with it. In short, after trying it a thousand different ways, and with a thousand different models, he candidly confessed, that nothing could compare with the pictures of so excellent and inimitable a master. Another, no less eminent, has given it as his opinion, that an academy, with no other furniture than the book of da Vinci, a critical account of the excellencies of the capital painters, the casts of the finest Greek statues, and the pictures of the Camera Obscura, would alone be sufficient to revive the art of painting. Let

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the

the young painter, therefore, begin as early as possible to study these divine pictures, and study them all the days of his life, for he never will be able sufficiently to contemplate them. In short, Painters should make the same use of the Camera Obscura, which Naturalists and Astronomers make of the Microscope and Telescope, for all these instruments equally contribute to make known, and represent Nature.

CHAP. VII.

OF DRAPERY.

DRAPERY is one of the most important branches of the whole art, and, accordingly, demands the greatest attention and study. It seldom happens, that a Painter has nothing but naked figures to represent; nay, his subjects generally consist of figures cloathed from head to foot. Now, the flowing of the folds in every garment depends chiefly upon the relief of the parts that lie under it. A certain author, I forget his name, observes, that, as the inequalities of a surface

are

are discoverable by the inequalities in the water that runs over it, so the posture and shape of the members must be discernible by the folds of the garment that covers them (7). Those idle windings and gatherings, with which some painters have affected to cover their figures, make the clothes made up of them look, as if the body had fled from under them, and left nothing in its place but a heap of empty bubbles, fit emblems of the brain that conceived them. As from the trunk of a tree there issue here and there boughs of various forms, so from one principal or mistress-fold there always flow many lesser ones: And, as it is on the quality of the tree, that the elegance, compactness or openness of its branches chiefly depends; it is, in like manner, by the quality of the stuff, of which a garment is made, that the number, order, and size of its folds must be determined. To sum up all in two words: the Drapery ought to be natural and easy, so as to show

- (7) *Qui ne s'y colle point, mais en suite la grace,
Et sans la ferrer trap la caresse & l'embrasse.
Moliere Gloire du Dome de Val de Grace.*

F 2

what

what stuff it is and what parts it covers. It ought, as a certain author expresses it, to cover the body, as it were merely to show it.

It was formerly the custom with some of our masters to draw all their figures naked, and then drape them, from the same principle that they first drew the skeletons of their figures, and afterwards covered them with muscles. And it was by proceeding in this manner, that they attained to such a degree of truth in expressing the folds of their drapery, and the joints and direction of the principal members that lay under it, so as to exhibit, in a most striking manner, the attitude of the person to whom they belonged. That the ancient sculptors clothed their statues with equal truth and grace, appears from many of them that are still in being, particularly a Flora lately dug up in Rome, whose drapery is executed with so much judgment, and in so grand and rich a stile, that it may vie with the finest of their naked statues, even with the Venus of Medicis. The statues of the ancients had so much beauty

beauty when naked, that they retained a great deal (8) when clothed. But here it must be considered, that it was usual with them to suppose their originals clothed with wet garments, and of an extreme fineness and delicacy, that, by lying close to the parts, and in a manner, clinging to them, they might the better show what these parts were. For this reason, a painter is not to confine himself to the study of the ancient statues, lest he should contract a dry stile, and even fall into the same faults with some great masters, who, accustomed to drape with such light stuffs as sit close to the body, have afterwards made the coarsest lie in the same manner, so as plainly to exhibit the muscles underneath them. It is, therefore, proper to study nature herself, and those modern masters, who have come nearest to her in this branch, such as Paolo Veronese, Andrea del Sarto, Rubens, and, above all, Guido Reni. The flow of their drapery is soft and gentle, and the gatherings and plaits so contrived, as not only not to hide the body, but add grace

(8) *Induitur, formosa est: exuitur, ipsa forma est.*

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and

and dignity to it. Their gold, silk and wool-
len stuffs are so distinguishable one from an-
other, by the quality of their several lustres,
and the peculiar light and shade belonging
to each, but, above all, by the form and flow
of their folds; that the age and sex of their
figures are hardly more discoverable by their
faces. Albert Durer is another great master
in this branch, inasmuch that Guido himself
was not ashamed to study him. There are
still extant several drawings made with the
pen by this great man, in which he has cop-
ied whole figures from Albert, and scrupulous-
ly retained the flow of his drapery as far as
his own peculiar stile, less harsh and sharp,
but more easy and graceful, would allow (9).
It may be said, that he made the same use of
Albert, that our modern writers ought to make
of the best Authors of the thirteenth century.

(9) There is one of these drawings in the
possession of Signor Hercules Lelli, taken from
a small passion carved in wood. It is a most
beautiful piece. And Marcantonio Burini had
once a little book, containing about a score
Madonas of Albert Durer, copied by Guido.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.
OF LANDSCAPE AND ARCHI-
TECTURE.

WHEN our young painter has made a
sufficient progress in those principal
branches of his art, the designing, perspective,
colouring, and drapery of human figures, he
should turn his thoughts to landscape and
architecture; for, by studying them, he will
render himself universal, and qualified to un-
dertake any subject; so as not to resemble
certain literati, who, though great masters
in some articles, are mere children in every
thing else (1).

THE most eminent landscape painters are
Poussin, Lorenese, and Titian.

POUSSIN was remarkable for his great
diligence. His pieces are quite exotic and
uncommon, being set off with buildings in a
beautiful but singular stile, and with learned
episodes, such as Poets reciting their verses

(1) Fontenelle, dans l'Eloge de Boerhaave.

to the woods, and youths exercising themselves in the several gymnastic games of antiquity; by which it plainly appears, that he was more indebted for his subjects to the descriptions of Pausanias, than to nature and truth.

LORENESE applied himself chiefly to express the various phenomena of light, especially those perceivable in the heavens. And, thanks to the happy climate of Rome, where he studied and exercised his talents, he has left us the brightest skies, and the richest and most gloriously cloud-tipt horizons that can well be conceived. Nay, the sun himself, which, like the Almighty, can be represented merely by his effects, has scarce escaped his daring and ambitious pencil.

TITIAN, the great confidant of Nature, is the Homer of landscape. His scenes have so much truth, so much variety, and such a bloom in them, that it is impossible to behold them, without wishing, as if they were real, to make an excursion into them. And, perhaps, the finest landscape, that ever issued from mortal hands, is the back ground of his

his Martyrdom of St. Peter, where, by the difference between the bodies and the leaves of his trees, and the disposition of their branches, one immediately discovers the difference between the trees themselves; where the different soils are so well expressed, and so exquisitely clothed with their proper plants, that a botanist has much ado to keep his hands from them.

PAOLO Veronese is in architecture, what Titian is in landscape. To excell in landscape, we must, above all things, study nature. To excell in architecture we must chiefly regard the finest works of art; such as the fronts of ancient edifices, and the fabrics of those moderns, who have best studied and best copied antiquity. Next to Brunelleschi and Alberti, who were the first revivers of architecture, came Bramante, Giulio Romano, Sanfovino, Sanmicheli, and, lastly, Palladio, whose works the young painter should, above all the rest, diligently study, and imprint deeply on his mind. Nor is Vignola to be forgot; for some think he was a more scrupulous copier of antiquity, and more exact than Palladio himself; inasmuch

insomuch that most people consider him as the first architect among the moderns. For my part, to speak of him, not as fame, but as truth seems to require, I cannot help thinking, that rather than break through the generality of the rules contrived by him to facilitate practice, he has, in some instances, deviated from the most beautiful proportions of the antique; and is rather barren in the distribution and disposition of certain members. Moreover, the extraordinary height of his pedestals and cornices hinders the column from shewing, in the orders designed and employed by him, as it does in those of Palladio. Amongst that great variety of proportions to be met with in ancient ruins, Palladio has been extremely happy in chusing the best. His profiles are well contrasted, yet easy. All the parts of his buildings hang well together. Grandeur, elegance and beauty walk hand in hand in them. In short, the very blemishes of Palladio, who was no slave to conveniency, and sometimes, perhaps, was too profuse in his decorations, are picturesque. And we may reasonably believe, that it was by following so great a master, whose

whose works he had continually before his eyes, that Paolo Veronese formed that fine and masterly taste, which enabled him to embellish his compositions with such beautiful structures.

CHAP. IX. OF THE COSTUME.

THE study of Architecture cannot fail, in another respect, of being very useful to the young painter; inasmuch as it will bring him acquainted with the form of the temples, thermæ, basilics, theatres, and other buildings of the Greeks and Romans. Besides, from the basso-relievos, with which it was customary to adorn these buildings, he may gather, with equal delight and profit, the nature of their sacrifices, arms, military ensigns, and drefs. The study of Landscape, too, will render familiar to him the form of the various plants peculiar to each soil and climate, and such other things as serve to characterise the different regions of the earth. Thus, by degrees, he will learn what we call

76 OF THE COSTUME.

call Costume, one of the chief requisites in a painter; since, by means of it, he may express, with great precision, the time and place in which his scenes are laid.

THE Roman School has been exceedingly chaste in this branch. So was the French, as long as it continued under the influence and direction of Poussin, whom we may justly stile the Learned Painter; whereas the Venetian School has been to the last degree careless, not to say, licentious. Titian made no difficulty of introducing, in an *Ecce Homo* of his, pages in a Spanish garb, and the Austrian Eagle on the shields of the Roman soldiers. It is true, indeed, that once he placed, in the back ground of a *Crowning-with-thorns*, a bust carrying the name of the Emperor Tiberius, under whom our Saviour suffered: but it is likewise true, that, as if he thought it unbecoming a painter to pay any regard to such minutiae of learning and the costume, he shewed himself perfectly indifferent about them in all his other works. Tintoret, in a fall of Manna, has armed his figures with muskets. And Paolo Veronese,

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OF THE COSTUME. 77

in a *Last-Supper*, presents us with Swiss, Levantine, and other strange figures. In short, he has been so careless this way, that his pieces have been often considered as so many beautiful masquerades.

I WANT words to express how much a picture suffers by such looseness of fancy, and sinks, as a bastard of the art, in the esteem of good judges. Some people, I am sensible, are of opinion, that so scrupulous an observance of the costume is apt to hurt pictures, by depriving them of a certain air of truth arising, they think, from those features and habits, to which we are accustomed; and which are, therefore, apt to make a greater impression, than can be expected from things drawn from the remote sources of antiquity: adding withal, that a certain degree of licence has ever been allowed those artists, who, in their works, must make fancy their chief guide. See, say they, the Greeks, that is, the masters of Raphael and Poussin themselves. Do they ever trouble their heads about such niceties? The Rhodian statuary, for example, have not scrupled to represent Laocoon naked,

naked; that is, the Priest of Apollo naked in the very act of sacrificing to the Gods, and that, too, in presence of a whole people; of the virgins and matrons of Ilium (2). Now, continue they, if it was allowable in the ancient statuaries to neglect probability and decency to such a degree, to have a better opportunity of displaying their skill in the anatomy of the human body, why may it not be allowable in modern painters, the better to attain the end of their art, which is deception, to depart now and then a little from the ancient manners, and the too rigorous laws of the costume? But these reasons, I beg leave to observe, are more absurd than they are ingenious. What! are we to draw conclusions from an example, which, far from deciding the dispute, gives occasion to another (3). The learned are of opinion, that these Rhodian masters would have done much better, had they looked out for a subject, in which, without offending so much

(2) See the notes of Mr. de Piles on the poem of Mr. Du Fresnoy.

(3) Nil agit exemplum, litem quod lite resolvit.
Hor. Lib. II. Sat. iii.
against

against truth, and even probability, they might have had an equal opportunity of displaying their knowledge of the naked. And, certainly, no authority or example whatever should tempt us to do any thing contrary to what both decency and the reason of things require, unless we intend, like Carpioni, to represent

Sogni d'infermi, e sole di romanzi (4).

No! a painter, the better to attain the end of his art, which is deception, ought carefully to avoid mixing the antique with the modern; the domestic with the foreign; things, in short, repugnant to each other, and therefore incapable of gaining credit. A spectator will never be brought to consider himself as actually present at the scene, the representation of which he has before him, unless the circumstances, which enter it, perfectly agree among themselves, and the field of action, if I may use the expression, in no shape belies the action itself. For instance, the circumstances, or, if you please, the accessaries, in a finding-

(4) The dreams of sick men, and the tales of fools.

of

of-Moses, are not, surely, to represent the borders of a canal planted with rows of poppies, and covered with country houses in the European taste, but the banks of a great river shaded with clusters of palm-trees; with a sphinx or an Anubis in the adjacent fields; and here and there, in the back ground, a towering pyramid (5). And, indeed, the painter, before he takes either canvas or paper in hand, should, on the wings of his fancy, transport himself to Egypt, to Thebes, or to Rome; and summoning to his imagination the physiognomy, the dress, the plants, the buildings suitable to his subject, with the particular spot where he has chosen to lay his scene, so manage his pencil, as, by the magic of it, make the enraptured spectators fancy themselves there along with him.

(5) Neales . . . ingeniosus & solers in arte. Siquidem cum prælium navale Ægyptiorum & Persarum pinxisset, quod in Nilo, cujus aqua est mari similis, factum volebat intelligi, argumento declaravit, quod arte non poterat. Asellum enim in litore bibentem pinxit, & crocodilum insidiantem ei.

C. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. XXXV. Cap. xi.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

OF INVENTION.

AS the operations of a General should, all, ultimately tend to battle and conquest; so should all the thoughts of a painter to perfect invention. Now, the studies, which I have been hitherto recommending, will prove so many wings, by which he may raise himself, as it were, from the ground, and soar on high, when desirous of trying his strength this way, and producing something from his own fund. Invention is the finding out probable things, not only such as are adapted to the subject in hand, but such, besides, as by their sublimity and beauty are most capable of exciting suitable sentiments in the Spectator, and of making him, when they happen to be well executed, fancy that it is the subject itself, in its greatest perfection, and not a mere representation of it, that he has before him. I do not say true things, but probable things; because probability or verisimilitude is, in fact, the truth of those arts, which

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have

have the fancy for their object (6). It is, indeed, the business and duty of both Naturalists and Historians to draw objects as they find them, and represent them with all those imperfections and blemishes, to which, as individuals, they are subject. But an ideal Painter, and such alone is a true Painter, resembles the Poet: instead of copying he imitates; that is, he works with his fancy, and represents objects, endued with all that perfection, which belongs to the species, and may be conceived in the Archetype. 'Tis all nature, says an English poet, speaking of poetry: and the same may be said of painting, but it is nature methodized and made perfect (7). Inasmuch, that the circumstances of the action, exalted and sublimed to the highest degree of beauty and boldness they are susceptible of, may, though possible, have never happened, exactly such as the painter fancies, and thinks proper to represent, them. Thus, the piety of Æneas, and the

(6) Judgement of Hercules, Introduction.

(7) 'Tis nature all, but nature methodiz'd.
Essay on Criticism.

anger

anger of Achilles, are things so perfect in their kind, as to be merely probable. And it is for this reason, that poetry, which is only another word for invention, is more philosophical, more instructive, and more entertaining than history (8).

HERE it is proper to observe, what great advantages the ancient had over the modern painters. The history of the times they lived in, fraught with great and glorious events, was to them a rich mine of the most noble subjects, which, besides, often derived no small sublimity and pathos from the Mythology, upon which their Religion was founded. So far were their Gods from being immaterial, and placed at an infinite distance above their worshippers; so far was their Religion from recommending humility, penance, and

(8) ἂν ἡ φιλοσοφία καὶ σπουδαίον αἰῶνι ὄντι·
εἰς τὴν, ἣ μὴ γὰρ αἰῶνι μᾶλλον τὰ καθ' αὐτὴν, ἢ δὲ
ἱστορία τὰ καθ' ἑαυτὴν λήγει.

De la foi d'un Chretien les mysteres terribles
D'ornemens egayez ne sont point susceptibles:
L'Evangile a l'esprit n'offre de tous cōtes,
Que penitence a faire, & tourments meritez.

Despreaux Art. Poet. Chant. III.

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self-

self-denial, that, on the contrary, it appeared calculated merely to flatter the senses, inflame the passions, and poison the fancy. By making the Gods partake of our nature, and subjecting them to the same passions, it gave man hopes of being able to mix with those, who, though greatly above him, resembled him, notwithstanding, in so many respects. Besides, these Deities of theirs were in a manner visible, and to be met at every step. The sea was crowded with Tritons and Nereids, the rivers with Naids, and the mountains with Dryads. The woods swarmed with Fauns and Nymphs, who, in these obscure retreats, sought an asylum for their stolen embraces. The most potent empires, the most noble families, the most celebrated heroes, all derived their pedigree from the greater Divinities. Nay, Gods interested themselves in all the concerns of mankind. Apollo, the God of long arrows stood by the side of Hector in the fields of Troy; and inspired him with new strength and courage to batter down the walls, and burn the ships of the Greeks. These, on the other hand, were led on to the fight and animated by Minerva, preceded.

preceded by terror, and followed by death. Jove nods, his divine locks shake on his immortal head; Olympus trembles. With that countenance, which allays the tempest, and restores serenity to the heavens, he gathers kisses from the mouth of Venus, the delight of Gods and of men. Among the ancients, every thing sported with the fancy; and in those works, which depend entirely on the imagination, some of our greatest masters have thought they could not do better than borrow from the Pagans, if I may be allowed to say it, their pictures of Tartarus, in order to render their own drawings of Hell more striking and picturesque.

AFTER all, there have not been wanting able inventors in point of painting among the moderns. Michael Angelo, notwithstanding the depth and boldness of his own fancy, is not ashamed, in some of his compositions, to Dantize (9); as Phidias and

(9) Concerning this we have a singular anecdote in the annotations, with which Monsignor Bottari, to whom the polite arts are so much indebted, has illustrated the life of Michael Angelo.

Apelles may be said formerly to have homerized (1). Raphael too, tutored by the

It is as follows. "We may see how much he studied Dante by a copy of this author, (the first edit. with the comment of Landino) in his possession. On the margins, which were left very broad, Bonarotti had drawn with a pen every thing contained in the poems of Dante, and, among the rest, an infinite number of the most excellent naked figures, in the most striking attitudes. This book got into the hands of Antonio Montauti of Florence, an intimate friend of the celebrated Abbate Antonio Maria Salvini, as appears from many letters written by the latter to the former, and printed in the collection of the Florentine pieces in prose. Montauti was by profession a statuary, and a very able one; and set the greatest esteem upon this volume. But having ordered, on his departure from Florence to fill the place of surveyor to the church of St. Peter's at Rome, that all his marbles, bronzes, books, &c. should be sent after him by sea, under the care of one of his pupils, the vessel, in which they were, perished, unfortunately, in a storm between Leghorn and Civitta Vecchia, and, along with her, Montauti's pupil and all his effects, among the rest this inestimable volume, which, alone, would have done honour to the library of the greatest monarch."

Greeks,

Greeks, has found means, like Virgil, to extract the quintessence of truth; has seasoned his works with grace and nobleness, and exalted nature, in a manner, above herself, by giving her an aspect more beautiful, more animating, and more sublime than she is, in reality, accustomed to wear. In point of in-

(1) Phidias quoque Homeri versibus egregio dicto allusit. Simulacro enim Jovis Olympii perfecto, quo nullum præstantius aut admirabilius humanæ fabricatæ sunt manus; interrogatus ab amico, quonam mentem suam dirigens, vultum Jovis propemodum ex ipso cælo petitus, eboris lineamenti esset amplexus: Illis & versibus, quasi magistris, usum respondit: Iliad. 1.

Ἡ δὲ πικρὴ ἐν ἱερῷ νύστι Κρονίῳ,

Ἀμφόροις ὃ ἄρα χαῖται ἐπιζήσαντο ἀναλθε.

Κρατὲρ αὖτ' ἀθανάτοις, μέγας δ' ἐλέλιξεν ἔλεμπος.

Valer. Max. Lib. III. Cap. vi. exemplo ext. 4.

Fecit Apelles & Neoptolemum ex equo pugnantem adversus Persas; Archelaum cum uxore & filia; Antigonum thoracatum cum equo incedentem. Peritiores artis præferunt omnibus ejus operibus eundem Regem sedentem in equo: Dianam sacrificantium virginum choro mixtam; quibus vicisse Homeri versus videtur, id ipsum describentis.

C. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. XXXV. Cap. x.

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vention,

vention, Domenichino and Annibal Caracci come very near Raphael, especially in the pieces painted by them in Rome; nor does Poussin fall very short of him in some of his pictures, particularly in his *Esther-before-Affuerus*, and his *death-of-Germanicus*, the richest jewel belonging to the Barberine family. Of all the painters, who have acquired any extraordinary degree of reputation, no one studied less to set off his pieces by bold and beautiful circumstances, or was more a stranger to what is called poetical perfection, than Jacopo Bassano. Among the numberless instances I could produce of his carelessness this way, let it suffice to mention a *Preaching-of-St. Paul* painted by him in a place, near that of his birth, called *Marostega*. Instead of representing the Apostle, full of a divine enthusiasm, as Raphael has done, and thundering against the superstitions of the heathen in an assembly of Athenians; instead of exhibiting one of his auditors struck to the quick, another persuaded, a third inflamed; he makes him hold forth, in a village of the Venetian state,

to

to a parcel of poor peasants and their wives, who take not the least notice of him; the women especially, who seem to mind nothing but the country labours, in which he had found them employed. After all, this is an admirable piece, and would be a perfect one, had the painter not disgraced it so much by the poverty of his ideas.

WITH regard to invention, painting and poetry resemble each other so much in many other respects, besides that of combining in every action all the beauty and elegance it will admit, that they well deserve the name of sister arts. They differ, however, in one point, and that too of no small importance. It is this. The poet, in the representation of his story, relates what has already happened, prepares that which is still to come, and so proceeds, step by step, through all the circumstances of the action; and to operate the greater effect on his hearers, avails himself of the succession of time and place. The painter, on the contrary, deprived of such helps, must be content to depend upon one single moment. But what a moment! A moment,

moment, in which he may conjure up, at once, to the eyes of his spectator a thousand objects; a moment, teeming with the most beautiful circumstances that can attend the action; a moment, equivalent to the successive labours of the poet. This the works of the greatest masters, which are every where to be seen, sufficiently evince; among others, the *St. Paul-at-Lystra*, by Raphael, whom it is impossible not to praise as often as this picture is mentioned. In order to give the spectator a thorough insight into the subject of this piece, the painter has placed, in the front of it, the cripple already restored to his limbs by the Apostle, fired with gratitude towards his benefactor, and exciting his countrymen to yield him all kinds of honour. Round the cripple are some figures lifting up the skirt of his coat, in order to look at the legs reduced to their proper shape, and acknowledging by gestures full of astonishment the reality of the miracle; an invention, says a certain author, a professed admirer of antiquity, which might have

have been proposed as an example in the happiest age of Greece (2).

We have another shining instance of the power of painting to introduce a great variety of objects on the scene at the same time, and of the advantage it has in this respect over poetry, in a drawing by the celebrated *la Fage*, which, like many other pieces of his, has not as yet been engraved, though worthier, perhaps, of that honour than any other performance of the kind. This drawing represents the descent of *Æneas* into Hell. The field is the dark caverns of Pluto's kingdom, through the middle of which creeps slowly the muddy and melancholy *Acheron*. Nearly in the center of the piece appears *Æneas* with the golden bough in his hand, and with an air of astonishment at what he sees. The Sybil,

(2) The wit of man could not devise means more certain of the end proposed; such a chain of circumstances is equal to a narration: And I cannot but think, that the whole would have been an example of invention and conduct, even in the happiest age of antiquity.

Webb, Dial. VII.

who

who accompanies him, is answering the questions which he asks her. The personage there is the ferryman of the pitchy lake, by which even the Gods themselves are afraid to swear. Those, who crowding in to the banks of the river, numberless as the leaves shaken off the trees by autumnal blasts, express, with out-stretched hands, an impatience to be ferried to the opposite shore, are the unhappy manes, who, for want of burial, are unqualified for that happiness. Charon, accordingly, is crying out to them, and with his lifted up oar driving them from his boat, which has already taken in a number of those, who had been honoured with the accustomed funeral rights. Behind Æneas and the Sybil we discover a confused groupe of wretched souls, lamenting bitterly their misfortune in being denied a passage; two of them wrapt up in their clothes, and, in a fit of despair, sunk upon a rock. Upon the first lines of the piece stands a third groupe of uninhumed shades, Leucaspes, Orontes, and, in the midst of them, the good old Palinurus, formerly master and pilot of the

the Hero's own vessel, who with joined hands most earnestly desires to be taken along with him into the boat, that, after death, at least, he may find some repose, and his dead body no longer remain the sport of winds and waves. Thus, what we see scattered up and down in many verses by Virgil, is here, as it were, gathered into a focus, and concentrated by the ingenious pencil of the painter; so as to form a subject well worthy of being exposed, in more shapes than one, to the eyes of the public (3).

(3) *Ibant obscuri sola sub nocte per umbras,
Perque domos Ditis vacuas & inania regna, &c.
Hinc via Tartarei quæ fert Acherontis ad undas:
Turbidus hic cæno vasta que voragine gurgis
Æstuat, &c.*

*Æneas miratus enim motusque tumultu, &c.
Cocyti stagna alta vides, stygiamque paludem,
Dii cujus jurare timent, & fallere numen.
Hæc omnis quam cernis inops inhumataque
turba est:*

*Portitor ille Charon, hi quos vehit unda sepulti, &c.
Quam multa in Sylvis Autumni frigore primo
Lapsa cadunt folia, &c.
Stabant orantes primi transmittere cursum,
Tendebantque manus ripæ ulterioris amore;
Navita sed tristes anac hos, nunc accipit illos,*

WASH

WHEN a painter takes a subject in hand, be it historical, be it fabulous, he should carefully peruse the books which treat of it, imprint well on his mind all the circumstances that attend it, the persons concerned in it, and the passions with which they must have been severally animated; not omitting the particulars of time and place. His next business is to create it, as it were, anew, observing the rules already laid down for that purpose. From what is true chusing that which is most striking, and cloathing his subject with such necessary circumstances and actions, as may render it more conspicuous, pathetic and noble, and best display the powers of the inventive faculty. But, in doing this, great

At alios longe summos arcet arena, &c.

*Cernit ibi maestos, & mortis honore carentes
Leucaspim & Lycia ductorem classis Orontem, &c.*

Ecce gubernator se se Palinurus agebat, &c.

*Nunc me fluctus habent, versantque in litore
venti, &c.*

*Da dextram misero, & tecum me tolle per undas,
Sedibus ut saltem placidis in morte quiescam.*

Virgil.

This drawing is in the possession of the author of this Essay.

discretion

discretion is requisite; for, let his imagination grow ever so warm, his hand is never to execute any thing that is not fully approved by his judgment. Nothing low or vulgar should appear in a lofty and noble argument; a fault, of which some of the greatest masters, even Lampieri and Poussin, have been now and then guilty.

THE action must be one, the place one, the time one. I need not, I believe, say any thing of those painters, who, like the writers of the Chinese and Spanish theatre, cram a variety of actions together, and so give us, at once, the whole life of a man. Such blunders, I flatter myself, are too gross to be feared at present. The politeness and learning of the age seem to demand considerations of a more refined nature, such as, that the episodes introduced in the drama of a picture, the better to fill and adorn it, should be not only beautiful in themselves, but indispensably requisite. The games, celebrated at the tomb of Anchises in Sicily, have a greater variety in them and more sources of delight, than those, that had been before celebrated at the tomb of Patroclus under the walls of Troy.

Troy. The arms forged by Vulcan for Æneas, if not better tempered, are at least better engraved than those, which the same God had forged several ages before for Achilles. Nevertheless, in the eyes of judges, both the games and the arms of Homer are more pleasing than those of Virgil, because the former are more necessary in the Iliad, than the latter in the Æneid. Every part should agree with, and have a relation to, the whole. Unity should reign even in variety, for in this beauty consists (4). This is a fundamental maxim in all the arts, whose object it is to imitate the works of nature.

PICTURES often borrow no small grace and beauty from the fictions of poetry. Albani has left us, in several of his works, sufficient proofs of the great share the belles lettres had in refining his taste. But Raphael, above all others, may, in this branch too, be considered as a guide and master. To give

(4) This puts me in mind, of what I once heard a man of letters and great learning say, *Alphabets beauty is ONE, deformity MANYFOLD.*
Della Casa nel Galatea.

but

but one instance out of many; what a beautiful thought was it to represent the river himself, in a Passage-of-Jordan, supporting his waters with his own hands, in order to open a way to the army of the Israelites! Nor has he displayed less judgment in reviving, in his designs engraved by Agostino of Venice (6), the little loves of Aetius, playing with the arms of Alexander conquered by the beauty of Roxana (7).

AMONG the ancients, Apelles and Parrhasius were those who distinguished them-

(6) *The original Italian says, by Marco Antonio. We are indebted to the noble Author for this correction, communicated by a private letter, as soon as he was informed of this translation being in the press.*

(7) *Επίρριθι δὲ τῷ καίρῳ ἄλλοι ἔρωτες παύσαντων ἐν τοῖς ὕπλοις τῷ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ, δὺς μὲν τὸν λείποντα αὐτὸν φέροντες, &c. Lucian.*

Les solâtres plaisirs dans le sein de repos,
Les amours enfantins desarmoient ce héros:
L'un tenoit sa cuirasse encor de sang trempée,
L'autre avoit détaché sa redoutable épée,
Et rioit en tenant dans ses débiles mains
Ce fer, l'appui du trône, & l'effroi des humains.

Henriade, Chant. IX.

H selves

98 OF INVENTION.

selves most in allegorical subjects; in which the inventive faculty shews itself to the greatest advantage: The first by his picture of calumny (8); the second by that of the genius of the Athenians (9). That ancient painter, called Galaton, gave likewise a fine proof of his genius in this branch, by representing a great number of poets greedily quenching their thirst, in the waters gushing from the mouth of the sublime Homer. And to this Allegory, according to Guigni, Pliny has an eye, when he calls that prince of poets, the fountain of wits (1). But it is, after all, no way surpris-

(8) See Lucian upon calumny, and the XXth note of Carlo Dati, in the life of Apelles.

(9) Pinxit (Parrhasius) Demon Atheniensium argumento quoque ingenioso.

C. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. XXXV. Cap. X.

(1) Nonnulli quoque artifices non vulgaris solertiae famam captantes longius petita inventio- nis gloriam praecipue sibi amplexandam puta- bant. Ita Galaton pictor, teste Aeliano var. Hist. XIII. 22. pinxit immensum gregem poeta- rum limpidas atque ubertim ex ore Homeri re- dundantes aquas avidissime haurientem. Hanc
ing,

OF INVENTION. 99

ing, that we should often meet such fine flights of fancy in the ancient artists. They were not guided in their works by a blind practice; they were men of polite educa- tion; conversant with the letters of the age in which they lived; and the companions, rather than the servants, of the great men who employed them (2). The finest

imaginem repraesentavit Ovidius III. Amorum, Eleg. 8.

Aspice Maeoniden, a quo ceu fonte perenni,
Vatum Pieriis ora rigantur aquis.

Manilius quoque circa initium libri secundi de Homero:

----- Cujusque ex ore profuso
Omnis posteritas latices in carmina duxit.

Plinius denique lib. XVII. Nat. Hist. Cap. v. videtur eo respexisse, cum Homerum vocat, fon- tem ingeniorum.

De Pictura Veterum, Lib. III. Cap. i.

(2) The statuarys of Greece were not mere mechanics; men of education and literature, they were more the companions than servants of their employers: Their taste was refined by the conversation of courts, and enlarged by the lecture of their poets: Accordingly, the spirit of their studies breathes through their works.

Webb, Dial. IV.

H 2 allegorical

allegorical painter among the moderns was Rubens; and he was, accordingly, much celebrated for it. The best critics, however, find fault with his uniting, in the Luxemburg Gallery, the queen-mother, in council, with two Cardinals and Mercury (3). Nor is there less impropriety in his making Tritons and Nereids, in another piece of the same gallery, swim to the queen's vessel through the galleys of the knights of St. Stephen. Such freedoms are equally disgusting with the prophecies of Sannazaro's Proteus, concerning the mystery of the incarnation; or the Indian kings of Camoens, reasoning with the Portuguese on the adventures of Ulysses.

THE best modern performances in picturesque allegory are, certainly, those of Poussin,

(3) In the fine set of pictures, by Rubens, in the Luxemburg gallery, you will meet with various faults too, in relation to the allegories.

the Queen-mother, in council, with two Cardinals and Mercury, &c. Polym. Dial. XVIII.

fin,

fin, who availed himself, with great discretion and judgment, of the vast treasures, with which, by a close study of the ancients, he had enriched his memory. On the other hand, le Brun his countryman, has been very unhappy this way. Ambitious to have every thing his own, instead of allegories, he has filled the gallery of Versailles with enigmas and riddles, of which none but himself was qualified to be the Œdipus. Allegory must be ingenious, it is true; but then it must be equally perspicuous; for which reason, a painter should avoid all vague and indeterminate allusions, and likewise those to history and heathen mythology, which are too abstruse to be understood by the generality of spectators. The best way, in my opinion, to symbolize moral and abstract things, is to represent particular events; as Caracci did, by advice of Monsignore Agucchi, in the Farnesian palace (4). For example, what can better express a hero's love towards his country, than the virtuous Decius consecrating himself boldly to the infernal gods, in or-

(4) See Bellori's Life of Caracci.

H 3

der

der to secure victory to his countrymen over their enemies? What finer emblems can we desire, of emulation, and an insatiable thirst for glory, than Julius Cæsar weeping before the statue of Alexander in the temple of Hercules at Gades; of the inconstancy of fortune, than Marius sitting on the ruins of Carthage, and receiving, instead of the acclamations of an army joyfully saluting him Emperor, orders from a licitor of Sextilius to quit Africa; of indiscretion, than Candaules, who, by shewing the naked beauties of his wife to his friend Giges, kindled a passion, that soon made him repent his folly? Such representations as these require no comment; they carry their explanation along with them. Besides, supposing, and it is the worst we can suppose, that the painter's aim in them should happen not to be understood, his piece would still give delight. It is thus that the fables of Ariosto prove so entertaining, even to those, who understand nothing of the moral couched under them; and likewise the *Æneis*, though all do

do not comprehend the allusions and double intent of the poet.

C H A P. XI.

OF DISPOSITION.

SO much for Invention. Disposition, which may be considered as a branch of invention, consists in the proper stationing of what the inventive faculty has imagined, so as to express the subject in the most lively manner. The chief merit of Disposition may be said to consist in that disorder, which, wearing the appearance of mere chance, is, in fact, the most studied effect of art. A painter, therefore, is equally to avoid the dryness of those ancients, who always planted their figures like so many couples in a procession; and the affectation of those moderns, who jumble them together, as if they were met merely to fight and squabble. In this branch Raphael was happy enough to chuse the just medium and attain perfection. The disposition of his figures is al-

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way

ways exactly such, as the subject requires. In the battle of Constantine, they are confusedly clustered with as much art, as they are regularly marshalled in Christ's commitment of the keys to Saint Peter, and constituting him Prince of the Apostles.

LET the inferior figures of a piece be placed as they will, the principal figure should strike the eye most, and stand out, as it were, from among the rest. This may be effected various ways, as by placing it on the foremost lines, or in some other conspicuous part, of the piece; by exhibiting it, in a manner, by itself; by making the principal light fall upon it; by giving it the most resplendent drapery; or, indeed, by several of these methods, nay, by all of them together. For, being the hero of the picturesque fable, it is but just that it should draw the eye to itself, and lord it, as it were, over all the other objects (6).

(6) Prenant un soin exact, que dans tout son ouvrage
Elle joue aux regards le plus beau personnage,

According

According to Leon Batista Alberti, painters should follow the example of Comic Writers, who compose their fable of as few persons as possible. For, in fact, a crowded picture is apt to give as much pain to the spectator, as a crowded road to the traveller.

SOME subjects, it must be granted, require a number, nay, a nation, as it were, of figures. On these occasions, it depends entirely on the skill of the painter to dispose them in such a manner, that the principal ones may always make the principal appearance; and contrive matters so, that the piece be not over-crowded, or want convenient rests and pauses. He must, in a word, take care that his piece be full, but not charged. In this respect, the battles of Alexander by Le Brun are masterpieces, which can never be sufficiently studied; whereas nothing, on the other hand, can be more unhappy than the famous Paradise of Tintoret, which covers one entire side of the Great Council Chamber at Venice. It appears no better

Et que par aucun role au spectacle placé
Le Héros du Tableau ne se voye effacé.

Molière la Gloire du Dome de Val de Grace.
than

106 OF DISPOSITION.

than a confused heap of figures, a swarm, a cloud, a chaos, which pains and fatigues the eye. What a pity it is that he did not dispose this subject after a model of his own, now in the Gallery of Bevilacqua at Verona! In this last, the several choirs of Martyrs, Virgins, Bishops, and other Saints, are judiciously thrown into so many clusters, parted here and there by a fine fleece of clouds; so as to exhibit the innumerable host of heaven drawn up in a way, that makes a most agreeable and glorious appearance. There goes a story to our purpose of a celebrated master, who in a drawing of the Universal Deluge, the better to express the immensity of the waters that covered the earth, left a corner of his paper without figures. Being asked, if he did not intend to fill it up: No, said he; don't you see that my leaving it empty is what precisely constitutes the picture?

THE reason for breaking a composition into several groupes is, that the eye, passing freely from one object to another, may the better comprehend the whole. But

OF DISPOSITION. 107

But the painter is not to stop here; for these groupes are, besides, to be so artfully put together, as to form rich clusters, give the whole composition a singular air of grandeur, and afford the spectator an opportunity of discerning the piece at a distance, and taking the whole in, as it were, at a single glance. These effects are greatly promoted by a due regard to the nature of colours, so as not to place together those which are apt to pain by their opposition, or distract by their variety. They should be so judiciously disposed as to temper and qualify each other.

A proper use of the Chiaroscuro is likewise of great service on this occasion. The groupes are easily parted, and the whole picture acquires a grand effect by introducing some strong falls of shade, and, above all, one principal beam of light. This method has been followed with great success by Rembrandt in a famous picture of his, representing the Virgin at the foot of the Cross on Mount Calvary, the principal light darting upon her through a break in the clouds, while the rest of the figures about her stand more or less in the shade. Tintoret, too, acquired great reputation

tation as well by that briskness, with which he enlivened his figures, as by his masterly manner of shading them; and Polidoro da Caravaggio, though he scarce painted any thing but basso-relievos, was particularly famous for introducing with great skill the effects of the chiaroscuro, a thing first attempted by Mantegna in his triumph of Julius Cesar. It is by this means, that his compositions appear so strikingly divided into different groupings, and, amongst their other perfections, afford so much delight through the beautiful disposition that reigns in them.

In like manner, a painter, by the help of perspective, especially that called aerial, the opposition of local colours, and other contrivances, which he may expect to hit upon by studying nature, and those who have best studied her before him, will be able not only to part his groupings, but make them appear at different distances, so as to leave sufficient passages between them.

BUT the greatest caution is to be used in the pursuit of the methods here laid down; especially in the management of the chiaroscuro;

curo, that the effects attributed to light and shade, and to their various concomitants, may not run counter to truth and experience. This is a capital point. For this purpose, a painter would do well to make, in little figures, as Tintoret and Poussin used to do, a model of the subject that he intends to represent, and then illuminate it by lamp or candle light. By this means he may come to know with certainty, if the chiaroscuro, which he has formed in his mind, does not clash with the reason of things. By varying the height and direction of his light he may easily discover such incidental effects, as are most likely to recommend his performance, and so establish a proper system for the illuminating of it. Nor will he afterwards find it a difficult matter to modify the quality of his shades, by softening or strengthening them according to the situation of his scene, and the quality of the light falling upon it. If it should happen to be a candle or lamp-light scene, he will then have nothing to do but consider his model well, and faithfully copy it.

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IN the next place, to turn a groupe elegantly, the best pattern is that of a bunch of grapes, adopted by Titian. As, of the many grains, which compose a bunch of grapes, some are struck directly by the light, and those opposite to them are in the shade, whilst the intermediate ones partake of both light and shade in a greater or less degree; so, according to Titian, the figures of a groupe should be so disposed, that, by the union of the chiaroscuro, several things may appear, as it were, but one thing. And, in fact, it is only from his having pursued this method, that we can account for the very grand effect of his pieces this way, in which it is impossible to study him too much.

THE Mannerists, who do not follow nature in the track of the masters just mentioned, are apt to commit many faults. The reason of their figures casting their shades in this or that manner seldom appears in the picture, or at least does not appear sufficiently probable. They are, besides, wont to trespass all bounds in splashing their pieces with light, that is, in enlivening those parts, which we usually trem

term the deas of a picture. This method, no doubt, has sometimes a very fine effect; but it is, however, to be used with no small discretion, as otherwise the whole loses that union, that pause, that majestic silence, as Carracci used to call it, which affords so much pleasure. The eye is not less hurt by many lights scattered here and there over a picture, than the ear is by the confused noise of different persons speaking, all together, in an Assembly (7).

GUIDO Reni, who has imparted to his paintings that gaiety and splendour in which he lived, seems enamoured with a bright and open light; whereas Michael Angelo da Caravaggio, who was of a fullen and savage dis-

(7) Let breadth be introduced how it will, it always gives great repose to the eye; as on the contrary when lights and shades in a composition are scattered about in little spots, the eye is constantly disturbed, and the mind is uneasy, especially if you are eager to understand every object in the composition, as it is painful to the ear, when any one is anxious to know what is said in company, where many are talking at the same time. Hogarth's Anal. of Beauty.

position

position (8), appears fondest of a gloomy and clouded sky; so that neither of them were qualified to handle indifferently all subjects. The Chiaroscuro may likewise prove of great service to a painter in giving his composition a grand effect; but, nevertheless, the light he chuses must be adapted to the situation of the scene, where the action is laid: nor would he be less faulty, who in a grotto or cavern, where the light entered by a chink, should make his shades soft and tender, than him, who should represent them strong and bold in an open sky-light.

BUT this is not, by many, the only fault which mannerists are apt to be guilty of in historical pieces, and particularly in the disposition of their figures. To say nothing of their favourite groupe of a woman lying on the ground with one child at her breast, and another playing about her, and the like, which they generally place on the first lines of their pieces, nor of those half figures in the back ground peeping out from the hol-

(8) *In picturis alios horrida, inculta, abdita, & opaca; contra alios nitida, laeta, collustrata delectant.* Cic. de Orator.

lows

lows contrived for them, they make a common practice of mixing naked with clothed figures; old men with young; placing one figure with its face towards you, and another with its back; they contrast violent motions with languid attitudes, and seem to aim at opposition in every thing; whereas oppositions never please, but when they arise naturally from the subject, like antitheses in a discourse.

As to foreshortned figures, too much affectation in using or avoiding them is equally blameable. The attitudes had better be composed than otherwise. It very seldom happens that there is any occasion for making them so impetuous, as to be in danger of losing their equilibrium; a thing too much practised by some painters, who may be aptly compared to those mad Divines, who in their strange conceits subtilize themselves almost into downright heresy.

IN regard to drapery, equal care should be taken to avoid that poverty, which makes some masters look, as if, through mere penury, they grudged cloaths to their figures; and that profusion, which Albani imput-

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ed to Guido, saying that he was rather a taylor than a painter. The ornaments of dress should be used with great sobriety, and it will not be amiss to remember what was once said to an ancient painter: "I pity you greatly; unable to make Helen handsome, you have taken care to make her fine (9)."

LET the whole, in a word, and all the different parts of the disposition, possess probability, grace, costume, and the particular character of what is to be represented. Let nothing look like uniformity of manner, which does not appear less in the composition, than it does in colouring, drapery, and design; and is, as it were, that kind of accent, by which painters may be as readily distinguished, as

(9) Ἀπὸ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ ἀνθρώπου φύσις ἀποκαλύπτεται. Ὁ μὲν γὰρ εἶναι, καὶ ἀποκαλύπτει, καὶ ἀποκαλύπτει. Clem. Alex. Proleg. Lib. II. C. xii. ap. Junium de Pict. Vet. Apelles in Catalogo.

Poets, like painters, thus unskill'd to trace
The naked nature and the living grace,
With gold and jewels cover ev'ry part,
And hide, with ornaments, their want of art.

Pope's Essay on Crit.
foreigners

OF DISPOSITION. 115

foreigners are, by pronouncing in the same manner all the different languages they happen to be acquainted with.

CHAP. XII.

OF THE EXPRESSION OF THE PASSIONS.

THAT language, which, above all others, a painter should carefully endeavour to learn, and from nature herself, is the language of the passions. Without it the finest works must appear lifeless and inanimate. It is not enough for a painter to be able to delineate the most exquisite forms, give them the most graceful attitudes, and compose them well together: it is not enough to dress them out with propriety and in the most beautiful colours. It is not enough, in fine, by the powerful magic of light and shade to make the canvas vanish. No, he must likewise know how to cloathe his figures with grief, with joy, with fear, with anger; he must, in some sort, write on their faces, what they think,

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114 OF DISPOSITION.

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θητῷ Ἐλπίδῃ ἐνέματι πολύχρυσον γράψαι. Ὁ μαι-
ράκιον εἶπε, μὴ διαάμειτο γὰρ καλὴν, πλουσίαν
σπουδαίαν. Clem. Alex. Pædag. Lib. II. C. xii.
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116 OF THE EXPRESSION

and what they feel; he must give them life and speech (1). It, is indeed, in this branch that painting truly soars, and, in a manner, rises superior to herself; it is in this branch she makes the spectator apprehend much more than what she expresses.

THE means, employed in her imitations by painting, are the circumscription of terms, the chiaroscuro, and colours; all which appear solely calculated to strike the visual faculty. Notwithstanding which, she contrives to represent hard and soft, rough and smooth surfaces, which are objects of the touch; and this by means of certain tints, and a certain chiaroscuro, which has a different look in marble, in the bark of trees, in downy and delicate substances. Nay, she contrives to express sound and motion by means of light and shade, and certain particular configurations. In some

(1) *Καὶ γὰρ τὸ ὁρῶν ἀποκαλύπτει τῆς τέχνης φύσιν τὴν ἀδελφικὴν ἐν διακρίσει, καὶ ἰκανῶς ἡ γοητικῶς ἰδὼν σύμβολα καὶ σημεῖα Τότε δὲ ἰκανῶς ἔχει ζωνταίνου σώματος, καὶ αἰσθάνεται ὅτι καὶ τὸ ἰατρικὸν ἔργον.* Philostr. junior. in proem. Iconum.
landscapes

OF THE PASSIONS. 117

landscapes of Diderich's, we almost hear the water murmur, and see it tremble along the sides of the river, and of the boats upon it. In the battles of Burgognons we are really apt to fancy, that the trumpet sounds; and we see the horse, who has thrown his rider, scamper along the plain. But, what is still more wonderful, painting, in virtue of her various colours, and certain particular gestures, expresses even the sentiments and most hidden affections of the soul, and renders her visible, so as to make the eye not only touch and hear, but even kindle into passion, and reason.

Many have written, and, amongst the rest, the famous le Brun, on the various changes, that, according to various passions, happen in the muscles of the face, which is, as it were, the dumb tongue of the soul (2). They

(2) *Omnis enim motus animi suum quemdam a natura habet vultum, et sonum, et gestum; et ejus omnis vultus, omnesque voces, ut nervi in sedibus, ita sonant, ut a motu animi cumque sunt*

I 3 observe,

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They observe, for example, that, in fits of anger, the face reddens, the muscles of the lips puff out, the eyes sparkle; and that, on the contrary, in fits of melancholy, the eyes grow motionless and dead, the face pale, and the lips sink in. It may be of service to a painter to read these and such other remarks; but it will be of infinitely more service to study them in nature itself, from which they have been borrowed, and which exhibits them in that lively manner, which neither tongue nor pen can express.

BUT, if a painter is to have immediate recourse to nature in any thing, it is particularly in treating those very minute and almost imperceptible differences, by which, however, things very different from each other are often expressed. This is particularly the case with regard to the passions of laughing and crying, as in these, however contrary, the muscles of the face operate nearly in the same manner (3).

pulsæ hi sunt aëtori,
ut pictori, expositi ad variandum colores.

Cic. de Orat. Lib. III. N. lvii.

(3) As the famous Pietro de Cortona was one day finishing the face of a crying child in a re-

ACCORDING

OF THE PASSIONS. 119

ACCORDING to Lionardo da Vinci, the best masters that a painter can have recourse to in this branch, are those dumb men, who have found out the method of expressing their sentiments by the motion of their hands, eyes, eye-brows, and, in short, every other part of the body. This advice, no doubt, is very good; but then such ge-

presentation of the Iron Age, with which he was adorning the floor, called the Hot-bath, in the royal palace of Pitti, Ferdinand II. who happened to be looking over him for his amusement, could not forbear expressing his approbation, by crying out, Oh, how well that child cries! To whom the able artist,—has your majesty a mind to see how easy it is to make children laugh? Behold, I'll prove it in an instant; and taking up his pencil, by giving the contour of the mouth a concave turn downwards, instead of the convex upwards, which it before had, and with little or no alteration in any other part of the face, he made the child, who, a little before, seemed ready to burst its heart with crying, appear in equal danger of bursting its sides with immoderate laughter; and then, by restoring the altered features to their former position, he soon set the child a crying again. Lectures of Philip Baldinucci, in the academy of la Crusca il Lufrato, &c.

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tures must be imitated with great sobriety and moderation, lest they should appear too strong and exaggerated, and the piece should shew nothing but pantomimes, when speaking figures, alone, are to be exhibited; and so become theatrical and second-hand; or, at least, look like the copy of a theatrical and second-hand nature (4).

We are told strange things of the ancient painters of Greece in regard to expression; especially of Aristides, who, in a picture of his representing a woman wounded to death at a siege, with a child crawling to her breast, makes her appear afraid, lest the child, when she was dead, should, for want of milk, suck her blood (5). A Medea murdering her children,

(4) Judgment of Hercules, Chap. iv.

(5) Is omnium primus (Aristides) Thebanus animum pinxit, & sensus hominis expressit, quæ vocant Græci *etbe*; item perturbationes, durior paulo in coloribus. Hujus pictura est, oppido capto, ad matris morientis e vulnere mammam adrepens infans: intelligiturque sentire mater & timere, ne mortuo lactis sanguinem lambat.

by

by Timomachus, was likewise much cried up; as the ingenious artist contrived to express, at once, in her countenance, both the fury that hurried her on to the commission of so great a crime, and the tenderness of a mother that seemed to withhold her from it (6). Rubens attempted to express such a double effect in the face of Mary of Medicis, still in pain from her past labour, and, at the same time, full of joy at the birth of a Dauphin. And in the countenance of Sancta Polonia, painted by Tiepolo for St. Anthony's church at Padua, one may, I think, clearly read a mixture of pain from the wound given her

(6) *Medeam vellet cum fingere Timomachi mens
Volventem in Natos crudum animo facinus,*

*Immanem exhaust rerum in diversa laborem,
Fingeret affectum matris ut ambiguum.*

*Ira subest lachrymis; misratio non caret ira,
Alterutrum videas ut sit in alterutro.*

Cunctantem satis est. Nam digna est sanguine mater

Natorum, tua non dextera, Timomache.

Auson. ex Antholog.

by

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by the executioner, and of pleasure from the prospect of paradise opened to her by it.

Few, to say the truth, are the examples of strong expression afforded by the Venetian, Flemish, or Lombard schools. Deprived of that great happiness, the happiness of being able to contemplate, at leisure, the works of the ancients, the purest sources of perfection in point of design, expression and character; and having nothing but nature constantly before their eyes, they made strength of colouring, blooming complexions, and the grand effects of the chiaroscuro their principal study; they aimed more at charming the senses than at captivating the understanding. The Venetians, in particular, seem to have placed their whole glory in setting off their pieces with all that rich variety of personages and dress, which their capital is continually receiving by means of its extensive commerce, and which attracts so much the eyes of all those who visit it. I doubt much, if, in all the pictures of Paolo Veronese, there is to be found a bold and judicious expression, or one of those attitudes, which,

as

OF THE PASSIONS. 123

as Petrarch expresses it, speak without words; unless, perhaps, it be that remarkable one in his Marriage-feast-at-Cana-of-Galilee, and which I don't remember to have seen taken notice of before. At one end of the table, and directly opposite to the bridegroom, whose eyes are fixed upon her, there appears a woman in red, holding up to him the skirt of her garment, as much as to say, I suppose, that the wine miraculously produced was exactly of the colour with the stuff on her back. And, in fact, it is red wine we see in the cups and pitchers. But all this while the faces and attitudes of most of the company betray not the least sign of wonder at so extraordinary a miracle. They all, in a manner, appear intent upon nothing but eating, drinking, and making merry. Such, in general, is the stile of the Venetian school. The Florentine, over which Michael Angelo presided, above all things curious of design, was most minutely and scrupulously exact in point of anatomy. On this she set her heart, and took singular pleasure in displaying it. Not only elegance of

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of form, and nobleness of invention, but likewise strength of expression, triumph in the Roman school, nursed, as it were, amongst the works of the Greeks, and in the bosom of a city, which had once been the seminary of learning and politeness. Here it was, that Domenichino and Poussin, both great masters of expression, refined themselves, as appears more particularly by the St. Jerome of the one, and the Death of Germanicus, or the Slaughter of the Innocents, by the other. Here it was, that arose Raphael, the sovereign master of them all. One would imagine, that, pictures which are generally considered as the books of the ignorant, and of the ignorant only, he had undertaken to make the instructors even of the learned. One would imagine, that he intended, in some measure, to justify Quintilian, who affirms, that painting has more power over us than all the arts of rhetoric (4). There is not, indeed, a

(4) Nec mirum si ista, quæ tamen in aliquo sunt posita motu, tantum in animis valent, quum pictura tacens opus, et habitus semper ejusdem,
single

OF THE PASSIONS. 125

single picture of Raphael's, from the study of which, those who are curious in point of expression, may not reap great benefit; particularly his Martyrdom of Saint Felicitas; his Magdalen in the house of the Pharisee; his Transfiguration; his Joseph explaining to Pharaoh his dream, a piece so highly rated by Poussin. His school of Athens, in the Vatican, is, to all intents and purposes, a school of expression. Among the many miracles of art, with which this piece abounds, I shall single out that of the four boys attending on a Mathematician, who stooping to the ground, his compasses in his hand, is giving them the demonstration of a theorem. One of the boys, recollected within himself, keeps back, with all the appearance of profound attention to the reasoning of the master; another, by the briskness of his attitude discovers a greater quickness of apprehension; while the third, who has already seiz-

fic in intimos penetret affectus, ut ipsam vim dicendi nonnunquam superare videatur.

Quint. Instit. Lib. XI. Cap. iii.
ed

ed the conclusion, is endeavouring to beat it into the fourth, who, standing motionless, with open arms, a staring countenance, and an unspeakable air of stupidity in his looks, will never, perhaps, be able to make any thing of the matter. And it is, probably, from this very groupe, that Albani, who studied Raphael so closely, drew the following precept of his; "That it behoves a painter to express more circumstances than one by every attitude; and so to employ his figures, that, by barely seeing what they are actually about, one may be able to guess, both what they have been already doing, and are next going to do (5)." This I know to be a difficult precept; but I know too, that it is only by a due observance of it, the eye and the mind can be made to hang in suspense on a painted piece of canvas (6). It is expression, that a painter, ambitious to soar in his profession, must, above all things,

(5) In a letter of his cited by Malvasia, P. IV. della Felsina Pittrice.

(6) *Suspendit picta vultum mentemque tabella.*
Hor. Lib. II. Epist. i.
labour

labour to perfect himself in. It is the last goal of his art, as Socrates proves to Parmastius (7). It is in expression that dumb poetry consists, and what the prince of our poets calls a visible language.

CHAP. XIII.

OF PROPER BOOKS FOR A PAINTER.

FROM what has been already said, it may be easily gathered, that a painter should be neither illiterate, nor unprovided with books. Many are apt to imagine, that the *Iconologia* of Ripa, or some such collection, is alone sufficient for this purpose; and that all the apparatus he stands in need of, may be reduced to a few casts of the remains of antiquity, or rather to what Rembrants used to call his antiques, being nothing more than coats of mail, turbants, shreds of stuff, and all manner of old household trumpery and wearing apparel. Such things, I own, are necessary to a painter, and perhaps, enough for one, who wants only to paint half lengths, or is

(7) *Xenoph. mem. Things of Soc. L. III.*

willing

willing to confine himself to a few low subjects. But they are by no means sufficient for him, who would soar higher, for a Painter who would attempt the Universe, and represent it in all its parts, such as it would appear, had not matter proved refractory to the intentions of the sovereign artist. Such a painter alone is a true, an universal, a perfect painter.—No mortal, indeed, must ever expect to rise to that sublimity; yet all should aspire to it, on pain of ever continuing at a very mortifying distance from it; as the orator, who wishes to make a figure in his profession, should propose to himself no less a pattern than that perfect orator described by Tully: nor the courtier, than that perfect courtier delineated by Castiglione. It cannot, therefore, appear surprising, if I insist on the propriety of reckoning a good collection of books as part of such a painter's implements. The Bible, the Greek and Roman historians, the works of Homer, that prince of painters (8), and of Virgil, are the

(8) μάλλιν δὲ τὸ ἀριστὸν τῶν γραφῶν Όμηρος . . . :
 διόγρητος ; Lucian. in Imag.
 most

most classical. To these let him add the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, some of our best poets, the voyage of Pausanias, Vinci, Vafari, and others upon painting.

It will also be of considerable advantage to him to have a well-chosen collection of drawings by the best masters, in order to trace the progress and history of his art, and make himself acquainted with the various styles of painting, which have been, and now are, in the greatest vogue. The prince of the Roman school was not ashamed to hang up in his study the drawings of Albert Durer; and spared no pains or expence to acquire all the drawings he could meet with, that were taken from ancient statues and basso-relievos; things, which the art of engraving has since rendered so common as to be in every one's hands. This art of multiplying drawings by means of the graver is of the same date, and boasts the same advantages, with the art of printing, by means of which the works of the mind are multiplied, as it were, at one stroke, and dispersed over the whole world. It were to be

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wished, indeed, that none but good books were printed, or good pictures engraved. This difference, however, must be allowed between the inconveniences severally attending these two arts, that the time lost in looking at a bad engraving is infinitely less than that lost in perusing a bad book. But, be that as it will, the sight of fine subjects treated by able masters, and the different forms, which the same subject assumes in different hands, cannot fail both of enlightening and enflaming the mind of the young painter. The same may be said of the perusal of good poets and historians, with the particulars and proofs of what they advance; not to mention those Ideas and flights of invention, with which the latter are wont to cloathe, beautify, and exalt every thing they take in hand. Bouchardon, after reading Homer, conceited, to use his own words, that men were three times taller than before, and that the world was enlarged in every respect (9). It is very probable, that

(9) Depuis que j'ai lu ce livre, les hommes ont quinze pieds, & la nature & s'est accrue pour moi. Tableaux tirez de l'Iliade, par Mr. le Comte de Caylus. the

the beautiful thought of covering Agamemnon's face with the skirt of his mantle, at the sacrifice of Iphigenia, was suggested to Timantes by the tragedy of Euripides (1). It is, at least, to the following lines of the poet,

Vergine madre figlia del tuo figlio

Umile ed alta piu che creatura,

Termine fissa d'eterno consiglio,

Tu se' colei, che l'umana natura

Nobilitasti sì, che'l suo fattore

Non si sdegnò di farsi tua fattura (2),

that we must ascribe Michael Angelo's making the Virgin look at her son on the cross, with a dry and steady eye, and

(1) ὡς δ' ἰοῦντο Ἀγαμέμνων δαΐξ

Ἐπὶ σφαγῆς εὐχόμενος εἰς ἄλσος κέρως,

Ἀντίοναί. κῆρυκα δὲ γρήνας κέρω

Δάκρυα πρὸ γυνὸς ἱερμάτων αἰσθάνει πρὸ τοῦ.

Eurip.

(2) Virgin mother, daughter of your son, the most humble and most exalted of all creatures, the term fixed upon by eternal council. Human nature has been so ennobled by you, that your Maker himself did not disdain to be born of you.

K 2

without

without any of those signs of grief, which other painters generally attribute to her on that occasion. And the sublime conceit of Raphael, who, in a Creation of his, represents God in the immense space, with one hand reaching to the Sun and the other to the Moon, may be considered as the child of the following words of the Psalmist: *The Heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work* (3).

(3) This thought of Raphael has been unjustly censured by an English writer, Mr. Webb. "A God, says this Gentleman, extending one hand to the Sun, and another to the Moon, destroys that idea of immensity, which should accompany the work of creation, by reducing it to a world of a few inches." For my part, I cannot discover, in this painting, a world of a few inches, but a world on a much greater scale; a world of millions and millions of miles: and yet this so immense a world, by means of that act of the Godhead, in which with one hand he reaches to the Sun, and with the other to the Moon, shrinks, in my imagination, to a mere nothing, in respect to the immensity of God himself; which is all that the powers of painting can pretend to. This invention is, though in a

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THE perusal of good Authors cannot but be very serviceable to a painter in another respect; as, among the great number of subjects afforded by history and poetry, he may expect to meet with many, on which his talents may display themselves to the greatest advantage. A painter can never be too nice in the choice of his arguments, for on the beauty of them that of his piece will greatly depend (4). How much to be pitied, therefore, were our first masters, in being so often obliged to receive their subjects from the

contrary sense, of the same kind with that of Timantes, who, to express the enormous size of a sleeping Polyphemus, placed round him some satyrs measuring the monster's thumb with a Thyrsus. Hence, Pliny, who relates the fact, takes occasion to tell us, that his works always imply more than they express, and that how great soever he may be in execution, he is still greater in invention; *atque in omnibus ejus operibus intelligitur plus semper quam pingitur, et cum ars summa sit, ingenium tamen ultra artem est.* Nat. Hist. L. XXXV. C. x.

(4) Fecit aliquid & materia. Ideo eligenda est fertilis, quæ capiat ingenium, quæ excitet.

Senec. Ep. XLVI.

K 3

hands

hands of simple and illiterate persons; and, what is worse, to spend all the riches of their art upon barren subjects. But why do I call them barren? I should have rather said, subjects in every respect unworthy the pencil. Such are the representations of those saints, who, though they never had the least intercourse with each other, and, perhaps, even lived in different ages, are, notwithstanding, to be introduced, *tete a tete*, as it were, in the same picture. The mechanic of the art may, indeed, display itself on these occasions; but by no means the ideal. The disposition may be good and praise-worthy, as in the works of Cortona, and Lanfranc; but we are not to expect in them either invention or expression, which require for their basis the representation of some fact capable of producing such effects. Who does not, on the bare mention of this abuse, immediately recollect many sad instances of it; such as the famous St. Cecilia of Raphael, surrounded by St. Paul, St. Mary Magdalen, St. John, and St. Augustin; and the picture of Paolo Veronese, in the Vestry of the Nuns of St.

Zachary

Zachary at Venice, in which St. Francis of Assizium, Saint Catherine, and St. Jerome richly habited in his Cardinal's robes, form a ring round the Virgin seated on a throne with the child Jesus in her arms; perhaps the most beautiful and picturesque of all the insipid and insignificant pieces, with which Italy abounds. It is very shocking to think, that young painters should be obliged to study their art from such wretched compositions, as others study good language in the best writers, in the lives of Giofaffate and Barlaamo.

THE subjects, in which the pencil triumphs most, and with which a judicious painter may stock himself by the perusal of good books, are, no doubt, those, which are most universally known, which afford the largest field for a display of the passions, and contain the greatest variety of incidents, all concurring, in the same point of time, to form one principal action. Of this the story of Coriolanus besieging Rome, as related by Livy, is a shining example. Nothing can be imagined more beautiful than the scene of action itself,

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which

which ought to take in the Pretorium in the camp of the Volscians, the Tiber behind it, and the seven hills, among which the towering Capitol is, as it were, to lord it over the rest. It is impossible to conceive a greater variety, than what must appear in that crowd of soldiers, women and children, all which are to enter the composition, unless, perhaps, it be that of the different passions with which they are severally agitated; some wishing that Coriolanus may raise the siege; others fearing it; others again suspecting it. But the principal groupe forms the most picturesque part of the piece. Coriolanus, hastily descended from his tribunal, and, hurried on by love, to embrace his mother, stops short through shame, on her crying out to him: hold; let me first know, if 'tis a son, or an enemy I am going to embrace (5)? Thus a painter may impart novelty to the most hackneyed subject,

(5) Sine, priusquam complexum accipio, sciam, inquit, ad hostem, an ad filium venerim: captiva, materno, in castris tuis sum?

Liv. Dec. I. L. ii.

by

by taking, for his guides, those authors, who possess the happy talent of adding grace and dignity, by their beautiful and sublime descriptions, even to the most common and trifling transactions.

CHAP. XIV.

OF A FRIEND.

THE painter may reap still greater advantages from the occasional advice of a learned and discreet friend. Diomedes, the better to discover what was going forward in the camp of the Trojans, desired that another might be sent with him, as two eyes see better than one (6). And it is to this that Socrates alludes in his second Alcibiades, by his *two* who consider at once the same object (7). Hannibal, when about to pass on his grand expedition from Spain into Italy, took with him a Spartan well versed in the art of

(7) *οὐκ ἓν ὀφθαλμὸν ἔχειν.*

(8) *οὐκ ἓν ὀφθαλμὸν ἔχειν.*

was

war (8). And Julius Cesar himself, the ornament of mankind, used to consult with Oppius and Balbus on the best methods of conducting himself in the civil war; and it is to this that we are to attribute the great success, with which all his undertakings were crowned (9). After such examples, who will dare to trust entirely to his own judgment, and slight the advice of others, in military, state, or literary affairs; but, above all, in the exercise of an art, composed, as painting is, of so many parts; and every part of so difficult a nature, that to excell in any one of them is sufficient to immortalize the artist?

FONTENELLE used to say, that however prejudiced he was against books in manuscript, he

(8) Nec minus Annibal petiturus Italiam Laedæmonium doctorem quæsitum armorum: cujus monitis tot consules, tantasque legiones inferior numero, ac viribus interemit.

Veget. de Re milit. L. III.

(9) Id quemadmodum fieri possit, nonnulla mihi in mentem veniunt, & multa reperiri possunt. De his rebus rogo vos, ut cogitationem suscipiatis. In L. X. Ep. ad Atticum.

was

was still more partial to those in print (1); insinuating thereby, that there is no necessity for being sparing of our advice and censure to those, who come to consult us about their works, before they have made them public: whereas the author, who brings his book ready printed, shews plainly that praise and incense is all he looks for. The same may be applied to the painter, who brings you his picture ready varnished, in order to have your opinion of it. A painter, if he is wise, will consult a friend concerning his sketch before he attempts to transfer it to the canvas, or rather upon the different sketches and cartoons he should make, in order to save himself the trouble and mortification of racking his piece afterwards. A friend may then venture to offer him such advice, as may tend most to render the piece perfect. He may tell him, for example, if, in the formation of his figures, he has been guilty of that common fault, of making things too like themselves; discuss with him the merit of the subject, on the

(1) Vie de Fontenelle.

choice

choice of which the merit of the execution itself so much depends; examine, if in the action he has chosen the most important and most favourable point of representing it; if the incidents he has introduced are such as best suit the subject; and, above all, if he has treated it with grace, erudition, and propriety. Pouffin, so chaste in this branch, used to have recourse to Bellori, to the Commendator del Pozzo, and to the Cavalier Marini. Taddeo Zuccheri took the advice of the learned Annibal Caro concerning his picturesque inventions of Caprarola; as the great Raphael used to do that of the Conte di Castiglione, though he himself was very far from being illiterate; and indeed wrote and designed with equal elegance; vying, in every thing, with those noble artists of Greece, who acquired as much glory by their speeches as by their works (3).

(3) *Gloriantur Athenæ armamentario suo, nec sine causâ; est enim illud opus & impensa & elegantia visendum. Cujus Architectum Philonem ita facunde rationem institutionis suæ in Theatro*
Giotto,

Giotto, the restorer of painting amongst us, made a friend and counsellor of the father of

reddidisse constat, ut disertissimus populus non minorem laudem eloquentiæ ejus quam arti tribuerit. Val. Ma. L. VIII. C. XII.

Raphael da Urbino to Count Balthazar Castiglione.

My Lord,

I HAVE made several drawings agreeable to the inventions of your Lordship; and, unless I am greatly flattered, they are well liked by all those who have seen them. But I cannot myself approve of them, for fear your Lordship should not. I therefore send them to your Lordship, that you may chuse some of them, should any of them appear worthy of your choice. The Holy Father, in conferring a great honour, has laid a heavy burthen upon me; I mean that of conducting the works at St. Peter's. I hope, however, that I shall not sink under it; and the more so, as the model I have made has been approved by his Holiness, and much admired by several ingenious men. But I am for soaring still higher. I would fain strike out some beautiful forms like those of the ancient structure

our poetry, who was not, it is said, unacquainted with the practical part of design (4); and the painters, who, after the Buonarrotis and the Vincis, supported the honour of the Florentine School, used to resort to Galileo as to an Oracle, who to some skill in drawing united the most exquisite taste and judgment (5).

tures. Perhaps I may meet with the fate of Icarus. Vitruvius gives me no small insight into them, but still less than I could wish. As to the Galatea, should think myself a great master, were that to be the last I had to perform of the fine things, about which your Lordship writes to me. But I plainly discover the love you bear me, in what you say on this occasion; and must tell you, that to paint a fine woman, I must see much finer, and, besides, have your Lordship with me to make choice of the finest. But, as good judges and fine women are scarce, I am obliged to abide by certain ideas of my own. I will not take upon me to determine, if the present has any merit; but this I know, that I have taken no small pains with her.

(4) Vasari in his life of Giotto, and Ludovico Dolce's dialogue upon painting, p. 130. Edition of Florence in 1735.

(5) Viviani's life of Galileo.

HAD

HAD Spagnoletto of Bologna consulted with men of this character, he never would have represented, as he has done in a picture he drew for Prince Eugene, Chiron about to give Achilles a kick, for not taking a good aim. Nor would the painters of the Venetian School have taken such liberties, especially in point of the Costume, had they had such good judges to restrain them.

CHAP. XV.

OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE
PUBLIC JUDGEMENT.

IT is requisite a painter should firmly believe, that there are no better judges of his art than men of true taste and the public (6). Wo to those works of art, (says

(6) Omnes enim tacito quodam sensu, sine
ulla arte aut ratione, quæ sunt in artibus ac ra-
tionibus recta ac prava dijudicant; idque cum
faciunt in picturis & in signis, &c.

Cic. de Orat. L. III. N. L

**Mirabile est enim cum plurimum in faciendo
interfit inter doctum & rudem, quam non mul-
a great**

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a great man, a very eagle in the regions of knowledge) which can please none but artists (-). Baldinucci gives us a pleasant instance of the weakness of a Florentine painter in this respect. Being told by a gentleman, who came to see one of his pieces, that

tum differat in judicando. Ars enim cum à natura profecta sit, nisi naturam moveat ac delectet, nihil sane egisse videtur. Id. *ibid.* N. li.

Ut enim pictores, & ii qui signa fabricantur, & vero etiam poete, suum quisque opus à vulgo considerari vult, ut si quid reprehensum sit à pluribus, id corrigatur: hique & secum, & cum aliis quid in eo peccatum sit exquirunt: sic aliorum judicio permulta nobis & facienda, & non facienda, & mutanda, & corrigenda sunt.

Id. *de Off.* L. I. N. xli.

Ad picturam probandam adhibentur etiam inficii faciendi, cum aliqua sollertia judicandi.

Id. *De opt. gen. Orat.* N. iv.

Namque omnes homines, non solum architecti, quod est bonum possunt probare.

Vitr. *Lib. VI. Cap. xi.*

(7) Malheur aux productions de l'Art, dont toute la beauté n'est que pour les artistes. Mr. D'Alembert dans l'Eloge de M. de Montesquieu.

a hand

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a hand in it would not admit that attitude, but looked as if crippled, he immediately made him an offer of his crayon, desiring him to alter what he thought amiss in it. But the gentleman excusing himself, by saying, "How should I be able to do it, who am not of the profession?" The painter, who stood in wait for this answer, replied, "What right have you, then, to censure the works of those who are (8)?" As though a man should be able to design a hand like Pefarese, to know if another, in designing one, has crippled it or not (9). There appeared a great deal more

(8) *Notitie de' Professori del Disegno, &c.* Anecdotes of the professors of design from the days of Cimabue to the present, containing thirty years, from 1580 to 1610, in the *Life of Fabrizio Boschi.*

(9) That saying of Donatellus to Philip, "Here's wood for you, do it yourself," will not always hold good; for the person to whom it is addressed, may, reply, "Though I cannot do better myself, I know when you do wrong." There is to this purpose a most beautiful passage in Dionysius Halicarnassensis, where he gives his opinion of the history of Thucydides. His words

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sense

sense in the conduct of that Venetian painter, who, when any honest mechanic happened to have business with him, never missed the opportunity of taking his opinion concerning the pieces he was then about; and, on the good man's telling him, that he was no judge of painting, immediately cancelled what he had been doing, and began it anew. Though all men are not acquainted with the niceties of an art, all can discern if a figure is free or cramped in its motions, if the colouring of it is lively enough, if its drapery sits well, if it operates and expresses what it

are: "But though we are not possessed of the exquisite and lively genius of Thucydides, and other great writers, we may yet claim some share of their judgement. It was never deemed unlawful for inferior artists, nor even those who did not belong to the profession, to criticise the works of an Apelles, a Zeuxes, or a Protogenes; of a Phidias, a Polictetus, or a Miron. Nay, it often happens, that the most illiterate persons, in their judgement of things immediately subject to the senses, shew themselves no way inferior to the most learned."

Carlo Dati Vita di Apelles:
ought

ought to operate and express. In short, there is no man, who, without entering into the niceties and depths of things, may not form a right judgement concerning the representation of those, which he himself has a proper feeling of, by having them constantly before his eyes; nay, a better judgement, perhaps, than the artist himself, who has his own favourite modes of attitude, drapery, and colouring; who has contracted a certain habit of seeing in the same stile that he works, and in all he does aims so constantly at some peculiar form, as to blame every thing that differs from it. Painters, exclusive of that envy which sometimes blinds them, judge oftener according to Paolo or Guercino, as writers do according to Boccaccio and Davanzati, than according to nature and truth. But it is not so with men of true taste and the public, equally strangers to school prejudice (1). It is cer-

(1) Je ferois souvent plus d'état de l'avis d'un homme de bon sens, qui n'auroit jamais manié le pinceau, que de celui de la plus part des peintres. M. de Piles Remarq. 50. sur le Poème de *Arts graphica* de M. du Fresnoy.

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tain,

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tain, that the Tarpa, without whose approbation no poets could gain admittance into the library of Apollo Palatinus, was himself no poet. Nor was the audience an audience of poets, which, in the French theatre, had taste enough to give the Armida, Misanthrope, and Athalia the preference over all their other dramatic performances.

THE academies of painting, even those composed of artists, are very subject to give false judgement, and the rather, as the heads of them have often obtained that honour by favour and intrigue, which, even in times deemed the happiest for the polite arts, were often sufficient to raise men of no merit above the heads of the most deserving (2).

(2) Quoniam autem . . . animadverto potius indoctos quam doctos gratia superare, non esse certandum judicans cum indoctis ambitione, potius his præceptis editis ostendam nostræ scientiæ virtutem. Vitruv. in Proemio, Lib. III.

Pardon me, I beseech you, as you yourself have experienced what it is to be deprived of liberty, and live under obligations to patrons, &c.

And

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And to this, no doubt, it is owing, that the numerous societies of that kind, founded of late by the liberality of Princes in Italy, Germany, and France, for the improvement of painting, have not produced a single pupil comparable with any of the ancient masters. Those great men did not, in studying the art, servilely aim to please the director of an academy, in hopes of obtaining his recommendation and interest, as is now the case. They did not give themselves up as slaves to follow blindly his favourite stile; but, true to their natural genius, they applied themselves to such things as best suited it, without running any risk of spoiling their fortune; and painted, not to flatter a master, but to please

Raphael's letter to M. F. Raibolini, called if Francia.

But if the other five books should be late to appear, I am not to be blamed for it. It must rather be imputed to my bad fortune, in having to deal with Princes, who lavish their riches, I need not tell you how; which, however, is generally the fault of their ministers.

Seb. Serlio, Lib. III. in fine.

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mankind.

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mankind. It is but lately they discovered in France, how much this art suffered by being under the dictature, or rather tyranny, of a director, who, in a few years, had diffused his own particular manner into the works of the youth under his care, and infected with it the whole school. And to this discovery, in all probability, is owing the wise method they have since taken, of exposing the works of their academists in public, to the open day, in which, to use the words of a master, the smallest blemish becomes visible; that is, to a judgment, to which Phidias (3), Apelles (4), Tintoret, and many others of the most famous masters, ancient and modern, submitted theirs. True it is, that either through the novelty of a subject, or the tricks of those who exhibit it, the

(3) *ἰσὶ καὶ Φιδίαν φέρει ὁ δῆμος ἀνίσταται, &c.*

Lucian. de Imaginibus.

(4) Idem (Apelles) perfecta opera proponebat pergula transeuntibus, atque post ipsam tabulam latens vitia, quæ notarentur, auscultabat, vulgum diligentiores judicem quam se preferens.

C. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. XXXV. Cap. x.

multitude

THE PUBLIC JUDGEMENT. 151

multitude is sometimes liable to be mistaken. But free from partiality, and guided by a certain natural good sense, as well as by the authority of good judges, they at last come to set a just value upon the several works of an artist; and, without knowing any thing of the contrast between light and shade, richness of colouring, beauty of attitude, or of the manner in which this or that effect is produced; in short, without knowing any thing of the niceties of the art, they judge, and from their judgment there lies no appeal, as well of the parts as of the whole of a piece. It was this opinion of the multitude, that encouraged Titian to follow the paths of Giorgione and nature; that solemnly belied, and turned to their shame, the judgment, which certain Canons, assembled in chapter, had pronounced concerning a piece of Vandycke's (5); that placed the Communion of St. Jerome on a footing with the transfiguration of Raphael, in spite of

(5) Deschamps Vies des Peintres Flamands, T. II. dans la Vie de Vandick.

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the

152 OF THE CRITICISM

the clamour first raised by the rivals of Domenichino against that ineffimable performance (6). The multitude, in a word, who, properly speaking, are the first masters of a painter, are likewise, and it is but just they should be so, his sovereign judges.

CHAP. XV. OF THE CRITICISM NECESSARY TO A PAINTER.

LET not a professor, desirous of obtaining universal applause, be backward in doing justice to the merit of others, who have gone before him; nor let him be afraid, where justice requires it, to censure freely their defects. He is not, either through affection for his own school, or even love for his country, to erect an idol in his own mind; but tutored by science, according to the infallible rule of truth, he must assign every painter that rank, which he is best entitled to; he must pay a due regard to his stile and manner. His judging thus of the

(6) Bellori in the Life of Domenichino.

merit

NECESSARY TO A PAINTER. 153

merit of other men's works will turn greatly to the benefit of his own.

THIS is the more necessary, considering how little the judgement of those, who have written the lives of painters, is to be depended on. The merit of these writers, utter strangers to the elegant acuteness of Pliny, consists entirely in giving a blind and tedious account of all the blunders committed, and all the good things said, by this or that painter, and a list of all his works; but not a word of his merit as a painter, no more than if he had never handled a pencil: for as to the praises, which they bestow on them by wholesale, just as they come uppermost, they are too vague to characterise any of them; not unlike those which Ariosto lavishes on the principal masters of the age he lived in,

*Duo Dossi, e quel che a par sculpe e colora
Michel pui de mortale angel divino
Bastiano, Raffael, Tizian, chonora
Non men Cador, e quei benexia, e Urbino (7).*

(7) The two Dossi, and Michael, who, more than mortal, a divine angel, both carves and paints

WHEREVER

WHEREVER, therefore, a young painter happens to be, let him make it his business to see the works of the best masters; but let him see them with a critic's eye, and observe as well their beauties as their blemishes. Achilles himself had a vulnerable part; nor was the divine genius, who celebrates him, without imperfection. Neither one nor the other had received a compleat dip. Among mortals, the best is he who is least bad (8). Let not the young painter, therefore, be ashamed to say of one piece; "here is no correctness of design, no grandeur in the outline, nor is the costume duly observed; there the rules of perspective are violated, the chiaroscuro false, the equally well; Bastiano, Raphael, and Titian who do as much honour to Cadiz, as these to Venice and Urbino.

An English writer says of this verse; "this "praise is excessive, not decisive; it carries no "idea."

(8) optimus ille est,

Qui minimis urgetur. Hor. L. I. Sat. iii.

Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,

Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.

Essay on Crit.

reasons

reasons for such a reflection of colour not sufficiently apparent." And of another piece, "here the colouring is lively, the features are fine, the penciling bold, the flow of drapery easy, the groupes well disposed, the degradation well conducted, and the contrasts both natural and ingenious." Happy the painter, who unites the grace and expression of this master with the colouring and shading of that; the truth and beauty possessed severally by these two; the symmetry observable in this piece, with the beautiful confusion preserved in that!"

C H A P. XVI.

OF THE PAINTER'S BALANCE.

BY such observations as these, a young painter will, in time, acquire the facility of forming a right judgment of those masters, who hold the first rank in his profession. The celebrated de Piles, who, by his writings, has thrown so much light upon painting, in order to reduce such judgment to the greater precision, bethought himself of a pictorial balance, by means of which a painter's

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painter's merit may be weighed with the greatest exactness. This merit he divides into composition, design, colouring, and expression; and in each of these branches he has assigned every painter that share he thought him entitled to, according as he approached more or less the highest degree of excellence, and summit of perfection; so that, by summing up the numbers, which, standing against each master's name, express his share of merit in each of these branches, we have his total merit or value in the art, and may hence gather what rank one painter holds in regard to another. Several objections, it is true, have been started to this method of calculation, by a famous mathematician of our days, who, among other things, insists, that it is the product of the above numbers, multiplied by each other, and not the sum of them that gives the true merit of the artist (9). But this is not a place

(9) See remarks on Monsieur de Piles's balance of painters, as it appears at the end of his course of painting by Monsieur de Mairan. *Mém. de l'Acad. des Sciences*, 1753.

to

• OF THE PAINTER'S BALANCE. 157

to enter into such niceties, nor, indeed, would the doing it be of any service to the art. The only thing worth our notice is, whether the original numbers, standing for the painter's merit in the several branches of his art, are such as he is really intitled to, without suffering ourselves to be biassed by any partiality, as de Piles has been, in favour of the Prince of the Flemish school; the consequence of which, strange as it may appear, is, that in his balance Raphael and Rubens turn out exactly of the same weight.

RAPHAEL is now universally allowed to have attained that degree of perfection, beyond which it is scarce lawful for mortals to aspire. Painting, in some measure revived among us by the diligence of Cimabue, towards the decline of the thirteenth century, received no small improvement from the genius of Giotto, Masaccio, and others; inasmuch that, in less than two hundred years, it began to blaze forth with great lustre in the works of Ghirlandai, Gian Bellino, Mantegna, Pietro Perugino, Leonardo da Vinci, the best grounded of them all, a man of great learning.

learning, and the first who contrived to give relief to pictures. But whatever improvement the art might have received from these different masters in different parts of Italy, they still, to a man almost, servilely followed the same manner, and all partook more or less of that hardness and dryness, which, in an age still Gothic, painting received from the hands of its restorer Cimabue; till Raphael, at length, issuing from the Perugian school, and, studying the works of the Greeks, without ever losing sight of nature, brought the art, in a manner, to the highest pitch of perfection. This great man has, if not entirely, at least in a great measure, attained those ends, which a painter should always propose to himself, to deceive the eye, satisfy the understanding, and touch the heart. So excellent are his pieces, that the spectator, far from praising his pencil, seems sometimes entirely to forget that they are the seats of it he has before him; solely intent upon, and, as it were, transported to the scene of action, in which he almost fancies himself a party. Well, indeed, has he deserved the title of *Divine*, by the beauty and comprehensiveness of his expression, the

the justness and nobleness of his compositions, the chastity of his designs, and the elegance of his forms, which always carry a natural ingenuity along with them; but above all, by that inexpressible gracefulness, more beautiful than beauty itself, with which he has contrived to season all his pieces. Carlo Maratti having engraved a piece, called the School, placed at the top of it the three graces with this verse under them.

Senza di noi ogni fatica è vana (1).

WITHOUT their aid, in fact, the light of a picture is no better than darkness, every attitude is insipid, every motion awkward. 'Tis they who impart to every thing that *Je ne sçai quoi*, that charm, which is as sure to conquer, as impossible to be defined. Maratti has placed the graces on high, and, as it were, descending from Heaven, in order to shew that they really are a celestial gift. Happy the artist on whose cradle they have smiled, whose vows and offerings they have not disdained! Maratti was not to be informed,

(1) Without our aid all labour is in vain.

that

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that gracefulness, that jewel which adds such value to every thing, though not originally obtainable by all the gold of diligence and study, may yet be greatly heightened and polished by them.

THOUGH Raphael might boast, like Apelles of old, whom he resembled in so many other respects, that in gracefulness he had no equal (2), yet Parmigiano and Correggio must be allowed to have come very near him. One of them has, however, often trespassed the just bounds of symmetry; and the other is not always chaste in his designs: both, besides, were too apt to be guilty of affectation. We ought, perhaps, to forgive

(2) *Præcipua ejus (Apellis) in arte venustas fuit, cum eadem ætate maximi pictores essent: quorum opera cum admiraretur, collaudatis, omnibus, deesse iis unam Venerem dicebat, quam Graeci Charita vocant: Cetera omnia contigisse: sed hac soli sibi neminem parem.*

Plin. Nat. Hist. L. XXXV. C. 2.

Ingenio, & gratia, quam in seipso maxime jactat, Apelles est præstantissimus.

Quintil. Inst. Orat. L. XII. C. 2.

Correggio

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Correggio every thing, for the sake of that uncommon greatness of manner, that life and soul which he has infused into all his figures; for the sake of that inimitable ease and delicacy of pencil, which makes his pieces appear as if finished in a day, and seen in a glass. Of this we have a sufficient proof in the Ancona of St. Jerome and the Magdalen on their knees before the child Jesus, which is in Parma; the finest picture, perhaps, that ever issued from mortal hands.

THERE are some glimpses of Correggio's stile in the works of Barrocci, though he studied at Rome. He never drew a figure that he did not borrow from nature; and, for fear of losing the masses, used to drape his models with very large folds. His pencil was exceedingly sweet, and his colouring equally harmonious. He, indeed, spoiled a little the natural tints by too free an use of reds and blues, and has now and then robbed things of their body by shading them too much, and melting them, as it were, into one another. In point of design he was far more diligent than successful; and, in the air

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of his heads, affected the gracefulness of the Lombard School, rather than the elegance of the Greeks and his Countryman Raphael.

MICHAEL Angelo was a perfect stranger to all manner of gracefulness. But he was learned, profound, severe, bold in his postures, and the first that introduced the terrible into painting.

JULIO Romano, full of spirit, and of learned and uncommon conceits, seems to come nearer the manner of Michael Angelo, than the elegantly natural one of Raphael, under whom he studied.

THE Germans, by servilely following Michael Angelo, gave into those strange attitudes and clumsy forms, which appear in the works of their greatest men, Spranger and Golzio.

THE Florentines copied him with greater judgement and discretion. We must, however, except Andrea del Sarto, who, though an observer of truth, is somewhat clumsy in his figures. But then he is easy in his draperies; sweet in his colours; and would have carried the palm among the Tuscans, had it not been

been ravished from him by Fra. Bartolomeo, to immortalise whom his St. Mark in the palace Pitti would alone be sufficient; for there is not wanting in that piece any of the perfections necessary to constitute an excellent master.

TITIAN, whom Giorgione first initiated in the art, is an universal master. Upon every thing he took in hand, he has contrived to stamp its own proper nature. His pencil flows with juices that are truly vital. His figures breathe; and the blood circulates in their faces. And though some, perhaps, have surpassed him in design, not but that he is generally correct enough in the bodies of his women, and his children, on account of their form, have been studied by the greatest masters (3); he never had his equal in colouring, or in portrait and landscape painting. He most indefatigably studied truth and never lost sight of her. He most indefatigably laboured to convert, if I may be allowed the expression, the colours of his

(3) Bellori's lives of Poussin and Francesco Fiammingo.

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pallet into flesh and blood. But what cost him most was, as he himself confesses, to cover and hide this fatigue; and in this he has succeeded so well, that his works seem rather born than made. His fortune equalled his merit. He was greatly honoured by Charles V, as the great Raphael had been, a few years before, by the Popes Julius II. and Leo X.

JACOPO Bassano distinguished himself, at the same time, by the strength of his colouring. Few have equalled him in the just dispensation of light reflected from one object to another, and in those happy contrasts, by means of which painted objects become really transparent. He may boast his having deceived an Annibal Caracci, as Parrhasio formerly deceived Zeuxes (4); and had the glory of Paolo Veronese's not being willing that his son Carletto should learn the principles of colouring from any other master.

PAOLO Veronese was the Creator, as it were, of a new manner. Though careless in

(4) See an account of this deception in the life of Annibal Caracci.

point

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point of design, and, in point of costume, extremely licentious, he was most noble of fancy, and most fruitful of invention. One would imagine, that those, who behold his magnificent pictures, longed to be of the action represented by them; and it may be said of him, with great justice, that even his faults are pleasing (5). He has had very great admirers in every age, and among them a Guido Reni, whose praise, no doubt, would have flattered him most.

TINTORET is no way inferior to any of the Venetians in those pieces, which he drew by way of displaying his talents and not improving them. This he has particularly shewn in his Martyrdom, now in the School of St. Mark, in which there is design, colouring, composition, effects of light, life, expression, and all carried to the highest pitch of perfection. Scarce had this picture made its appearance, when all mankind seemed to fall in love with it. Aretine himself, though

(5) In quibusdam virtutes non habent gratiam, in quibusdam vitia ipsa delectant.

Quint. Inst. Orat. Lib. XI. C. iii.

so

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so warm a friend to Titian, that through mere jealousy he turned Tintoret out of his School, could not forbear crying it up to excess. He wrote himself to Tintoret, that this piece had extorted the applause of all those who saw it. The scene, adds he, appears rather true than feigned; and happy would you be, if, instead of being so expeditious, you could prevail on yourself to be a little more patient (6).

NEXT to these great artists, who had no guide but nature, or the most perfect copies of nature, the Greek statues, started up those other artists, whom we are not to consider as the disciples of nature, so much as of those masters, who a little before had revived the art of painting, and restored it to its ancient honour and dignity. Such were the Caraccis, who undertook to unite in their manner the beauties of all the most famous Italian Schools, and founded a new one, which did not yield to the Roman in

(6) Vedi Lettera LXV. T. III. Raccolta di Lettere sulla Pittura, Scultura, e Architettura.

elegance

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elegance of forms, to the Florentine in correctness of design, nor to the Venetian or Lombard in beauty of colouring. These schools, if I may be allowed the expression, are the primitive metals of painting; and the Caraccis, by melting them down together, composed a Corinthian metal, noble indeed and beautiful to look at, but wanting the strength, ductility, and weight possessed singly by the different metals which compose it. And, indeed, the greatest praise, that can be bestowed on the works of the Caraccis, is not owing to any air of originality in them, or any perfect imitation of nature, but to the striking likeness in them, to the manner of Titian, Raphael, Parmigianino, and Correggio. As to the rest, the Caraccis did not neglect to provide their school with all those helps, which learning could afford; from a conviction that the arts never succeed through mere good fortune, or boldness of fancy, but are rather so many habits working according to the dictates of learning and right reason (7).

(7) ἡ μὲν οὖν τέχνη ἐστὶ τῆς μετὰ νότον ἀλυσὶς ποιητικῆς ὁρίσιν. Arist. Eth. L. VI. C. iv.

M 4

In

In their school the pupils were taught perspective, anatomy; in a word, every thing necessary to lead them by the shortest and safest road. And it is to this that we are chiefly to attribute the school of Bologna's having produced a greater number of able masters than any other.

AT the head of these masters stand Domenichino and Guido; one a most curious observer of nature, and most profound painter, the other the inventor of a certain noble and beautiful manner peculiar to himself, which shines especially in that sweetness and beauty he has contrived to give the faces of his women. Both these artists have been preferred to the Caraccis, and it must be owned, that the last did really excell them.

FRANCESCO Barbieri, called il Guercino, studied first in this school, but he afterwards formed to himself a certain peculiar manner, entirely founded upon nature and truth. Quite careless in the choice of his forms, he produced a Chiaroscuro that gives the greatest relief to objects, and renders them palpable. Caravaggio, the Rembrants of Italy,

was

was the real author of this manner, which, in these our days, has been again brought to light by Pizzetta and Crespi. He abused the saying of that Greek, who being asked, who was his master, pointed to the populace; and such, indeed, was the magic of his Chiaroscuro, that, as often as he undertook to copy nature in low and trivial subjects, he had the power of deceiving even a Dominichino and a Guido. The stile of Caravaggio was followed by two famous Spaniards, Velasquez, the founder of a school amongst his countrymen, and il Ribera, who settled in Italy, and from whom afterwards the whimsical Salvator Rosa, and that most fertile genius Lucas Giordano, the Proteus and thunderbolt of painting, studied the first principles of the art.

BETWEEN the masters of the Bolognian, and those of the other schools of Italy, we are to place Rubens, the prince of the Flemish School, and a man of the most elevated genius, who appeared, at once, as painter and ambassador in a country, which, in a few years after, saw one of its greatest poets

Secretary

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Secretary of State. Nature endowed him with great vivacity, and great ease in working; and he added learning to these natural gifts. He, too, studied our masters, Titian, Tintoret, Caravaggio and Paolo; and borrowed a little from every one of them, so sparingly, however, that his own peculiar manner predominates. He was in his movements more moderate than Tintoret, more soft in his Chiaroscuro than Caravaggio, but not so rich in his compositions, or light in his touches as Paolo; and, in his carnations, always less true than Titian, and less delicate than his own scholar Vandycke. He contrived to give his colours the greatest transparency, and no less harmony, notwithstanding the extraordinary deepness of them; and he had a strength and grandeur of style entirely his own. He would have soared still higher, had nature afforded him finer objects in Flanders, or had he known how to create them anew, or correct them after the patterns left us by the Greek masters.

POUSSIN, the prince of French painters, had a particular fondness for the works of Rubens,

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Rubens, at the same time that he sought for the art of design amongst the ancient marbles, in which, as an ingenious author expresses it, she sits as Queen to give law to the moderns. He spared no pains in the choice and composition of his subjects; and to give them life, learning and dignity. He would have equalled Raphael himself, whose style he imitated, were gracefulness, ease and vivacity to be acquired by study. For, in fact, it was by mere dint of labour and fatigue, that he produced what, in a manner, cost Raphael nothing; insomuch, that his figures may be said to mimic the natural actions of that great master.

CHAPTER XVII. OF IMITATION.

A Painter ought attentively to consider, compare together, and weigh in the balance of reason and truth all these different styles. But he ought likewise carefully to guard against too great a fondness for any one of them in particular, that he may think proper

proper to adopt; otherwise, to use the Dantesque expression of a first rate master, instead of the child, he would become the grand-child of nature (8).

BESIDES, his imitation must be of generals, and not of particulars. Whatever a young painter's natural disposition may be, whether to paint boldly and freely, like Tintoret and Rubens, or to labour his works, like Titian or da Vinci, let him follow it. This kind of imitation is very commendable. It is thus that Dante, at the same time that he carefully avoided adopting the particular expressions of Virgil, endeavoured to seize his bold and free manner, and at last caught from him

Lo bello stile che gli ha fatto onore (9).

Whereas little has accrued to that numerous herd, who stole from Petrarch his peculiar expressions and images, and racked their brains to think like him.

(8) Da Vinci on Painting.

(9) That elegance of style, which has done him so much honour.

As

As to the rest, nothing should hinder an able master from making use, now and then, of any antique or even modern figure, which he may find his account in employing. Sanzio, in a St. Paul-at-Lisra, scrupled not to avail himself of an ancient sacrifice in basso rilievo; nor did Bonarroti himself disdain to use, in his paintings of the Sextine chappel, a figure taken from that famous Cornelian, which, tradition tells us, he wore on his finger, and which is now in the possession of the most Christian King. Men, like these, avail themselves of the productions of others in such a manner, as to make us apply to them, what la Bruyere said of Despreaux: that one would imagine the thoughts of other men had been of his own creation (1).

In general, a painter should have his eye constantly fixed on nature, that inexhaustible and varied source of every kind of beauty; and should study to imitate her in her most singular effects. As beauty, scattered over the whole universe, shines brighter in some objects than in others, he should never

(1) Harangue a l'Academie.

be

be without his little book and crayon, in order to make drawings of every beautiful or uncommon object that may happen to present itself; and take sketches of every fine building, every situation, every effect of light, every sight of clouds, every flow of drapery, every attitude, every expression of the passions, that may happen to strike him. He may afterwards employ these things as occasions offer; and in the mean time will have the advantage of acquiring a grand taste. By uniting in a grand composition effects no less bold and beautiful than true and natural, he will acquire the same glory, that orators acquire by the sublime, the glory of surprising, and, in a manner, exalting us above ourselves.

CHAP. XVIII. OF THE RECREATIONS OF A PAINTER.

A Painter must now and then break from these important studies, and unbend the mind, that it may return to its work with new strength and relish. We are told that

that the Carraccis, by way of relaxation, used to draw caricaturas, and propose picturesque riddles to one another, by sketching out various devices which contained a great meaning under a few strokes; some of which Malvasia has thought worthy of his graver. Some masters have been known, after finishing the day's work, to spend the dusk of the evening in considering the spots then forming on faces and walls; and taking down upon paper those figures or groupes thereby suggested to their fancy; a practice recommended by da Vinci, as tending greatly to improve the inventive faculty. But of all the amusements of this kind, the most useful seems to be that of the five points, in which the head, hands and feet of a figure are to be placed. By this exercise both the head and hand of an artist acquire dexterity. By it he may be said to break himself to invention. By it he may expect often to hit upon the most beautiful attitudes; just as the finest thoughts are sometimes suggested by the difficulty of rhyming.

A painter, by employing even his hours of recreation in this manner, will find himself entirely

entirely taken up, as I have already said he should be, with his art. And, indeed, it is the only method by which a man can expect to render any exercise natural to him, and overcome every difficulty that may occur in undertakings of great consequence. An education, in which all things, even the minutest, tend solely to one great end, is no other than the art of forming excellent men and heroes. And, accordingly, a very great genius has wisely observed, that, if the Spartans became the wonder of all Greece, it was not so much on account of the excellence of any of their laws in particular, as on account of the general tendency of them all to one and the same point (2). In like manner, a

(2) Sed ut de rebus, quae ad homines solos pertinent potius loquamur, si olim Lacedaemoniorum respublica fuit florentissima, non puto ex eo contigisse quod legibus uteretur, quae singulatim spectatae meliores essent aliarum civitatum institutis, nam contra multae ex iis ab usu communi abhorrebant, atque etiam bonis moribus adversabantur, sed ex eo quod ab uno tantum legislatore conditae sibi omnes consentiebant, atque in eundem scopum collimabant.

Cartesius in Dissertatione de Methodo.

young

young painter may expect to attain the greatest heights, when nothing diverts him from his purpose, or retards him in the pursuit of it; when he never turns his eyes or his thoughts from off his art (3), when he has persuaded himself, that, let a man have ever so great a genius, he must not expect to succeed without pains; and, like a man armed at all points, joining a well grounded theory to a continual and uninterrupted practice.

C H A P. XIX.

OF THE FORTUNATE CONDITION OF A PAINTER.

GREAT are the fatigues, no doubt, which a painter must undergo to become eminent in his art; but great, too, is the interest, with which he may expect to see them repaid. I know not, indeed, any

(3) Les arts sont come Eglè, dont le cœur s'est rendu,

Qu'a l'amant le plus tendre, et le plus assidu.
Dans l'Épître a Hermothime.

N

art

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(3) Les arts sont come Eglè, dont le cœur n'est rendu,

Qu'a l'amant le plus tendre, et le plus assidu.

Dans l'Épître a Hermothime.

N

art

art or science, which enjoys so many, and such considerable advantages as that of painting. A very eminent physician, who has minutely described the various diseases, usually contracted by those who apply themselves to the several trades and professions, attributes them all either to the vapours which they are obliged to inhale, or the kind of life which they are obliged to lead; as though these diseases were so many penalties, which nature had inflicted on the learning of man. In regard to painting, he has not been able to charge it with any thing, but the smell of its oils, and the fumes of its vermilion and ceruse, the first generated by mercury, the other extracted from lead by means of vinegar; both which he condemns as very hurtful to the constitution; alleging, as a proof of their poisonous quality, the short lives of the first rate painters, by whom, no doubt, he means Parmigianino, Correggio, Annibal, and a few others; but, above all, Raphael da Urbino, who, it is well known, was carried off in the flower of his youth.

youth (4). But any one, ever so little acquainted with the history of painting, may oppose to these testimonies the very long life of Cortona, le Brun, Jouvenet, Giordano, Cornelio Poelenburg, Lionardo da Vinci, Primaticcio, and Guercino, who all lived to above seventy; of Poussin, Mig-

(4) Ego quidem quotquot novi pictores, & in hac & in aliis urbibus, omnes fere semper valedudinarios observavi. Et si pictorum historiam evolvantur, non admodum longævus fuisse constabit, ac precipuè, qui inter eos præstantiores fuerint. Raphaellem Urbinatem Pictorem celeberrimum, in ipso juventutis flore e vivis ereptum fuisse legimus, cujus immaturam mortem Balthassar Castilioneus eleganti carmine desilevit Ast alia potior causa subest, quæ pictores morbis obnoxios reddit, colorum nempe materia, quam semper præ manibus habent, ac ipsi sub naribus, &c. Cinnabarim sobolem esse Mercurii, Cerasum ex plumbo parari nemo non novit, & propter hanc causam satis graves noxas subsequi. Iisdem igitur affectibus, licet non ita graviter, illos vexari necessum est, ac ceteros Metallurgos. Bernardini Ramazzini de Morbis Artificum Diatriba, Cap. ix. Patav. 1713.

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nard, Carlo Maratti, Lorenese, Albani, Tintoret, Jacopo Bassano, and Michael Angelo, who lived to above eighty; of Selimene Cignani, and Gian Bellino, who attained ninety; and particularly Tiziano Vecellio, another prince of painting, who died in his ninety ninth year, and that too of a contagious distemper. It looks therefore, as if this great man sought to charge the art with some disorder or another, merely because he was a physician, and the title of his book seemed to require it. The truth is, that the only disorders, to which painters are subject, are, as the proverb goes, *ceruse diseases*. One would imagine almost, that nature, in this instance, intended to exempt painting, as a favourite art, which, on account of its representing her beauties better than any other, she considered with a more than ordinary degree of partiality and affection.

A painter may, without fatigue, confine himself to his work from morning till night: an advantage unknown to the Poet, and the Mathematician, whose business, being all head-work, requires a most intense meditation,

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meditation, which the mind, incapable of being long bent, is incapable of enduring; whereas in painting, whatever study the invention and disposition, and certain niceties of expression colouring and design may require, the greatest part of the work belongs to the hands, upon which depends the execution of what the mind has planned. And when once a painter is well grounded in the principles of his art, and has acquired a thorough facility of hand, the crayon and the pencil run, as it were, of themselves, with the smallest impulse of the inventive faculty. In fact, we know it is customary with some masters to converse freely, while painting, with those about them; the nature of their art being such, that, in the exercise of it, they may, like Julius Cæsar, often attend to different objects at one and the same time.

If any mortal has a right to flatter himself with a long course of happiness, it is certainly the painter. By spending most of his time in company, and being never totally excluded from it, he runs the less risk of growing sower or melancholy. When alone, he enjoys, in common with

the poet, the supreme pleasure of creation; and has, besides, the superior advantage of knowing that his art is more popular; there not being a man, from the highest to the lowest, from the most learned to the most illiterate, over whom painting has not a very great hold and empire (5). He is constantly employed on the most beautiful and enchanting subjects; nor is there, in the immense sphere of the visual faculty, a single object, which is not a fund of entertainment to him.

As delight is the principal end of his art, he is honoured and caressed by every one, there being few, who do not often stand in need of company to banish irksomeness the most mortal enemy of man; who from this art, therefore, derives no small advantage. Neither ushers, nor guards, are able to stop irksomeness, or hinder

- (5) *Vel quum Paufiaca torpes infane tabella,
Qui peccas minus atque ego? quum Fulvi
Rutabæque,
Aut Placedejani contento poplite miror
Prælia rubrica picta aut carbone: velut si
Re vera pugnent, feriant, vitentque moventes
Armaviri, nequam & cessator Davus: at ipse
Sæptilis veterum iudex & callidus audis.*

Hor. L. II. Sat. vii.

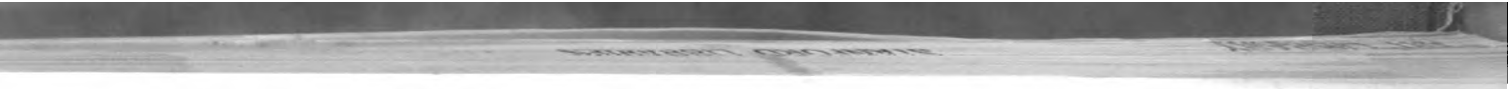
it

it from penetrating into the most solemn audiences, and the cabinets of those, whom the vulgar consider as sunk in the bosom of happiness. To this it is chiefly owing, that able painters have, in all ages, been highly honoured and rewarded by princes, as so many operators of that sweet enchantment, which converts a canvas into the most pleasing and wonderful scenes in nature; which breaks the fetters of the soul, and exalts a man, as it were, above himself. Need I add, that slaves were formerly forbid the exercise of this art, always reckoned the first of the liberal arts (6); that, as both useful and delightful, it made part of the education of children of family with Grammar, Musick, and Gymnastic exer-

- (6) *Et hujus (Pamphili) auctoritate effectum est Sicyone primum, deinde & in tota Græcia; ut pueri ingenui ante omnia graphicen, hoc est picturam in buxo docerentur, recipereturque ars ea in primum gradum liberalium. Semper quidem honos ei fuit, ut ingenui exercebant, mox ut honesti: perpetuo interdictio ne servitia docerentur. Ideo neque in hac, neque in toreutics ullius qui servierit opera celebrantur.*

C. Plin. Nat. Hist. L. XXXV. C. x.

cise



cises (7); that the ancient painters were ever held in the greatest honour, the most grateful reward to generous minds, by the learned people of Greece, that is, by those, who by their virtues and their arms subdued the world. And what honours have not been conferred on many of our modern painters, whose works prove so great an ornament to the age that gave them birth, and to the countries which now possess them (8)?

(7) Ἐπὶ δὲ τίτταρα ἔχουσιν αἱ φιλοῦσαι αἰδέσθαι, γράμματα, καὶ γυμνασιακὰ, καὶ μουσικὰ, καὶ τίτταρον ἔστι γραφικὴν. Τὸ δὲ γραμματικὸν καὶ γραφικὸν οὐ χωριστὸν πρὸς τὸ βίον ὄντας καὶ ἀποσχιστὸν ἰσότης δὲ καὶ τὸ γραφικὸν, οὐχ ὡς τοὺς ἰδίους ἀνέους μὴ διαμαρτυροῦνται, ἀλλ' ὅσον ἀνελπιστοῦν πρὸς τὸ τῶν σπουδῶν ὅτι καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν, ἢ μᾶλλον ὅτι αὐτοὶ διαμαρτυροῦνται τὸ πρὸς τὰ σύμματα ἄλλους. Τὸ δὲ ζῆτον αὐταρχοῦ τὸ χρῆσθαι, ὅπως ἀκριβὲς τοῖς μεγαλοφύκοις καὶ τοῖς ἐλευθέροις.

Arist. de Rep. L. VIII. C. iii

(8) Primumque dicemus quæ nescant de pictura arte quondam nobili tunc cum expeteretur a regibus popalisque, & illos nobilitantes quos esset dignata posteris tradere.

C. Plin. Nat. Hist. L. XXXV. C. i.

C H A P.

CHAP. XX.

CONCLUSION.

AND, if this divine art is now less honoured and favoured by Princes than it used to be (8), it must, to say the truth, be entirely attributed to the little merit of the artists, who, having long quitted the right paths in which the ancient masters used to travel, affect to call that dry, which approaches natural beauty, and that pedantic and affected, which contains the least learning. One would imagine, that they did not aim at finishing their pieces as they should do, so much as at having a great number upon their hands at the same time. Too many resemble a certain painter, whose name I am ashamed to mention, who, to apologize for his finishing his works in a slovenly manner, used to say, that he painted merely to get money (9). It is now, indeed, hard to meet with an artist, who, well ground-

(8) Στοι τὸ ἔργον.

Philostrat. in Proem. L. I. de Imag.

(9) Deschamps Vis de Vandycke.

ed

ed in the sciences, and entirely wrapt up in his profession; who, neither assuming the liberties allowed to mere practitioners, nor stooping slavishly to the whims of others, can say with truth: I paint only for myself, and for the art.

LET the Apelles, the Raphaels, the Titians but appear again; and there will not, I answer for it, be wanting Alexanders, Charleses, and Leos. And if, through some strange and uncommon malignity of fortune, an exquisite artist should happen not to meet with favour from the Great, he may, however, be sure of acquiring that honour, which is the genuine offspring of virtue, and never forsakes her; which will always flourish in the mouths of men; and which it is not in the power of kings to confer (8).

(8) Honour not confer'd by Kings. Pope's One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty-eight.

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