A Biographical Dictionary

Containing An Historical Account Of All The Engravers, From The Earliest Period Of The Art Of Engraving To The Present Time; And A Short List Of Their Most Esteemed Works. ... To Which Is Prefixed, an Essay On The Rise And Progress Of The Art Of Engraving, Both On Copper And On Wood. ...

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An Essay on the Art of Engraving, with an Account of its Origin and Progress.

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AN ESSAY ON THE ART OF ENGRAVING, WITH AN ACCOUNT OF ITS ORIGIN AND PROGRESS.

CHAPTER I.

An Introduction to the Continuation of the Essay on the Art of Engraving, &c. containing a short Examination of the Difference, in the Style of Drawing, between the Artists of the Italian, and the Artists of the German School, at the Commencement of the sixteenth Century.

BEFORE I proceed with the Essay on the Origin and Progress of Engraving, I wish to make some few general observations upon the different styles of the German and Italian schools, at the commencement of the sixteenth century; and I mean to confine myself entirely to the engravings of that period, and principally to that part of them, which refers to the expression of general forms, or what may properly be called drawing; for with respect to the invention, composition, expression, and the other essential requisites in painting, they do not immediately concern the present design.

On examining the works of the German artists at this period, the eye is disgusted by the stiffness and inelegance of the general forms. If we look at the draperies, the folds are either long and narrow, or subdivided into a multiplicity of small parts, intersecting one another at right angles, and resembling the crumpling up of paper, rather than the flowing lines, produced by the easy fall of any species of cloth. And the pains, which they took to express each fold with such laboured minuteness, proves, that this defect proceeded not from want of attention, but from a vitiated taste, formed from long habit upon a Gothic original. It is indeed by endeavouring to produce something superior to nature, that they have sunk so far below her. There is another fault, which strikes us, equal in magnitude to the former; especially when we consider the female figures, and such as required beauty and elegance in the composition; and this is the frequent neglect of expressing the indication of the limbs, as they must occasionally appear beneath the drapery; which gives them the appearance of the wax dolls, dressed up by children. The heads and the hands are perhaps moulded with some pains; but it will require the exertion of a fertile imagination, to substitute any tolerable shape for the body or dimensions for the limbs; for the spectator has commonly sufficient scope allowed him for the employment of his ideas.

Albert

Albert Durer, and the ſucceeding ancient German maſters, took great pains in the ſtudy of the human figure; but it appears to have been a theoretical, rather than a practical ſtudy; and we may juſtly be ſurpriſed to find the naked parts of their figures ſo very incorrectly drawn, not only with reſpect to the outlines, but alſo with reſpect to the muſcular markings. Indeed the muſcular parts of the limbs are, in general, ſo poor and thin, that they have the appearance of belonging to perſons emaciated by ſickneſs; while, on the other hand, the extremities are large and the joints protuberating and heavy. It ſeems as if they paid little attention to the appearance of nature; or, if they did, copied her under her worſt forms. For large extremities are not only inconſiſtent with beauty and elegance, but always convey to the mind the idea of weakneſs. Another fault in the works of the artiſts of Germany, at this period, is the great want we diſcover in them of diverſity of character, with reſpect to the drawing of the naked parts of the human figure. The ſame meagre ſtyle of outline appears in the repreſentation of a Sampſon or a Hercules, that prevails in an Adam or an Adonis; but this defect is particularly ſtriking in the female figures. Henry Aldergraver, who was probably the pupil of Albert Durer, ſeems to have been aware of this, and in his beſt works he has, in a great meaſure, avoided it. John Sebald Beham followed his example; and George Penz, with Barthelmy Beham, his contemporary, who both of them are ſaid to have ſtudied at Rome, in the ſchool of Marc Antonio Raimondi, quitted almoſt entirely the Gothic ſtyle of their countrymen, and adopted that of the Italians.

Simplicity of outline and beauty of form were as much ſtudied by the Italian, as they were neglected by the German artiſts. The antique ſculptures, which the former had continually before their eyes, were, without doubt, the ſources, from which they derived thoſe ideas of beauty and elegance. Raphael, with the other eminent artiſts of this period, obtained ſo great an advantage from the ſtudy of them, that the ſucceeding maſters not only followed their example, but laid it down as a rule to their ſcholars, to conſider ſuch a ſtudy, as a very eſſential part of their education, if they meant to excel. Hence it is, that the great Italian artiſts have ſo uniformly preſerved the ſame ſtyle of deſign. They were taught from their infancy to look with admiration upon the antique ſculptures, and to conſider them as the moſt excellent models to form their taſte upon; by this means the ſtudy of them became habitual, and as it were a thing of courſe.

The ſimplicity of ſtyle, which ſo evidently marks the beſt Italian prints of this period, has been cenſured, with no ſmall ſeverity, by the modern French artiſts. They ſpeak of the ſtudying of the antiques as carried too far; and remark, that the ſwellings of the muſcles, and markings of the joints are too equally round and uniform, wanting the flat parts, which appear in nature, and not only give a beautiful variety to the form of the outlines, but add greatly to the ſpirit and expreſſion of the drawing, eſpecially in ſtrong and muſcular figures.

It is certainly true, that the ſtudy of the antiques ſhould be blended with the ſtudy of nature. Where the latter is wholly neglected, in preference to the former, the works of ſuch an artiſt, though correctly drawn, have always much of the coldneſs and inanimation of marble ſtatues. And where nature alone is attended to, without the ſtudy of the antiques, the defects, in general, will be more exceptionable than in the former caſe. For, as we have ſeen in the works of the German artiſts, a bad, vitiated manner is contracted, which impoveriſhes the compoſitions even of the greateſt maſters. And this ariſes from the great difficulty of meeting with nature, truly fine and perfect in all her parts. Fine forms have been ſelected by the ancient ſtatuaries, from variety of different ſubjects, and united by a proportion, which has generally been conſidered as very excellent. To theſe forms, and to this proportion, we ſhould carefully turn our eyes; but nature ſurely ought not to be neglected.

Theſe obſervations, it is preſumed, are juſt in themſelves; but the objections, upon which they are founded, cannot be applied to the beſt works of Marc Antonio; and whenever they have been ſo, it muſt have ariſen from the critic's not having carefully

examined the engravings by that great maſter. It is granted, that his outlines are ſometimes harſh, and the terminations of the ſhadows defective in harmony, and want thoſe gradations of light and ſhadow, which produce an agreeable effect; but whoever will give himſelf the trouble of tracing thoſe very prints, will find the outlines correct and beautiful; he will obſerve, that the form of the muſcles are juſt; and that the knitting of the joints, and the markings of the extremities, are very finely expreſſed. They will hold far better with George Ghiſſi of Mantua, and thoſe who followed his ſtyle of engraving. Ghiſſi, though a man of abilities, was a great manneriſt, and certainly paid little or no attention to the beautiful variety of forms, which are found in nature.

Bernard Picart, a French artiſt, who flouriſhed at the commencement of this century, may be placed at the head of the party, who have ſet their faces againſt the works of old maſters; and thoſe, in particular, of Marc Antonio and his ſcholars. "The out-"lines of their figures," ſays he, "when they worked from the deſigns of Raphael, "are hard, equal lines; the engraving part is neat, but meagre, and without round-"neſs, or gradation of light and ſhadow, which the connoiſſeurs pretend to applaud, "and call improperly the *gout de Rafael*. But," adds he, "when the prints are compared "with the drawings, they are found, not only to be very inferior, but by no means per-"fect copies; the engravers, in many inſtances, having taken unwarrantable liberties, ſuch "as adding back-grounds, where there are none, and working over parts, which are left "clear and light in the originals." But in this inſtance he either was not informed, or had forgotten, that Marc Antonio and the greater part of his diſciples worked immediately under the eye of Raphael; and thoſe alterations were moſt probably made by the painter himſelf. So alſo, if we look at the *Saint Cecelia* from Raphael, as engraved by Marc Antonio, and compare it with the engraving by Strange, from the picture at Bologna, we ſhall find the compoſition conſiderably varied; and ſome of the figures, that eſpecially of *Mary Magdelen*, totally changed. But the reaſon is evident, the print by Marc Antonio was taken from the original drawing; and the alterations took place, when the artiſt painted his deſign upon the canvaſs. Indeed not only he, but his diſciples, alſo, worked, in general, from the drawings of Raphael, and very ſeldom from his pictures.

By way of ſoftening the ſeverity of his other remarks, he adds, "Give Marc Antonio "and the old maſters their due, for they claim indulgence. It is extraordinary, that "they ſhould have puſhed the art ſo far as they did, at ſo early a period. But," continues he, "when the advocates for them pretend to ſay, that the art of engraving has "not been improved ſince their time, they talk abſurdly." Without doubt, if any one did pretend to aſſert ſo manifeſt a falſehood, it would be abſurd; but till the old maſters do meet with ſo extraordinary an advocate, no arguments on the contrary are neceſſary: the fact is too generally known, even by people, who are not judges, to need them. Therefore, ſo much of his diſcourſe, at leaſt, might reaſonably have been ſpared. He writes, he informs us, to remove the prejudices, which many of the admirers of the ancient maſters had formed againſt the modern artiſts. But I cannot conceive that it is neceſſary, in order to elevate the fame of the moderns, to ſtrip antiquity of all its laurels, and blot out, with a ſtroke of the pen, the merit of many very great artiſts, only becauſe that merit was become the object of admiration. Neither is this violent method of proceeding by any means well calculated to remove the prejudices, which any might have imbibed; nor even to prevent the effects of the prevalence of cuſtom, which has led and does lead many to venerate the productions of the ancients; though, in reality, they have never diſcovered one of the beauties, for which alone they are intitled to reſpect. Certainly when we ſpeak of the mechanical part of engraving, the taſte and beauty of finiſhing, the judicious diſtributions of light and ſhadow, the works of the old maſters will bear no compariſon with thoſe of the modern ones. But perhaps it may be added, that the mechanical part of engraving is too much the object in view,

in

in the present day; while the more essential parts, namely, correctness and purity of drawing, in which the ancients excelled, are often hastily overlooked.

It would perhaps have been more advantageous to Picart, if he had never entered the field against the ancients, or, at least, if he had ceased hostilities, when he had laid down his pen. But not contented with abusing their works, his vanity prompted him, in an evil hour, to take up the point and the graver, to convince the world how much it had been imposed upon. For this purpose he imitated the etchings and engravings of various masters, and called the collection *the innocent impostors*. But they sufficiently prove his want of abilities to execute the work in such a manner, as to deceive an experienced judge. The two following engravings are all I shall take notice of. The first is *a Venus and Cupid*, copied from a drawing by Raphael, in the King of France's cabinet. This drawing was engraved by Marc Antonio. The second is *a Bacchanal*, from a drawing by the same master, in the same cabinet; and it was first engraved by Agostino de Musis, the Venetian, who was the scholar of Marc Antonio. Having discovered the original drawings, he gravely tells us, that he thought he could produce something better, than what had excited so long the admiration of the curious; and with this laudable resolution he set to work, and appears to have been well satisfied with the productions of his graver. But can the voice of candour say he has been successful? I apprehend not. I have not, it is true, seen the original drawings, from which the prints are engraved; but if they are faithful transcripts of those drawings, I should not hesitate to declare, that Raphael learned the art of design in the French academy; and, what is more extraordinary, drew in the very style adopted by Picart himself. It appears to me, that Picart, like his countryman Nicholas Dorigny, has so much frenchified the Italian painter, that he would find it a difficult task at first sight to know his own composition.

Picart was certainly a very able artist in his way; but not being fond of the graver, his prints are never highly finished. His great excellence lay in designing and engraving small compositions for vignettes and other book plates; and his works in this line are exceedingly meritorious. In justice to him we ought to observe, that he did not live to publish the above-mentioned work; but being approved of by his friends, it was given to the public after his death. It is much to be lamented, that they had not judgment sufficient to suppress it. His misfortune was such as many other great men have experienced through the zeal of their friends, to publish all their productions, which zeal has often been more prejudicial to their fame, than all the malevolence of their enemies.

It is probable that Picart's judgment was misled by his vanity; but this motive can hardly be attributed to a writer of our own country, who possessed of very little more knowledge in the arts, than what is displayed by a list of technical terms, and a few theoretical observations, has taken a decided part with Picart, and levelled his anathemas against the old masters, in general, through the medium of Marc Antonio.

Picart was not the first artist, who attempted to deceive the unwary connoisseurs. Henry Goltzius, a German master, and a man of superior abilities, being disgusted at the preference which was given to the works of Albert Durer, Lucas of Leyden, and other artists of those schools, when compared with his own, (for he had attempted to improve the taste of his country, and this attempt was not immediately relished) undertook in a decisive manner to prove, that his talents were not inferior to those of his predecessors. In order to divest his contemporaries of so unreasonable a prejudice, he engraved a plate representing *the circumcision of Christ*, in the style of Albert Durer, which we are informed, and, indeed, we can easily credit the information, being printed on soiled paper, and torn to give it the appearance of antiquity, was really sold as a curious performance by that master. He then proceeded to engrave *the adoration of the wise men*, in the style of Lucas of Leyden, and was equally successful. These prints, which consist of six, are called his masterpieces, and they are by no means undeserving of that appellation. The last of them represents *a holy family*, and is in his own style. This admirable print is greatly superior to any of the others; and, without doubt, it was the original intention of the artist, that it should be so.

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But to return from this long digreſſion. In order to illuſtrate more clearly the obſervations I have offered to the public, reſpecting the correctneſs of outline, which is ſo diſtinguiſhable in the works of Marc Antonio, I have attempted to copy *the Adam and Eve*, engraved by that artiſt from Raphael, which is a very ſcarce and valuable print. (See the frontiſpiece.) I have not imitated the ſtyle of engraving, in which the original is executed; but have finiſhed it as neatly, as I conceived was conſiſtent with the deſign; and have cauſed the back-ground to be covered with a light aqua tinta, in order to bring the figures more forward, and to produce a greater degree of harmony If theſe liberties ſhould be thought to require an excuſe, I could wiſh that it might be recollected, that the ſole purpoſe, for which this plate is given, is to ſhow the ſtyle of drawing, which prevails in the beſt engravings by Marc Antonio. I have therefore conſidered the print as a drawing only, the effect of which I was to produce in the neateſt and moſt agreeable manner I could. And I hope thoſe defects, which may be diſcovered in the copy, are ſuch only, as naturally muſt ariſe from the difficulty of imitating the beauties of one of the fineſt prints, by one of the greateſt maſters of the early Italian ſchool, aſſiſted by Raphael himſelf. The outlines of the figures, and ſuch parts as reſpect the drawing only, are, I believe, expreſſed with ſome degree of correctneſs, ſufficient, at leaſt, to demonſtrate the beauty and elegant flow of lines, which ſo evidently diſtinguiſhed the works of the Italian ſchools, when compared with the mannered repreſentations of nature by the Germans, under ſuch forms as are by no means agreeable to the eye. In order further to confirm my obſervation upon the ſimplicity of ſtyle, adopted by the Italian artiſts, I have copied a ſecond print, originally engraved by Marc Antonio from Raphael; which is ſtill more rare than the preceding. (See plate IV.) The ſame liberty is taken with the engraving of this plate, as with the other, and for the ſame reaſon. It repreſents *St. Jerom upon his knees*, devoutly meditating upon the fatal conſequences of the fall of man. The figure has all the ſimplicity of nature herſelf, without the leaſt appearance of art; and yet, on examination, much art may be diſcovered in the judicious contraſt of the ſeveral parts one with another. The reaſon, indeed, aſſigned by the moſt ſkilful writers upon the beauties of painting, why the works of Raphael make ſo little impreſſion upon the mind, at the firſt ſight, is, they reſemble nature in that pure and ſimple ſtate, in which the eye is conſtantly accuſtomed to ſee her; but, on re-examination, they improve upon the ſpectator; and the beauties, which at firſt were hidden, develop themſelves by degrees, and excite in the end the higheſt admiration. Theſe obſervations have been made, with reſpect to the wonderful performances by that great maſter in the Vatican at Rome.

If we look at the mechanical part of the engraving, whilſt we are ſpeaking of the comparative merit of the German and Italian artiſts at this period; the deciſion muſt be made entirely in favour of the former. Albert Durer, Lucas of Leyden, Henry Aldegrever, and ſome few other artiſts of this time, have produced ſuch performances, as cannot be viewed without admiration. The firſt of theſe maſters, in particular, handled the graver with ſo much facility and judgment, that his beſt works, in point of neatneſs and preciſion, have rarely been equalled, much leſs ſurpaſſed. Marc Antonio and his ſcholars appear, in general, to have made this branch of the art, a ſecond conſideration only: it was kept in ſubordination to the drawing and expreſſion. Not but that it muſt, in many inſtances, be acknowledged, that if more neatneſs and preciſion had been added to their engravings, they would have been much leſs objectionable, to the common eye eſpecially.

The reſult of theſe obſervations therefore is, that if we look for beauty of form, or correctneſs of outline, in the works of the old German maſters, we ſhall not be likely to ſucceed in our reſearches. Neatneſs and preciſion was the characteriſtic of this ſchool, as beauty and elegance of form was of that of the Italians.

CHAP. II.

The Examination of the Works of the German Masters continued, from the Fifth Chapter of the Essay on the Art of Engraving in the First Volume.

I concluded the few general obſervations, which I made in the former volume, upon the engravings of the early German artiſts, with ſome account of the works of Martin Schoen and Iſrael Van Mecheln. In the preſent volume I have given two plates; the one repreſenting *St. Sebaſtian tied to a tree.* (ſee plate II, copied from a print by Martin Schoen of the ſame ſize); and the other *St. Agnes*, from an engraving by Iſrael Van Mecheln. I have ſelected the beſt naked figure I could find by the firſt artiſt; but the drawing of the latter is ſo exceedingly defective, that I choſe a draperied figure, and one, which, I conceive, is by no means a bad ſpecimen of the abilities of the artiſt.

It now remains to offer to the peruſal of my readers ſome few obſervations, in a general manner, upon the ſtate and progreſs of the art, in Germany and the Low Countries, from the commencement of the ſixteenth century; at which period flouriſhed ſeveral very eminent artiſts. Michael Wolgemut was a man of abilities, though the beauty of his works is much obſcured by the Gothic ſtiffneſs, which prevails in them. To him Albert Durer owed his firſt inſtructions in the arts of deſign and engraving, eſpecially on wood, in which ſtyle Wolgemut principally employed himſelf.

Albert Durer may juſtly be conſidered, as one of the moſt eminent artiſts that Germany ever produced. His compoſitions are ſuch, as do him the greateſt credit; and in point of expreſſion, the heads of his figures may vie with thoſe of almoſt any maſter. This excellent artiſt appears to have made the works of Martin Schoen the model, upon which he formed his ſtyle of engraving on copper: That is, with reſpect to the mechanical part of it, which was carried to very great perfection by him. Indeed the mechanical part of engraving appears to have been conſidered by Albert Durer, as a very important object; and his prints poſſeſs a clearneſs and delicacy of ſtroke, which has been rarely equalled. He has carefully attended to the minutiæ, and diſtinguiſhed, with great preciſion, the ſmalleſt part of his compoſitions. A beautiful ſpecimen of this kind by him is the celebrated print of *St. Jerom.* The ſaint is repreſented in the inſide of a room, ſeated at his writing deſk. The perſpective of the room is admirable. The floor, the ceiling, the walls of the room, the window, and the furniture, many parts of which are exceedingly minute, are ſo diſtinctly expreſſed, that they have the appearance of objects repreſented in the camera obſcura, ſaving only the want of variety of colours. Contemporary with Albert Durer was another artiſt of great eminence, though not entirely equal to him, namely, Lucas Jacobs, better known by the appellation of Lucas Van Leyden. He handled the graver with great facility; and his works are very neat and delicate, and indeed too much ſo to produce that force of colour, which the deep maſſes of ſhadow required. For this reaſon his prints have not that brilliancy of effect, which is diſcovered in the works of his friend and competitor, Albert Durer. Another inconvenience aroſe from the extreme neatneſs of his engraving, which was, that the plates could not produce many good impreſſions. Hence it is, that the fine impreſſions of his works are ſo exceedingly rare.

Henry Aldegrever, the two Behams, and moſt of the engravers of this period, diſtinguiſhed by the appellation of little maſters, may be conſidered as the diſciples of Albert Durer; for ſuch of them as did not immediately ſtudy under him evidently formed their ſtyle of engraving from his works. Henry Aldegrever ſtands the foremoſt in the liſt of his ſcholars; for George Penz, having firſt learned the art of engraving in his own country, finiſhed his ſtudies at Rome, under the direction of Marc Antonio. He adopted much of the Italian ſtyle, and had the honour to aſſiſt Marc Antonio in ſeveral of his capital undertakings.

After

After the death of Hans Sebald Beham, the art met with no kind of improvement; but, on the other hand, ſeems to have declined for a few years. The ſucceeding little maſters did not even attend to the neatneſs and clearneſs of the mechanical part of their prints, which had before been conſidered as one of the great eſſentials in engraving. They ſeem as if they had been ſtudying to excel one another in number, rather than in the beauty of their productions. Towards the concluſion of the ſixteenth century flouriſhed the Wierix's, who not only regarded exceſſive neatneſs, as neceſſary towards the formation of a fine print, but ſacrificed almoſt every other requiſite, except correctneſs of drawing, to produce it. The works of theſe artiſts muſt excite the admiration of every one, who examines them. The prodigious delicacy, with which they are finiſhed, far ſurpaſſed any thing, that had been produced before their time; and from the great number of their engravings we may conclude, that they met with much encouragement. They had a reprehenſible cuſtom of making dark outlines to their figures; which, together with the laboured ſtiffneſs, apparent in the management of the graver, gives an unpleaſing effect to their prints, notwithſtanding all their neatneſs and delicacy. Adrian Collaert, and Hans or John Collaert, his ſon, flouriſhed alſo at this time; but they reſided a conſiderable time in Italy, where they acquired a greater degree of taſte, Hans Collaert in particular. His works, though not altogether equal in neatneſs to thoſe of the Wierix's, are ſuperior in taſte and expreſſion.

At the ſame time flouriſhed John and Raphael Sadeler, Philip, Theodore, and Cornelius Galle the elder, Peter de Jode the elder, and the younger, with John Baptiſt Barbe, and other artiſts, who may juſtly be conſidered as men of great abilities. Generally ſpeaking, they drew correctly, and certainly poſſeſſed ſufficient genius to have made very conſiderable improvements in the art of engraving, eſpecially as the greater part of them had the opportunity of ſtudying at Rome. But they ſeem to have contented themſelves with the ſtyle of workmanſhip, which they ſaw before them; and worked rather for emolument than praiſe. The prodigious number of bible cuts and religious ſubjects, in ſets, executed ſeparately or conjointly by theſe artiſts, almoſt exceeds belief. They are evidently haſty productions, in which no exertions of genius were employed. And though the defects are not very powerful, the beauties, on the other hand, are by no means very obvious.

While the art of engraving remained in this torpid ſtate in Germany, Henry Goltzius, one of the greateſt artiſts of that country, completed his ſtudies at Rome, and, returning home, adopted a new ſtyle of handling of the graver; and his prints poſſeſs an aſtoniſhing degree of freedom and ſpirit. They not only excited the attention of the connoiſſeurs, but the envy of ſeveral of his contemporaries, who raiſed cavils againſt them, and ſet up the works of Albert Durer, Lucas of Leyden, and other old maſters, as the inimitable models for beauty and excellence. Goltzius, piqued at the ignorance and malice of his oppoſers, convinced them of his own ſuperior abilities, by compoſing and engraving ſeveral prints, in the ſtyle of thoſe maſters, in ſo accurate a manner, as to deceive the judges themſelves. By this he proved, that it was not for want of power, that he quitted the ſtyle, adopted by thoſe maſters; but becauſe he wiſhed to introduce another, infinitely ſuperior. As the works of Goltzius ſoon after became popular, and his ſtyle of engraving was much admired, we ſhall not wonder, that it became the object of imitation among the artiſts of that time. John Muller and Jaques Mathem were his diſciples; and John Saenredam imitated his ſtyle. The works of Muller are ſpecimens of freedom of engraving, carried to very extravagant lengths; and Lucas Kilian followed him, at no great diſtance. Mathem and Saenredam were more reaſonable imitators of the ſtyle of Goltzius; and their works poſſeſs more delicacy and correctneſs. Frederic Bloemart was another ſucceſsful imitator of the ſtyle of this great artiſt. At the commencement of the ſeventeenth century flouriſhed the two Bolſwerts. Their firſt exertions with the graver were in the ſtyle of Goltzius, received probably through the medium of Frederic Bloemart; but under the inſtruction and patronage of Rubens. They changed that ſtyle for one, better adopted to repreſent the finiſhed and picturesque

beauties of the paintings by that great maſter. And in this ſchool Paul Pontius, Lucas Vorſterman, Peter de Jode, and other excellent Dutch and Flemiſh artiſts, whoſe works may juſtly be eſteemed as an honour to their country, completed their ſtudies. After the death of Rubens, the arts gradually declined, not only in Germany, but in the Low Countries. For as thoſe admirable engravers, which he had brought forward, diſappeared, there were none found of equal abilities to ſucceed them, eſpecially in the hiſtorical line. Houbraken, indeed, as an engraver of portraits, has excited our admiration; and his works juſtly deſerve the attention, which has been paid to them by the experienced collectors.

CHAP. III.

The Examination of the Works of the Italian Artiſts, from the Commencement of the ſixteenth Century, with a ſhort Account of the Improvements, made by the French Engravers.

IN order to ſhow more clearly the difference between the two ſtyles of engraving, adopted by the firſt Italian artiſts, mentioned in the ſixth Chapter of the Eſſay on the Origin and Progreſs of Engraving, prefixed to the firſt volume, I gave two plates: one, a copy from a print in the celebrated edition of the works of Dante, printed at Florence 1481, which was engraved by Sandro Boticelli, or by Baccio Baldini his aſſociate, from his deſign; ſee plate VII. The other, a copy from a print engraved by Andrea Mantegna; ſee plate VI. With reſpect to the former, plate VII. it muſt be obſerved, that the original plate was not printed upon the leaf of the book itſelf, but on a ſeparate paper; and was afterwards cut cloſe, and paſted upon the blank ſpace of the leaf, left for that purpoſe. And it has been remarked to me, that, for this cauſe, the originality of the engraving copied might be diſputed. Now it appears, that two only of the original plates were printed upon the leaves of the book; and thoſe are the firſt and ſecond. The others, which, in the moſt perfect edition of this book, amount to ſeventeen, making nineteen in the whole, are paſted upon the blank ſpaces, at the beginning of each canto. The reaſon why no more than two engravings were printed upon the leaves might be, the inconveniency they found in placing the plate properly upon the blank deſigned for it, and the difficulty in taking the impreſſion with the rollers, without damaging the leaf itſelf, which is of the largeſt folio ſize. In taking the impreſſions of the plates ſeparately, the difficulty was not ſo great; neither was it of ſo much conſequence, if they happened to ſpoil a few of the prints in the courſe of the operation. Upon examining the prints paſted upon the blanks, and comparing them with thoſe printed upon the leaves themſelves, I think it is ſufficiently evident, that they were, in both inſtances, the work of one artiſt. But in order to remove every poſſible objection, I have, in the preſent volume, given a copy of a ſecond plate from the Dante, which is printed upon the leaf itſelf, at the head of the ſecond canto. See plate III.

It was evidently from the works of Boticelli, or of his ſcholars, that Marc Antonio formed his firſt ſtyle of engraving. And it is highly probable, that at Venice he might meet with ſeveral of the engravings on copper by Albert Durer, as well as with his wood cuts, though he choſe to copy the latter, rather than the former, for the ſake of expedition. The neateſt and beſt performances by this great artiſt are certainly from the deſigns of Raphael: under his tuition he completed his ſtudies.

It is true, indeed, that the engravings by Marc Antonio are often defective, in point of harmony, and the ſkilful management of the light and ſhadow, which gives them an unfiniſhed and, ſometimes, diſguſtful appearance to the common eye. On the other hand, a graceful flow of outline, joined with purity and correctneſs of drawing in its greateſt latitude, are found in the beſt works of this maſter; but theſe beauties rarely attract the general notice, without the aſſiſtance of neatneſs, or what is more properly called high finiſhing, eſpecially in the preſent day.

The

The eye, long accuſtomed to neatneſs and delicacy of finiſhing, eſpecially where the judgment is not capable of diſtinguiſhing the greater eſſentials of the art, will neceſſarily conſider that neatneſs, as the criterion of excellency. Hence it is, that the works of the old maſters are fallen into ſuch general diſrepute, their beauties are overlooked, and their faults are viewed through a magnifying medium. And it is perhaps becauſe Marc Antonio ſtands the firſt among the old maſters, that he has received a greater ſhare of cenſure than the reſt.

The excellency of this maſter conſiſts in the correctneſs of his drawing, the character of his heads, and the pure idea his works convey of the ſimplicity and elegance of the originals they are taken from; and they may be conſidered as admirable drawings, not highly finiſhed indeed, but ſufficiently ſo to preſerve the deſign and ſpirit of the maſters, from whom he worked.

That perſons, poſſeſſed of little judgment in the arts, ſhould not diſcover the merits of this engraver, cannot ſurpriſe us; but that artiſts themſelves, and experienced collectors, ſhould join in the common cenſure, is much more extraordinary. In theſe inſtances we may conclude, he has been too haſtily, as he certainly has been unjuſtly, condemned, without a proper examination of his works in their native ſtate. Such as generally appear at ſales, and too many of thoſe in the hands of collectors, are either worn-out impreſſions, or, what is ſtill worſe, retouched ones. In theſe the primitive beauty is entirely loſt. Let any one, for inſtance, examine the common impreſſions of that admirable engraving by this maſter, repreſenting *the martyrdom of St. Laurence*, from Baccio Bandinelli, which is the largeſt of all his prints, and he will find the outlines darkened with black ſtrokes upon the lights, and the demy tints upon the fleſh increaſed, ſo as nearly to equal the deep ſhadows; by which means all the breadths of light are deſtroyed, and cut into a variety of diſagreeable diviſions, which produce a diſguſtful and unharmonious effect. But in a fine impreſſion of the ſame plate, there are none of theſe diſagreeable crudities to be found; the ſhadows are judiciouſly ſoftened, and blended into the lights, and harmonized with each other; the outlines are neat and correct; and the characters of the heads admirably well expreſſed. In ſhort, he would ſcarcely believe it poſſible, that the ſame plate ſhould furniſh impreſſions, ſo beautiful in one ſtate, and ſo truly execrable in the other. But the wonder ceaſes, if he be told, that the plate, paſſing through a variety of hands, has been frequently retouched, and that by careleſs and unſkilful men. We may further add, that as the name of Marc Antonio ſtands high among the curious collectors, the ignorant are too frequently impoſed upon by bad copies, or ſpurious productions. It is indeed become cuſtomary to write the name of Marc Antonio with a pen, at the bottom of any old print, which bears even the leaſt diſtant reſemblance to his manner of engraving; and, in ſeveral inſtances, I have ſeen both his cypher and tablet ingeniouſly copied upon prints, that are a diſgrace to any maſter.

The great reputation, which Marc Antonio acquired by his works, in ſome meaſure eclipſed the fame of the German ſchools. Young artiſts from every quarter flocked to Rome, being deſirous of ſtudying under this excellent maſter; and the improvement which they made was ſo evident, that it was ſoon afterwards conſidered as neceſſary for an engraver, as for a painter, to viſit Italy. So that, by degrees, the Italian ſtyle of engraving became the ſtandard of excellence; and upon it the greateſt artiſts formed their taſte; and that manner, which had been conſidered in Germany, as moſt excellent, under the auſpices of Albert Durer, Lucas Jacobs, Henry Aldegrever, and Hans Sebald Beham, declined by degrees, and was almoſt totally diſuſed, at the concluſion of the ſixteenth century.

The ſcholars of Marc Antonio followed his ſtyle of engraving, with very little variation. Among them, Agoſtino de Muſis and Marc de Ravenna were the moſt ſucceſsful: the former principally excelled in neatneſs, and the latter in a more bold and open manner.

Agoſtino de Muſis was the inventor of a new ſpecies of engraving, which was performed

formed with dots only; but for what reaſon he did not carry it to a greater extent, cannot eaſily be aſcertained. He introduced it into one or two of his firſt productions only; and there it was confined to the fleſh. In the account of this artiſt, given in the body of the work, a plate, with the head of an old man, finiſhed with dots only, is deſcribed. Probably this might be ſeen by Giulio Campagnola, who adopted a mode of engraving, much reſembling this, upon a more extenſive plan than that of de Muſis; but not with ſufficient ſucceſs, to render it an object worthy of the imitations of the contemporary artiſts. Stephen de Laulne, a native of Germany, and a very ingenious man, followed the ſteps of Campagnola; and many of his ſlight works are executed in dots only. Profeſſor Chriſt, ſpeaking of De Laulne, and mentioning this mode of engraving, calls it improperly *Opus Mallei*, or *the work of the hammer*; but it differs greatly from that ſtyle of which Janus Lutma appears to have been the inventor, and is properly named *Opus Mallei*, being performed with the point, held upright upon the copper, while the impreſſion is made by a ſlight ſtroke of the hammer. Theſe blows are repeated, and the point moved backwards and forwards, till a ſufficient depth of colour is produced. A very ſharp ſcraper is paſſed gently over this work, to take off ſo much of the barb raiſed by the repeated percuſſions upon the copper, as would prevent the dots appearing diſtinctly upon the print. In ſome inſtances, and in etching particularly, two, and ſometimes three points, joined together, have been very ſucceſsfully uſed. Deſmarteau at Paris practiſed this mode of engraving, and carried it to great perfection. It is admirably adapted to the repreſentations of drawings in red chalk, and ſlight academical ſtudies. The head of the old man, in the print by Agoſtino de Muſis, is executed with the point of the graver; but the prints by Campagnola and Stephen de Laulne, were done with the dry point, or ſome inſtrument of ſimilar conſtruction; and the dots have all the appearance of being made by hand, regularly one after another. John Boulanger, a French artiſt, who flouriſhed in the middle of the ſeventeenth century, improved greatly upon this mode of engraving, and practiſed it with much ſucceſs; while his contemporary, Nicholas Van Plattenberg, finiſhed *a dead Chriſt* almoſt entirely with dots, made with the point of the graver, in a very powerful manner.

After the diſperſion of the artiſts, educated in the ſchool of Marc Antonio, which happened upon taking of the city of Rome by the Spaniards, the Ghiſſii of Mantua made a very conſiderable figure, eſpecially George, who laying before him the Neptune of Marc Antonio for a model, improved upon the mechanical part of engraving, and harmonized the light and ſhadows with dots, judiciouſly inſerted and intermixed with the ſtrokes.

In the mean time, Cornelius Cort, a Dutchman, who reſided a conſiderable time in Italy, and worked in general from the Italian painters, followed by Agoſtino Carracci, Cherubino Alberto, and Franceſco Villamene, introduced a ſtyle of engraving entirely new. It was bold, powerful, and maſterly; and, at the ſame time, demonſtrated much more freedom of execution, than had been attempted before. Henry Goltzius approved of this ſtyle, and introduced it into the Low Countries, and many excellent artiſts were formed under his inſtructions. From this time the boldneſs and freedom of execution with the graver became an indiſpenſible requiſite; and, in many inſtances, correctneſs of drawing, character, and beauty, were ſacrificed to the twiſting and twirling of the ſtrokes, and the clearneſs, with which the artiſt could cut the copper. But one very great defect, in the works of all the artiſts, from the commencement of engraving, to the time we are now treating of, is, their want of attention to the proper diſtribution of the light and ſhadow. They do not ſeem to have formed to themſelves the leaſt notion of harmonizing the effect, by the ſubordination of the lights upon the diſtant objects, in order to bring out, and give conſequence to the principal figures. On the contrary, the lights are juſt as powerful and glaring upon the diſtant mountains, as upon the objects neareſt to the eye in the fore-ground. This, of courſe, prevents the gradation of the maſſes, and gives a harſh and unfiniſhed appearance to the moſt excellent performances of that age.

Cornelius Bloemart ſeems to have been one of the firſt, who attempted, by covering the diſtant lights, to increaſe the effect of the front figures, and harmonize the different parts of the engraving, with each other; and he was followed by Francois de Poilly, Francois Spierre, Girard Edelinck, and other great maſters; and this improvement was carried by the French artiſts to a very great degree of perfection.

Prints, executed entirely with the graver, eſpecially when the back-grounds conſiſt of landſcapes, muſt always have a cold, inanimate effect in proportion as they are highly finiſhed. I am now ſpeaking of large hiſtorical ſubjects. Portraits require neatneſs and preciſion; and, in this ſpecies of engraving, the French artiſts have been peculiarly excellent. If the works of Scheltius Bolſwert ſhould be produced, in anſwer to the propoſition above mentioned, it is to be obſerved, that though they are executed entirely with the graver, it is in a ſtyle peculiar to themſelves; and in the back-grounds, we find a pleaſing negligence and roughneſs, which imitates the point. And the more that imitation is perceptible, the more the effect is agreeable. The continual ſameneſs, which appears in the works of the greateſt French maſters, with the graver only, gives them a heavy appearance, and a flatneſs of effect, when compared with the animated performances of Girard Audran.

While the point remained in the hands of the painters only, no great improvement could be ſuppoſed to take place. Their attention was neceſſarily turned to objects of greater importance, and etching was conſidered by them, in general, as anamuſement. They were, therefore, content with the ſtate of the art, as they found it; but ſeldom attempted to go any great lengths towards the improvement of it; eſpecially with reſpect to the mechanical part. And by the engravers the point was too much neglected. They ſeem to have regarded it, as a thing of ſmall conſequence, till ſuch time as Girard Audran, by uniting it with the graver, produced thoſe excellent performances, which are an honour to himſelf and to his country. Not that I would, by any means, be ſuppoſed to inſinuate, that Girard Audran was the firſt artiſt, who joined the graver to the point; but all attempts, prior to his time, were ſo feeble, when compared with his, that he may be juſtly conſidered, as the firſt that brought it to perfection. John James Frey, and many other excellent artiſts, both French and Italian, followed the manner of Audran with great ſucceſs. From France, Flanders, and Holland, engravers of portraits and hiſtory came into England; but the art of engraving itſelf never flouriſhed, in any great degree, among the natives, till within theſe late years. And the aſtoniſhing progreſs, which has been made in ſo ſhort a time as the ſpace of thirty years, gives us great reaſon to believe, that in the courſe of a very little time, the Engliſh hiſtorical engravers will equal, if not exceed, the exertions of the moſt ſkilful foreign artiſts. In landſcape engraving, and ſcraping of mezzotintos, they have already gained ſo deciſive a precedency, that even envy herſelf muſt hide her head in ſilence.

CHAP. IV.

General Obſervations on the Antiquity of Seals and Stamps, with an Account of ſeveral very ancient ones.

IT will be needleſs to enter into a long diſcuſſion concerning the origin of ſeals or ſtamps. The former, we are aſſured, are as ancient as the time of the Patriarchs. Judah, the ſon of Jacob, meeting with Tamer his daughter by the way, left his ſignet with his bracelets and ſtaff, as a pledge for the reward, which he was to give her. The engraver of ſignets or ſeals is expreſsly ſpoken of by Moſes; and the ſkill of the artiſt ſeems to have acquired him a conſiderable ſhare of reputation and eſteem.

The greater part of the ſignets or ſeals, mentioned in ſacred and prophane hiſtory, were, without doubt, hollow, and the impreſſions, of courſe, which were taken from them, whether upon wax or any other ductile ſubſtance, protuberated in proportion to the

the depth of the engraving, But from the application of the word SIGNET in ſeveral inſtances, there is great reaſon to believe, that it was alſo given to a ſtamp or brand. In this ſenſe it ſeems particularly to be uſed by St. John, in the Apocalypſe, where he ſpeaks of ſealing the foreheads of the elect, as intimating thereby, that ſome peculiar mark was ſet upon them, as we find it was upon the worſhippers of the beaſt.

That ſtamps or brands, every way proper for the purpoſe of marking ſuch things as required diſtinction, were actually in being at that time, is poſitively certain; and I have given the repreſentation of ſix of them upon the fifth plate in this volume. The originals are in the Britiſh Muſeum; and were, with many others, brought from Italy by Sir William Hamilton. They were found in the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii; and ſome of them bear the marks of great antiquity. I have given two repreſentations of thoſe marked, I. II. IV. V. and VI. The laſt of theſe ſtamps, the handle of which is broken, differs from all the reſt. The letters, and the ornamental line of the edge, are hollowed from the ſurface; and the impreſſion it makes upon the paper is directly contrary to that of any one of the others, the letters being white, and the ground black. I have given the impreſſion of No. I. marked A. and of No. VI. marked B. at the top of the plate. The original ſtamps are of the ſame ſize with the repreſentations upon the plate; and are hollowed out from the ſurface of the letters and ornaments, an eighth of an inch, and ſometimes more. No. I. is a rude attempt at the form of a fiſh. No. III. is in the form of a ſhield; and No. VI. is in the form of the bottom of a ſandal. The letters are reverſed upon the ſtamp, of courſe, that they might appear the right way in the impreſſions, as repreſented A. B. at the top of the plate. The Greek word ΠΑΝΦΙΑΙ is very legible upon No. I. The other inſcriptions, except that of No. V. are not ſo eaſily decyphered. The impreſſions from No. V. were, I apprehend, conſidered as an amulet, or charm, to ſecure the wearers of it from certain diſeaſes, or dangers, to which they were expoſed. The inſcription is evidently FELICIS AMVLLI GEMELÆ. There is a variety of forms among the other ſtamps at the Muſeum; particularly one of a *ſhip*, with the word ASPER upon it. Another in the form of a *heart*, with this inſcription, BASILEI SEXIS TERT. Another as a tablet, in the middle of which is a repreſentation, nearly obliterated, of an animal, inſcribed LEONTI VINCAS. Another ſmall one, in the ſhape of a tablet, on which is inſcribed C + PVB + IANVARI. Some have inſcriptions at full length; others again have only monograms, as No. II. They have all the appearance of being firſt caſt, and afterwards repaired with the chiſel. They are made of a kind of mixed metal, reſembling braſs.

Whatever may have been the purpoſe, to which theſe curious relics of antiquity were applied, we cannot but wonder, that, having ſo nearly, nay, we may ſay, actually diſcovered the art of printing, in a ſmall degree, they did not gradually appropriate it to more extenſive purpoſes; eſpecially as we ſee they had, in one inſtance, No. V. produced three lines following each other.

CHAP. V.

A ſhort Eſſay upon the Art of Engraving on Wood.

IT is generally allowed by the beſt authors upon the ſubject of printing, that prior to the invention of moveable types, there were books, conſiſting of rude delineations cut on wood, with ſhort explanations of the ſubjects, contrived for the convenience of thoſe, who could not afford to purchaſe manuſcript copies of the Old and New Teſtament, from whence theſe ſhort mementos were chiefly taken. Of this ſpecies are the books entitled, *Hiſtoria Sancti Johannis Evangeliſtae, ejuſque Viſiones Apocalypticae*, or, *the Hiſtory of St. John the Evangeliſt, and his Apocalyptical Viſions*; and *Hiſtoriæ Veteris et Novi*

Novi Teſtamenti, or, *the Hiſtories of the Old and New Teſtament*, commonly known by the appellation of the *Poor Man's Bible*. Theſe are ranked among the earlieſt productions of this kind; but from their having no date, or any indication of the year, in which they were printed, the difficulty of affixing the exact period of their appearance is inſurmountable. They are ſmall folio volumes. A ſingle block of wood was appropriated to each leaf, which was printed only on one ſide; and two of theſe leaves being paſted together had the appearance of a ſingle one, printed on both ſides. Beſides the two above-mentioned books, there are ſeveral others, printed in the ſame manner: namely, *Hiſtoria beatae Mariae Virginis*, *The Hiſtory of the bleſſed Virgin Mary*. *Ars Memorandi*, or, *an Aſſiſtant to the Memory*. *Ars Moriendi*, or, *the Art of Dying*. *Speculum Humanæ Salvationis*, or, *the Mirrour of Human Salvation*. But none of theſe are ſo ancient, as the two before mentioned. I have therefore choſen from them the ſpecimens, which accompany this eſſay.

Papillon indeed tells us of eight engravings on wood, the account of which was given to him by a Swiſs officer. Theſe muſt have been conſiderably more ancient, than any thing now known; and upon which a decided opinion may be given, with reſpect to the date. The title, according to that author, ran thus, *Les Chevaleureux faits en figures du grand & Magnanime Macedonian Roi, le preux & Vaillant Alexandre, dedie, &c.* "A repreſentation of the Warlike Actions of the great and magnanimous Mace-" donian King, the bold and valiant Alexander, dedicated, preſented, and humbly offered " to the Moſt Holy Father, Pope Honorius IV. the glory and ſupport of the church; " and to our illuſtrious and generous Father and Mother, by us, Alexander-Alberic Cunio, " Chevalier, and Iſabella Cunio, twin brother and ſiſter: firſt reduced, imagined; and " attempted to be executed in relief, with a ſmall knife, on blocks of wood, made even " and poliſhed by this learned and dear ſiſter, continued and finiſhed together at Ra-" venna, from eight pictures of our invention, painted ſix times larger than here re-" preſented; engraved, explained by verſes, and marked upon the paper, to perpetuate " the number, and to enable us to give them to our relations and friends, in remem-" brance of friendſhip and affection. Theſe were compleatly finiſhed by us both, at the " age of ſixteen only."

If this ſtory be true, and ſuch engravings with the foregoing title ever did exiſt, they muſt have been executed in the years 1284 or 1285; for Honorius IV. to whom the work is dedicated, ſat only thoſe two years in the Papal Chair. But as Papillon gives this ſtory upon the ſole evidence of the Swiſs officer, and had never ſeen any part of the engravings, the generality of authors have not been inclined to give much credit to the fact, which at beſt is exceedingly doubtful.

The moſt probable conjectures, concerning the origin of this ſpecies of engraving, is, that it was introduced into Germany by the briefmalers, or painters of the playing-cards, who cut the outlines of the figures on wood, and ſtamped them upon the paper, to ſave the trouble of making a ſeparate drawing for every card; and afterwards coloured them by hand. In this manner preciſely were executed the blocks for the cuts, in the edition of the Apocalypſe, which is now preſerved in the Bodleian library at Oxford; part of one of which is very faithfully copied plate VI. of this volume.

Baron Heineken aſſerts, that cards for playing were invented in Germany, where they were in uſe as early as the year 1376, though the reaſon he gives is not, by any means, concluſive: *parce qu'on les connoiſſoit vers ce tems en France*, "becauſe they were " known about this time in France." Other authors, with Bullet at their head, as confidently aſſert, that they were invented in France. The diſputes upon this ſubject ſerve only to prove the difficulty, if not the impoſſibility of aſcertaining the æra of the invention of cards, or the country in which they were firſt produced. This, however, is of no conſequence to the preſent enquiry, unleſs it could alſo be proved that a part of them was printed on blocks of wood, at the time of their firſt invention. There ſeems to be very little doubt, but that they were drawn and painted by hand.

Theſe card makers did not entirely confine themſelves to the printing and painting

of cards, they alſo produced ſubjects of a more devout nature. "We find," ſays Baron Heineken, "in the library of Wolfenbuttel, a variety of prints, repreſenting "different ſubjects, taken from holy writ, and devotional compoſitions, with the ex-"planatory text facing the figures; the whole engraved on wood. Theſe prints are "preciſely of the ſize with our playing cards; that is, a little above three inches high, "by two inches and a quarter in width. There are alſo in the ſame library, five prints, "at the end of a book entitled, *Ars Moriendi*, repreſenting different figures of angels, "devils, dying perſons, and ſaints. They are of the ſame ſize with the playing cards; "and each print is marked with a letter of the alphabet." He adds further, "that they "engraved the ſame ſort of images upon a larger ſcale; and that, in a convent at "Buxheim, near Memmingen, he ſaw a print repreſenting *St. Chriſtopher, carrying the "infant Jeſus over the ſea.* Facing the ſaint is repreſented the figure of a hermit, hold-"ing up his lanthorn to give them light; and behind him a peaſant, climbing to the "top of a mountain, with a bag at his back. This print," continues my author, "is "of a folio ſize, engraved on wood, and illuminated in the ſame manner as the playing "cards are done. At the bottom is this inſcription, **Criſtoferi faciam, die qua-"cunque tueris. Illa nempe die morte mala non morieris. Milleſimo** "cccc° xx° **tertio.** This print proves at leaſt, that the images of ſaints, with letters, "were engraved on wood, as early as the year 1423. It is paſted upon the inſide of "the cover of an old book, probably by ſome religious perſon of the convent, in order "to preſerve it."

The ſame author informs us, that in viſiting the convents, monaſteries, and other religious houſes, he frequently found ſpecimens of this kind, paſted into books of the fifteenth century; "which," ſays he, "confirmed me in my opinion, that the firſt expe-"riments of engraving on wood, after thoſe of the playing cards, were the images of "ſaints, and devotional ſubjects; which, being diſperſed among the laity, were loſt by "degrees; and thoſe which were preſerved, were ſuch only, as the monks and other ec-"cleſiaſtics paſted into the early printed books, which ornamented their libraries."

Theſe images of ſaints, and other devotional ſubjects, being firſt produced, ſets of ſubjects with the letters of the alphabet followed; and theſe were taken from the bible, or legendary hiſtories, which in former times were conſidered of almoſt equal conſequence with the bible, and the prints were conſtantly accompanied by inſcriptions, either for inſtructions, or the exciting of devotion, in the manner of the Apocalypſe, and the Poor Man's Bible, &c.

The next dated work of this kind is the Chiromancy of Dr. Hartlieb, conſiſting of twelve leaves, printed on both ſides, the firſt and laſt pages only, which are blank, forming three diviſions, marked at the bottom **a. b. c.** each diviſion conſiſting of eight pages; to which may be added two leaves more, the one for the title, and the other for the concluſion, both of them inſcribed **Die Runſt Cyromantia,** upon the top of an ornamented ſquare border. At the beginning of this curious book, which is in ſmall folio, is a large vignette, repreſenting Dr. Hartlieb kneeling, and preſenting it to the Princeſs Anne, who is ſeated upon her throne; and the names of theſe two perſonages are engraved at the bottom of their portraits. The prints in this book are exceedingly rude; but have not, as far as one can judge from the copy of one of them, given in the *Idée generale d'une Collection complette d'eſtampes*, the appearance of being ſo ancient, as thoſe in the Apocalypſe, or the Poor Man's Bible. This curious compilation is dated 1448; and the name of **Jorg Schapff in Augſpurg,** the artiſt, who is ſuppoſed to have performed the engravings, appears upon the fourth page.

I had intended to examine the claim, which the Dutch have laid to the invention of this ſpecies of engraving; but, on conſideration, I find it is entirely uſeleſs, on the preſent occaſion, to enter into that controverſy; and particularly, as the matter has been ſo fully treated by Baron Heineken, in the book above-mentioned; and alſo in a late publication, by an author of our own country. In theſe works all the evidences, which

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are given by the Dutch in ſupport of Laurence Coſter, are carefully examined; and as ſtrongly refuted by the Baron, as they are ſupported by the Engliſh author. But the arguments of the former are, in my opinion, much more powerful, than thoſe of the latter.

After the invention of moveable types, the briefmalers continued to vend their publications for a conſiderable time; but when the engravings on wood were annexed to the books, printed with the moveable types, they were gradually diſcontinued. However, the art of engraving itſelf continued in an improving ſtate; and towards the concluſion of the fifteenth century, there were ſeveral artiſts of great reputation, who ſeem to have been principally employed by the printers to ornament their publications.

In 1493, appeared at Nuremberg, the folio Chronicle by Schedel, ornamented with a large number of engravings on wood, greatly ſuperior to any thing, which had appeared before that time. They were executed by William Pleydenwurff and Michael Wolgemut. The latter of theſe artiſts was the tutor of Albert Durer, whoſe admirable performances, in this ſtyle of engraving, are juſtly held in the higheſt eſteem. From the time of Albert Durer, it became cuſtomary for almoſt every one of the German engravers on copper, to engrave on wood alſo; and the works of many of them were better on wood, than on copper; for example, thoſe of Albert Altdorfer, Hiſbel Pen, Virgil Solis, &c.

Many excellent engravings on wood were produced by the German artiſts; but none more extraordinary than the *dance of Death*, by Hans, or John Holbein the younger, which, for the freedom and delicacy of execution, has hardly been equalled, but never ſurpaſſed, by any artiſt ancient or modern. Italy, France, and Holland, have produced many capital artiſts of this kind, whoſe names may be found in the body of the work, and, of courſe, need not be repeated here. But, for boldneſs and ſpirit, we muſt ſee the prints of Chriſtopher Jegher, who worked under the direction of Rubens, and was, without doubt, aſſiſted by that great artiſt. Among the moderns, Papillon may certainly be conſidered as an excellent artiſt. He publiſhed at Paris two volumes, and in them he gives a full explanation of the manner in which the engravings on wood of every ſpecies are performed, with a hiſtory of the art itſelf, deduced from the earlieſt æra of its appearance to his own time, together with an account of all the artiſts, and their works. And theſe volumes are replete with his performances, which do him great honour.

Before I quit the preſent ſubject, it is neceſſary that I ſhould give ſome ſhort account of another branch of this art, namely, that ſpecies of engraving on wood, which is diſtinguiſhed by the appellation of chiaro-ſcuro. And firſt, with reſpect to the invention of it, which is claimed by the Germans, and by the Italians. The latter aſſert, that, ſoon after the commencement of the ſixteenth century, Ugo da Carpi, a man of great ingenuity, diſcovered a mode of imitating ſlight drawings by the means of different blocks of wood. The Germans, on the other hand, produce ſeveral engravings by Mair, which are dated 1499, and one by Lucas Cranach, dated 1500, which are prior to the time, affixed by the Italians for the invention by da Carpi. This circumſtance, even if we ſhould ſuppoſe, that the prints by Mair are the firſt attempts in this ſtyle of engraving, is ſufficient to prove the priority of the exerciſe of it in Germany. Baron Heineken is of opinion that the works of John Ulric are ſtill more ancient than thoſe by Mair; but I think the appearance of the prints themſelves, which are admirable ſpecimens of the art, do not by any means juſtify the aſſertion.

There is, however, a material difference between the chiaro-ſcuro's of the old German maſters, and thoſe of the Italians. Mair and Cranach engraved the outlines and deep ſhadows upon the copper. The impreſſion taken in this ſtate was tinted over, by the means of a ſingle block of wood, with thoſe parts hollowed out, which were deſigned to be left quite white upon the print. On the contrary, the mode of engraving, adopted by Ugo da Carpi, was to cut the outlines on one block of wood; the dark ſhadows upon a ſecond; and the light ſhadows or half tint upon a third. The firſt being

impreſſed upon the paper, the outlines only appeared; this block being taken away, the ſecond was put in its place; and being alſo impreſſed upon the paper, the dark ſhadows were added to the outlines; and the third block being put in the ſame place, upon the removal of the ſecond, and alſo impreſſed upon the ſame paper, made the demy tints; and the print was completed. In ſome few inſtances, the number of blocks were increaſed; but the operation was ſtill the ſame; the print receiving an impreſſion from every block. Andrea Andreani carried this ſpecies of engraving to great perfection.

Both the German and Italian ſtyle of engraving in chiaro-ſcuro have been practiſed by different artiſts of every country; and in France, many excellent works of this kind have been produced. The attempts of Jackſon, Kirkall, and others of our country, were not equally ſucceſsful.

CHAP. VI.

A Deſcription of the firſt eight Plates, contained in this Volume; and of Plate VII. *in the former Volume.*

FRONTISPIECE.

ADAM and Eve, from a very curious engraving, by Marc Antonio Raimondi, after a drawing by Raphael.

PLATE II.

St. Agnes, copied from an engraving, exactly the ſame ſize, by Iſrael Van Mecheln.

PLATE II.

St. Sebaſtian, from an engraving by Martin Schoen, of the ſame ſize as the original.

PLATE III.

This engraving, together with plate VII. in the firſt volume, is taken from the rare edition of the works of Dante, publiſhed at Florence, A. D. 1481. The deſigns for theſe prints were made by Sandro Boticelli; and they were either engraved by him, or by Baldini his aſſociate. The greateſt number of plates ever ſeen in this ſcarce book are nineteen. —— Wilbraham, Eſq. politely lent me his copy, which is eſteemed the moſt perfect one in Europe: and as the prints are rarely to be ſeen complete, I ſhall the liſt of them, as follows:

I. *The author, frighted by a wolf, meeting his guide Virgil in the wood.*

II. *St. Beatrice appearing to the author and his guide.*

Theſe two plates only are printed upon the paper of the book; thoſe that follow are paſted on. The ſecond is copied; ſee plate III. as above.

III. *The entrance into Hell.* Charon is repreſented as a frightful demon with wings, a monſtrous viſage, and covered with hair.

IV. *The interview of the author with Homer, and the appearance of Hector and Alexander.*

V. *The interview with Minos*, who is repreſented as a demon, covered with hair, having large wings, with great horns, and a ſerpent's tail.

VI. *The ſhower of hail.* Charon is repreſented again in this print, with ugly ſpectres of ſeveral kinds.

VII. *The interview with Pluto, and the appearance of Ghoſts rolling heavy ſtones.*

VIII. *The approach to the tower of Dis.*

IX. *The guide hiding the eyes of the author, at the entrance into the place of torment.*

X. *The approach to the flaming ſepulchres.*

XI. *The*

XI. *The author and his guide, ſeated in view of the ſteep rocks and flaming ſepulchres.*
XII. *The centaurs and other ſpectres.*
XIII. *The wood, with the Harpies, who have female faces.*
XIV. *The wood, with the ghoſts of the poetical heroes.*
XV. *The author ſpeaking to a ghoſt whoſe perſon was known to him.*
XVI. *The guide caſts a cord into the gulph, and the head of the monſter* Fraud *appears riſing up to them.*
XVII. *The monſter* Fraud, *with the guide ſeated upon his back, deſiring the author to follow his example.* This print is copied; ſee plate VII. of the firſt volume.
XVIII. *The burning pits.*
XIX. *The monſter* Fraud, *with the ghoſts upon the burning lakes.*

PLATE IV.

St. Jerom, copied from a print engraved by Marc Antonio, after Raphael. The original of this plate is exceedingly rare.

PLATE V.

Six ancient ſeals or ſtamps, uſed by the ancients. The originals are at the Britiſh Muſeum, and were found in the ruins of the Herculaneum.

PLATE VI.

An accurate copy of one of the ancient engravings on wood, contained in a book, entitled, *Hiſtoria Sancti Johannis Evangeliſtæ ejus que Viſiones Apocalypticæ*, or, the Hiſtory of St. John the Evangeliſt, and his Apocalyptical Viſions. This curious book is in ſmall folio; and, generally ſpeaking, every leaf contains two prints, engraved on one block, and printed, of courſe, on one ſide only. Every other leaf is marked with a letter of the alphabet, and the number of the leaves amount to forty-eight. The preſent engraving is taken from the upper part of the VIth print, and coloured, in imitation of the original. It repreſents *the man on a white horſe, who appeared to St. John at the opening of the firſt ſeal.* The book itſelf is preſerved in the Bodleian library at Oxford.

PLATE VII.

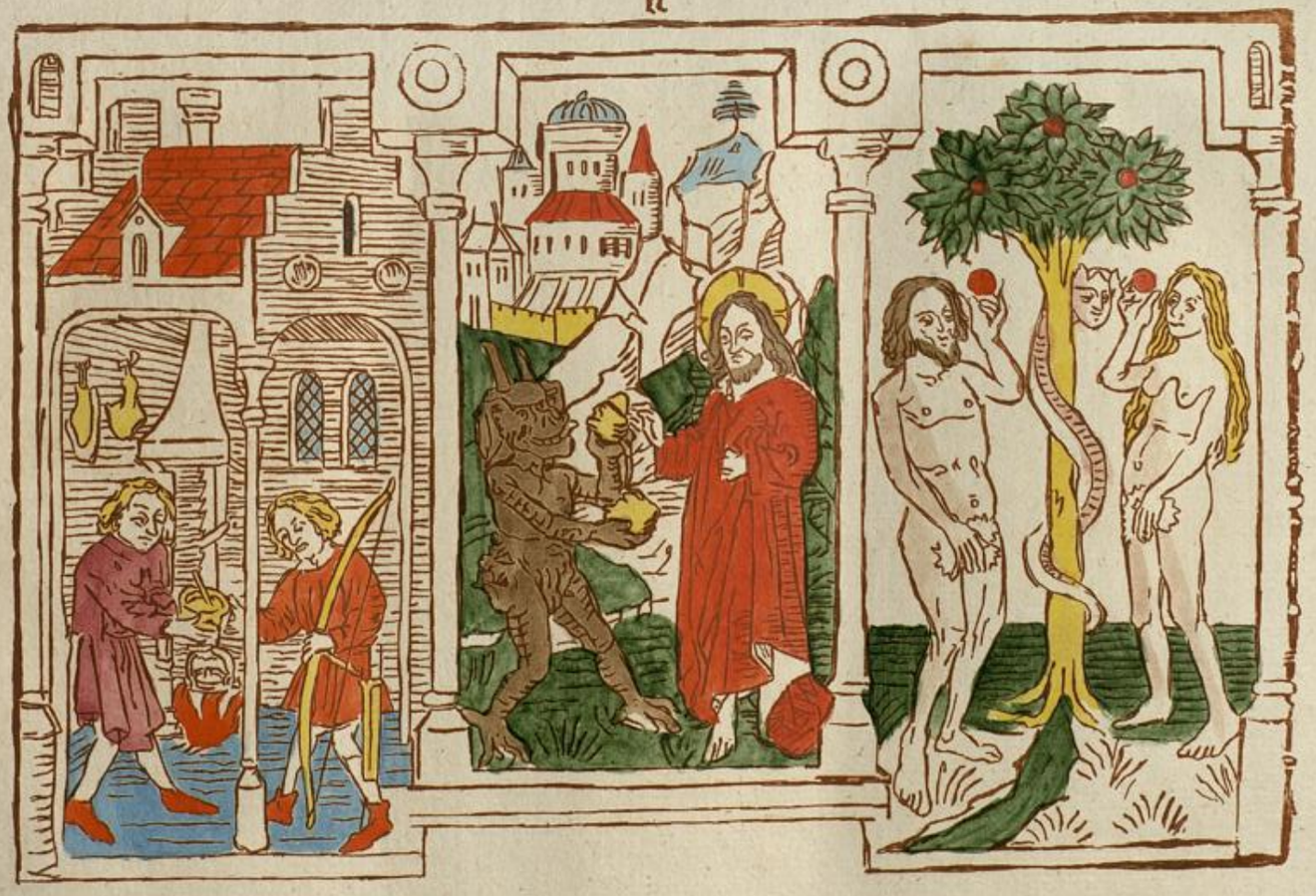
Is an accurate copy taken from the middle part of one of the ancient engravings on wood, in a book, entitled, *Hiſtoriæ Veteris et Novi Teſtamenti*, or, the Hiſtories of the Old and New Teſtament. The book is in ſmall folio. It conſiſts of fifty engravings, printed on one ſide of the leaf only. In the middle part of every one of theſe engravings are three compartments, in each of which is repreſented ſome hiſtorical fact, taken from the ſacred writings. At the top, over the middle compartment, are two half figures, ſtanding in two arches, repreſenting two of *the Patriarchs or Prophets.* The ſpaces on each ſide are filled up with extracts from the ſcriptures; and at the bottom, under the middle compartment, are two more half figures in arches, reſembling thoſe at the top; and the blank ſpaces on each ſide are filled up in the ſame manner as above. The preſent engraving is taken from the Xth. print of this book. In the firſt compartment is repreſented *Eſau ſelling his birthright*; in the ſecond, *the temptation of our Saviour*; and in the third, *Adam and Eve, taking the forbidden fruit.* It is coloured in imitation of the original. This book is preſerved in the Bodleian library at Oxford. I did not copy the whole of the print, becauſe it would then have been too large for the book, and, of courſe, muſt have been folded up. Beſides, as this is inſerted merely as a ſpecimen of the ſtyle of engraving, the upper and lower parts, conſiſting chiefly of letters, could be of little or no ſervice.

III

Raphael inv.t Strutt sculp.

St. Jerom.

Taken from a very rare print by Marc Antonio.



vg Ter ob ardore apū male
pdit honorem

vg Serpēs vim adāvent
ti sibi suggerendā.