Sketches Of The History Of Man

In Two Volumes

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Sketch V. Origin and Progress of Arts.

SKETCH V.

Origin and Progreſs of ARTS.

SECTION I.

USEFUL ARTS.

SOme uſeful arts muſt be nearly coeval with the human race; for food, cloathing, and habitation, even in their original ſimplicity, require ſome art. Many other arts are of ſuch antiquity as to place the inventers beyond the reach of tradition. Several have gradually crept into exiſtence, without an inventer. The buſy mind however, accuſtomed to a beginning in things, cannot reſt till it find or imagine a beginning to every art. Bacchus is ſaid to have invented wine; and Staphylus, the mixing water with wine. The bow and arrow are aſcribed by tradition to Scythos, ſon of Jupiter, tho' a weapon all the world over. Spinning is ſo uſeful, that it muſt be honoured with ſome illuſtrious inventer: it was aſcribed by the Egyptians to their goddeſs Iſis; by the Greeks to Minerva; by the Peruvians to Mama Ella, wife to their firſt ſovereign Mango Capac; and by the Chineſe to the wife of their Emperor Yao. Mark here by the way a connection

nection of ideas: ſpinning is a female occupation, and it muſt have had a female inventer *.

In the hunter-ſtate, men are wholly occupied in procuring food, cloathing, habitation, and other neceſſaries; and have no time nor zeal for ſtudying conveniencies. The eaſe of the ſhepherd-ſtate affords both time and inclination for uſeful arts; which are greatly promoted by numbers who are relieved by agriculture from bodily labour: the ſoil, by gradual improvements in huſbandry, affords plenty with leſs labour than at firſt; and the ſurplus hands are employ'd, firſt, in uſeful arts, and, next, in thoſe of amuſement. Arts accordingly make the quickeſt progreſs in a fertile ſoil, which produces plenty with little labour. Arts flouriſhed early in Egypt and Chaldea, countries extremely fertile.

When men, who originally lived in caves like ſome wild animals, began to think of a more commodious habitation, their firſt houſes were extremely ſimple; witneſs the houſes of the Canadian ſavages, which continue ſo to this day. Their houſes, ſays Charlevoix, are built with leſs art, neatneſs, and ſolidity, than thoſe of the beavers; having neither chimneys nor windows: a hole only is left in the roof, for admitting light, and emitting ſmoke. That hole muſt be ſtopped when it rains or ſnows; and of courſe the fire is put out, that the inhabitants may not be blinded with ſmoke. To have paſſed ſo many ages in that man-

* The Illinois are induſtrious above all their American neighbours. Their women are neat-handed: they ſpin the wool of their horned cattle, which is as fine as that of Engliſh ſheep. The ſtuffs made of it are dyed black, yellow, or red, and cut into garments ſewed with roe-buck ſinews. After drying theſe ſinews in the ſun, and beating them, they draw out threads as white and fine as any that are made of flax, but much tougher.

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ner, without thinking of any improvement, ſhows how greatly men are influenced by cuſtom. The blacks of Jamaica are ſtill more rude in their buildings: their huts are erected without even a hole in the roof; and accordingly at home they breathe nothing but ſmoke.

Revenge early produced hoſtile weapons. The club and the dart are obvious inventions: not ſo the bow and arrow; and for that reaſon it is not eaſy to ſay how that weapon came to be univerſal. As iron is ſeldom found in a mine like other metals, it was a late diſcovery: at the ſiege of Troy, ſpears, darts, and arrows, were headed with braſs. Meneſtheus, who ſucceeded Theſeus in the kingdom of Athens, and led fifty ſhips to the ſiege of Troy, was reputed the firſt who marſhalled an army in battle-array. Inſtruments of defence are made neceſſary by thoſe of offence. Trunks of trees, interlaced with branches, and ſupported with earth, made the firſt fortifications; to which ſucceeded a wall finiſhed with a parapet for ſhooting arrows at beſiegers. As a parapet covers but half of the body, holes were left in the wall from ſpace to ſpace, no larger than to give paſſage to an arrow. Beſiegers had no remedy but to beat down the wall: a battering ram was firſt uſed by Pericles the Athenian, and perfected by the Carthaginians at the ſiege of Gades. To oppoſe that formidable machine, the wall was built with advanced parapets for throwing ſtones and fire upon the enemy, which kept him at a diſtance. A wooden-booth upon wheels, and puſhed cloſe to the wall, ſecured the men who wrought the battering ram. This invention was rendered ineffectual, by ſurrounding the wall with a deep and broad ditch. Beſiegers were reduced to the neceſſity of inventing engines for throwing ſtones and javelins upon thoſe who occupied the advanced parapets, in order to give opportunity for filling up the ditch; and ancient hiſtories expatiate upon the powerful operation of the catapulta and baliſta. Theſe engines ſuggeſt-

ed a new invention for defence: inſtead of a circular wall, it was built with ſalient angles, like the teeth of a ſaw, in order that one part might flank another. That form of a wall was afterward improved, by raiſing round towers upon the ſalient angles; and the towers were improved by making them ſquare. The ancients had no occaſion for any form more complete, being ſufficient for defending againſt all the miſſile weapons at that time known. The invention of cannon required a variation in military architecture. The firſt cannons were made of iron bars, forming a concave cylinder, united by rings of copper. The firſt cannon-balls were of ſtone, which required a very large aperture. A cannon was reduced to a ſmaller ſize, by uſing iron for balls inſtead of ſtone; and that deſtructive engine was perfected by making it of caſt metal. To reſiſt its force, baſtions were invented, horn-works, crown-works, half-moons, &c. &c.; and military architecture became a ſyſtem, governed by fundamental principles and general rules. But all in vain: it has indeed produced fortifications that have made ſieges horridly bloody; but artillery at the ſame time has been carried to ſuch perfection, and the art of attack ſo improved, that, according to the general opinion, no fortification can be rendered impregnable. The only impregnable defence, is good neighbourhood among weak princes, ready to unite whenever one of them is attacked with ſuperior force. And nothing tends more effectually to promote ſuch union, than conſtant expe-rience that fortifications ought not to be relied on.

With reſpect to naval architecture, the firſt veſſels were beams joined together, and covered with planks, puſhed along with long poles in ſhallow water, and drawn by animals in deep water. To theſe ſucceeded trunks of trees cut hollow, termed by the Greeks *monoxyles*. The next were planks joined together in form of a monoxyle. The thought of imitating a fiſh advanced naval architecture. A prow was conſtructed in imitation of the head, a ſtern with

with a moveable helm, in imitation of the tail, and oars in imitation of the fins. Sails were at laſt added; which invention was ſo early that the contriver is unknown. Before the year 1545, ſhips of war in England had no port-holes for guns, as at preſent: they had only a few cannon placed on the upper deck.

When Homer compoſed his poems, at leaſt during the Trojan war, the Greeks had not acquired the art of gelding cattle; they eat the fleſh of bulls and of rams. Kings and princes killed and cooked their victuals: ſpoons, forks, table-cloths, napkins, were unknown. They fed ſitting, the cuſtom of reclining upon beds being afterward copied from Aſia; and, like other ſavages, they were great eaters. At the time mentioned, they had not chimneys, nor candles, nor lamps. Torches are frequently mentioned by Homer, but lamps never: a vaſe was placed upon a tripod, in which was burnt dry wood for giving light. Locks and keys were not common at that time. Bundles were ſecured with ropes intricately combined (*a*); and hence the famous Gordian knot. Shoes and ſtockings were not early known among them, nor buttons, nor ſaddles, nor ſtirrups. Plutarch reports, that Gracchus cauſed ſtones to be erected along the high-ways leading from Rome, for the convenience of mounting a horſe; for at that time ſtirrups were unknown, tho' an obvious invention. Linen for ſhirts was not uſed in Rome for many years after the government became deſpotic. Even ſo late as the eighth century, it was not common in Europe.

Thales, one of the ſeven wiſe men of Greece, about ſix hundred years before Chriſt, invented the following method for meaſuring the height of an Egyptian pyramid. He watched the progreſs of the ſun, till his body and its ſhadow were of the ſame length; and

(*a*) Odyſſey, b. 8. l. 483. Pope's tranſlation.

at that inſtant meaſured the ſhadow of the pyramid, which conſequently gave its height. Amaſis King of Egypt, preſent at the operation, thought it a wonderful effort of genius; and the Greeks admired it highly. Geometry muſt have been in its very cradle at that time. Anaximander, ſome ages before Chriſt, made the firſt map of the earth, ſo far as then known. About the end of the thirteenth century, ſpectacles for aſſiſting the ſight were invented by Alexander Spina, a monk of Piſa. So uſeful an invention cannot be too much extolled. At a period of life when the judgement is in maturity, and reading is of great benefit, the eyes begin to grow dim. One cannot help pitying the condition of bookiſh men before that invention; many of whom muſt have had their ſight greatly impaired, while their appetite for reading was in vigour.

As the origin and progreſs of writing make a capital article in the preſent ſketch, they muſt not be overlooked. To write, or, in other words, to exhibit thoughts to the eye, was early attempted in Egypt by hieroglyphics. But theſe were not confined to Egypt: figures compoſed of painted feathers were uſed in Mexico to expreſs ideas; and by ſuch figures Montezuma received intelligence of the Spaniſh invaſion: in Peru, the only arithmetical figures known were knots of various colours, which ſerved to caſt up accounts. The ſecond ſtep naturally in the progreſs of the art of writing, is, to repreſent each word by a mark, termed a *letter*, which is the Chineſe way of writing: they have about 11,000 of theſe marks or letters in common uſe; and in matters of ſcience, they employ to the number of 60,000. Our way is far more eaſy and commodious: inſtead of marks or letters for words, which are infinite, we repreſent by marks or letters, the articulate ſounds that compoſe words: theſe ſounds exceed not thirty in number; and conſequently the ſame number of marks or letters are ſufficient for writing. This was at once to ſtep from hieroglyphics,

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the moſt imperfect mode of writing, to letters repreſenting ſounds, the moſt perfect; for there is no probability that the Chineſe mode was ever practis'd in this part of the world. With us, the learning to read is ſo eaſy as to be acquired in childhood; and we are ready for the ſciences as ſoon as the mind is ripe for them: the Chineſe mode, on the contrary, is an unſurmountable obſtruction to knowledge; becauſe it being the work of a lifetime to read with eaſe, no time remains for ſtudying the ſciences. Our caſe was in ſome meaſure the ſame at the reſtoration of learning: it required an age to be familiarized with the Greek and Latin tongues; and too little time remained for gathering knowledge out of their books. The Chineſe ſtand upon a more equal footing with reſpect to arts; for theſe may be acquired by imitation or oral inſtruction, without books.

The art of writing with letters repreſenting ſounds, is of all inventions the moſt important, and the leaſt obvious. The way of writing in China makes ſo naturally the ſecond ſtep in the progreſs of the art, that our good fortune in ſtumbling upon a way ſo much more perfect cannot be ſufficiently admired, when to it we are indebted for our ſuperiority in literature above the Chineſe. Their way of writing is a fatal obſtruction to ſcience; for it is ſo rivetted by inveterate practice, that the difficulty would not be greater to make them change their language than their letters. Hieroglyphics were a ſort of writing, ſo miſerably imperfect, as to make every improvement welcome; but as the Chineſe make a tolerable ſhift with their own letters, however cumberſome to thoſe who know better, they never dream of any improvement. Hence it may be averred with great certainty, that in China, the ſciences, tho' ſtill in infancy, will for ever continue ſo.

The art of writing was known in Greece when Homer compoſed his two epics; for he gives ſomewhere a hint of it. It was at

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that time probably in its infancy, and uſed only for recording laws, religious precepts, or other ſhort works. Ciphers, invented in Hindoſtan, were brought into France from Arabia about the end of the tenth century.

Huſbandry made a progreſs from Egypt to Greece, and from Afric to Italy. Mago, a Carthaginian General, compoſed twenty-eight books upon huſbandry, which were tranſlated into Latin by order of the Roman ſenate. From theſe fine and fertile countries, it made its way to colder and leſs kindly climates. According to that progreſs, agriculture muſt have been practiſed more early in France than in Britain; and yet the Engliſh at preſent make a greater figure in that art than the French, inferiority in ſoil and climate notwithſtanding. Before huſbandry became an art in the northern parts of Europe, the French nobleſſe had deſerted the country, fond of ſociety in a town-life. Landed gentlemen in England, more rough, and delighting more in hunting and other country-amuſements, found leiſure to practiſe agriculture. Skill in that art proceeded from them to their tenants, who now proſecute huſbandry with ſucceſs, tho' their landlords have generally betaken themſelves to a town-life.

When Cæſar invaded Britain, agriculture was unknown in the inner parts: the inhabitants fed upon milk and fleſh, and were cloathed with ſkins. Hollinſhed, cotemporary with Eliſabeth of England, deſcribes the rudeneſs of the preceding generation in the arts of life: "There were very few chimneys even in capital "towns: the fire was laid to the wall, and the ſmoke iſſued out "at the roof, or door, or window. The houſes were wattled and "plaiſtered over with clay; and all the furniture and utenſils "were of wood. The people ſlept on ſtraw-pallets, with a log of "wood for a pillow." Henry II. of France, at the marriage of the Ducheſs of Savoy, wore the firſt ſilk ſtockings that were made in France. Queen Eliſabeth, the third year of her reign, received

ved in a preſent a pair of black ſilk knit ſtockings; and Dr Howel reports, that ſhe never wore cloth hoſe any more. Before the conqueſt there was a timber bridge upon the Thames between London and Southwark, which was repaired by King William Rufus, and was burnt by accident in the reign of Henry II. ann. 1176. At that time a ſtone bridge in place of it was projected, but it was not finiſhed till the year 1212. The bridge Notre-Dame over the Seine in Paris was firſt of wood. It fell down anno 1499; and as there was not in France a man who would undertake to rebuild it of ſtone, an Italian cordelier was employ'd, whoſe name was *Joconde*, the ſame upon whom Sanazarius made the following pun:

Jocondus geminum impoſuit tibi, Sequana, pontem;
Hunc tu jure potes dicere pontificem.

The art of making glaſs was imported from France into England ann. 674, for the uſe of monaſteries. Glaſs windows in private houſes were rare even in the twelfth century, and held to be great luxury. King Edward III. invited three clockmakers of Delft in Holland to ſettle in England. In the former part of the reign of Henry VIII. there did not grow in England cabbage, carrot, turnip, or other edible root; and it has been noted, that even Queen Catharine herſelf could not command a ſalad for dinner, till the King brought over a gardener from the Netherlands. About the ſame time, the artichoke, the apricot, the damaſk roſe, made their firſt appearance in England. Turkeys, carps, and hops, were firſt known there in the year 1524. The currant-ſhrub was brought from the iſland of Zant ann. 1533; and in the year 1540, cherry-trees from Flanders were firſt planted in Kent. It was in the year 1563 that knives were firſt made in England. Pocket-watches were brought there from Germany ann. 1577. About the year 1580,

1580, coaches were introduced; before which time Queen Eliſabeth on public occaſions rode behind her chamberlain. A ſaw-mill was erected near London ann. 1633, but afterward demoliſhed, that it might not deprive the labouring poor of employment. How crude was the ſcience of politics even in that late age?

People who are ignorant of weights and meaſures fall upon odd ſhifts to ſupply the defect. Howel Dha Prince of Wales, who died in the year 948, was their capital lawgiver. One of his laws is, "If any one kill or ſteal the cat that guards the Prince's granary, "he forfeits a milch ewe with her lamb; or as much wheat as will "cover the cat when ſuſpended by the tail, the head touching "the ground." By the ſame lawgiver a fine of twelve cows is enacted for a rape committed upon a maid, eighteen for a rape upon a matron. If the fact be proved after being denied, the criminal for his falſity pays as many ſhillings as will cover the woman's poſteriors.

The negroes of the kingdom of Ardrah in Guinea have made great advances in arts. Their towns, for the moſt part, are fortified, and connected by great roads, kept in good repair. Deep canals from river to river are commonly filled with canoes, for pleaſure ſome, and many for buſineſs. The vallies are pleaſant, producing wheat, millet, yams, potatoes, lemons, oranges, cocoa-nuts, and dates. The marſhy grounds near the ſea are drained; and ſalt is made by evaporating the ſtagnating water. Salt is carried to the inland countries by the great canal of Ba, where numberleſs canoes are daily ſeen going with ſalt, and returning with gold duſt or other commodities.

In all countries where the people are barbarous and illiterate, the progreſs of arts is wofully ſlow. It is vouched by an old French poem, that the virtues of the loadſtone were known in France before the 1180. The mariner's compaſs was exhibited at Venice ann. 1260 by Paulus Venetus, as his own invention. John

Goya

Goya of Amalphi was the firſt who, many years afterward, uſed it in navigation; and alſo paſſed for being the inventer. Tho' it was uſed in China for navigation long before it was known in Europe, yet to this day it is not ſo perfect as in Europe. Inſtead of ſuſpending it in order to make it act freely, it is placed upon a bed of ſand, by which every motion of the ſhip diſturbs its operation. Hand-mills, termed *querns*, were early uſed for grinding corn; and when corn came to be raiſed in greater quantity, horſe-mills ſucceeded. Water-mills for grinding corn are deſcribed by Vitruvius (*a*). Wind-mills were known in Greece and in Arabia as early as the ſeventh century; and yet no mention is made of them in Italy till the fourteenth century. That they were not known in England in the reign of Henry VIII. appears from a houſehold book of an Earl of Northumberland, cotemporary with that King, ſtating an allowance for three mill-horſes, "two to draw in the mill, and one to carry ſtuff to the "mill and fro." Water-mills for corn muſt in England have been of a later date. The ancients had mirror-glaſſes, and employ'd glaſs to imitate cryſtal vaſes and goblets: yet they never thought of uſing it in windows. In the thirteenth century, the Venetians were the only people who had the art of making cryſtal glaſs for mirrors. A clock that ſtrikes the hours was unknown in Europe till the end of the twelfth century. And hence the cuſtom of employing men to proclaim the hours during night; which to this day continues in Germany, Flanders, and England. Galileo was the firſt who conceived an idea that a pendulum might be uſeful for meaſuring time; and Hughens was the firſt who put the idea in execution, by making a pendulum clock. Hook, in the year 1660, invented a ſpiral ſpring for a watch, tho' a watch was far from being a new invention. Paper was made no

(*a*) L. 10. cap. 10.

earlier than the fourteenth century; and the invention of printing was a century later. Silk manufactures were long eſtabliſhed in Greece before ſilk-worms were introduced there. The manufacturers were provided with raw ſilk from Perſia: but that commerce being frequently interrupted by war, two monks, in the reign of Juſtinian, brought eggs of the ſilk-worm from Hindoſtan, and taught their countrymen the method of managing them. The art of reading made a very ſlow progreſs. To encourage that art in England, the capital puniſhment for murder was remitted if the criminal could but read, which in law-language is termed *benefit of clergy*. One would imagine that the art muſt have made a very rapid progreſs when ſo greatly favoured: but there is a ſignal proof of the contrary; for ſo ſmall an edition of the Bible as ſix hundred copies, tranſlated into Engliſh in the reign of Henry VIII. was not wholly ſold off in three years. The people of England muſt have been profoundly ignorant in Queen Eliſabeth's time, when a forged clauſe added to the twentieth article of the Engliſh creed paſſed unnoticed till about forty years ago *.

The diſcoveries of the Portugueſe in the weſt coaſt of Africa, is a remarkable inſtance of the ſlow progreſs of arts. In the begin-

* In the act 13th Eliſabeth anno 1571, confirming the thirty-nine articles of the church of England, theſe articles are not engroſſed, but referred to as compriſed in a printed book, intitled, *Articles agreed to by the whole clergy in the convocation holden at London* 1562. The forged clauſe is, "The church has power to "decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controverſies of faith." In the articles referred to, that clauſe is not to be found, nor the ſlighteſt hint of any authority with reſpect to matters of faith. In the ſame year 1571, the articles were printed both in Latin and Engliſh, preciſely as in the year 1562. But ſoon after came out ſpurious editions, in which the ſaid clauſe was foiſted into the twentieth article, and continues ſo to this day. A forgery ſo impudent would not paſs at preſent; and its ſucceſs ſhows great ignorance in the people of England at that period.

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ning of the fifteenth century, they were totally ignorant of that coaſt beyond Cape Non, 28 deg. north latitude. In the 1410 the celebrated Prince Henry of Portugal fitted out a fleet for diſcoveries, which proceeded along the coaſt to Cape Bojadore in 26 deg.; but had not courage to double it. In 1418 Triſtan Vaz diſcovered the iſland Porto Santo; and the year after the iſland Madeira was diſcovered. In 1439 a Portugueſe captain doubled Cape Bojadore; and the next year the Portugueſe reached Cape Blanco, lat. 20 deg. In 1446 Nuna Triſtan doubled Cape Verd, lat. 14° 40′. In 1448 Don Gonzallo Vallo took poſſeſſion of the Azores. In the 1449 the iſlands of Cape Verd were diſcovered for Don Henry. In the 1471 Pedro d'Eſcovar diſcovered the iſland St Thomas and Prince's iſland. In 1484 Diego Cam diſcovered the kingdom of Congo. In 1486 Bartholemew Diaz, employ'd by John II. of Portugal, doubled the Cape of Good Hope, which he called *Cabo Tormentoſo*, from the tempeſtuous weather he found in the paſſage.

The exertion of national ſpirit upon any particular art, promotes activity to proſecute other arts. The Romans, by conſtant ſtudy, came to excel in the art of war, which led them naturally to improve upon other arts. Having, in the progreſs of ſociety, acquired ſome degree of taſte and poliſh, a talent for writing broke forth. Nevius compoſed in verſe ſeven books of the Punic war; beſide comedies, replete with bitter raillery againſt the nobility (*a*). Ennius wrote annals, and an epic poem (*b*). Lucius Andronicus was the father of dramatic poetry in Rome (*c*). Pacu-

(*a*) Titus Livius, lib. 7. c. 2.

(*b*) Quintilian, lib. 10. c. 17.

(*c*) Cicero de oratore, lib. 2. No. 72.

vius wrote tragedies (*a*). Plautus and Terence wrote comedies. Lucilius compoſed ſatires, which Cicero eſteems to be ſlight, and void of erudition (*b*). Fabius Pictor, Cincius Alimentus, Piſo Frugi, Valerius Antias, and Cato, were rather annaliſts than hiſtorians, confining themſelves to naked facts, ranged in order of time. The genius of the Romans for the fine arts was much inflamed by Greek learning, when free intercourſe between the two nations was opened. Many of thoſe who made the greateſt figure in the Roman ſtate, commenced authors, Cæſar, Cicero, &c. Sylla compoſed memoirs of his own tranſactions, a work much eſteemed even in the days of Plutarch.

The progreſs of art ſeldom fails to be rapid, when a people happen to be rouſed out of a torpid ſtate by ſome fortunate change of circumſtances: proſperity contraſted with former abaſement, gives to the mind a ſpring, which is vigorouſly exerted in every new purſuit. The Athenians made but a mean figure under the tyranny of Piſiſtratus; but upon regaining freedom and independence, they were converted into heroes. Miletus, a Greek city of Ionia, being deſtroy'd by the King of Perſia, and the inhabitants made ſlaves; the Athenians, deeply affected with the miſery of their brethren, boldly attacked that king in his own dominions, and burnt the city of Sardis. In leſs than ten years after, they gained a ſignal victory at Marathon; and under Themiſtocles, made head againſt that prodigious army with which Xerxes threatened utter ruin to Greece. Such proſperity produced its uſual effect: arts flouriſhed with arms, and Athens became the chief theatre for ſciences as well as for fine arts. The reign of

(*a*) Cicero de oratore, lib. 2. No. 193.

(*b*) De finibus, lib. 1. No. 7.

Auguſtus

Auguſtus Cæſar, which put an end to the rancour of civil war and reſtored peace to Rome with the comforts of ſociety, proved an auſpicious æra for literature; and produced a cloud of Latin hiſtorians, poets, and philoſophers, to whom the moderns are indebted for their taſte and talents. One who makes a figure rouſes emulation in all: one catches fire from another, and the national ſpirit is every where triumphant: claſſical works are compoſed, and uſeful diſcoveries made in every art and ſcience. This fairly accounts for the following obſervation of Velleius Paterculus (*a*), that eminent men generally appear in the ſame period of time. "One age," ſays he, "produced Eſchylus, Sophocles, and Eu-"ripides, who advanced tragedy to a great height. In another "age the old comedy flouriſhed under Eupolis, Cratinus, and A-"riſtophanes; and the new was invented by Menander, and his "cotemporaries Diphilus and Philemon, whoſe compoſitions are "ſo perfect that they left to poſterity no hope of rivalſhip. The "philoſophic ſages of the Socratic ſchool, appeared all about the "time of Plato and Ariſtotle. And as to rhetoric, few excelled in "that art before Iſocrates, and as few after the ſecond deſcent of "his ſcholars." The hiſtorian applies the ſame obſervation to the Romans, and extends it even to grammarians, painters, ſtatuaries, and ſculptors. With regard to Rome, it is true, that the Roman government under Auguſtus was in effect deſpotic: but deſpotiſm, in that ſingle inſtance, made no obſtruction to literature, it having been the politic of that reign to hide power as much as poſſible. A ſimilar revolution happened in Tuſcany about three centuries ago. That country having been divided into a number of ſmall republics, the people, excited by mutual hatred between ſmall nations in cloſe neighbourhood, became ferocious and bloody,

(*a*) Hiſtoria Romana, lib. 1. in fine.

flaming

flaming with revenge for the ſlighteſt offence. Theſe republics being united under the Great Duke of Tuſcany, enjoy'd the ſweets of peace in a mild government. That comfortable revolution, which made the deeper impreſſion by a retroſpect to recent calamities, rouſed the national ſpirit, and produced ardent application to arts and literature. The reſtoration of the royal family in England, which put an end to a cruel and envenomed civil war, promoted improvements of every kind: arts and induſtry made a rapid progreſs among the people, tho' left to themſelves by a weak and fluctuating adminiſtration. Had the nation, upon that favourable turn of fortune, been bleſſed with a ſucceſſion of able and virtuous princes, to what a height might not arts and ſciences have been carried! In Scotland, a favourable period for improvements was the reign of the firſt Robert, after ſhaking off the Engliſh yoke: but the domineering ſpirit of the feudal ſyſtem rendered abortive every attempt. The reſtoration of the royal family, mentioned above, animated the legiſlature of Scotland to promote manufactures of various kinds: but in vain; for the union of the two crowns had introduced deſpotiſm into Scotland, which ſunk the genius of the people, and rendered them heartleſs and indolent. Liberty indeed and many other advantages, were procured to them by the union of the two kingdoms; but theſe ſalutary effects were long ſuſpended by mutual enmity, ſuch as commonly ſubſiſts between neighbouring nations. Enmity wore out gradually, and the eyes of the Scots were opened to the advantages of their preſent condition: the national ſpirit was rouſed to emulate and to excel: talents were exerted, hitherto latent; and Scotland at preſent makes a figure in arts and ſciences, above what it ever made while an independent kingdom *.

Another

* In Scotland, an innocent bankrupt impriſoned for debt, obtains liberty by a proceſs termed *Ceſſio bonorum*. From the year 1694 to the 1744 there were but twenty-

Another cauſe of activity and animation, is the being engaged in ſome important action of doubtful event, a ſtruggle for liberty, the reſiſting a potent invader, or the like. Greece, divided into ſmall ſtates frequently at war with each other, advanced literature and the fine arts to unrivalled perfection. The Corſicans, while engaged in a perilous war for defence of their liberties, exerted a vigorous national ſpirit: they founded an univerſity for arts and ſciences, a public library, and a public bank. After a long ſtupor during the dark ages of Chriſtianity, arts and literature revived among the turbulent ſtates of Italy. The royal ſociety in London, and the academy of ſciences in Paris, were both of them inſtituted after civil wars that had animated the people, and rouſed their activity.

An uſeful art is ſeldom loſt, becauſe it is in conſtant practice. And yet, tho' many uſeful arts were in perfection during the reign of Auguſtus Cæſar, it is amazing how ignorant and ſtupid men became, after the Roman empire was ſhattered by northern barbarians: they degenerated into ſavages. So ignorant were the Spaniſh Chriſtians during the eighth and ninth centuries, that Alphonſus the Great, King of Leon, was reduced to the neceſſity of employing Mahometan preceptors for educating his eldeſt ſon. Even Charlemagne could not ſign his name: nor was he ſingular in that reſpect, being kept in countenance by ſeveral neighbouring princes.

twenty-four proceſſes of that kind; which ſhows how languidly trade was carried on while the people remained ſtill ignorant of their advantages by the union. From that time to the year 1771 there have been thrice that number every year, taking one year with another; an evident proof of the late rapid progreſs of commerce in Scotland. Every one is rouſed to venture his ſmall ſtock, tho' every one cannot be ſucceſsful.

As

As the progreſs of arts and ſciences toward perfection is greatly promoted by emulation, nothing is more fatal to an art or ſcience than to remove that ſpur, as where ſome extraordinary genius appears who ſoars above rivalſhip. Mathematics ſeem to be declining in Britain: the great Newton, having ſurpaſſed all the ancients, has not left to the moderns even the fainteſt hope of equalling him; and what man will enter the liſts who deſpairs of victory?

In early times, the inventers of uſeful arts were remembered with fervent gratitude. Their hiſtory became fabulous by the many incredible exploits that were attributed to them. Diodorus Siculus mentions the Egyptian tradition of Oſiris, that with a numerous army he traverſed every inhabited part of the globe, in order to teach men the culture of wheat and of the vine. Beſide the impracticability of ſupporting a numerous army where huſbandry is unknown, no army could enable Oſiris to introduce wheat or wine among ſtupid ſavages who live by hunting and fiſhing, which probably was the caſe, in that early period, of all the nations he viſited.

In a country thinly peopled, where even neceſſary arts want hands, it is common to ſee one perſon exerciſing more arts than one: in ſeveral parts of Scotland, one man ſerves as a phyſician, ſurgeon, and apothecary. In a very populous country, even ſimple arts are ſplit into parts, and each part has an artiſt appropriated to it. In the large towns of ancient Egypt, a phyſician was confined to a ſingle diſeaſe. In mechanic arts that method is excellent. As a hand confined to a ſingle operation becomes both expert and expeditious, a mechanic art is perfected by having its different operations diſtributed among the greateſt number of hands: many hands are employ'd in making a watch; and a ſtill greater number in manufacturing a web of woollen cloth. Various arts or operations carried on by the ſame man, envigorate his

his mind, becauſe they exerciſe different faculties; and as he cannot be equally expert in every art or operation, he is frequently reduced to ſupply want of ſkill by thought and invention. Conſtant application, on the contrary, to a ſingle operation, confines the mind to a ſingle object, and excludes all thought and invention: in ſuch a train of life, the operator becomes dull and ſtupid, like a beaſt of burden. The difference is viſible in the manners of the people: in a country where, from want of hands, ſeveral occupations muſt be carried on by the ſame perſon, the people are knowing and converſable: in a populous country where manufactures flouriſh, they are ignorant and unſociable. The ſame effect is equally viſible in countries where an art or manufacture is confined to a certain claſs of men. It is viſible in Hindoſtan, where the people are divided into *caſts*, which never mix even by marriage, and where every man follows his father's trade. The Dutch lint-boors are a ſimilar inſtance: the ſame families carry on the trade from generation to generation; and are accordingly ignorant and brutiſh even beyond other Dutch peaſants. The inhabitants of Buckhaven, a ſeaport in the county of Fife, were originally a colony of foreigners, invited hither to teach our people the art of fiſhing. They continue fiſhers to this day, marry among themſelves, have little intercourſe with their neighbours, and are dull and ſtupid to a proverb.

SECT. II.

Progreſs of TASTE and of the FINE ARTS.

THE ſenſe by which we perceive right and wrong in actions, is termed the *moral ſenſe:* the ſenſe by which we perceive beauty and deformity in objects, is termed *taſte.* Perfection in the moral ſenſe conſiſts in perceiving the minuteſt differences of right and wrong: perfection in taſte conſiſts in perceiving the minuteſt differences of beauty and deformity; and ſuch perfection is termed *delicacy of taſte* (*a*).

The moral ſenſe is born with us; and ſo is taſte: yet both of them require much cultivation. Among ſavages, the moral ſenſe is faint and obſcure; and taſte ſtill more ſo *. Even in the moſt enlightened ages, it requires in a judge both education and experience to perceive accurately the various modifications of right and wrong: and to acquire delicacy of taſte, a man muſt grow old in examining beauties and deformities. In Rome, abounding with productions of the fine arts, an illiterate ſhopkeeper is a more correct judge of ſtatues, of pictures, and of buildings, than the

* Some Iroquois, after ſeeing all the beauties of Paris, admired nothing but the ſtreet De la Houchette, where they found a conſtant ſupply of eatables.

(*a*) Elements of Criticiſm, vol. 1. p. 111. edit. 4.

beſt-

beſt-educated citizen of London (*a*). Thus taſte goes hand in hand with the moral ſenſe in their progreſs toward maturity, and they ripen equally by the ſame ſort of culture. Want, a barren ſoil, cramps the growth of both: ſenſuality, a ſoil too fat, corrupts both: the middle ſtate, equally diſtant from diſpiriting poverty and luxurious ſenſuality, is the ſoil in which both of them flouriſh.

As the fine arts are intimately connected with taſte, it is impracticable, in tracing their progreſs, to ſeparate them by accurate limits. I join therefore the progreſs of the fine arts to that of taſte, where the former depends entirely on the latter; and I handle ſeparately the progreſs of the fine arts, where that progreſs is influenced by other circumſtances beſide taſte.

During the infancy of taſte, imagination is ſuffered to roam, as in ſleep, without control. Wonder is the paſſion of ſavages and of ruſtics; to raiſe which, nothing is neceſſary but to invent giants and magicians, fairy-land and inchantment. The earlieſt exploits recorded of warlike nations, are giants mowing down whole armies, and little men overcoming giants; witneſs Joannes Magnus, Torfeus, and other Scandinavian writers. Hence the abſurd romances that delighted the world for ages; which are now fallen into contempt every where. Madame de la Fayette led the way to novels in the preſent mode. She was the firſt who introduced ſentiments inſtead of wonderful adventures, and amiable men inſtead of bloody heroes. In ſubſtituting diſtreſſes to prodigies, ſhe made a diſcovery that perſons of taſte and feeling are more attached by compaſſion than by wonder.

When gigantic fictions were baniſhed, ſome remaining taſte for the wonderful encouraged gigantic ſimiles, metaphors, and allegories. The Song of Solomon, and many other Aſiatic compoſi-

(*a*) Elements of Criticiſm, chap. 25.

tions, afford examples without end of ſuch figures; which are commonly attributed to force of imagination in a warm climate. But a more extenſive view will ſhow this to be a miſtake. In every climate, hot and cold, the figurative ſtyle is carried to extravagance, during a certain period in the progreſs of writing; a ſtyle that is reliſhed by all at firſt, and continues to delight many till it yield to a taſte poliſhed by long experience. Even in the bitter cold country of Iceland, we are at no loſs for examples. A rainbow is termed *Bridge of the gods:* gold, *Tears of Frya:* the earth is termed *Daughter of Night*, the *veſſel that floats upon Ages;* and herbs and plants are her *hair*, or her *fleece*. Ice is termed *the great bridge:* a ſhip, *horſe of the floods*. Many authors fooliſhly conjecture, that the Hurons and ſome other neighbouring nations, are of Aſiatic extraction; becauſe, like the Aſiatics, their diſcourſe is highly figurative.

The national progreſs of morality is ſlow: the national progreſs of taſte is ſtill ſlower. In proportion as a nation poliſhes, and improves in the arts of peace, taſte ripens. The Chineſe had long enjoy'd a regular ſyſtem of government, while the Europeans were comparatively in a chaos; and accordingly literary compoſitions in China were brought to perfection more early than in Europe. In their poetry they indulge no incredible fables, like thoſe of Arioſto or the Arabian Tales; but commonly ſelect ſuch as afford a good moral. Their novels, like thoſe of the moſt approved kind among us, treat of misfortunes unforeſeen, unexpected good luck, and perſons finding out their real parents. The Orphan of China, compoſed in the fourteenth century, ſurpaſſes far any European play in that early period. But good writing has made a more rapid progreſs with us; not from ſuperiority of talents, but from the great labour the Chineſe muſt undergo, in learning to read and write their own language. The Chineſe tragedy is indeed languid, and not ſufficiently intereſting; which Voltaire aſcribes

to

to want of genius. With better reaſon he might have aſcribed it to the nature of their government, ſo well contrived for preſerving peace and order, as to afford few examples of ſurpriſing events, and little opportunity for exerting manly talents.

A nation cannot acquire a taſte for ridicule till it emerge out of the ſavage ſtate. Ridicule however is too rough for refined manners: Cicero diſcovers in Plautus a happy talent for ridicule, and peculiar delicacy of wit; but Horace, who figured in the court of Auguſtus, eminent for delicacy of taſte, declares againſt the low roughneſs of that author's raillery (*a*). The high burleſk ſtyle prevails commonly in the period between barbarity and politeneſs, in which a taſte ſomewhat improved diſcovers the ridicule of former manners. Rabelais in France and Butler in England are illuſtrious examples. Dr Swift is our lateſt burleſk writer, and probably will be the laſt.

Emulation among a multitude of ſmall ſtates in Greece, ripened taſte, and promoted the fine arts. Taſte, rouſed by emulation, refines gradually; and is advanced toward perfection by a diligent ſtudy of beautiful productions. Rome was indebted to Greece for that delicacy of taſte which ſhone during the reign of Auguſtus, eſpecially in literary compoſitions. But taſte could not long flouriſh in a deſpotic government: ſo low had the Roman taſte fallen in the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, that nothing would pleaſe him but to ſuppreſs Homer, and in his place to inſtall a ſilly Greek poet, named *Antimachus*.

The northern barbarians who deſolated the Roman empire, and revived in ſome meaſure the ſavage ſtate, occaſioned a woful decay of taſte. Pope Gregory VII. anno 1080, preſented to the Emperor Rodolph a crown of gold with the following inſcription:

(*a*) Elements of Criticiſm, chap. 2. part 2.

Petra

Petra dedit Petro, Petrus diadema Rodolpho. Miſerably low muſt taſte have been in that period, when a childiſh play of words was reliſhed as a proper decoration for a ſerious ſolemnity. The famous golden bull of Germany, digeſted anno 1356 by Bartolus, a celebrated lawyer, and intended for a maſter-piece of compoſition, is replete with wild conceptions, without the leaſt regard to truth, propriety, or connection. It begins with an apoſtrophe to Pride, to Satan, to Choler, and to Luxury: it aſſerts, that there muſt be ſeven electors for oppoſing the ſeven mortal ſins: The fall of the angels, terreſtrial paradiſe, Pompey, and Cæſar, are introduced; and it is ſaid, that Germany is founded on the Trinity, and on the three theological virtues. What can be more puerile! A ſermon preached by the Biſhop of Bitonto, at the opening of the council of Trent, excels in that manner of compoſition. He proves, that a council is neceſſary; becauſe ſeveral councils have extirpated hereſy, and depoſed kings and emperors; becauſe the poets aſſemble councils of the gods; becauſe Moſes writes, that at the creation of man and at confounding the language of the giants, God acted in the manner of a council; becauſe religion has three heads, doctrine, ſacraments, and charity, and that theſe three are termed *a council.* He exhorts the members of the council to ſtrict unity, like the heroes in the Trojan horſe. He aſſerts, that the gates of paradiſe and of the council are the ſame; that the holy fathers ſhould ſprinkle their dry hearts with the living water that flowed from it; and that otherwiſe the Holy Ghoſt would open their mouths like thoſe of Balaam and Caiphas (*a*). James I. of Britain dedicates his declaration againſt Vorſtius to our Saviour, in the following words. " To the honour of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, " the eternal Son of the eternal Father, the only Theanthropos,

(*a*) Father Paul's hiſtory of Trent, lib. 1.

" mediator

" mediator and reconciler of mankind; in ſign of thankfulneſs, " his moſt humble and and obliged ſervant, James, by the grace " of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, defender " of the Faith, doth dedicate and conſecrate this his declaration." Funeral orations were ſome time ago in faſhion. Regnard, who was in Stockholm about the year 1680, heard a funeral oration at the burial of a ſervant-maid. The prieſt, after mentioning her parents and the place of her birth, praiſed her as an excellent cook, and enlarged upon every ragout that ſhe made in perfection. She had but one fault, he ſaid, which was the ſalting her diſhes too much; but that ſhe ſhow'd thereby her prudence, of which ſalt is the ſymbol; a ſtroke of wit that probably was admired by the whole audience. Funeral orations are out of faſhion: the futility of a trite panegyric purchaſed with money, and indecent flattery in circumſtances that require ſincerity and truth, could not long ſtand againſt improved taſte. The yearly feaſt of the aſs that carried the mother of God into Egypt, was a moſt ridiculous farce, highly reliſhed in the dark ages of Chriſtianity. See the deſcription of that feaſt in Voltaire's general hiſtory (*a*).

The public amuſements of our forefathers, ſhow the groſſneſs of their taſte after they were reduced to barbariſm by the Goths and Vandals. The plays termed *Myſteries*, becauſe they were borrow'd from the ſcriptures, indicate groſs manners as well as infantine taſte; and yet in France, not farther back than three or four centuries, theſe Myſteries were ſuch favourites as conſtantly to make a part at every public feſtival. The reformation of religion, which rouſed a ſpirit of inquiry, baniſhed that amuſement, as not only low but indecent. A ſort of plays ſucceeded, termed *Moralities*, leſs indecent indeed, but ſcarce preferable in point of

(*a*) Chap. 78.

compoſition.

compoſition. Theſe Moralities have alſo been long baniſhed, except in Spain, where they ſtill continue in vigour. The devil is commonly the hero: nor do the Spaniards make any difficulty, even in their more regular plays, to introduce ſupernatural and allegorical beings upon the ſame ſtage with men and women. The Cardinal Colonna carried into Spain a beautiful buſt of the Emperor Caligula. In the war about the ſucceſſion of Spain, after the death of its King Charles II. Lord Gallway, upon a painful ſearch, found that buſt ſerving as a weight to a church-clock.

In the days of our barbarous forefathers, who were governed by pride as well as by hatred, princes and men of rank entertained a changeling, diſtinguiſhed by the name of *fool*; who being the butt of their ſilly jokes, flattered their vanity. Such amuſement, not leſs groſs than inhuman, could not ſhow its face even in the dawn of taſte: it was rendered leſs inſipid and leſs inhuman, by entertaining one of real wit; who, under diſguiſe of a fool, was indulged in the moſt ſatirical truths. Upon a further purification of taſte, it was diſcovered, that to draw amuſement from folly, real or pretended, is below the dignity of human nature. More refined amuſements were invented, ſuch as balls, public ſpectacles, gaming, and ſociety with women. Paraſites, deſcribed by Plautus and Terence, were of ſuch a rank as to be permitted to dine with gentlemen; and yet were ſo deſpicable as to be the butt of every man's joke. They were placed at the lower end of the table; and the gueſts diverted themſelves with daubing their faces, and even kicking and cuffing them; all which was patiently born for the ſake of a plentiful meal. They reſembled the fools and clowns of later times, being equally intended to be laughed at: but the paraſite profeſſion ſhows groſſer manners; it being leſs indelicate to make game of fools, who were men of the loweſt rank, than of paraſites, who were gentlemen by birth, tho' not by behaviour.

Pride, which introduced fools, brought dwarfs alſo into faſhion.

In

In Italy, fondneſs for dwarfs was carried to extravagance. "Being "at Rome in the year 1566," ſays a French writer, "I was invited by "Cardinal Vitelli to a feaſt, where we were ſerved by no fewer than "thirty-four dwarfs, moſt of them horridly diſtorted." Was not the taſte of that Cardinal horridly diſtorted? The ſame author adds, that Francis I. and Henry II. Kings of France, had many dwarfs: one named *Great John* was the leaſt ever had been ſeen, if it was not a dwarf at Milan, who was carried about in a cage.

In the eighth and ninth centuries, no ſort of commerce was known in Europe but what was carried on in markets and fairs. Artificers and manufacturers were diſperſed through the country, and ſo were monaſteries; the towns being inhabited by none but clergymen, and thoſe who immediately depended on them. The nobility lived on their eſtates, unleſs when they followed the court. The low people were not at liberty to quit the place of their birth: the *villain* was annexed to the eſtate, and the *ſlave*, to the perſon, of his lord. Slavery foſtered rough manners; and there could be no improvement in manners, nor in taſte, where there was no ſociety. Of all the polite nations in Europe, the Engliſh were the lateſt of taking to a town-life; and their progreſs in taſte and manners was proportionally ſlow. By no audience in the neighbouring kingdoms, would the following paſſage in one of Dryden's plays have been endured. "Jack Sauce! if I ſay it is a tragedy, "it ſhall be a tragedy in ſpite of you: teach your grandam how "to piſs." Theſe plays are full of ſuch coarſe ſtuff, and yet continued favourites down to the Revolution. For a long time after the revival of arts and ſciences, Lucan was ranked above Virgil by every critic. Ben Johnſon, and even Beaumont and Fletcher, were preferred before Shakeſpeare*; and the ſublime genius of

* Yet Shakeſpeare ſpent his life in writing for ſuch people. Unhappy Shakeſpeare! who, like his countryman Roger Bacon, lived in an age unworthy of him.

Milton made little impreſſion for more than half a century after *Paradiſe Loſt* was publiſhed. We have Dryden's authority that taſte in his time was conſiderably refined:

" They who have beſt ſucceeded on the ſtage,
" Have ſtill conform'd their genius to their age.
" Thus Johnſon did mechanic humour ſhow,
" When men were dull, and converſation low.
" Then comedy was faultleſs, but 'twas coarſe:
" Cobb's Tankard was a jeſt, and Otter's Horſe.
" Fame then was cheap, and the firſt comer ſped:
" And they have kept it ſince by being dead.
" But were they now to write, when critics weigh
" Each line and ev'ry word throughout a play,
" None of them, no not Johnſon in his height,
" Could paſs without allowing grains for weight.
" If love and honour now are higher rais'd,
" It's not the poet, but the age is prais'd:
" Wit's now arriv'd to a more high degree,
" Our native language more refin'd and free.
" Our ladies and our men now ſpeak more wit
" In converſation, than thoſe poets writ."

The high opinion Dryden had of himſelf and of his age breaks out in every line. Johnſon probably had the ſame opinion of himſelf and of his age: the preſent age is not exempted from that bias; nor will the next age be, tho' probably maturity in taſte will be ſtill later. We humble ourſelves before the antients who are far removed from us; but not to ſoar above our immediate predeceſſors, would be a ſad mortification. Many ſcenes in Dryden's plays, if not lower than Cobb's Tankard or Otter's Horſe, are more

out

out of place. In the *Wild Gallant*, the hero is a wretch conſtantly employ'd, not only in cheating his creditors, but in cheating his miſtreſs, a lady of high rank and fortune. And how abſurd is the ſcene, where he convinces the father of his miſtreſs that the devil had got him with child! The character of Sir Martin Marall is below contempt. The ſcenes in the ſame play, of a bawd inſtructing one of her novices how to behave to her gallants, and of the novice practiſing her leſſons, are perhaps not lower than Cobb's Tankard or Otter's Horſe, but ſurely they are leſs innocent.

Portugal was riſing in power and ſplendor when Camoens wrote the Luſiad; and with reſpect to the muſic of verſe it has merit. The author however is far from ſhining in point of taſte. He makes a ſtrange jumble of Heathen and Chriſtian Deities. "Gama," obſerves Voltaire, "in a ſtorm addreſſes his prayers to "Chriſt, but it is Venus who comes to his relief." Voltaire's obſervation is but too well founded. In the firſt book, Jove ſummons a council of the gods, which is deſcribed at great length, for no earthly purpoſe but to ſhow that he favoured the Portugueſe. Bacchus, on the other hand, declares againſt them upon the following account, that he himſelf had gained immortal glory as conqueror of the Indies; which would be eclipſed if the Indies ſhould be conquered a ſecond time by the Portugueſe. A Mooriſh commander having received Gama with ſmiles, but with hatred in his heart, the poet brings down Bacchus from heaven to confirm the Moor in his wicked purpoſes; which would have been perpetrated, had not Venus interpoſed in Gama's behalf. In the ſecond canto, Bacchus feigns himſelf to be a Chriſtian, in order to deceive the Portugueſe; but Venus implores her father Jupiter to protect them. And yet, after all, I am loth to condemn an early writer for introducing Heathen Deities as actors in a real hiſtory, when in the age of Lewis XIV. celebrated for refinement of

taſte, we find French writers, Boileau in particular, guilty ſometimes of the ſame abſurdity (*a*).

Tho' taſte in France is more correct than in any other nation, it will bear ſtill ſome purification. The ſcene of a clyſter-pipe in Moliere is too low even for a farce; and yet to this day it is acted, with a few ſoftenings, before the moſt polite audience in Europe.

In Elements of Criticiſm (*b*) ſeveral cauſes are mentioned that may retard taſte in its progreſs toward maturity, and that ſtill more effectually may give it a retrograde motion when it is in maturity. There are many biaſſes both natural and acquired that tend to miſlead perſons even of the beſt taſte. Of the latter, inſtances are without number. I ſelect one or two to ſhow what influence even the ſlighteſt circumſtances have on taſte. The only tree beautiful at all ſeaſons is the holly: in winter, its deep and ſhining green intitles it to be the queen of the grove: in ſummer, this colour completes the harmonious mixture of ſhades ſo pleaſing in that ſeaſon! Mrs D—— is lively and ſociable. She in particular is eminent above moſt of her ſex for a correct taſte, diſplay'd not only within doors but in the garden and in the field. Having become miſtreſs of a great houſe by matrimony, the moſt honourable of all titles, a group of tall hollies, which had long been ſuffered to obſcure a capital room, ſoon attracted her eye. She took an averſion to a holly, and was not at eaſe till the group was extirpated. Such a bias is perfectly harmleſs. What follows is not altogether ſo excuſable. The Oxonians diſliked the great Newton becauſe he was educated at Cambridge; and they favoured every book writ againſt him. That bias, I hope, has not come down to the preſent time.

(*a*) Elements of Criticiſm, chap. 22.

(*b*) Chap. 25.

Refinement

Refinement of taſte in a nation is always accompanied with refinement of manners: people accuſtomed to behold order and elegance in public buildings and public gardens, acquire urbanity in private. But it is irkſome to trudge long in a beaten track, familiar to all the world; and therefore, leaving what is ſaid above, like a ſtatue curtail'd of legs and arms, I haſten to the hiſtory of the fine arts.

Uſeful arts paved the way to fine arts. Men upon whom the former had beſtow'd every convenience, turned their thoughts to the latter. Beauty was ſtudied in objects of ſight; and men of taſte attached themſelves to the fine arts, which multiply'd their enjoyments and improved their benevolence. Sculpture and painting made an early figure in Greece; which afforded plenty of beautiful originals to be copied in theſe imitative arts. Statuary, a more ſimple imitation than painting, was ſooner brought to perfection: the ſtatue of Jupiter by Phidias and of Juno by Polycletes, tho' the admiration of all the world, were executed long before the art of light and ſhade was known. Apollodorus, and Zeuxis his diſciple, who flouriſhed in the fifteenth Olympiad, were the firſt who figured in that art. Another cauſe concurred to advance ſtatuary before painting in Greece, viz. a great demand for ſtatues of their gods. Architecture, as a fine art, made a ſlower progreſs. Proportions, upon which its elegance chiefly depends, cannot be accurately aſcertained, but by an infinity of trials in great buildings: a model cannot be relied on; for a large and a ſmall building even of the ſame form, require different proportions. Gardening, however, made a ſtill ſlower progreſs than architecture: the palace of Alcinoous, in the ſeventh book of the Odyſſey, is grand and highly ornamented; but his garden is no better than what we term a kitchen-garden.

The ancient churches in this iſland cannot be our own invention, being unfit for a cold climate. The vaſt ſpace they occupy,

quantity

quantity of ſtone, and gloomineſs by excluding the ſun, afford a refreſhing coolneſs, and fit them for a hot climate only. It is highly probable that they have been copied from the moſques in the ſouth of Spain, erected there by the Saracens. Spain, when poſſeſſed by that people, was the centre of arts and ſciences, and led the faſhion in every thing beautiful and magnificent.

From the fine arts mentioned, we proceed to literature. It is agreed among all antiquaries, that the firſt writings were in verſe, and that writing in proſe was of a much later date. The firſt Greek who wrote in proſe, was Pherecides Syrus: the firſt Roman, was Appius Cæcus, who compoſed a declamation againſt Pyrrhus. The four books of the Chatah Bhade, which is the ſacred book of Hindoſtan, are compoſed in verſe ſtanzas; and the Arabian compoſitions in proſe followed long after thoſe in verſe. To account for that ſingular fact, many learned pens have been employ'd; but without ſucceſs. By ſome it has been urged, that as memory is the only record of events where writing is unknown, hiſtory originally was compoſed in verſe for the ſake of memory. This is not ſatisfactory. To undertake the painful taſk of compoſing in verſe merely for the ſake of memory, would require more foreſight than ever was exerted by a barbarian; not to mention that other means were uſed for preſerving the memory of remarkable events, a heap of ſtones, a pillar, or other object that catches the eye. The account given by Longinus is more ingenious. In a fragment of his treatiſe on verſe, the only part that remains, he obſerves, "that meaſure or verſe belongs to poetry, becauſe "poetry repreſents the various paſſions with their language; for "which reaſon the ancients, in their ordinary diſcourſe, delivered "their thoughts in verſe rather than in proſe." Longinus thought, that anciently men were more expoſed to accidents and dangers, than when they were protected by good government and by fortified cities. But he ſeems not to have adverted, that fear

and

and grief, inſpired by dangers and misfortunes, are better ſuited to humble proſe than to elevated verſe. I add, that however natural poetical diction may be when one is animated with any vivid paſſion, it is not ſuppoſable that the ancients never wrote nor ſpoke but when excited by paſſion. Their hiſtory, their laws, their covenants, were certainly not compoſed in that tone of mind.

An important article in the progreſs of the fine arts, which writers have not ſufficiently attended to, will, if I miſtake not, explain this myſtery. The article is the profeſſion of a bard, which ſprung up in early times before writing was known, and died away gradually as writing turned more and more common. The curioſity of man is great with reſpect to the tranſactions of his own ſpecies; and when ſuch tranſactions are deſcribed in verſe accompanied with muſic, the performance is enchanting. An ear, a voice, ſkill in inſtrumental muſic, and above all a poetical genius, are requiſite to excel in that complicated art. As ſuch talents are rare, the few that poſſeſſed them were highly eſteemed; and hence the profeſſion of a bard, which, beſide natural talents, required more culture and exerciſe than any other known art. Bards were capital perſons at every feſtival and at every ſolemnity. Their ſongs, which, by recording the atchievements of kings and heroes, animated every hearer, muſt have been the entertainment of every warlike nation. We have Heſiod's authority, that in his time bards were as common as potters or joiners, and as liable to envy. Demodocus is mentioned by Homer as a celebrated bard (*a*); and Phemius, another bard, is introduced by him deprecating the wrath of Ulyſſes, in the following words.

(*a*) Odyſſey b. 8.

" O

" O king! to mercy be thy ſoul inclin'd,
" And ſpare the poet's ever-gentle kind.
" A deed like this thy future fame would wrong,
" For dear to gods and men is ſacred ſong.
" Self-taught I ſing; by heav'n, and heav'n alone,
" The genuine ſeeds of poeſy are ſown;
" And (what the gods beſtow) the lofty lay,
" To gods alone, and godlike worth, we pay.
" Save then the poet, and thyſelf reward;
" 'Tis thine to merit, mine is to record."

Cicero reports, that at Roman feſtivals anciently, the virtues and exploits of their great men were ſung (*a*). The ſame cuſtom prevailed in Peru and Mexico, as we learn from Garcilaſſo and other authors. Strabo (*b*) gives a very particular account of the Gallic bards. The following quotation is from Ammianus Marcellinus (*c*). " Bardi quidem fortia virorum illuſtrium facta, he-
" roicis compoſita verſibus, cum dulcibus lyræ modulis, cantita-
" runt." We have for our authority Father Gobien, that even the inhabitants of the Marian iſlands have bards, who are greatly admired, becauſe in their ſongs are celebrated the feats of their anceſtors. There are traces of the ſame kind among the Apalachites in North America *. And we ſhall ſee afterward (*d*), that in

(*a*) Tuſculan Queſtions, lib. 4. N° 3. & 4.

(*b*) Lib. 4.

(*c*) Lib. 15. cap. 9.

(*d*) Sketch 7. Progreſs of Manners.

* The firſt ſeal that a young Greenlander catches is made a feaſt for the family and neighbours. The young champion, during the repaſt, deſcants upon his addreſs in catching the animal: the gueſts admire his dexterity, and extol the flavour of

in no other part of the world were bards more honoured than in Britain and Scandinavia.

Bards were the only hiſtorians before writing was introduced. Tacitus (*a*) ſays, that the ſongs of the German bards were their only annals. And Joannes Magnus Archbiſhop of Upſal acknowledges, that in compiling his hiſtory of the ancient Goths, he had no other records but the ſongs of the bards. As theſe ſongs made an illuſtrious figure at every feſtival, they were convey'd in every family by parents to their children; and in that manner were kept alive before writing was known.

The invention of writing made a conſiderable change in the bard-profeſſion. It is now an agreed point, that no poetry is fit to be accompanied with muſic, but what is ſimple: a complicated thought or deſcription requires the utmoſt attention, and leaves none for the muſic; or if it divide the attention, it makes but a faint impreſſion (*b*). The ſimple operas of Quinault bear away the palm from every thing of the kind compoſed by Boileau or Racine. But when a language, in its progreſs to maturity, is en-

of the meat. Their only muſic is a ſort of drum, which accompanies a ſong in praiſe of ſeal-catching, in praiſe of their anceſtors, or in welcoming the ſun's return to them. Here are the rudiments of the bard-profeſſion. The ſong is made for a chorus, as many of our ancient ſongs are. Take the following example.

" The welcome ſun returns again,
" Amna ajah, ajah, ah-hu!
" And brings us weather fine and fair.
" Amna ajah, ajah, ah-hu!

The bard ſings the firſt and third lines, accompanying it with his drum and with a ſort of dance. The other lines, termed the burden of the ſong, are ſung by the gueſts.

(*a*) De moribus Germanorum, cap. 2.

(*b*) See Elements of Criticiſm, vol. 2. Appendix.

riched with variety of phraſes fit to expreſs the moſt elevated thoughts, men of genius aſpired to the higher ſtrains of poetry, leaving muſic and ſong to the bards: which diſtinguiſhed the profeſſion of a poet from that of a bard. Homer, in a lax ſenſe, may be termed a bard; for in that character he ſtrolled from feaſt to feaſt. But he was not a bard in the original ſenſe: he indeed recited his poems to crowded audiences; but his poems are too complex for muſic, and he probably did not ſing them, nor accompany them with the lyre. The Trovadores of Provence were bards in the original ſenſe; and made a capital figure in days of ignorance, when few could read, and fewer write. In later times the ſongs of the bards were taken down in writing, which gave every one acceſs to them without a bard; and the profeſſion ſunk by degrees into oblivion. Among the highlanders of Scotland, reading and writing in their own tongue is not common even at preſent; and that circumſtance ſupported long the bard-profeſſion among them, after being forgot among neighbouring nations. Oſſian was the moſt celebrated bard in Caledonia, as Homer was in Greece *.

After the foregoing hiſtorical deduction, the reader will perceive without my aſſiſtance why the firſt writings were in verſe. The ſongs of the bards, being univerſal favourites, were certainly the firſt compoſitions that writing was employ'd upon: they would be carefully collected by the moſt ſkilful writers, in order to preſerve

* The multitude are ſtruck with what is new and ſplendid, but ſeldom continue long in a wrong taſte. Voltaire holds it to be a ſtrong teſtimony for the Gieruſaleme Liberata, that even the gondoliers in Venice have it moſtly by heart; and that one no ſooner pronounces a ſtanza than another carries it on. The works of Oſſian have the ſame teſtimony for them: there are not many highlanders, even of the loweſt rank, but can repeat long paſſages out of them.

them

them in perpetual remembrance. The following part of the progreſs is equally obvious. People acquainted with no written compoſitions but what were in verſe, compoſed in verſe their laws, their religious ceremonies, and every memorable tranſaction that was intended to be preſerved in memory by writing. But when ſubjects of writing multiplied and became more and more involved, when people began to reaſon, to teach, and to harangue, they were obliged to deſcend to humble proſe: for to confine a writer or ſpeaker to verſe in handling ſubjects of that nature, would be a burden unſupportable.

The proſe compoſitions of early hiſtorians are all of them dramatic. A writer deſtitute of art is naturally prompted to relate facts as he ſaw them performed: he introduces his perſonages as ſpeaking and conferring; and he himſelf relates what was acted and not ſpoke. The hiſtorical books of the Old Teſtament are compoſed in that mode; and ſo addicted to the dramatic are the authors of thoſe books, that they frequently introduce God himſelf into the dialogue. At the ſame time, the ſimplicity of that mode is happily ſuited to the poverty of every language in its early periods. The dramatic mode has a delicious effect in expreſſing ſentiments, and every thing that is ſimple and tender (*a*). Take the following inſtance of a low incident becoming by that means not a little intereſting. Naomi having loſt her huſband and her two ſons in foreign parts, and purpoſing to return to the land of her forefathers, ſaid to her two daughters in law, "Go, return "each to her mother's houſe: the LORD deal kindly with you, as "ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The LORD grant "you that you may find reſt, each of you in the houſe of her huſ-"band. Then ſhe kiſſed them: and they lift up their voice and

(*a*) See Elements of Criticiſm, chap. 22.

" wept. And they ſaid unto her, Surely we will return with thee
" unto thy people. And Naomi ſaid, Turn again, my daugh-
" ters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more ſons in
" my womb, that they may be your huſbands? Turn again,
" my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have an huſ-
" band: if I ſhould ſay, I have hope, if I ſhould have a huſband
" alſo to night, and ſhould alſo bear ſons; would ye tarry for
" them till they were grown? would ye ſtay for them from ha-
" ving huſbands? nay, my daughters: for it grieveth me much
" for your ſakes, that the hand of the LORD is gone out againſt
" me. And they lift up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah
" kiſſed her mother in law, but Ruth clave unto her. And ſhe
" ſaid, Behold, thy ſiſter in law is gone back unto her people,
" and unto her gods: return thou after thy ſiſter in law. And
" Ruth ſaid, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from fol-
" lowing after thee: for whither thou goeſt, I will go; and
" where thou lodgeſt I will lodge: thy people ſhall be my people,
" and thy God my God: where thou dieſt, will I die, and there
" will I be buried: the LORD do ſo to me, and more alſo, if
" ought but death part thee and me. When ſhe ſaw that ſhe was
" ſtedfaſtly minded to go with her, then ſhe left ſpeaking unto
" her.

" So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it
" came to paſs when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the
" city was moved about them, and they ſaid, Is this Naomi?
" And ſhe ſaid unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara:
" for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out
" full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why
" then call ye me Naomi, ſeeing the LORD hath teſtified againſt
" me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? So Naomi returned,
" and Ruth the Moabiteſs her daughter in law with her, which

" returned

" returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-
" lehem in the beginning of barley-harveſt.

" And Naomi had a kinſman of her huſband's, a mighty man
" of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.
" And Ruth the Moabiteſs ſaid unto Naomi, Let me now go to
" the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whoſe ſight I
" ſhall find grace. And ſhe ſaid unto her, Go, my daughter.
" And ſhe went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the
" reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belong-
" ing unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

" And behold, Boaz came from Beth-lehem, and ſaid unto the
" reapers, The LORD be with you: and they anſwered him, The
" LORD bleſs thee. Then ſaid Boaz unto his ſervant that was
" ſet over the reapers, Whoſe damſel is this? And the ſervant
" that was ſet over the reapers anſwered and ſaid, It is the Moa-
" bitiſh damſel that came back with Naomi, out of the country
" of Moab: and ſhe ſaid, I pray you, let me glean, and gather
" after the reapers, amongſt the ſheaves: ſo ſhe came, and hath
" continued even from the morning until now, that ſhe tarried
" a little in the houſe. Then ſaid Boaz unto Ruth, Heareſt thou
" not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither
" go from hence, but abide here faſt by my maidens. Let thine
" eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them:
" have I not charged the young men, that they ſhall not touch
" thee? and when thou art athirſt, go unto the veſſels, and drink
" of that which the young men have drawn. Then ſhe fell on her
" face, and bowed herſelf to the ground, and ſaid unto him,
" Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou ſhouldſt take
" knowledge of me, ſeeing I am a ſtranger? And Boaz anſwer-
" ed and ſaid unto her, It hath fully been ſhewed me all that
" thou haſt done unto thy mother in law ſince the death of thine
" huſband: and how thou haſt left thy father and thy mother,

" and

" and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which
" thou knewest not heretofore. The LORD recompense thy work,
" and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, un-
" der whose wings thou art come to trust. Then she said, Let me
" find favour in thy sight, my lord, for that thou hast comforted
" me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine hand-
" maid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.
" And Boaz said unto her, At meal-time come thou hither, and
" eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she
" sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and
" she did eat, and was sufficed, and left. And when she was
" risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying,
" Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not.
" And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and
" leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not. So
" she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had
" gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley.

" And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother
" in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and
" gave to her that she had reserved, after she was sufficed. And
" her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to
" day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take
" knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother in law with
" whom she had wrought, and said, The mans name with whom
" I wrought to day, is Boaz. And Naomi said unto her daughter
" in law, Blessed be he of the LORD, who hath not left off his
" kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto
" her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen.
" And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou
" shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my
" harvest. And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, It is
" good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that

" they

" they meet thee not in any other field. So ſhe kept faſt by the
" maidens of Boaz to glean, unto the end of barley-harveſt, and
" of wheat-harveſt; and dwelt with her mother in law.

" Then Naomi her mother in law ſaid unto her, My daughter,
" ſhall I not ſeek reſt for thee, that it may be well with thee?
" And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whoſe maidens thou
" waſt? Behold he winnoweth barley to night in the threſhing-
" floor. Waſh thy ſelf therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy
" raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: but make
" not thyſelf known unto the man, until he ſhall have done eat-
" ing and drinking. And it ſhall be when he lieth down, that
" thou ſhalt mark the place where he ſhall lie, and thou ſhalt go
" in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down, and he will tell
" thee what thou ſhalt do. And ſhe ſaid unto her, All that thou
" ſayſt unto me, I will do.

" And ſhe went down unto the floor, and did according to all
" that her mother in law bade her. And when Boaz had eaten
" and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at
" the end of the heap of corn: and ſhe came ſoftly, and unco-
" vered his feet, and laid her down.

" And it came to paſs at midnight, that the man was afraid,
" and turned himſelf: and behold, a woman lay at his feet. And
" he ſaid, Who art thou? And ſhe anſwered, I am Ruth thine
" handmaid: ſpread therefore thy ſkirt over thine handmaid, for
" thou art a near kinſman. And he ſaid, Bleſſed be thou of the
" LORD, my daughter: for thou haſt ſhewed more kindneſs in
" the latter end, than at the beginning, inaſmuch as thou fol-
" lowedſt not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my
" daughter, fear not, I will do to thee all that thou requireſt: for
" all the city of my people doth know, that thou art a virtuous
" woman. And now it is true, that I am thy near kinſman: how-
" beit there is a kinſman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it
" ſhall

" ſhall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the " part of a kinſman, well, let him do the kinſmans part; but if " he will not do the part of a kinſman to thee, then will I do the " part of a kinſman to thee, as the LORD liveth: lie down until " the morning.

" And ſhe lay at his feet until the morning: and ſhe roſe up " before one could know another. And he ſaid, Let it not be " known that a woman came into the floor. Alſo he ſaid, Bring " the vail that thou haſt upon thee, and hold it. And when ſhe " held it, he meaſured ſix meaſures of barley, and laid it on her: " and ſhe went into the city. And when ſhe came to her mo- " ther in law, ſhe ſaid, Who art thou, my daughter? And ſhe " told her all that the man had done to her. And ſhe ſaid, Theſe " ſix meaſures of barley gave he me; for he ſaid to me, Go not " empty unto thy mother in law. Then ſaid ſhe, Sit ſtill, my " daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the " man will not be in reſt, until he have finiſhed the thing this " day.

" Then went Boaz up to the gate, and ſat him down there: " and behold, the kinſman of whom Boaz ſpake, came by; unto " whom he ſaid, Ho, ſuch a one, turn aſide, ſit down here. " And he turned aſide and ſat down. And he took ten men of " the elders of the city, and ſaid, Sit ye down here. And they " ſat down. And he ſaid unto the kinſman, Naomi that is come " again out of the country of Moab, ſelleth a parcel of land, " which was our brother Elimelech's. And I thought to adver- " tiſe thee, ſaying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the " elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it; but if " thou will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for " there is none to redeem it beſides thee, and I am after thee. And " he ſaid, I will redeem it. Then ſaid Boaz, What day thou " buyeſt the field of the hand of Naomi, thou muſt buy it alſo of

" Ruth

" Ruth the Moabiteſs, the wife of the dead, to raiſe up the name " of the dead upon his inheritance.

" And the kinſman ſaid, I cannot redeem it for my ſelf, leſt I mar " mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thy ſelf, for I " cannot redeem it. Now this was the manner in former time in " Iſrael, concerning redeeming, and concerning changing, for to " confirm all things: a man plucked off his ſhoe, and gave it to " his neighbour: and this was a teſtimony in Iſrael. Therefore " the kinſman ſaid unto Boaz, Buy it for thee: ſo he drew off his " ſhoe.

" And Boaz ſaid unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are " witneſſes this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, " and all that was Chilion's, and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. " Moreover, Ruth the Moabiteſs, the wife of Mahlon, have I " purchaſed to be my wife, to raiſe up the name of the dead upon " his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from " among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are wit- " neſſes this day. And all the people that were in the gate, and " the elders ſaid, We are witneſſes: The LORD make the woman " that is come into thine houſe, like Rachel, and like Leah, " which two did build the houſe of Iſrael: and do thou worthily " in Ephratah, and be famous in Beth-lehem. And let thy houſe " be like the houſe of Pharez (whom Tamar bare unto Judah) of " the ſeed which the LORD ſhall give thee of this young wo- " man.

" So Boaz took Ruth, and ſhe was his wife: and when he went " in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and ſhe bare a " ſon. And the women ſaid unto Naomi, Bleſſed be the LORD, " which hath not left thee this day without a kinſman, that his " name may be famous in Iſrael. And he ſhall be unto thee a re- " ſtorer of thy life, and a nouriſher of thine old age: for thy " daughter in law which loveth thee, which is better to thee than

" ſeven ſons, hath born him. And Naomi took the child, and " laid it in her boſom, and became nurſe unto it (*a*)."

The dramatic mode is far from pleaſing ſo much in relating bare hiſtorical facts. Take the following example.

" Wherefore Nathan ſpake unto Bath-ſheba the mother of So- " lomon, ſaying, Haſt thou not heard that Adonijah the ſon of " Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth it not? Now " therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counſel, that thou " mayſt ſave thine own life, and the life of thy ſon Solomon. " Go, and get thee in unto king David, and ſay unto him, Didſt " not thou, my lord O king, ſwear unto thine handmaid, ſay- " ing, Aſſuredly Solomon thy ſon ſhall reign after me, and he " ſhall ſit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign? Be- " hold, while thou yet talkeſt there with the king, I will alſo come " in after thee, and confirm thy words.

" And Bath-ſheba went in unto the king, into the chamber: " and the king was very old; and Abiſhag the Shunammite mi- " niſtered unto the king. And Bath-ſheba bowed, and did obei- " ſance unto the king: and the king ſaid, What wouldſt thou? " And ſhe ſaid unto him, My lord, thou ſwareſt by the LORD " thy God unto thine handmaid, ſaying, Aſſuredly Solomon thy " ſon ſhall reign after me, and he ſhall ſit upon my throne: and " now behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now my lord the king, " thou knoweſt it not. And he hath ſlain oxen, and fat cattle, " and ſheep in abundance, and hath called all the ſons of the " king, and Abiathar the prieſt, and Joab the captain of the hoſt: " but Solomon thy ſervant hath he not called. And thou, my " lord O king, the eyes of all Iſrael are upon thee, that thou " ſhouldſt tell them who ſhall ſit on the throne of my lord the

(*a*) Ruth, i. 8. — iv. 16.

" king

" king after him. Otherwiſe it ſhall come to paſs, when my lord
" the king ſhall ſleep with his fathers, that I and my ſon Solo-
" mon ſhall be counted offenders.

" And lo, while ſhe yet talked with the king, Nathan the pro-
" phet alſo came in. And they told the king, ſaying, Behold,
" Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the
" king, he bowed himſelf before the king with his face to the
" ground. And Nathan ſaid, My lord O king, haſt thou ſaid,
" Adonijah ſhall reign after me, and he ſhall ſit upon my throne?
" For he is gone down this day, and hath ſlain oxen, and fat
" cattle, and ſheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's
" ſons, and the captains of the hoſt, and Abiathar the prieſt; and
" behold, they eat and drink before him, and ſay, God ſave
" king Adonijah. But me, even me thy ſervant, and Zadok the
" prieſt, and Benaiah the ſon of Jehoiada, and thy ſervant Solo-
" mon hath he not called. Is this thing done by my lord the king,
" and thou haſt not ſhewed it unto thy ſervant, who ſhould ſit on
" the throne of my lord the king after him?

" Then king David anſwered and ſaid, Call me Bath-ſheba:
" and ſhe came into the king's preſence, and ſtood before the
" king. And the king ſware, and ſaid, As the LORD liveth, that
" hath redeemed my ſoul out of all diſtreſs, even as I ſware un-
" to thee by the LORD God of Iſrael, ſaying, Aſſuredly Solomon
" thy ſon ſhall reign after me, and he ſhall ſit upon my throne
" in my ſtead; even ſo will I certainly do this day. Then Bath-
" ſheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to
" the king, and ſaid, Let my lord king David live for ever.

" And king David ſaid, Call me Zadok the prieſt, and Nathan
" the prophet, and Benaiah the ſon of Jehoiada. And they came
" before the king. The king alſo ſaid unto them, Take with you
" the ſervants of your lord, and cauſe Solomon my ſon to ride
" upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon. And

" let Zadok the prieſt, and Nathan the prophet, anoint him there " king over Iſrael: and blow ye with the trumpet, and ſay, God " ſave king Solomon. Then ye ſhall come up after him, that he " may come and ſit upon my throne; for he ſhall be king in my " ſtead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Iſrael, and o- " ver Judah. And Benaiah the ſon of Jehoiada anſwered the " king, and ſaid, Amen: the LORD God of my lord the king ſay " ſo too. As the LORD hath been with my lord the king, even ſo " be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater then the throne " of my lord king David. So Zadok the prieſt, and Nathan the " prophet, and Benaiah the ſon of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites " and the Pelethites, went down, and cauſed Solomon to ride up- " on king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. And Zadok " the prieſt took an horn of oyl out of the tabernacle, and anoint- " ed Solomon: and they blew the trumpet, and all the people " ſaid, God ſave king Solomon. And all the people came up af- " ter him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoyced with " great joy, ſo that the earth rent with the ſound of them.

" And Adonijah, and all the gueſts that were with him, heard " it, as they had made an end of eating: and when Joab heard " the ſound of the trumpet, he ſaid, Wherefore is this noiſe of " the city, being in an uprore? And while he yet ſpake, behold, " Jonathan the ſon of Abiathar the prieſt came, and Adonijah " ſaid unto him, Come in, for thou art a valiant man, and " bringeſt good tidings. And Jonathan anſwered and ſaid to A- " donijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king. " And the king has ſent with him Zadok the prieſt, and Nathan " the prophet, and Benaiah the ſon of Jehoiada, and the Chere- " thites, and the Pelethites, and they have cauſed him to ride up- " on the king's mule. And Zadok the prieſt, and Nathan the " prophet have anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come " up from thence rejoycing, ſo that the city rang again: this is

" the

" the noiſe that ye have heard. And alſo Solomon ſitteth on the " throne of the kingdom. And moreover the king's ſervants " came to bleſs our lord king David, ſaying, God make the name " of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne great- " er than thy throne: and the king bowed himſelf upon the bed. " And alſo thus ſaid the king, Bleſſed be the LORD God of Iſrael, " which hath given one to ſit on my throne this day, mine eyes " even ſeeing it. And all the gueſts that were with Adonijah " were afraid, and roſe up, and went every man his way (*a*)".

In the example here given are found frequent repetitions; not however by the ſame perſon, but by different perſons who have occaſion in the courſe of the ſtory to ſay the ſame things; which is natural in the dramatic mode, where things are repreſented preciſely as they were tranſacted. In that view, Homer's repetitions are a beauty, not a blemiſh; for they are confined to the dramatic part, and never occur in the narrative.

But the dramatic mode of compoſition, however pleaſing, is tedious and intolerable in a long hiſtory. In the progreſs of ſociety new appetites and new paſſions ariſe; men come to be involved with each other in various connections; incidents and events multiply, and hiſtory becomes intricate by an endleſs variety of circumſtances. Dialogue accordingly is more ſparingly uſed, and in hiſtory plain narration is mixed with it. Narration is as it were the ground-work, and dialogue is raiſed upon it, like flowers in embroidery. Homer is admitted by all to be the great maſter in that mode of compoſition. Nothing can be more perfect in that reſpect than the Iliad. The Odyſſey is far inferior; and to guard myſelf againſt the cenſure of the blind admirers of Homer, a tribe extremely formidable, I call to my

(*a*) 1 Kings, i. 11.—49.

aid

aid a celebrated critic, whoſe ſuperior taſte and judgement never has been diſputed. " The Odyſſey," ſays Longinus, " ſhows " how natural it is for a writer of a great genius, in his decli- " ning age, to ſink down to fabulous narration; for that Homer " compoſed the Odyſſey after the Iliad is evident from many " circumſtances. As the Iliad was compoſed while his genius " was in its greateſt vigour, the ſtructure of that work is drama- " tic and full of action; the Odyſſey, on the contrary, is moſtly em- " ploy'd in narration, proceeding from the coldneſs of old age. " In that later compoſition, Homer may be compared to the ſet- " ting ſun, which has ſtill the ſame greatneſs, but not the ſame " ardor or force. We ſee not in the Odyſſey that ſublime of the " Iliad which conſtantly proceeds in the ſame animated tone, " that ſtrong tide of motions and paſſions flowing ſucceſſively like " waves in a ſtorm. But Homer, like the ocean, is great, even " when he ebbs, and loſes himſelf in narration and incredible " fictions; witneſs his deſcription of tempeſts, the adventures of " Ulyſſes with Polyphemus the Cyclops, and many others *."

The narrative mode came in time ſo to prevail, that in a long chain of hiſtory, the writer commonly leaves off dialogue altogether. Early writers of that kind appear to have very little judgement in diſtinguiſhing capital facts from minute circumſtances, ſuch as can be ſupply'd by the reader without being mentioned. The hiſtory of the Trojan war by Dares Phrygius is a curious inſtance of that cold and creeping manner of compoſition. Take the following paſſage. Hercules having made a deſcent upon Troy, ſlew King

* The *Pilgrim's Progreſs* and *Robinſon Cruſoe*, great favourites of the vulgar, are compoſed in a ſtyle enlivened like that of Homer by a proper mixture of the dramatic and narrative; and upon that account chiefly have been tranſlated into ſeveral European languages.

Laomedon,

Laomedon, and made a preſent of Heſione, the King's daughter, to Telamon his companion. Priamus, who ſucceeded to the kingdom of Troy upon the death of his father Laomedon, ſent Antenor to demand his ſiſter Heſione. Our author proceeds in the following manner. " Antenor, as commanded by Priamus, took " ſhipping, and ſailed to Magneſia, where Peleus reſided. Peleus " entertained him hoſpitably three days, and the fourth day " demanded whence he came. Antenor ſaid, that he was " ordered by Priamus to demand from the Greeks, that they " ſhould reſtore Heſione. When Peleus heard this he was angry, " becauſe it concerned his family, Telamon being his brother; " and ordered the ambaſſador to depart. Antenor, without de- " lay, retired to his ſhip, and ſailed to Salamis, where Telamon " reſided, and demanded of him, that he ſhould reſtore Heſione " to her brother Priamus; as it was unjuſt to detain ſo long in " ſervitude a young woman of royal birth. Telamon anſwered, " that he had done nothing to Priamus; and that he would not " reſtore what he had received as a reward for his valour; and " ordered Antenor to leave the iſland. Antenor went to Achaia; " and ſailing from thence to Caſtor and Pollux, demanded of " them to ſatisfy Priamus, by reſtoring to him his ſiſter Heſione. " Caſtor and Pollux denied that they had done any injury to Pri- " amus, but that Laomedon had firſt injured them; ordering " Antenor to depart. From thence he ſailed to Neſtor in Pylus, " telling him the cauſe of his coming; which when Neſtor heard, " he begun to exclaim, how Antenor durſt ſet his foot in Greece, " ſeeing the Greeks were firſt injured by the Phrygians. When " Antenor found that he had obtained nothing, and that Pri- " amus was contumelioufly treated, he went on ſhipboard, and " returned home." The Roman hiſtories before the time of Cicero are chronicles merely. Cato, Fabius, Pictor, and Piſo, confined

fined themſelves to naked facts (*a*). In the *Auguſtæ Hiſtoriæ ſcriptores* we find nothing but a jejune narrative of facts, commonly of very little moment, concerning a degenerate people, without a ſingle incident that can rouſe the imagination, or exerciſe the judgement. The monkiſh hiſtories are all of them compoſed in the ſame manner *.

The dry narrative manner being very little intereſting or agreeable, a taſte for embelliſhment prompted ſome writers to be copious and verboſe. Saxo Grammaticus, who in the 12th century compoſed in Latin a hiſtory of Denmark, ſurpriſingly pure at that early period, is extremely verboſe and full of tautologies. Such a ſtyle, at any rate unpleaſant, is intolerable in a modern tongue, before it is enriched with a ſtock of phraſes for expreſſing aptly the great variety of incidents that enter into hiſtory. Take the following example out of an endleſs number. Henry VII. of England, having the young Queen of Naples in view for a wife, deputed three men in character of ambaſſadors, to viſit her, *and to anſwer certain queſtions contained in curious and exquiſite inſtructions for taking a ſurvey of her perſon, complexion, &c.* as expreſſed by Bacon in his life of that prince. One of the inſtructions was, to procure a picture of the Queen; which one would think could not re-

* Euripides, in his Phœnicians, introduces Oedipus, under ſentence of baniſhment and blind, calling for his ſtaff, his daughter Antigone putting it in his hand, and directing every ſtep, to keep him from ſtumbling. Such minute circumſtances, like what are frequent in Richardſon's novels, tend indeed to make the reader conceive himſelf to be a ſpectator (*b*): but whether that advantage be not more than overbalanced by the languor of a creeping narrative, may be juſtly doubted.

(*a*) Cicero *De Oratore, lib.* 2. No 5.

(*b*) See Elements of Criticiſm, chap. 2. part 1. ſect. 7.

quire

quire many words; yet behold the inſtruction itſelf. "The "King's ſaid ſervants ſhall alſo, at their comyng to the parties of "Spayne, diligently enquere for ſome conynge paynter having "good experience in making and paynting of viſages and por-"tretures, and ſuche oon they ſhall take with them to the place "where the ſaid Quunis make their abode, to the intent that the "ſaid paynter maye draw a picture of the viſage and ſemblance "of the ſaid young Quine, as like unto her as it can or may be "conveniently doon, which picture and image they ſhall ſubſtan-"tially note, and marke in every pounte and circumſtance, ſoo that "it agree in ſimilitude and likeneſſe as near as it may poſſible to "the veray viſage, countenance, and ſemblance of the ſaid Quine; "and in caſe they may perceyve that the paynter, at the furſt "or ſecond making thereof, hath not made the ſame perfaite to "her ſimilytude and likeneſſe, or that he hath omitted any fe-"ture or circumſtance, either in colours, or other proporcions "of the ſaid viſage, then they ſhall cauſe the ſame paynter, or "ſome other the moſt conyng paynter that they can gete, ſoo "oftentimes to renewe and reforme the ſame picture, till it be "made perfaite, and agreeable in every behalfe, with the very "image and viſage of the ſaid Quine *." After this ſpecimen ſo much to his Lordſhip's taſte, one will not be ſurpriſed at the flat-

* The following paſſage, copied from an Edinburgh news-paper, may almoſt rival this eloquent piece. After obſerving that the froſt was intenſe, which, ſays the writer, renders travelling very dangerous either in town or country, he proceeds thus. "We would therefore recommend it to ſhopkeepers, and thoſe whoſe houſes "are cloſe upon the ſtreets or lanes, to ſcatter aſhes oppoſite to their doors, as it "may be a means of preventing paſſengers from falling, which they are in great "danger of doing at preſent, from the ſlippineſs of the ſtreets, where that practice "is not followed."

neſs of the hiſtorical ſtyle during that period. By that flatneſs of ſtyle his Lordſhip's hiſtory of Henry VII. ſinks below the gravity and dignity of hiſtory; particularly in his ſimiles, metaphors, and alluſions, not leſs diſtant than flat. Of Perkin Warbeck and his followers he ſays, "that they were now like ſand without "lime, ill bound together." Again, "But Perkin, adviſed to "keep his fire, which hitherto burned as it were upon green "wood, alive with continual blowing, ſailed again into Ireland." Again, "As in the tides of people once up, there want not common-"ly ſtirring winds to make them more rough, ſo this people did "light upon two ringleaders or captains." Again, ſpeaking of the Corniſh inſurgents, and of the cauſes that inflamed them, "But now theſe bubbles by much ſtirring began to meet, as they "uſed to do on the top of water." Again, ſpeaking of Perkin, "And as it fareth with ſmoak, that never loſeth itſelf till it be at "the higheſt, he did now before his end raiſe his ſtile, intytling "himſelf no more Richard Duke of York, but Richard the "Fourth, King of England." He deſcends ſometimes ſo low as to play upon words; witneſs the following ſpeech made for Perkin to the King of Scotland. "High and mighty King! your Grace "may be pleaſed benignly to bow your ears to hear the tragedy "of a young man that by right ought to hold in his hand the "ball of a kingdom, but by fortune is made himſelf a ball, toſſed "from miſery to miſery, and from place to place." The follow-ing is a ſtrangely forc'd alluſion. Talking of Margaret Ducheſs of Burgundy, who had patronized Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck, he ſays, "It is the ſtrangeſt thing in the world, that "the Lady Margaret ſhould now, when other women give over "child-bearing, bring furth two ſuch monſters, being, at birth, "not of nine or ten months, but of many years. And whereas "other natural mothers bring furth children weak, and not able "to help themſelves, ſhe bringeth furth tall ſtriplings, able, ſoon

"after

" after their coming into the world, to bid battle to mighty " kings." I ſhould not have given ſo many inſtances of puerilities in compoſition, were they not the performance of a great philoſopher. Low indeed muſt have been the taſte of that age when it infected its greateſt genius.

The perfection of hiſtorical compoſition, which writers at laſt attain to after wandering through various imperfect modes, is a relation of intereſting facts connected with their motives and conſequences. A hiſtory of that kind is truly a chain of cauſes and effects. The hiſtory of Thucydides, and ſtill more that of Tacitus, are ſhining inſtances of that mode.

A language in its original poverty, being deficient in ſtrength and variety, has nothing at command for enforcing a thought but to redouble the expreſſion. Inſtances are without number in the Old Teſtament. " And they ſay, How doth God know, and is " there knowledge in the Moſt High?" Again, " Thus ſhalt thou " ſay to the houſe of Jacob, and tell to the children of Iſrael." Again, " I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adverſary " unto thine adverſaries." Again, " To know wiſdom and in- " ſtruction, to perceive the words of underſtanding, to receive the " inſtruction of wiſdom." " She layeth her hands to the ſpindle, " and her hands hold the diſtaff." " Put away from thee a fro- " ward mouth, and perverſe lips put far from thee. Let thine " eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look ſtraight before " thee."

Eloquence was of a later date than the art of literary compoſition; for till the latter was improved, there were no models for ſtudying the former. Cicero's oration for Roſcius is compoſed in a ſtyle diffuſe and highly ornamented; which, ſays Plutarch, was univerſally approved, becauſe at that time the ſtyle of Aſia, introduced into Rome with its luxury, was in high vogue. But Cicero, in a journey to Greece, where he leiſurely ſtudied Greek au-

thors, was taught to prune off ſuperfluities, and to purify his ſtyle, which he did to a high degree of refinement. He introduced into his native tongue a ſweetneſs, a grace, a majeſty, that ſurpriſed the world, and even the Romans themſelves. Cicero obſerves with great regret, that if ambition for power had not drawn Julius Cæſar from the bar to command legions, he would have become the moſt complete orator in the world. So partial are men to the profeſſion in which they excel. Eloquence triumphs in a popular aſſembly, makes ſome figure in a court of law compoſed of many judges; very little where there is but a ſingle judge, and none at all in a deſpotic government. Eloquence flouriſhed in the republics of Athens and of Rome; and makes ſome figure at preſent in a Britiſh houſe of Commons.

The Greek ſtage has been juſtly admired among all polite nations. The tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides in particular are by all critics held to be perfect in their kind, excellent models for imitation, but far above rivalſhip. If the Greek ſtage was ſo early brought to maturity, it is a phenomenon not a little ſingular in the progreſs of arts. The Greek tragedy made a rapid progreſs from Theſpes to Sophocles and Euripides, whoſe compoſitions are indeed the moſt complete that ever were exhibited in Greece: but whether they be really ſuch maſterpieces as is generally thought, will admit ſome doubt. The ſubject is curious: and I hope the candid reader will give attention to what follows.

No human voice could fill the Greek theatre, which was ſo ſpacious as to contain ſeveral thouſands without crowding. A braſs pipe was invented to ſtrengthen the voice; but that invention ſuppreſſed the melody of pronunciation, by confining the voice to a harſh monotony. The pipe was not the only unpleaſant circumſtance: every actor wore a maſk; for what end or purpoſe, is not explained. It may be true, that the expreſſions of the countenance could not be diſtinctly ſeen by thoſe who occupied the back

back rows; and a maſk poſſibly was thought neceſſary in order to put all the citizens upon a level. But without prying into the cauſe, let us only figure an actor with a maſk and a pipe. He may repreſent tolerably a ſimple incident or plain thought, ſuch as are the materials of an Italian opera; but the voice, countenance, and geſtures, are indiſpenſable in expreſſing refined ſentiments, and the more delicate tones of paſſion.

Where then lies the charm in ancient tragedies that captivated all ranks of men? Greek tragedies are more active than ſentimental: they contain many ſenſible reflections on morals, manners, and upon life in general; but no ſentiments except what are plain and obvious. The ſubjects are of the ſimpleſt kind, ſuch as give riſe to the paſſions of hope, fear, love, hatred, envy, and revenge, in their moſt ordinary exertions: no intricate nor delicate ſituation to occaſion any ſingular emotion; no gradual ſwelling and ſubſiding of paſſion; and ſeldom any conflict between different paſſions. I would not however be underſtood as meaning to depreciate Greek tragedies. They are indeed wonderful productions of genius, conſidering that the Greeks at that period were but beginning to emerge from roughneſs and barbarity into a taſte for literature. The compoſitions of Eſchylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, muſt have been highly reliſhed among a people who had no idea of any thing more perfect. We judge by compariſon, and every work is held to be perfect that has no rival. It ought at the ſame time to be kept in view, that it was not the dialogue which chiefly enchanted the Athenians, nor variety in the paſſions repreſented, nor perfection in the actors, but machinery and pompous decoration, joined with exquiſite muſic. That theſe particulars were carried to the greateſt height, we may with certainty conclude from the extravagant ſums beſtow'd on them: the exhibiting a ſingle tragedy was more expenſive to the Athenians than their fleet or their army in any ſingle campaign.

One

One would imagine, however, that theſe compoſitions were too ſimple to enchant for ever; as variety in action, ſentiment, and paſſion is requiſite, without which the ſtage will not continue long a favourite entertainment: and yet we find not a ſingle improvement attempted after the days of Sophocles and Euripides. This may appear a matter of wonder at firſt view. But the wonder vaniſhes upon conſidering, that the manner of performance prevented abſolutely any improvement. A fluctuation of paſſion and refined ſentiments would have made no figure on the Grecian ſtage. Imagine the diſcording ſcene between Brutus and Caſſius in Julius Cæſar to be there exhibited, or the handkerchief in the Moor of Venice: how ſlight would be their effect, when pronounced in a maſk, and through a pipe? The workings of nature upon the countenance, and the flections of voice expreſſive of various feelings, ſo deeply affecting in modern repreſentation, would have been entirely loſt. If a great genius had ariſen with talents for compoſing a pathetic tragedy in perfection, he would have made no figure in Greece. An edifice muſt have been erected of a moderate ſize: new actors muſt have been trained to act with a bare face, and to pronounce in their own voice. And after all there remained a greater miracle ſtill to be performed, viz. a total reformation of taſte in the people of Athens. In one word, the ſimplicity of the Greek tragedy was ſuited to the manner of acting; and that manner excluded all improvements.

From theſe premiſſes an inference may with certainty be drawn, that delicacy of taſte and feeling were but faintly known among the Greeks, even when they made the greateſt figure. Muſic indeed may be ſucceſsfully employ'd in a ſentimental tragedy; but pomp and ſplendor of performance avail nothing. A ſpectator deeply affected is regardleſs of decoration. I appeal to the reproving ſcene between Hamlet and the Queen his mother: does any man of taſte beſtow the ſlighteſt attention on the beauty of the ſcenery? It would

would however be raſh to involve in the ſame cenſure every Athenian. Do not pantomime-ſhow, rope-dancing, and other ſuch faſhionable ſpectacles, draw multitudes from the deepeſt tragedies? And yet among us there are perſons of taſte not a few, who deſpiſe ſuch ſpectacles as fit only for the mob, perſons who never bow'd the knee to Baal. And if there were ſuch perſons in Athens, of which we have no reaſon to doubt, it proves the ſuperiority of their taſte: they had no example of more refined compoſitions than were exhibited on their ſtage; we have many.

With reſpect to comedy, it does not appear that the Greek comedy ſurpaſſed the tragedy in its progreſs toward perfection. Horace mentions three ſtages of Greek comedy. The firſt was well ſuited to the rough and coarſe manners of the Greeks, when Eupolis, Cratinus, and Ariſtophanes wrote. Theſe authors were not aſhamed to repreſent on the ſtage real perſons, not even diſguiſing their names; of which we have a ſtriking inſtance in a comedy of Ariſtophanes called *The Clouds*, where Socrates is introduced, and moſt contemptuouſly treated. This ſort of comedy, ſparing neither gods nor men, was reſtrained by the magiſtrates of Athens, ſo far as to prohibit perſons to be named on the ſtage. This led writers to do what is done at preſent: the characters and manners of known perſons were painted ſo much to the life, that there could be no miſtake; and the ſatire was indeed heightened by this regulation; as it was an additional pleaſure to find out the names that were meant in the repreſentation. This was termed the *middle comedy*. But as there ſtill remained too great ſcope for obloquy and licentiouſneſs, a law was made prohibiting real events or incidents to be introduced upon the ſtage. This law happily baniſhed ſatire againſt individuals, and confined it to manners and cuſtoms in general. Obedient to this law are the comedies of Menander, Philemon, and Diphilus, who flouriſhed about 300 years before the Chriſtian era. And this is termed the *third ſtage*

of

of Greek comedy. The comedies of Ariſtophanes, which ſtill remain, err not leſs againſt taſte than againſt decency. But we have good ground to believe, that the Greek comedy was conſiderably refined by Menander and his cotemporaries; and we muſt rely upon collateral evidence, becauſe we have very few remains of their works. Their works however were far from perfection, if we can draw any conjecture from their imitator Plautus, who wrote about a century later. Plautus was a writer of genius; and it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed that his copies did not fall much ſhort of the originals, at leaſt in matters that can be faithfully copied; and he ſhows very little art, either in his compoſitions, or in the conduct of his pieces. With reſpect to the former, his plots are wondrous ſimple, very little varied, and very little intereſting. The ſubject of almoſt every piece is a young man in love with a muſic-girl, deſiring to purchaſe her from the procurer, and employing a favourite ſlave to cheat his father out of the price; and the different ways of accompliſhing the cheat, is all the variety we find. In ſome few of his comedies the ſtory riſes to a higher tone, the muſic-girl being diſcovered to be the daughter of a free man, which removes every obſtruction to a marriage between her and her lover. In the conduct of his pieces there is a miſerable defect of art. Inſtead of unfolding the ſubject in the progreſs of the action, as is done by Terence, and by every modern writer, Plautus introduces a perſon for no other end but to explain the ſtory to the audience. In one of his comedies, a houſehold-god is ſo obliging as not only to unfold the ſubject, but to relate beforehand every particular that is to be repreſented, not excepting the cataſtrophe. Did not Plautus know, that it is pleaſant to have our curioſity raiſed about what will happen next? In the courſe of the action, perſons are frequently introduced who are heard talking to themſelves on the open ſtreet. One would imagine the Greeks to have been great babblers, when they could not refrain ſoliloquies

liloquies even in public. Could Plautus have been ſo artleſs in the conduct of his pieces, had a more perfect model been exhibited to him by Menander or the other authors mentioned?

It is obſerved in Elements of Criticiſm (*a*), that when a language begins to receive ſome poliſh, and the meaning of words is tolerably aſcertained, then it is that a play of words comes to be reliſhed. At that period of the Roman language Plautus wrote. His wit conſiſts almoſt entirely in a play of words, an eternal jingle, words brought together that have nearly the ſame ſound, with different meanings, and words of different ſounds that have the ſame meaning. As the Greek language had arrived to its perfection many years before, ſuch falſe wit may be juſtly aſcribed to Plautus himſelf, not to the Greeks from whom he copied. What was the period of that baſtard wit in Greece, I know not; but it appears not to have been antiquated in Homer's days, witneſs the joke in the Odyſſey, where Ulyſſes impoſed upon Polyphemus by calling himſelf Houtis or No-man. Nor ſeems it to have been antiquated in the days of Euripides, who in his Cyclops repeats the ſame ſilly joke. The Roman genius ſoon purged their compoſitions of ſuch infantine beauties; for in Terence, who wrote about fifty years later than Plautus, there is ſcarce a veſtige of them. The dialogue beſide of Terence is more natural and correct, not a word but to the purpoſe: Plautus is full of tautologies, and digreſſions very little to the purpoſe. In a word, conſidering the ſlow progreſs of arts, the Roman theatre, from the time of Plautus to that of Terence, made as rapid a progreſs as perhaps ever happened in any country. Ariſtotle defines comedy to be an imitation of light and trivial ſubjects provoking laughter. The comedies of

(*a*) Chap. 13.

Plautus correſpond accurately to that definition: thoſe of Terence riſe to a higher tone.

Beſide the diſadvantages of the maſk and pipe mentioned above, there are two cauſes that tended to keep back the Greek and Roman comedy from the perfection of its kind. The firſt is the ſlow progreſs of ſociety among theſe nations, occaſioned by debarring the female ſex from it. Without a mixture of the two ſexes ſociety can never arrive at any degree of refinement, not to talk of perfection. That mixture brings to light every latent talent and every variety of character. To judge from ancient writers, man was a very plain being. Tacitus wrote when ſociety between the ſexes was abundantly free; and in no author before him is to be found any thing beyond the outlines of character. In ancient comedies there are miſers, lovers, paraſites, procurers; but the individuals of each claſs are caſt in the ſame mould. In the Rudens of Plautus, it is true, a miſer is painted with much anxiety about his hidden treaſure, every trifling incident being converted by him into a cauſe of ſuſpicion; but he is ſtill the ſame miſer that is painted by others, without any ſhade or ſingularity in the character. Homer is the only ancient that deſerves to be excepted: his heroes have all courage; but courage in each is clearly of a different kind. Knowledge of an endleſs variety of character in the human ſpecies, acquired from unreſtrained ſociety, has enabled the moderns to enrich the theatre with new characters without end. What elſe is it but defect of knowledge in the diſpoſitions of men that has confined Plautus and Terence, like the Italian comedy, to a very few characters?

Nothing is more evident than the ſuperiority of Terence above Plautus in the art of writing; and conſidering that Terence is a later writer, nothing would appear more natural, if they did not copy the ſame originals. It may be owing to genius that Terence excell'd in purity of language, and propriety of dialogue; but how account

account for his ſuperiority over Plautus in the conſtruction and conduct of a play? It will not certainly be thought, that Plautus would imitate the worſt-conſtructed plays, leaving the beſt to thoſe who ſhould come after him. This difficulty has not occurred to any of the commentators, ſo far as I can recollect. Had the works of Menander and of his cotemperaries been preſerved, they probably would have explained the myſtery; which for want of that light will probably remain a myſtery for ever.

Homer has for more than two thouſand years been held the prince of poets. Such perfection in an author who flouriſhed when arts were far ſhort of maturity, is ſurpriſing, is miraculous. An author of genius (*a*) has endeavoured to account for this extraordinary phenomenon; and I willingly acknowledge, that he has exerted much induſtry, as well as invention; but in my apprehenſion without giving much ſatisfaction. The new light that is thrown above upon the Greek theatre has encouraged me to attempt a criticiſm on the Iliad, in order to judge whether Homer has ſo far anticipated the ordinary progreſs of nature as in a very early period to have arrived at the perfection of his art.

To form a good writer, genius and judgement muſt concur. Nature ſupplies the former; but to the latter inſtruction and imitation are eſſential. Shakeſpeare lived in an age that afforded him little opportunity to cultivate or improve his judgement; and tho' inimitable in every article that depends on genius, there are found many defects in the conduct of his plays, and in other particulars that require judgement ripen'd by experience. Homer lived in a rude age, little advanced in uſeful arts, and ſtill leſs in civilization and enlarged benevolence. The nations engaged in the Trojan war are deſcribed by him as in a progreſs from the ſhepherd-ſtate to that of agriculture. Frequent mention is made in the Iliad of the

(*a*) Eſſay on the life and writings of Homer.

moſt eminent men being ſhepherds. Andromaché in particular (*a*) mentions ſeven of her brethren who were ſlain by Achilles as they tended their father's flocks and herds. In that ſtate, garments of woollen cloth were uſed; but the ſkins of beaſts, the original clothing, were ſtill worn as an upper garment: every chief in the Iliad appears in that dreſs. Such indeed was the ſimplicity of this early period, that a black ewe was promiſed by each chief to the man who would undertake to be a ſpy. In times of ſuch ſimplicity, literature could not be far advanced; and it is a great doubt, whether there was at that time a ſingle poem of the epic kind for Homer to imitate or improve upon. Homer is undoubtedly a wonderful genius, perhaps the greateſt that ever exiſted: his fire, and the boldneſs of his conceptions, are inimitable. But in that early age it would fall little ſhort of a real miracle, to find ſuch ripeneſs of judgement, and correctneſs of execution, as in modern writers are the fruits of long experience, and progreſſive improvements, during the courſe of many centuries. Homer is far from being ſo ripe, or ſo correct. I ſhall mention but two or three particulars; for to dwell upon the imperfections of ſo eminent an author is not pleaſant. The firſt is, that he reduces his heroes to be little better than puppets. Not one of them performs an action of eclat, but with the aſſiſtance of ſome deity: even Achilles himſelf is every where aided by ſuperior powers. It is Jupiter who inſpires Hector with boldneſs to perform the illuſtrious actions that are ſo finely deſcribed in the 15th book; and it is Jupiter who, changing ſides, fills his heart with diſmay. Glaucus, deſperately wounded, ſupplicates Apollo, is miraculouſly healed, and returns to the battle prefectly ſound. Hector, ſtruck to the ground with a ſtone, and at the point of giving up the ghoſt, is cured by Apollo, and ſent

(*a*) Book 6.

back

back to the battle with redoubled vigour. Homer reſembles a ſect of Chriſtians, who hold, that a man can do nothing of himſelf, but that God does all. Can Homer's admirers be ſo blind as not to perceive, that this ſort of machinery detracts from the dignity of his heroes, renders them leſs intereſting, and leſs worthy of admiration? Homer however is deſervedly ſuch a favourite that we are prone to admit any excuſe. In days of ignorance, people are much addicted to the marvellous. Homer himſelf, it may be juſtly ſuppoſed, was infected with that weakneſs; and he certainly knew that his hearers would be enchanted with every thing wonderful and out of the common courſe of nature. Another particular is his digreſſions without end, which draw our attention from the principal ſubject. I wiſh as good an apology could be made for them. Diomedes (*a*), for inſtance, meeting with Glaucus in the field of battle, and doubting from his majeſtic air whether he might not be an immortal, enquires who he was, declaring that he would not fight with a god. Glaucus lays hold of this very ſlight opportunity, in the very heat of action, to give a long hiſtory of his family. In the mean time the reader's patience is put to a trial, and his ardor cools. Agamemnon (*b*) deſiring advice how to reſiſt the Trojans, Diomedes ſprings forward; but before he offers advice, gives the hiſtory of all his progenitors, and of their characters, in a long train. And after all, what was the ſage advice that required ſuch a preface? It was, that Agamemnon ſhould exhort the Greeks to fight bravely. At any rate, was Diomedes ſo little known as to make it proper to ſuſpend the action at ſo critical a juncture for a genealogical hiſtory? There is a third particular which juſtly merits cenſure; and that is an endleſs number of mi-

(*a*) Book 6.

(*b*) Book 14.

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nute circumſtances, eſpecially in the deſcription of battles, where they are the moſt improper. One capital beauty of an epic poem is the ſelection of ſuch incidents and circumſtances as make a deep impreſſion, keeping out of view every thing low or familiar (*a*). An account of a ſingle battle employs the whole fifth book of the Iliad, and a great part of the ſixth: yet in the whole there is no general action; but unknown warriors, whom we never heard of before, killed at a diſtance with an arrow or a javelin; and every wound deſcribed with anatomical accuracy. The whole ſeventeenth book is employ'd in the conteſt about the dead body of Patroclus, ſtuffed with minute circumſtances below the dignity of an epic poem. In ſuch ſcenes the reader is fatigued with endleſs particulars; and has nothing to ſupport him but the melody of Homer's verſification. Gratitude would prompt one to apologiſe for an author who affords ſo much pleaſure: the only apology I can think of for the particulars laſt mentioned is, that Homer had no good models to copy after; and that without good models it is in vain to expect maturity of judgement. In a word, Homer was a blazing ſtar, and the more to be admired becauſe he blazed in an obſcure age. But that he ſhould in no degree be tainted with the imperfections of ſuch an age is a wild thought: it is ſcarce poſſible, but by ſuppoſing him to be more than man.

Particular cauſes that advance the progreſs of fine arts, as well as of uſeful arts, are mentioned in the firſt part of this Sketch, and to theſe I refer.

Having traced the progreſs of the fine arts toward maturity in a ſummary way, the decline of theſe arts comes next in order. An art, in its progreſs toward maturity, is greatly promoted by emulation; and after arriving at maturity, its downfal is not leſs

(*a*) Elements of Criticiſm, vol. 1. p. 232. edit. 5.

promoted

promoted by it. It is difficult to judge of perfection but by compariſon; and an artiſt, ambitious to outſtrip his predeceſſors, cannot ſubmit to be an imitator, but muſt ſtrike out ſomething new, which in an art advanced to ripeneſs, ſeldom fails to be a degeneracy. This cauſe of the decline of the fine arts, I ſhall endeavour to illuſtrate by various inſtances. The perfection of vocal muſic is to accompany paſſion, and to enforce ſentiment. In ancient Greece the province of muſic was well underſtood; which being confined within its proper ſphere, had an enchanting influence. Harmony at that time was very little cultivated, becauſe it was of very little uſe: melody reaches the heart, and it is by it chiefly that a ſentiment is enforc'd, or a paſſion ſooth'd: harmony on the contrary reaches the ear only; and it is a matter of undoubted experience, that the moſt melodious airs admit but of very ſimple harmony. Artiſts in later times, ignorant why harmony was ſo little regarded by the ancients, apply'd themſelves ſeriouſly to its cultivation; and they have been wonderfully ſucceſsful. But they have been ſucceſsful at the expence of melody; which in modern compoſitions, generally ſpeaking, is loſt amid the blaze of harmony. Theſe compoſitions tickle the ear by the luxury of complicated ſounds, but make ſeldom any impreſſion on the heart. The Italian opera in its form reſembles the Greek tragedy, from which it is evidently copied; but very little in ſubſtance. In the latter, muſic being made ſubſervient to ſentiment, the dialogue is nervous and ſublime: in the former, the whole weight is laid on muſic, and the dialogue, devoid of ſentiment, is weak and ſpiritleſs. Reſtleſs man knows no golden mean, but will be attempting innovations without end *. By the ſame ambition,

* Corelli excells all the other moderns in combining harmony with melody. His melody could not be richer without impoveriſhing the harmony; and his harmony could

bition, architecture has viſibly declined from its perfection. The Ionic was the favourite order when architecture was in its height of glory. The Corinthian order came next; which, in attempting greater perfection, has deviated from the true ſimplicity of nature; and the deviation is ſtill greater in the Compoſite order (*a*). With reſpect to literary productions, the firſt eſſays of the Romans were very imperfect. We may judge of this from Plautus, whoſe compoſitions are abundantly rude, tho' much admired by his cotemporaries, being the beſt that exiſted at that time. The exalted ſpirit of the Romans hurried them on to the grand and beautiful; and literary productions of all kinds were in perfection when Auguſtus reigned. In attempting ſtill greater perfection, the Roman compoſitions became a ſtrange jumble of inconſiſtent parts; they were tumid and pompous, and at the ſame time full of antitheſes, conceit, and tinſel wit. Every thing new in the fine arts pleaſes, tho' leſs perfect than what we are accuſtomed to; and for that reaſon ſuch compoſitions were generally reliſhed. We ſee not by what gradual ſteps writers after the time of Auguſtus deviated from the patterns that were before them; for no book of any moment after that time is preſerved till we come down to Seneca, in whoſe works nature and ſimplicity give place to artificial thought and baſtard wit. He was a great corrupter of the Roman taſte; and after him nothing was reliſhed but brilliant ſtrokes of fancy, with very little regard to ſentiment: even Virgil and Cicero made no figure in compariſon. Lucan has a forc'd elevation of thought and ſtyle, very difficult to

could not be richer without impoveriſhing the melody. And therefore if harmony is requiſite in any conſiderable degree, the productions of that author may be pronounced perfect.

(*a*) Elements of Criticiſm, vol. 1. p. 206. edit. 5.

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be ſupported; and accordingly he ſinks often into puerile reflections; witneſs his encomium on the river Po, which, ſays he, would equal the Danube, had it the ſame number of tributary ſtreams. Quintilian, a writer of true and claſſical taſte, who was protected and encouraged by Veſpaſian, attempted to ſtem the tide of falſe writing. His rhetoric is compoſed in an elegant ſtyle; and his obſervations contain every delicacy of the critcal art. At the ſame time flouriſhed Tacitus, poſſeſſing a more extenſive knowledge of the nature of man than any other author ancient or modern, if Shakeſpeare be not excepted. His ſtyle is original, conciſe, compact, and comprehenſive; and in what is properly called his hiſtory, perfectly correct and beautiful. He has been imitated by ſeveral, but never equalled by any. Brutus is ſaid to be the laſt of the Romans for love of liberty: Quintilian and Tacitus may be ſaid to be the laſt of the Romans for literary genius. Pliny the younger is no exception: his ſtyle is affected, turgid, and full of childiſh brilliancy. Seneca and Pliny are proper examples of writers who ſtudy ſhow more than ſubſtance, and who make ſenſe yield to ſound. The difference between theſe authors and thoſe of the Auguſtan age reſembles the difference between Greek and Italian muſic. Muſic among the Greeks limited itſelf to the employment to which it is deſtin'd by nature, viz. to be the handmaid of ſenſe, to enforce, enliven, or ſweeten, a ſentiment. In the Italian opera the miſtreſs is degraded to be the handmaid; and harmony triumphs, with very little regard to ſentiment.

Another great cauſe that precipitates the downfal of every fine art is deſpotiſm. The reaſon is obvious; and there is a diſmal example of it in Rome, particularly with regard to eloquence. We learn from a dialogue accounting for the corruption of the Roman eloquence, that in the decline of the art it became faſhionable to ſtuff harangues with impertinent poetical quotations, without any view but ornament merely; and this alſo was long faſhionable in

France. It happened unluckily for the Romans, and for the world, that the fine arts were at their height in Rome, and not much upon the decline in Greece, when deſpotiſm put an end to the republic. Auguſtus, it is true, retarded their fall, particularly that of literature; it being the politic of his reign to hide deſpotiſm, and to give his government an air of freedom. His court was a ſchool of urbanity, where people of genius acquired that delicacy of taſte, that elevation of ſentiment, and that purity of expreſſion, which characterize the writers of his time. He honoured men of learning, admitted them to his table, and was bountiful to them. It would be painful to follow the decline of the fine arts in Rome to their total extirpation. The tyranny of Tiberius, and of ſubſequent emperors, broke at laſt the elevated and independent ſpirit of the brave Romans, reduced them to abject ſlavery, and left not a ſpark of genius *. The ſcience of law is the only exception, as it flouriſhed even in the worſt of times: the Roman lawyers were a reſpectable body, and leſs the object of jealouſy than men of power and extenſive landed property. Among the Greeks alſo, a conquered people, the fine arts decay'd; but not ſo rapidly as at Rome;

* A ſingular perſecution was carried on by Pope Gregory, moſt improperly ſurnamed the Great, againſt the works of Cicero, Titus Livius, and Cornelius Tacitus, which in every corner of Chriſtendom were publicly burnt; and from that time there has not been ſeen a complete copy of any of theſe authors. This happen'd in the ſixth century: ſo ſoon had the Romans fallen, from the perfection of taſte and knowledge, to the moſt humbling barbarity. Nor was that the only perſecution of books on the ſcore of religion. Many centuries before, a ſimilar inſtance happened in China, directed by a fooliſh emperor. The Alexandrian library was twice conſumed by fire, once in the time of Julius Cæſar, and once in the time of the Calif Omar. What a profuſion of knowledge was loſt paſt redemption! And yet, upon the whole, it ſeems doubtful, whether the moderns have ſuffered by theſe events. At what corner of a library ſhall a man begin where he ſees an infinity of books, choice ones too? Even the moſt reſolute would be deterred from reading at all.

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the Greeks, farther removed from the ſeat of government, being leſs within the reach of a Roman tyrant. During their depreſſion they were guilty of the moſt puerile conceits; witneſs verſes compoſed in the form of an axe, an egg, wings, and ſuch like. The ſtyle of Greek authors in the reign of the Emperor Hadrian is unequal, obſcure, ſtiff, and affected. Lucian is the only exception I am acquainted with.

We need ſcarce any other cauſe but deſpotiſm to account for the decline of ſtatuary and painting in Greece. Theſe arts had arrived at their utmoſt perfection about the time of Alexander the Great; and from that time they declined gradually with the vigour of a free people; for Greece was now enſlaved by the Macedonian power. It may in general be obſerved, that when a nation becomes ſtationary in that degree of power which it acquires from its conſtitution and ſituation, the national ſpirit ſubſides, and men of talents become rare. It is ſtill worſe with a nation that is ſunk below its former power and pre-eminence; and worſt of all when it is reduced to ſlavery. Other cauſes concurred to accelerate the downfal of the arts mentioned. Greece in the days of Alexander was filled with ſtatues of excellent workmanſhip; and there being little demand for more, the later ſtatuaries were reduced to heads and buſts. At laſt the Romans put a total end both to ſtatuary and painting in Greece, by plundering it of its fineſt pieces; and the Greeks, expoſed to the avarice of the conquerors, beſtow'd no longer any money on the fine arts. Winckelman, overlooking the cauſes mentioned, borrows from Velleius Paterculus a reaſon for the decline of the fine arts in Greece, not a little ridiculous. "Naturaque, quod ſummo ſtudio petitum eſt, aſcendit in ſummum; difficiliſque in perfecto mora eſt; naturaliterque, quod procedere non poteſt, recedit (*a*)." "The idea (ſays Winckelman) of

(*a*) Roman Hiſtory, lib. 1.

" beauty could not be made more perfect; and thoſe arts which " could not advance farther, become retrograde, by a fatality at- " tending all human things, viz. that if they cannot mount, they " muſt fall down, becauſe ſtability is not a quality of any created " thing."

The decline of the fine arts in Rome is by a writer of taſte and elegance aſcribed to a cauſe different from any above mentioned, a cauſe that overwhelms manhood as well as the fine arts where-ever it prevails; and that is opulence, joined with its faithful attendants avarice and luxury. It would be doing injuſtice to that author to refuſe him in his native language. " Priſcis temporibus, quum ad- " huc nuda virtus placeret, vigebant artes ingenuæ; ſummumque " certamen inter homines erat, ne quid profuturum ſeculis diu la- " teret. Itaque, Hercules! omnium herbarum ſuccos Democri- " tus expreſſit: et ne lapidum virgultorumque vis lateret, ætatem " inter experimenta conſumpſit. Eudoxus quidem in cacumine " excelſiſſimi montis conſenuit, ut aſtrorum cœlique motus de- " prehenderet: et Chryſippus, ut ad inventionem ſufficiret, ter " helleboro animum deterſit. Verum ut ad plaſtas convertar, " Lyſippum ſtatuæ unius lineamentis inhærentem inopia extinxit: " et Myron, qui penè hominum animas ferarumque ære compre- " henderat, non invenit heredem. At nos, vino ſcortiſque demerſi, " ne paratas quidem artes audemus cognoſcere; ſed accuſatores " antiquitatis, vitia tantum docemus, et diſcimus. Ubi eſt dia- " lectica? ubi aſtronomia? ubi ſapientiæ conſultiſſima via? " Quis unquam venit in templum, et votum fecit ſi ad eloquen- " tiam perveniſſet? quis, ſi philoſophiæ fontem inveniſſet? Ac " ne bonam quidem mentem, aut bonam valetudinem petunt: " ſed ſtatim, antequam limen capitolii tangunt, alius donum pro- " mittit ſi propinquum divitem extulerit; alius, ſi theſaurum ef- " foderit; alius, ſi ad trecenties H—S. ſalvus pervenerit. Ipſe " ſenatus, recti bonique præceptor, mille pondo auri capitolio " promittere

" promittere ſolet: et ne quis dubitet pecuniam concupiſcere, Jo-
" vem quoque peculio exorat. Nolito ergo mirari, ſi pictura de-
" fecit, quum omnibus diis hominibuſque formoſior videatur
" maſſa auri, quam quidquid Apelles Phidiaſve fecerunt * (*a*)."
In England, the fine arts are far from ſuch perfection as to ſuffer by opulence. They are in a progreſs, it is true, toward matu-

* " In ancient times, when naked virtue had her admirers, the liberal arts were
" in their higheſt vigour; and there was a generous conteſt among men, that no-
" thing of real and permanent advantage ſhould long remain undiſcovered. De-
" mocritus extracted the juice of every herb and plant, and leſt the virtue of a
" ſingle ſtone or twig ſhould eſcape him, he conſumed a lifetime in experiments.
" Eudoxus, immerſed in the ſtudy of aſtronomy, ſpent his age upon the top of a
" mountain. Chryſippus, to ſtimulate his inventive faculty, thrice purified his ge-
" nius with hellebore. To turn to the imitative arts: Lyſippus, while labouring
" on the forms of a ſingle ſtatue, periſhed from want. Myron, whoſe powerful
" hand gave to the braſs almoſt the ſoul of man, and animals,—at his death
" found not an heir! Of us of modern times what ſhall we ſay? Immerſed in
" drunkenneſs and debauchery, we want the ſpirit to cultivate thoſe arts which we
" poſſeſs. We inveigh againſt the manners of antiquity; we ſtudy vice alone;
" and vice is all we teach. Where now is the art of reaſoning? where aſtronomy?
" where is the right path of wiſdom? What man now-a-days is heard in our
" temples to make a vow for the attainment of eloquence, or for the diſcovery of
" the fountain of true philoſophy? Nor do we even pray for health of body, or
" a ſound underſtanding. One, while he has ſcarce entered the porch of the
" temple, devotes a gift in the event of the death of a rich relation; another prays
" for the diſcovery of a treaſure; a third for a miniſterial fortune. The ſenate
" itſelf, the exemplary preceptor of what is good and laudable, has promiſed a
" thouſand pounds of gold to the capitol; and, to remove all reproach from the
" crime of avarice, has offered a bribe to Jupiter himſelf. How ſhould we won-
" der that the art of painting has declined, when, in the eyes both of the gods
" and men, there is more beauty in a maſs of gold, than in all the works of Phidias
" and Apelles?"

(*a*) Petronius Arbiter.

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rity; but, gardening alone excepted, they proceed in a very ſlow pace.

There is a particular cauſe that never fails to undermine a fine art in a country where it is brought to perfection, abſtracting from every one of the cauſes above mentioned. In the firſt part of the preſent ſketch it is remarked, that nothing is more fatal to an art or to a ſcience than a performance ſo much ſuperior to all of the kind as to extinguiſh emulation. This remark is exemplified in the great Newton, who, having ſurpaſſed all the ancients, has not left to his countrymen even the fainteſt hope of rivalling him; and to that cauſe is attributed the viſible decline of mathematics in Great Britain. The ſame cauſe would have been fatal to the arts of ſtatuary and painting among the Greeks, even tho' they had continued a free people. The decay of painting in modern Italy is probably owing to the ſame cauſe: Michael Angelo, Raphael, Titian, &c. are lofty oaks that bear down young plants in their neighbourhood, and intercept from them the ſunſhine of emulation. Had the art of painting made a ſlower progreſs in Italy, it might have there continued in vigour to this day. Velleius Paterculus ſays judiciouſly, "Ut primo ad conſequendos quos priores ducimus ac-
"cendimur; ita, ubi aut præteriri aut æquari eos poſſe deſpera-
"vimus, ſtudium cum ſpe ſeneſcit; et quod adſequi non poteſt,
"ſequi deſinit: præteritoque eo in quo eminere non poſſimus, a-
"liquid in quo nitamur conquirimus *."

The decline of an art or ſcience proceeding from the foregoing cauſe, is the moſt rapid where a ſtrict compariſon can be inſtituted

* "As at firſt we are excited to emulate thoſe ſuperior models, ſo when once
"we have loſt the hope of excelling, or even of equalling them, our ambition fails
"us with our hopes: we ceaſe to purſue what we cannot attain, and neglecting
"that ſtudy in which we are debarred from arriving at excellence, we ſearch for
"a different field of emulation."

between

between the works of different maſters. The ſuperiority of Newton above every other mathematician can be aſcertained with preciſion; and hence the ſudden decline of that ſcience in Great Britain. In Italy a talent for painting continued many years in vigour, becauſe no painter appeared with ſuch ſuperiority of genius as to carry perfection into every branch of the art. As one ſurpaſſed in deſigning, one in colouring, one in graceful attitudes, there was ſtill ſcope for emulation. But when at laſt there was not a ſingle perfection but what one or other maſter had excelled in, from that period the art began to languiſh. Architecture continued longer in vigour than painting, becauſe the principles of compariſon in the former are leſs preciſe than in the latter. The artiſt who could not rival his predeceſſors in an eſtabliſhed mode, ſought out a new mode for himſelf, which, tho' perhaps leſs elegant or perfect, was for a time ſupported by novelty.

Corruption of the Latin tongue makes a proper appendix to the decline of the fine arts in Rome. That the Latin tongue did not long continue in purity after the Emperor Auguſtus, is certain; and all writers agree, that the cauſe of its early corruption was a continual influx into Rome of men to whom the Latin was a foreign language. The reaſon is plauſible; but whether ſolid may juſtly be doubted. In all countries there are provincial dialects; which however tend not to corrupt the language of the capital, becauſe they are carefully avoided by all who pretend to ſpeak properly; and accordingly the multitude of provincials who flock to Paris and London have no effect to debaſe the language. The ſame probably was the caſe in old Rome, eſpecially with reſpect to ſtrangers whoſe native tongue was totally different from that of Rome: their imperfect manner of ſpeaking Latin might be excuſed, but certainly was not imitated. Slaves in Rome had little converſation with their maſters, except in receiving orders or reproof; which had no tendency to vitiate the Latin tongue. The

corruption

corruption of that tongue, and at laſt its death and burial as a living language, were the reſult of two combined cauſes; of which the early prevalence of the Greek language in Rome is the firſt. Latin was native to the Romans only, and to the inhabitants of Latium. The languages of the reſt of Italy were numerous: the Meſſapian was the mother-tongue in Apulia, the Hetruſcan in Tuſcany and Umbria, the Greek in Magna Græcia, the Celtic in Lombardy and Liguria, &c. &c. Latin had arrived at its purity not many years before the reign of Auguſtus; and had not taken deep root in thoſe parts of Italy where it was not the mother-tongue, when Greek came to be the faſhionable language among people of rank, as French is in Europe at preſent. Greek, the ſtorehouſe of learning, prevailed in Rome, even in Cicero's time; of which he himſelf bears teſtimony in his oration for the poet Archias. "Græca leguntur in omnibus fere gentibus: La-" tina ſuis finibus, exiguis ſane, continentur." And for that reaſon Atticus is warmly ſolicited by him to write the hiſtory of his conſulſhip in Greek. Thus Latin, juſtled by Greek out of its place, was left to inferiors; and probably would have ſunk to utter oblivion, even though the republic had continued in vigour. But the chief cauſe was the deſpotiſm of the Roman government, which proved the deſtruction of the fine arts, and of literature in particular. In a country of ſo many different languages the Latin tongue could not be preſerved in purity, but by a conſtant peruſal of Roman claſſics: but theſe were left to rot in libraries, a dark cloud of ignorance having overſpread the whole empire. Every perſon careleſsly ſpoke the language acquired in the nurſery; and people of different tongues being mixed under one government, without a common ſtandard, fell gradually into a ſort of mixed language, which every one made a ſhift to underſtand. The irruption of many barbarous nations into Italy, ſeveral of whom ſettled there, added to the jargon. And that jargon, compoſed of many hete-

rogeneous

rogeneous parts, was in proceſs of time purified to the tongue that is now native to all the inhabitants of Italy.

In a hiſtory of the Latin tongue, it ought not to be overlooked, that it continued long in purity among the Roman lawyers. The ſcience of law was in Rome more cultivated than in any other country. The books writ upon that ſcience in Latin were numerous; and, being highly regarded, were the conſtant ſtudy of every man who aſpired to be an eminent lawyer. Neither could ſuch men have any bias to the Greek tongue, as law was little cultivated in Greece. Thus it happened, that the Latin tongue, ſo far as concerns law, was preſerved in purity, even to the time of the Emperor Juſtinian.

Greek was preſerved in purity much longer than Latin. The ſame language was ſpoken through all Greece, with ſome ſlight varieties in dialect. It was brought to great perfection and firmly rooted during the proſperous days of Greece. Its claſſics were numerous, and the ſtudy of every perſon who pretended to literature *. Now tho' the free and manly ſpirit of the Greeks yielded to Roman deſpotiſm, yet while any appetite for literature remained, their invaluable claſſics were a ſtandard, which preſerved the language in purity. But ignorance at length became univerſal, and the Greek claſſics ceaſed to be a ſtandard, being buried in libraries, as the Roman claſſics had been for centuries. In that ſtate, the Greek tongue could not fail to degenerate, among an ignorant and ſervile people, who had no longer any ambition to act well, write well, or ſpeak well. And yet after all, that beautiful tongue, far beyond a rival, has ſuffered leſs alteration than any other ever did in ſimilar circumſtances; one cauſe of which is, that to

* There ſtill remain about three thouſand Greek books: of Latin books not above ſixty.

this day the Greeks live ſeparate from their maſters the Turks, and have little commerce with them.

From the fate of the Latin tongue, an obſervation is drawn by many writers, that all languages are in a continual flux, changing from age to age without end. And ſuch as are fond of fame, deplore it as a heavy misfortune, that the language in which they write will ſoon become obſolete and unintelligible. But it is a common error in reaſoning, to found a general concluſion upon a ſingle fact. In its progreſs toward perfection, a language is continually improving, and therefore continually changing. But ſuppoſing a language to have acquired its utmoſt perfection, I ſee nothing that ſhould neceſſarily occaſion any change: on the contrary, the claſſical books in that language become a ſtandard for writing and ſpeaking, to which every man of taſte and figure conforms himſelf. Such was the caſe of the Greek tongue, till that people were brutified by deſpotiſm: the Italian has continued in perfection more than three centuries, and the French more than one. The Engliſh language has not yet acquired all the purity it is ſuſceptible of: but when there is no place for further improvements, there ſeems little doubt of its becoming ſtationary, like the languages now mentioned. I bar always ſuch a revolution as eradicates knowledge, and reduces a people to a ſtate of barbarity. In an event ſo diſmal, the deſtruction of claſſical books, and of a pure language, will not be the chief calamity: they will be little regretted in the univerſal wreck. In the mean time, to a writer of genius in a poliſhed nation it cannot but be a charming proſpect, that his works will ſtand and fall with his country. To make ſuch a writer exert his talents for purifying his mother-tongue, and for adding to the number and reputation of its claſſics, what nobler encitement, than the certainty of being tranſmitted to poſterity, and welcomed by every perſon of taſte through all ages!

As before the invention of printing writers could have nothing in

in view but reputation and praiſe, they endeavoured to give the utmoſt perfection to their compoſitions. They at the ſame time ſtudied brevity, in order that their works might be diffuſed through many hands; for the expence of tranſcribing great volumes could not be afforded by every reader. The art of printing has made a great change: the opportunity it furniſhes to multiply copies has degraded writing to be a lucrative employment. Authors now ſtudy to ſwell their works, in order to ſwell the price; and being in a hurry for money, they neglect the precept of Horace, *Nonum prematur in annum.* Take for example the natural hiſtory of Aldrovandus, in many folio volumes. After filling his common-place book with paſſages from every author ancient and modern, to the purpoſe and not to the purpoſe, he ſits down to compoſe, bent to transfuſe into his book every article thus painfully collected. For example, when he introduces the ox, the cock, or any other animal; far from confining himſelf to its natural hiſtory, he omits nothing that has been ſaid of it in books where it has been occaſionally introduced, not even excepting tales for amuſing children: he mentions all the ſuperſtitious notions concerning it, every poetical compariſon drawn from it, the uſe it has ſerved in hieroglyphics and in coats-armorial; in a word, all the hiſtories and all the fables in which it has been named. Take another inſtance from a German or Dutch chronologer, whoſe name has eſcaped me, and which I give in a tranſlation from the Latin, to prevent the bias that one has for a learned language. "Samſon was the ſame with the Theban Hercules; which ap-
"pears from the actions attributed to each of them, eſpecially
"from the following, That Hercules, unarmed, is ſaid to have ſuf-
"focated the Nemean lion with a ſqueeze of his arms: Samſon
"unarmed did the ſame, by tearing a lion to pieces; and Joſe-
"phus ſays, that he did not tear the lion, but put out his breath
"with a ſqueeze; which could be done, and was done by Scu-

" tileus the wreſtler, as reported by Suidas. David alſo, unarmed,
" tore to pieces a lion, 1 Samuel, chap. 17.; and Benaiah the ſon
" of Jehojada alſo ſlew a lion, 2 Samuel, chap. 23. ver. 20. More-
" over we read, that Samſon having caught three hundred foxes,
" tied lighted firebrands to their tails, and drove them into the
" ſtanding corn of the Philiſtines, by which both the ſhocks and
" ſtanding corn, with the vineyards and olives, were burnt up.
" Many think it incredible, that three hundred foxes ſhould be
" caught by one man; as the fox, being the moſt cunning of all
" animals, would not ſuffer itſelf to be eaſily taken. Accordingly Oppian, a Greek poet who writes upon hunting, aſſerts, that
" no fox will ſuffer itſelf to be taken in a gin or a net; tho' we are
" taught the contrary by Martial, lib. 10. epig. 37.

" *Hic olidum clamoſus ages in retia vulpem.*

" In India, eagles, hawks, and ravens, are taught to hunt foxes,
" as we are informed by Olianus, Var. hiſt. lib. 9. cap. 26. They
" are alſo caught by traps and ſnares, and in covered pits, as
" wolves are, and other large animals. Nor is it wonderful that
" ſuch a multitude of foxes were caught by Samſon, conſidering
" that Paleſtine abounded with foxes. He had hunters without
" number at command; and he was not confined in time. The
" fame of that exploit was ſpread far and near. Even among the
" Romans there were veſtiges of it, as appears from Ovid, Faſt.
" lib. 9. ver. 681. In one Roman feſtival, armed foxes were let
" looſe in the circus; which Ovid, in the place quoted, ſays, was
" done in memory of the Carſiolan fox, which, having deſtroy'd
" many hens belonging to a country-woman, was caught by her,
" and puniſhed as follows. She wrapped up the fox in hay, which
" ſhe ſet fire to; and the fox being let go, fled through the ſtanding corn, and ſet it on fire. There can be no doubt but that
" this

" this feſtival was a veſtige of Samſon's foxes, not only from con-
" gruity of circumſtances, but from the time of celebration,
" which was the month of April, the time of harveſt in Paleſtine.
" See more about foxes in Burman's works." Not to mention the ridiculous arguments of this writer to prove Samſon to be the ſame with the Theban Hercules, nor the childiſh wanderings from that ſubject, every one muſt be ſenſible of his having overlooked the chief difficulty. However well fixed the fire-brands might be, it is not eaſily conceivable, that the foxes, who would naturally fly to their lurking-holes, could much injure the corn, or the olive trees. And it is as little conceivable, what ſhould have moved Samſon to employ foxes, when, by our author's ſuppoſition, he had men at command, much better qualified than foxes for committing waſte. This author would have ſaved himſelf much idle labour had he embraced a very probable opinion, that if the tranſlation be not erroneous, the original text muſt be corrupted. But enough, and more than enough, of theſe writers. Maturity of taſte has baniſhed ſuch abſurdities; and at preſent, happily, books are leſs bulky, and more to the purpoſe, than formerly.

It is obſerved above (*a*), that in a country thinly peopled, where the ſame perſon muſt for bread undertake different employments, the people are knowing and converſable; but ſtupid and ignorant in a populous country, where induſtry and manufactures abound. That obſervation holds not with reſpect to the fine arts. It requires ſo much genius to copy even a ſingle figure, whether in painting or in ſculpture, as to prevent the operator from degenerating into a brute. The great exertion of genius, as well as of invention, required in grouping figures, and in imitating human

(*a*) Firſt ſection of the preſent Sketch.

actions,

actions, tends to envigorate thoſe faculties with reſpect to every ſubject, and of courſe to form a man of parts.

Such ſketches of the hiſtory of man as tend the moſt to explain his nature, are chiefly inſiſted on in this work. The hiſtory of muſic is entertaining, that branch eſpecially which compares ancient and modern muſic; and accordingly I have occaſionally handled that branch above. The other branches fall not properly within my plan; becauſe they ſeem to afford little opening into human nature. There is one article however, which regard to my native country will not ſuffer me to omit. We have in Scotland a multitude of ſongs tender and pathetic, expreſſive of love in its varieties of hope, fear, ſucceſs, deſpondence, and deſpair. The ſtyle of the muſic is wild and irregular, extremely pleaſant to the natives, but little reliſhed by the bulk of thoſe who are accuſtomed to the regularity of the Italian ſtyle. None but men of genius, who ſtudy nature, and break looſe from the thraldom of cuſtom, eſteem that muſic. It was a favourite of the late Geminiani, whoſe compoſitions ſhow no leſs delicacy of taſte than ſuperiority of genius, and it is warmly praiſed by Aleſſandro Taſſoni, the celebrated author of *Secchia Rapita*. Diſcourſing of ancient and modern muſic, and quoting from various authors the wonderful effects produced by ſome modern compoſitions, he ſubjoins the following paſſage. "Noi ancora poſſiamo connumerar trà noſtri, "Jacopo Rè de Scozia, che non pur coſe ſacre compoſe in canto, "ma trovò da ſeſteſſo una nuova muſica lamentevole e meſta, "differente da tutte l'altre. Nel che poi è ſtato imitato da Carlo "Geſualdo Principe di Venoſa, che in queſta noſtra età hà illu-"ſtrata anch' egli la muſica con nuova mirabili invenzioni (*a*) *."

The

(*a*) Penſieri diverſi, lib. 10. cap. 23.

* "We may reckon among the compoſers of the moderns, James King of "Scotland, who not only compoſed ſacred ſongs, but was himſelf the *inventor* of

"a

The king mentioned muſt be James I. of Scotland, the only one of our kings who ſeems to have had any remarkable taſte in the fine arts; and the muſic can be no other than the ſongs mentioned above. Theſe are commonly thought to be the compoſition of David Rizzio, becauſe he was an Italian and a muſician; but erroneouſly, as we now diſcover from Taſſoni. That King was eminent for poetry no leſs than for muſic. He is praiſed for the former by Biſhop Leſlie, one of our hiſtorians, in the following words: "Patrii carminis gloriâ nulli ſecundus." We have many poems aſcribed by tradition to that king; one in particular, *Chriſt's Kirk on the Green*, is a ludicrous poem, deſcribing low manners with no leſs propriety than ſprightlineſs.

Uſeful arts will never be neglected in a country where there is any police; for every man finds his account in them. Fine arts are more precarious. They are not reliſhed but by perſons of taſte, who are rare; and ſuch as can ſpare great ſums for ſupporting them, are ſtill more rare. For that reaſon they will never flouriſh in any country, unleſs patronized by the ſovereign, or by men of power and opulence. They merit ſuch patronage as one of the ſprings of government: and a capital ſpring they make, by multiplying amuſements, and humanizing manners; upon which account they have always been encouraged by good princes.

"a new ſtyle of muſic, plaintive and pathetic, different from all others. In this "manner of compoſition he has been imitated in our times by Carlo Geſualdo "Prince of Venoſa, who has illuſtrated that ſtyle of muſic with new and wonderful "invention."

SKETCH