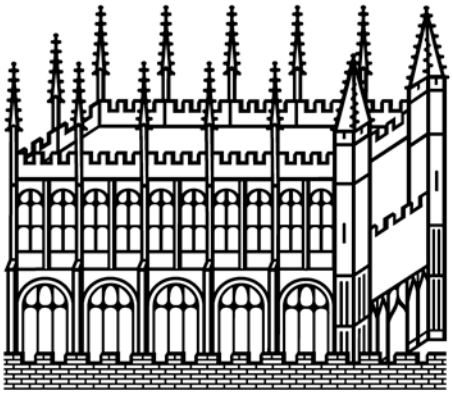

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DEPARTMENT OF
THE HISTORY OF ART
OXFORD

nem.

ΓLEY,

THE LIFE

AND

WRITINGS

OF

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"Animo vidit, ingenio complexus est, eloquentiâ illuminavit."

Velleius Paterculus in Ciceronem.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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INTRODUCTION.

It cannot be considered as superfluous or assuming to present the reader of the following lectures with a succinct characteristic sketch of the principal technic instruction, ancient and modern, which we possess: I say, a sketch, for an elaborate and methodical survey, or a plan well digested and strictly followed, would demand a volume. These observations, less written for the man of letters and cultivated taste, than for the student who wishes to inform himself of the history and progress of his art, are to direct him to the sources from which my principles are deduced, to enable him, by comparing my authors with myself, to judge how far the theory which I deliver, may be depended on as genuine, or ought to be rejected as erroneous or false.

The works, or fragments of works, which we possess, are either purely elementary, critically historical, biographic, or mixed up of all three. On the books purely elementary, the van of which is led by Lionardo da Vinci and Albert Durer, and the rear by Gherard Lairesse, as the principles which they detail must be supposed to be already in the student's possession, or are occasionally interwoven with the topics of the Lectures, I shall not expatiate, but immediately proceed to the historically critical writers; who consist of all the ancients yet remaining, Pausanias excepted.

We may thank Destiny that, in the general wreck of ancient art, a sufficient number of entire and mutilated monuments have escaped the savage rage of barbarous conquest, and the still more savage hand of superstition, not only to prove that the principles which we deliver, formed the body of ancient art, but to furnish us with their standard of style. For if we had nothing to rely on to prove its existence than the historic and critical information left us, such is the chaos of assertion and contradiction, such the chronologic confusion, and dissonance of dates, that nothing short of a miracle could

guide us through the labyrinth, and the whole would assume a fabulous aspect. Add to this the occupation and character of the writers, none of them a professional man. For the rules of Parrhasius, the volumes of Pamphilus, Apelles, Metrodorus, all irrecoverably lost, we must rely on the hasty compilations of a warrior, or the incidental remarks of an orator, Pliny and Quintilian. Pliny, authoritative in his verdicts, a Roman in decision, was rather desirous of knowing much, than of knowing well; the other, though, as appears, a man of exquisite taste, was too much occupied by his own art to allow ours more than a rapid glance. In Pliny, it is necessary, and for an artist not very difficult, to distinguish when he speaks from himself and when he delivers an extract, however short; whenever he does the first, he is seldom able to separate the kernel from the husk; he is credulous, irrelevant, ludicrous. The Jupiter of Phidias, the Doryphorus of Polycletus, the Aphrodite of Praxiteles, the Demos of Parrhasius, the Venus of Apelles, provoke his admiration in no greater degree than the cord drawn over the horns and muzzle of the bull in the group of Amphion, Zetus, and

Antiope; the spires and windings of the serpents in that of the Laocoon, the effect of the foam from the sponge of Protogenes, the partridge in his Jalysus, the grapes that imposed on the birds, and the curtain which deceived Zeuxis. Such is Pliny when he speaks from himself, or perhaps from the hints of some Dilettante; but when he delivers an extract, his information is not only essential and important, but expressed by the most appropriate words. Such is his account of the glazing-method of Apelles, in which, as Reynolds has observed, he speaks the language of an artist; such is what he says of the manner in which Protogenes embodied his colours, though it may require the practice of an artist to penetrate his meaning. No sculptor could describe better in many words than he does in one, the manœuvre by which Nicias gave the decided line of correctness to the models of Praxiteles; the word *circumlitio*, shaping, rounding the moist clay with the finger, is evidently a term of art. Thus when he describes the method of Pausias, who, in painting a sacrifice, foreshortened the bull and threw his shade on part of the surrounding crowd, he throws before us the

depths of the scenery and its forcible chiaroscuro; nor is he less happy, at least in my opinion, when he translates the deep aphorism by which Eupompus directed Lysippus to recur to Nature, and to animate the rigid form with the air of life.

In his dates he seldom errs, and sometimes adjusts or corrects the errors of Greek chronology, though not with equal attention; for whilst he exposes the impropriety of ascribing to Polycletus a statue of Hephestion, the friend of Alexander, who lived a century after him, he thinks it worth his while to repeat that Erynna, the contemporary of Sappho, who lived nearly as many years before him, celebrated in her poems a work of his friend and fellow-scholar Myron of Eleutheræ. His text is at the same time so deplorably mutilated that it often equally defies conjecture and interpretation. Still, from what is genuine it must be confessed that he condenses in a few chapters the contents of volumes, and fills the whole atmosphere of art. Whatever he tells, whether the most puerile legend, or the best attested fact, he tells with dignity.

Of Quintilian, whose information is all rela-

tive to style, the tenth chapter of the twelfth book, a passage on Expression in the eleventh, and scattered fragments of observations analogous to the process of his own art, is all that we possess; but what he says, though comparatively small in bulk with what we have of Pliny, leaves us to wish for more. His review of the revolutions of style in painting, from Polygnotus to Apelles, and in sculpture from Phidias to Lysippus, is succinct and rapid; but though so rapid and succinct, every word is poised by characteristic precision, and can only be the result of long and judicious inquiry, and perhaps even minute examination. His theory and taste savour neither of the antiquary nor the mere Dilettante; he neither dwells on the infancy of art with doating fondness, nor melts its essential and solid principles in the crucibles of merely curious or voluptuous execution.

Still less in volume, and still less intentional are the short but important observations on the principals of art and the epochs of style, scattered over nearly all the works of Cicero, but chiefly his Orator and Rhetoric Institutions. Some of his introductions to these books might furnish the classic scenery of Poussin with

figures; and though he seems to have had little native taste for painting and sculpture, and even less than he had taste for poetry, he had a conception of nature; and, with his usual acumen, comparing the principles of one art with those of another, frequently scattered useful hints, or made pertinent observations. For many of these he might probably be indebted to Hortensius, with whom, though his rival in eloquence, he lived on terms of familiarity, and who was a man of declared taste and one of the first collectors of the time.

Pausanias, the Cappadocian, was certainly no critic, and his credulity is at least equal to his curiosity; he is often little more than a nomenclator, and the indiscriminate chronicler of legitimate tradition and legendary trash; but the minute and scrupulous diligence with which he examined what fell under his own eye, amply makes up for what he may want of method or of judgment. His description of the pictures of Polygnotus at Delphi, and of the Jupiter of Phidias at Olympia, are perhaps superior to all that might have been given by men of more assuming powers, mines of information, and inestimable legacies to our arts.

The Heroics of the elder, and the Eicones, or Picture Galleries of the elder and younger Philostratus, though perhaps not expressly written for the artist, and rather to amuse than to instruct, cannot be sufficiently consulted by the epic or dramatic artist. The Heroics furnish the standard of form and habits for the Grecian and Troic warriors, from Protesilaus to Paris and Euphorbus; and he who wishes to acquaint himself with the limits the ancients prescribed to invention, and the latitude they allowed to expression, will find no better guide than an attentive survey of the subjects displayed in their galleries.

Such are the most prominent features of ancient criticism, and those which we wish the artist to be familiar with; the innumerable hints, maxims, anecdotes, descriptions, scattered over Lucian, Aelian, Athenæus, Achilles, Tatius, Tatian, Pollux, and many more, may be consulted to advantage by the man of taste and letters, and probably may be neglected without much loss by the student.

Of modern writers on art, Vasari leads the van; theorist, artist, critic, and biographer in one. The history of modern art owes no doubt

much to Vasari; he leads us from its cradle, to its maturity, with the anxious diligence of a nurse, but he likewise has her derelictions; for more loquacious than ample, and less discriminating styles than eager to accumulate descriptions, he is at an early period exhausted by the superlatives lavished on inferior claims, and forced into frigid rhapsodies and astrologic nonsense to do justice to the greater. He swears by the divinity of M. Agnolo. He tells us himself that he copied every figure of the Capella Sistina and the Stanze of Raffaello; yet his memory was either so treacherous,* or his rapidity in writing so inconsiderate, that his account of both is a mere heap of errors and unpardonable confusion; and one might almost fancy that he had never entered the Vatican. Of Correggio he leaves us less informed than of Apelles. Even Bottari, the learned editor of his work, his countryman and advocate against the complaints of Agostino

* There will be an opportunity to notice that incredible dereliction of reminiscence which prompted him to transfer what he had rightly ascribed to Giorgione, in the Florentine edition, 1550, to the elder Palma in the subsequent ones. See Lecture on Chiaroscuro.

Carracci and Federigo Zucchero, though ever ready to fight his battles, is at a loss to account for his mistakes. He has been called the Herodotus of our art, and if the main simplicity of his narrative, and the desire of heaping anecdote on anecdote, entitle him in some degree to that appellation, we ought not to forget, that the information of every day adds something to the authenticity of the Greek historian, whilst every day furnishes matter to question the credibility of the Tuscan.

What we find not in Vasari it is useless to search for amid the rubbish of his contemporaries or followers, from Condivi to Ridolfi, and on to Malvasia, whose criticism on the style of Lodovico Carracci and his pupils in the cloisters of St. Michele in Bosco, near Bologna, amount to little more than a sonorous rhapsody of ill applied or empty metaphors and extravagant praise; till the appearance of Lanzi, who in his 'Storia Pittorica della Italia,' has availed himself of all the information existing in his time, has corrected most of those who wrote before him, and though perhaps not possessed of great discriminative powers, has accumulated more instructive

anecdotes, rescued more deserving names from oblivion, and opened a wider prospect of art than all his predecessors.*

The French critics composed a complete sys-

* It ought not, however, to be disguised, that the history of art, deviating from its real object, has been swelled to a diffuse catalogue of individuals, who, being the nurslings of different schools, or picking something from the real establishers of art, have done little more than repeat or mimic rather than imitate, at second hand, what their masters or predecessors had found in nature, discriminated and applied to art in obedience to its dictates. Without depreciating the merits of that multitude who strenuously passed life in following others, it must be pronounced a task below history to allow them more than a transitory glance; neither novelty nor selection and combination of scattered materials, are entitled to serious attention from him who only investigates the real progress of art, if novelty is proved to have added nothing essential to the system, and selection to have only diluted energy, and by a popular amalgama to have been content with captivating the vulgar. Novelty, without enlarging the circle of fancy, may delight, but is nearer allied to whim than to invention; and an Eccletic system without equality of parts, as it originated in want of comprehension, totters on the brink of mediocrity, sinks art, or splits it into crafts decorated with the specious name of schools, whose members, authorized by prescript, emboldened by dexterity of hand, encouraged by ignorance, or heading a cabal, subsist on mere repetition, with few more legitimate claims to the honours of history than a rhapsodist to those of the poem which he recites.

tem of rules. Du Fresnoy spent his life in composing and revising general aphorisms in Latin classic verse; some on granted, some on disputable, some on false principles. Though Horace was his model, neither the Poet's language nor method have been imitated by him. From Du Fresnoy himself, we learn not what is essential, what accidental, what superinduced, in style; from his text none ever rose practically wiser than he sat down to study it: if he be useful, he owes his usefulness to the penetration of his English commentator; the notes of Reynolds, treasures of practical observation, place him among those whom we may read with profit. What can be learnt from precept, founded on prescriptive authority, more than on the verdicts of nature, is displayed in the volumes of De Piles and Felibien; a system, as it has been followed by the former students of their academy, and sent out with the successful combatants for the premium to their academic establishment at Rome, to have its efficiency proved by the contemplation of Italian style and execution. The timorous candidates for fame, knowing its rules to be the only road to success at their return, whatever be

their individual bent of character, implicitly adopt them, and the consequence is, as may be supposed, that technical equality, which borders on mediocrity. After an exulting and eager survey of the wonders the place exhibits, they all undergo a similar course of study. Six months are allotted to the Vatican, and in equal portions divided between the Fierté of M. Agnolo, and the more correct graces of Raffaello; the next six months are in equal intervals devoted to the academic powers of Annibale Carracci, and the purity of the antique.

About the middle of the last century the German critics, established at Rome, began to claim the exclusive privilege of teaching the art, and to form a complete system of antique style. The verdicts of Mengs and Winkelmann became the oracles of Antiquaries, Dilettanti, and artists from the Pyrenees to the utmost North of Europe, have been detailed, and are not without their influence here. Winkelmann was the parasite of the fragments that fell from the conversation or the tablets of Mengs, a deep scholar, and better fitted to comment a classic than to give lessons on art and

style, he reasoned himself into frigid reveries and Platonic dreams on beauty. As far as the taste or the instructions of his tutor directed him, he is right, whenever they are, and between his own learning and the tuition of the other, his history of art delivers a specious system and a prodigious number of useful observations. He has not, however, in his regulation of epochs, discriminated styles, and masters, with the precision, attention, and acumen, which from the advantages of his situation and habits might have been expected; and disappoints us as often by meagreness, neglect, and confusion, as he offends by laboured and inflated rhapsodies on the most celebrated monuments of art. To him Germany owes the shackles of her artists, and the narrow limits of their aim; from him they have learnt to substitute the means for the end, and by a hopeless chace after what they call beauty, to lose what alone can make beauty interesting, expression and mind. The works of Mengs himself are no doubt full of the most useful information, deep observation, and often consummate criticism. He has traced and distinguished the principles of the moderns from those of the

ancients; and in his comparative view of the design, colour, composition, and expression of Raffaello, Correggio and Tiziano, with luminous perspicuity and deep precision, pointed out the prerogative or inferiority of each. As an artist he is an instance of what perseverance, study, experience and encouragement can achieve to supply the place of genius.

Of English critics, whose writings preceded the present century, whether we consider solidity of theory or practical usefulness, the last is undoubtedly the first. To compare Reynolds with his predecessors would equally disgrace our judgment and impeach our gratitude. His volumes can never be consulted without profit, and should never be quitted by the student's hand, but to embody by exercise the precepts he gives and the means he points out.

FIRST LECTURE.

ANCIENT ART.

Ταυτα μεν οὐν πλαστων και γραφεων και ποιητων παιδες ἐργασονται. ὁ δε πασιν ἐπανθει τουτοις, ἡ χαρις, μαλλον δε ἁπασαι ἁμα, ὁποσαι χαριτες, και ὁποσοι ἐρωτες περίχορευοντες. τις ἀν μιμησασθαι δυναιτο;

ΛΟΥΚΙΑΝΟΥ Σαμ. εἰκονες.

ARGUMENT.

Introduction. Greece the legitimate parent of the Art.— Summary of the local and political causes. Conjectures on the mechanic process of the Art. Period of preparation — Polygnotus — essential style — Apollodorus — characteristic style. Period of establishment — Zeuxis, Parrhasius, Timanthes. Period of refinement — Eupompus Apelles, Aristides, Euphranor.

FIRST LECTURE.

THE difficulties of the task prescribed to me, if they do not preponderate are at least equal to the honour of the situation. If, to discourse on any topic with truth, precision, and clearness, before a mixed or fortuitous audience, before men neither initiated in the subject, nor rendered minutely attentive by expectation, be no easy task, how much more arduous must it be to speak systematically on an art, before a select assembly, compossed of *Professors* whose life has been divided between theory and practice, of *Critics* whose taste has been refined by contemplation and comparison, and of *Students*, who, bent on the same pursuit, look for the best and always most compendious method of mastering the principles, to arrive at its emoluments and honours. Your lecturer is to in-

struct *them* in the principles of 'composition; to form their taste for design and colouring; to strengthen their judgment; to point out to them the beauties and imperfections of celebrated works of art; and the particular excellencies and defects of great masters; and finally, to lead them into the readiest and most efficacious paths of study.'* If, Gentlemen, these directions presuppose in the student a sufficient stock of elementary knowledge, an expertness in the rudiments, not mere wishes but a peremptory will of improvement, and judgment with docility; how much more do they imply in the person selected to address them — knowledge founded on theory, substantiated and matured by practice, a mass of select and well digested materials, perspicuity of method and command of words, imagination to place things in such views as they are not commonly seen in, presence of mind, and that resolution, the result of conscious vigour, which, in daring to correct errors, cannot be easily discountenanced. — As conditions like these would discourage abilities far superior to mine, my hopes

* Abstract of the Laws of the Royal Academy, article *Professors*; page 21.

of approbation, moderate as they are, must in a great measure depend on that indulgence which may grant to my will what it would refuse to my powers.

Before I proceed to the history of Style itself, it seems to be necessary that we should agree about the terms which denote its object and perpetually recur in treating of it; that my vocabulary of technic expression should not clash with the dictionary of my audience; mine is nearly that of your late president. I shall confine myself at present to a few of the most important; the words nature, beauty, grace, taste, copy, imitation, genius, talent. Thus, by *nature* I understand the general and permanent principles of visible objects, not disfigured by accident, or distempered by disease, not modified by fashion or local habits. Nature is a collective idea, and, though its essence exist in each individual of the species, can never in its perfection inhabit a single object. On *beauty* I do not mean to perplex you or myself with abstract ideas, and the romantic reveries of platonic philosophy, or to inquire whether it be the result of a simple or complex principle. As a local idea, beauty is a despotic

princess, and subject to the anarchies of despotism, enthroned to-day, dethroned to-morrow. The beauty we acknowledge is that harmonious whole of the human frame, that unison of parts to one end, which enchants us; the result of the standard set by the great masters of our art, the ancients, and confirmed by the submissive verdict of modern imitation. By *grace* I mean that artless balance of motion and repose sprung from character, founded on propriety, which neither falls short of the demands nor overleaps the modesty of nature. Applied to execution, it means that dexterous power which hides the means by which it was attained, the difficulties it has conquered. When we say *taste*, we mean not crudely the knowledge of what is right in art: taste estimates the degrees of excellence, and by comparison proceeds from justness to refinement. Our language, or rather those who use it, generally confound, when speaking of the art, *copy* with *imitation*, though essentially different in operation and meaning. Precision of eye and obedience of hand are the requisites of the former, without the least pretence to choice, what to select, what to reject; whilst choice directed by

judgment or taste constitutes the essence of imitation, and alone can raise the most dexterous copyist to the noble rank of an artist. The imitation of the ancients was, *essential, characteristic, ideal.* The first cleared nature of accident, defect, excrescence; the second found the stamen which connects character with the central form; the third raised the whole and the parts to the highest degree of unison. Of *genius* I shall speak with reserve, for no word has been more indiscriminately confounded; by genius I mean that power which enlarges the circle of human knowledge, which discovers new materials of nature, or combines the known with novelty, whilst *talent* arranges, cultivates, polishes the discoveries of genius.

Guided by these preliminaries we now approach that happy coast, where, from an arbitrary hieroglyph, the palliative of ignorance, from a tool of despotism, or a ponderous monument of eternal sleep, art emerged into life, motion, and liberty; where situation, climate, national character, religion, manners and government conspired to raise it on that permanent basis, which after the ruins of the fabric itself, still subsists and bids defiance to the rava-

ges of time; as uniform in the principle as various in its applications, the art of the Greeks possessed in itself and propagated, like its chief object Man, the germs of immortality.

I shall not detail here the reasons and the coincidence of fortunate circumstances which raised the Greeks to be the arbiters of form. * The standard they erected, the cannon they framed, fell not from Heaven: but as they fancied themselves of divine origin, and *Religion* was the first mover of their art, it followed that they should endeavour to invest their authors with the most perfect form; and as Man possesses that exclusively, they were led to a complete and intellectual study of its elements and constitution; this, with their *climate*, which allowed that form to grow, and to show itself to the greatest advantage; with their *civil* and *political* institutions, which established and encouraged exercises and manners best calculated to develope its powers; and above all that simplicity of their end, that uniformity of pur-

* This has been done in a superior manner by J. G. Herder, in his *Ideen zur Philosophie der geschichte der Menschheit*, Vol. iii. Book 13; a work translated under the title of *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, 4to.

suit which in all its derivations retraced the great principle from which it sprang, and like a central stamen drew it out into one immense connected web of congenial imitation; these, I say, are the reasons why the Greeks carried the art to a height which no subsequent time or race has been able to rival or even to approach.

Great as these advantages were, it is not to be supposed that Nature deviated from her gradual progress in the developement of human faculties, in favour of the Greeks. Greek Art had her infancy, but the Graces rocked the cradle, and Love taught her to speak. If ever legend deserved our belief, the amorous tale of the Corinthian maid, who traced the shade of her departing lover by the secret lamp, appeals to our sympathy, to grant it; and leads us at the same time to some observations on the first mechanical essays of Painting, and that *linear method* which, though passed nearly unnoticed by *Winkelmann*, seems to have continued as the basis of execution, even when the instrument for which it was chiefly adapted had long been laid aside.

The etymology of the word used by the

Greeks to express *Painting* being the same with that which they employ for *Writing*, makes the similarity of tool, materials, method, almost certain. The tool was a style or pen of wood or metal; the materials a board, or a levigated plane of wood, metal, stone, or some prepared compound; the method, letters or lines.

The first essays of the art were *Skiagrams*, simple outlines of a shade, similar to those which have been introduced to vulgar use by the students and parasites of Physiognomy, under the name of Silhouettes; without any other addition of character or feature but what the profile of the object, thus delineated could afford.

The next step of the art was the *Monogram*, outlines of figures without light or shade, but with some addition of the parts within the outline, and from that to the *Monochrom*, or paintings of a single colour on a plane or tablet, primed with white, and then covered with what they called punic wax, first amalgamated with a tough resinous pigment, generally of a red, sometimes dark brown, or black colour. *In*, or rather *through* this thin inky ground, the outlines were traced with a firm but pliant

style, which they called *Cestrum;* if the traced line happened to be incorrect or wrong, it was gently effaced with the finger or with a sponge, and easily replaced by a fresh one. When the whole design was settled, and no farther alteration intended, it was suffered to dry, was covered, to make it permanent, with a brown encaustic varnish, the lights were worked over again, and rendered more brilliant with a point still more delicate, according to the gradual advance from mere outlines to some indications, and at last to masses of light and shade, and from those to the superinduction of different colours, or the invention of the *Polychrom*, which by the addition of the *pencil* to the style, raised the mezzotinto or stained drawing to a legitimate picture, and at length produced that vaunted *harmony*, the magic scale of Grecian colour. *

If this conjecture, for it is not more, on the process of linear painting, formed on the evidence and comparison of passages always unconnected, and frequently contradictory, be

* This account is founded on the conjectures of Mr. *Riem*, in his Treatise on *die Malerey der Alten*, or the *Painting of the Ancients*, 4to. Berlin, 1787.

founded in fact, the rapturous astonishment at the supposed momentaneous production of the Herculanean dancers and the figures on the earthern vases of the ancients, will cease; or rather, we shall no longer suffer ourselves to be deluded by palpable impossibility of execution: on a ground of levigated lime or on potters ware, no velocity or certainty attainable by human hands can conduct a full pencil with that degree of evenness equal from beginning to end with which we see those figures executed, or if it could, would ever be able to fix the line on the glassy surface without its flowing: to make the appearances we see, possible, we must have recourse to the linear process that has been described, and transfer our admiration, to the perseverance, the correctness of principle, the elegance of taste that conducted the artist's hand, without presuming to arm it with contradictory powers: the figures he drew and we admire, are not the magic produce of a winged pencil, they are the result of gradual improvement, exquisitely finished *monochroms.*

How long the pencil continued only to assist, when it began to engross and when it at last entirely supplanted the cestrum, cannot in

the perplexity of accidental report be ascertained. Apollodorus in the 93d Olymp. and Zeuxis in the 94th, are said to have used it with freedom and with power. The battle of the Lapithæ and the Centaurs, which according to Pausanias, Parrhasius painted on the shield of the Minerva of Phidias, to be chased by Mys, could be nothing but a monochrom, and was probably designed with the cestrum, as an instrument of greater accuracy.* Apelles and Protogenes, nearly a century afterwards, drew their contested lines with the pencil; and that alone, as delicacy and evanescent subtlety were the characteristic of those lines, may give an idea of their mechanic excellence. And yet in their time the *diagraphic* process,† which is

* Pausanias Attic. c. xxviii. The word used by Pausanias καταγραψαι, shows that the figures of Parrhasius were intended for a Bassorelievo. They were in profile. This is the sense of the word *Catagrapha* in Pliny, xxxv. c. 8, he translates it "obliquas imagines."

† By the authority chiefly of Pamphilus the master of Apelles, who taught at Sicyon. 'Hujus auctoritate,' says Pliny, xxxv. 10, 'effectum est Sicyone primum, deinde et in tota Græcia, ut pueri ingenui ante omnia *diagraphicen*, hoc est, picturam in buxo, docerentur,' &c. *Harduin*, contrary to the common editions, reads indeed, and by the authority, he says, of all the MSS. *graphicen*, which he

the very same with the *linear* one we have described, made a part of liberal education. And Pausias of Sicyon, the contemporary of Apelles, and perhaps the greatest master of composition amongst the ancients, when employed to repair the decayed pictures of Polygnotus at Thespiæ, was adjudged by general opinion to have egregiously failed in the attempt, because he had substituted the pencil to the cestrum, and entered a contest of superiority with weapons not his own.

Here it might seem in its place to say something on the Encaustic method used by the ancients; were it not a subject by ambiguity of expression and conjectural dispute so involved in obscurity that a true account of its process must be despaired of: the most probable idea we can form of it is, that it bore some resemblance to our oil-painting, and that the name was adopted to denote the use of

translates: ars 'delineandi,' desseigner, but he has not proved that graphice means not more than design; and if he had, what was it that Pamphilus taught? he was not the inventor of what he had been taught himself. He established or rather renewed a particular method of drawing, which contained the rudiments, and facilitated the method of painting.

materials, inflammable or prepared by fire, the supposed durability of which, whether applied hot or cold, authorised the terms ἐνεκαυσε and *inussit.*

The first great name of that epoch of the preparatory period when facts appear to overbalance conjecture, is that of Polygnotus of Thasos, who painted the poecile at Athens, and the lesche or public hall at Delphi. Of these works, but chiefly of the two large pictures at Delphi, which represented scenes subsequent to the eversion of Troy, and Ulysses consulting the spirit of Tiresias in hades, Pausanias* gives a minute and circumstantial detail; by which we are led to surmise, that what is now called composition was totally wanting in them as a whole: for he begins his description at one end of the picture, and finishes it at the opposite extremity, a senseless method if we suppose that a central group, or a principal figure to which the rest were in a certain degree subordinate, attracted the eye; it appears as plain that they had no perspective, the series of figures on the second or middle ground being described as placed above those

* Pausan. Phocica, c. xxv. seq.

on the foreground, and the figures in the distance above the whole: the honest method too which the painter chose of annexing to many of his figures, their names in writing, savours much of the infancy of painting.—We should however be cautious to impute solely to ignorance or imbecility, what might rest on the firm base of permanent principle. The genius of Polygnotus was more than that of any other artist before or after, Phidias perhaps alone excepted, a public genius, his works monumental works, and these very pictures the votive offerings of the Gnidians. The art at that summit, when exerting its powers to record the feats, consecrate the acts, perpetuate the rites, propagate the religion, or to disseminate the peculiar doctrines of a nation, heedless of the rules prescribed to inferior excellence and humbler pursuits, returns to its elements, leaps strict possibility, combines remote causes with present effects, connects local distance and unites separate moments. — Simplicity, parallelism, apposition, take place of variety, contrast, and composition. — Such was the Lesche painted by Polygnotus; and if we consider the variety of powers that distinguished many of the parts,

we must incline to ascribe the primitive arrangement of the whole rather to the artist's choice and lofty simplicity, than want of comprehension: nature had endowed him with that rectitude of taste which in the individuum discovers the stamen of the genus, hence his style of design was essential with glimpses of *grandeur* * and ideal beauty. Polygnotus, says Aristotle, *improves* the model. His invention reached the conception of undescribed being, in the dæmon Eurynomus; filled the chasm of description in Theseus and Pirithous, in Ariadne and Phædra; and improved its terrors in the spectre of Tityus; whilst colour to assist it, became in his hand an organ of expression; such was the prophetic glow which still *crimsoned* the cheeks of his Cassandra in

* This I take to be the sense of Μεγεθος here, which distinguished him, according to Ælian, Var. Hist. iv. 3, from Dionysius of Colophon. The word Τελειοις in the same passage: και ἐν τοις τελειοις εἰργαζετο τα ἀθλα, I translate: *he aimed at, he sought his praise in the representation of essential proportion;* which leads to ideal beauty.

The χρειττους, χειρους, ὁμοιους; or the βελτιονας ἡ καθ' ἡμας, ἡκαι τοιουτους, ἡ χειρονας, of Aristotle, Poetic. c. 2, by which he distinguishes Polygnotus, Dionysius, Pauson, confirms the sense given to the passage of Ælian.

the time of Lucian.* The improvements in painting which Pliny ascribes to him, of having dressed the heads of his females in variegated veils and *bandeaus*, and robed them in lucid drapery, of having gently opened the lips, given a glimpse of the teeth, and lessened the former monotony of face, such improvements, I say, were surely the most trifling part of a power to which the age of Apelles and that of Quintilian paid equal homage: nor can it add much to our esteem for him, to be told by Pliny that there existed, in the portico of Pompey, a picture of his with the figure of a warrior in an attitude so ambiguous as to make it a question whether he were ascending or descending. Such a figure could only be the

* Παρειῶν το ἐνερευθες, οἱαν την Κασσανδραν ἐν τη λεσχη ἐποιησε τοις Δελφοις. Lucian: εἰκονες. This, and what Pausanias tells of the colour of Eurynomus in the same picture, together with the coloured draperies mentioned by Pliny; makes it evident, that the 'simplex color' ascribed by Quintilian to Polygnotus and Aglaophon, implies less a single colour, as some have supposed, than that simplicity always attendant on the infancy of painting, which leaves every colour unmixed and crudely by itself. Indeed the *Poecile* (ἡ ποικιλη στοα) which obtained its name from his pictures, is alone a sufficient proof of variety of colours.

offspring of mental or technic imbecility, even if it resembled the celebrated one of a Diomede carrying off the palladium with one and holding a sword in the other hand, on the intaglio inscribed, I think, with the name of Dioscorides.

With this simplicity of manner and materials the art seems to have proceeded from Polygnotus, Aglaophon, Phidias, Panænus, Colotes, and Evenor, the father of Parrhasius, during a period of more or less disputed Olympiads, to the appearance of Apollodorus the Athenian, who applied the essential principles of Polygnotus to the delineation of the species, by investigating the leading forms that discriminate the various classes of human qualities and passions. The acuteness of his taste led him to discover that as all men were connected by one general form, so they were separated each by some predominant power, which fixed character and bound them to a class: that in proportion as this specific power partook of individual peculiarities, the farther it was removed from a share in that harmonious system which constitutes nature, and consists in a due balance of all its parts; thence he drew his line

of imitation, and personified the central form of the class, to which his object belonged; and to which the rest of its qualities administered without being absorbed: agility was not suffered to destroy firmness, solidity, or weight; nor strength and weight agility; elegance did not degenerate to effeminacy, or grandeur swell to hugeness; such were his principles of style: his expression extended them to the mind, if we may judge from the two subjects mentioned by Pliny, in which he seems to have personified the characters of devotion and impiety; *that*, in the adoring figure of a priest, perhaps of Chryses, expanding his gratitude at the shrine of the God whose arrows avenged his wrongs and restored his daughter: and *this*, in the figure of Ajax wrecked, and from the sea-swept rock hurling defiance unto the murky sky. As neither of these subjects can present themselves to a painter's mind without a contrast of the most awful and terrific tones of colour, magic of light and shade, and unlimited command over the tools of art, we may with Pliny and with Plutarch consider Apollodorus as the first assertor of the pencil's honours, as the first colourist of his age, and the

man who opened the gates of art which the Heracleot Zeuxis entered.*

From the essential style of Polygnotus and the specific discrimination of Apollodorus, Zeuxis, by comparison of what belonged to the genus and what to the class, framed at last that ideal form, which in his opinion, constituted the supreme degree of human beauty, or in other words, embodied possibility, by uniting the various but homogeneous powers scattered among many, in one object, to one end. Such a system, if it originated in genius,

* Hic primus species exprimere instituit, Pliny xxxv. 36., as *species* in the sense Harduin takes it, 'oris et habitus venustas,' cannot be refused to Polygnotus, and the artists immediately preceding Apollodorus, it must mean here the subdivisions of generic form; the classes.

At this period we may with probability fix the invention of local colour, and tone; which, though strictly speaking it be neither the light nor the shade, is regulated by the medium which tinges both. This, Pliny calls 'splendour.' To Apollodorus Plutarch ascribes likewise the invention of tints, the mixtures of colour and the gradations of shade, if I conceive the passage rightly: Ἀπολλοδωρος ὁ Ζωγραφος Ἀνθρωπων πρωτος ἐξευρων φθοραν και ἀποχρωσιν Σκιας, (Plutarch, Bellone an pace Ath., &c. 346.) This was the element of the ancient Ἁρμογη, that imperceptible transition, which, without opacity, confusion, or hardness, united local colour, demitint, shade, and reflexes.

was the considerate result of taste refined by the unremitting perseverance with which he observed, consulted, compared, selected the congenial but scattered forms of nature. Our ideas are the offspring of our senses, we are not more able to create the form of a being, we have not seen, without retrospect to one we know, than we are able to create a new sense. He whose fancy has conceived an idea of the most beautiful form must have composed it from actual existence, and he alone can comprehend what one degree of beauty wants to become equal to another, and at last superlative. He who thinks the pretty handsome, will think the handsome a beauty, and fancy he has met an ideal form in a merely handsome one, whilst he who has compared beauty with beauty, will at last improve form upon form to a perfect image; this was the method of Zeuxis, and this he learnt from Homer, whose mode of ideal composition, according to Quintilian, he considered as his model. Each individual of Homer forms a class, expresses and is circumscribed by one quality of heroic power; Achilles alone unites their various but congenial energies. The grace of Nireus, the dignity of Agamemnon,

the impetuosity of Hector, the magnitude, the steady prowess of the great, the velocity of the lesser Ajax, the perseverance of Ulysses, the intrepidity of Diomede, are emanations of energy that reunite in one splendid centre fixed in Achilles. This standard of the unison of homogeneous powers exhibited in *successive action* by the poet, the painter, invigorated no doubt by the contemplation of the works of Phidias, transferred to his own art and substantiated by *form*, when he selected the congenial beauties of Croton to compose a perfect female. Like Phidias too, he appears to have been less pathetic than sublime, and even in his female forms more ample and august than elegant or captivating: his principle was epic, and this Aristotle either considered not or did not comprehend, when he refuses him the expression of character in action and feature: Jupiter on his throne encircled by the celestial synod, and Helen, the arbitress of Troy, contained probably the principal elements of his style; but he could trace the mother's agitation in Alcmena, and in Penelope the pangs of wedded love.

On those powers of his invention which

Lucian relates in the memoir inscribed with the name of Zeuxis, I shall reserve my observations for a fitter moment. Of his colour we know little, but it is not unreasonable to suppose that it emulated the beauties and the grandeur of his design; and that he extended light and shade to masses, may be implied from his peculiar method of painting monochroms on a black ground, adding the lights in white.*

The correctness of Parrhasius succeeded to the genius of Zeuxis. He circumscribed his ample style, and by subtle examination of outline established that standard of divine and heroic form which raised him to the authority of a legislator from whose decisions there was no appeal. He gave to the divine and heroic character in painting, what Polycletus had given to the human in sculpture, by his Doryphorus, a canon of proportion. Phidias had discovered in the nod of the Homeric Jupiter the characteristic of majesty, *inclination of the head:* this hinted to him a higher elevation of the neck behind, a bolder protrusion of the front, and the increased perpendicular of the

* 'Pinxit et monochromata ex albo.' Pliny, xxxv. 9. This Aristotle, Poet. c. 6, calls λευκογραφειν.

profile. To this conception Parrhasius fixed a maximum; that point from which descends the ultimate line of celestial beauty, the angle within which moves what is inferior, beyond which what is portentous. From the head conclude to the proportions of the neck, the limbs, the extremities; from the father to the race of gods; all, the sons of one, Zeus; derived from one source of tradition, Homer; formed by one artist, Phidias: on him measured and decided by Parrhasius. In the simplicity of this principle, adhered to by the succeeding periods, lies the uninterrupted progress and the unattainable superiority of Grecian art. With this prerogative, which evidently implies a profound as well as general knowledge of the parts, how are we to reconcile the criticism passed on the intermediate parts of his forms as inferior to their outline? or how could Winkelmann, in contradiction with his own principles, explain it, by a want of anatomic knowledge?* how is

* In lineis extremis palmam adeptus——minor tamen videtur, sibi comparatus, in mediis corporibus exprimendis. Pliny, xxxv. 10. Here we find the inferiority of the middle parts merely relative to himself. Compared with himself, Parrhasius was not all equal.

it possible to suppose that he who decided his outline with such intelligence that it appeared ambient, and pronounced the parts that escaped the eye, should have been uninformed of its contents? let us rather suppose that the defect ascribed to the intermediate forms of his bodies, if such a fault there was, consisted in an affectation of smoothness bordering on insipidity, in something effeminately voluptuous, which absorbed their character and the idea of elastic vigour; and this Euphranor seems to have hinted at, when in comparing his own Theseus with that of Parrhasius, he pronounced the Ionian's to have fed on roses, his own on flesh:* emasculate softness was not, in his opinion, the proper companion of the contour, or flowery freshness of colour an adequate substitute for the sterner tints of heroic form.

None of the ancients seem to have united or wished to combine as man and artist, more qualities seemingly incompatible than Parrhasius.—The volubility and ostentatious insolence of an Asiatic with Athenian simplicity and urbanity of manners; punctilious correctness with

* Theseus, in quo dixit, eundem apud Parrhasium rosa pastum esse, suum vero carne. Plin. xxxv. 11.

blandishments of handling and luxurious colour, and with sublime and pathetic conception, a fancy libidinously sportive.* If he was not the inventor, he surely was the greatest master of allegory, supposing that he really embodied by signs universally comprehended that image of the Athenian ΔΗΜΟΣ or people, which was to combine and to express at once its contradictory qualities. Perhaps he traced the jarring branches to their source, the aboriginal moral principle of the Athenian character, which he made intuitive. This supposition alone can shed a dawn of possibility on what else appears impossible. We know that the personification of the Athenian Δημος was an object of sculpture, and that its images by Lyson and Leo-

* The epithet which he gave to himself of Ἀβροδιαιτος, the delicate, the elegant, and the epigram he is said to have composed on himself, are known: See Athenæus, l. xii. He wore, says Ælian, Var. Hist. ix. 11. a purple robe and a golden garland; he bore a staff wound round with tendrils of gold, and his sandals were tied to his feet and ankles with golden straps. Of his easy simplicity we may judge from his dialogue with Socrates in Xenophon; ἀπομνημονευατων, l. iii. Of his libidinous fancy, besides what Pliny says, from his Archigallus, and the Meleager and Atalanta mentioned by Suetonius in Tiberio, c. 44.

chares* were publicly set up; but there is no clue to decide whether they preceded or followed the conceit of Parrhasius. It was repeated by Aristolaus, the son of Pausias.

The decided forms of Parrhasius, Timanthes the Cythnian, his competitor for fame, attempted to inspire with mind and to animate with passions. No picture of antiquity is more celebrated than his immolation of Iphigenia in Aulis, painted, as Quintilian informs us, in contest with Colotes of Teos, a painter and sculptor from the school of Phidias; crowned with victory at its rival exhibition, and since, the theme of unlimited praise from the orators and historians of antiquity, though the solidity or justice of their praise relatively to our art, has been questioned by modern criticism. On this subject, which not only contains the gradations of affection from the most remote to the closest link of humanity, but appears to me to offer the fairest specimen of the limits which

* In the portico of the Piræus by Leochares; in the hall of the Five-hundred, by Lyson; in the back portico of the Ceramicus there was a picture of Theseus, of Democracy and the Demos, by Euphranor. Pausan. Attic. i. 3. Aristolaus, according to Pliny, was a painter, 'è severissimis.'

the theory of the ancients had prescribed to the expression of pathos, I think it my duty the more circumstantially to expatiate, as the censure passed on the method of Timanthes, has been sanctioned by the highest authority in matters of art, that of your late President, in his eighth discourse at the delivery of the academic prize for the best picture painted from this very subject.

How did Timanthes treat it? Iphigenia, the victim ordained by the oracle to be offered for the success of the Greek expedition against Troy, was represented standing ready for immolation at the altar, the priest, the instruments of death at her side; and around her, an assembly of the most important agents or witnesses of the terrible solemnity, from Ulysses, who had disengaged her from the embraces of her mother at Mycenæ, to her nearest male relations, her uncle Menelaus, and her own father, Agamemnon. Timanthes, say Pliny and Quintilian with surprising similarity of phrase, when, in gradation he had consumed every image of grief within the reach of art, from the unhappy priest, to the deeper grief of Ulysses, and from that to the pangs of kindred sympa-

thy in Menelaus, unable to express *with dignity* the father's woe, threw a veil, or if you will, a mantle over his face.———This mantle, the pivot of objection, indiscriminately borrowed, as might easily be supposed, by all the concurrents for the prize, gave rise to the following series of criticisms:

"Before I conclude, I cannot avoid making one observation on the pictures now before us. I have observed, that every candidate has copied the celebrated invention of Timanthes in hiding the face of Agamemnon in his mantle; indeed such lavish encomiums have been bestowed on this thought, and that too by men of the highest character in critical knowledge, —Cicero, Quintilian, Valerius Maximus, and Pliny,—and have been since re-echoed by almost every modern that has written on the Arts, that your adopting it can neither be wondered at, nor blamed. It appears now to be so much connected with the subject, that the spectator would perhaps be disappointed in not finding united in the picture what he always united in his mind, and considered as indispensably belonging to the subject. But it may be observed, that those who praise this circum-

stance were not painters. They use it as an illustration only of their own art; it served their purpose, and it was certainly not their business to enter into the objections that lie against it in another Art. I fear *we* have but very scanty means of exciting those powers over the imagination, which make so very considerable and refined a part of poetry. It is a doubt with me, whether we should even make the attempt. The chief, if not the only occasion which the painter has for this artifice, is, when the subject is improper to be more fully represented, either for the sake of decency, or to avoid what would be disagreeable to be seen; and this is not to raise or increase the passions, which is the reason that is given for this practice, but on the contrary to diminish their effect.

"Mr. Falconet has observed, in a note on this passage in his translation of Pliny, that the circumstance of covering the face of Agamemnon was probably not in consequence of any fine imagination of the painter, — which he considers as a discovery of the critics, — but merely copied from the description of the sacrifice, as it is found in Euripides.

"The words from which the picture is supposed to be taken, are these: *Agamemnon saw Iphigenia advance towards the fatal altar; he groaned, he turned aside his head, he shed tears, and covered his face with his robe.*

"Falconet does not at all acquiesce in the praise that is bestowed on Timanthes; not only because it is not his invention, but because he thinks meanly of this trick of concealing, except in instances of blood, where the objects would be too horrible to be seen; but, says he, 'in an afflicted Father, in a King, in Agamemnon, you, who are a painter, conceal from me the most interesting circumstance, and then put me off with sophistry and a veil. You are (he adds) a feeble painter, without resources: you do not know even those of your Art. I care not what veil it is, whether closed hands, arms raised, or any other action that conceals from me the countenance of the Hero. You think of veiling Agamemnon; you have unveiled your own ignorance.'

"To what Falconet has said, we may add, that supposing this method of leaving the expression of grief to the imagination, to be, as it was thought to be, the invention of the painter,

and that it deserves all the praise that has been given it, still it is a trick that will serve but once; whoever does it a second time, will not only want novelty, but be justly suspected of using artifice to evade difficulties.

If difficulties overcome make a great part of the merit of Art, difficulties evaded can deserve but little commendation."

To this string of animadversions, I subjoin with diffidence the following observations:

The subject of Timanthes was the immolation of Iphigenia; Iphigenia was the principal figure, and her form, her resignation, or her anguish the painter's principal task; the figure of Agamemnon, however important, is merely accessory, and no more necessary to make the subject a completely tragic one, than that of Clytemnestra the mother, no more than that of Priam, to impress us with sympathy at the death of Polyxena. It is therefore a misnomer of the French critic, to call Agamemnon 'the hero' of the subject.

Neither the French nor the English critic appears to me to have comprehended the real motive of Timanthes, as contained in the words, '*decere, pro dignitate,* and *digne,*' in the pas-

sages of Tully, Quintilian, and Pliny;* they ascribe to impotence what was the forbearance of judgment; Timanthes felt like a father: he did not hide the face of Agamemnon, because it was beyond the power of his art, not because it was beyond the *possibility*, but because it was beyond the *dignity* of expression, because the inspiring feature of paternal affection at that moment, and the action which of necessity must have accompanied it, would either have destroyed the grandeur of the character and the solemnity of the scene, or

* Cicero *Oratore*, 73. seq.—In alioque ponatur, aliudque totum sit, utrum *decere* an *oportere* dicas; *oportere* enim, perfectionem declarat officii, quo et semper utendum est, et omnibus: *decere*, quasi aptum esse, consentaneumque tempori et personæ; quod cum in factis sæpissime, tum in dictis valet, in vultu denique, et gestu, et incessu. Contraque item *dedecere*. Quod si poeta fugit, ut maximum vitium, qui peccat, etiam, cum probam orationem affingit improbo, stultove sapientis: si denique pictor ille vidit, cum immolanda Iphigenia tristis Calchas esset, mœstior Ulysses, mœreret Menelaus, obvolvendum caput Agamemnonis esse, quoniam summum illum luctum penicillo, non posset imitari: si denique histrio, quid deceat quærit: quid faciendum oratori putemus?

M. F. Quintilianus, l. ii. c. 14.—Operienda sunt quædam, sive ostendi non debent, sive exprimi *pro dignitate* non possunt: ut fecit Timanthes, ut opinor, Cithnius, in ea

subjected the painter with the majority of his judges to the imputation of insensibility. He must either have represented him in tears, or convulsed at the flash of the raised dagger, forgetting the chief in the father, or shown him absorbed by despair, and in that state of stupefaction, which levels all features and deadens expression; he might indeed have chosen a fourth mode, he might have exhibited him fainting and palsied in the arms of his attendants, and by this confusion of male and

tabula qua Coloten Tejum vicit. Nam cum in Iphigeniæ immolatione pinxisset tristem Calchantem, tristiorem Ulyssem, addidisset Menelao quem summum poterat ars efficere mœrorem, consumptis affectibus, non reperiens quo *dignè* modo Patris vultum possit exprimere, velavit ejus caput, et sui cuique animo dedit æstimandum.

It is evident to the slightest consideration, that both Cicero and Quintilian lose sight of their premises, and contradict themselves in the motive they ascribe to Timanthes. Their want of acquaintance with the nature of plastic expression made them imagine the face of Agamemnon beyond the power of the artist. They were not aware that by making him waste expression on inferior actors at the expence of a principal one, they call him an improvident spendthrift and not a wise œconomist.

From Valerius Maximus, who calls the subject 'Luctuosum *immolatæ* Iphigeniæ sacrificium' instead of *immolandæ*, little can be expected to the purpose. Pliny, with the *dignè* of Quintilian has the same confusion of motive.

female character, merited the applause of every theatre at Paris. But Timanthes had too true a sense of nature to expose a father's feelings or to tear a passion to rags; nor had the Greeks yet learnt of Rome to steel the face. If he made Agamemnon bear his calamity as a man, he made him also feel it as a man. It became the leader of Greece to sanction the ceremony with his presence, it did not become the father to see his daughter beneath the dagger's point: the same nature that threw a real mantle over the face of Timoleon, when he assisted at the punishment of his brother, taught Timanthes to throw an imaginary one over the face of Agamemnon; neither height nor depth, *propriety* of expression was his aim.

The critic grants that the expedient of Timanthes may be allowed in 'instances of blood,' the supported aspect of which would change a scene of commiseration and terror into one of abomination and horror, which ought for ever to be excluded from the province of art, of poetry as well as painting: and would not the face of Agamemnon, uncovered, have had this effect? was not the scene he must have witnessed a scene of blood? and whose blood was

to be shed? that of his own daughter—and what daughter? young, beautiful, helpless, innocent, resigned,—the very idea of resignation in such a victim, must either have acted irresistibly to procure her relief, or thrown a veil over a father's face. A man who is determined to sport wit at the expence of heart alone could call such an expedient ridiculous —'as ridiculous,' Mr. Falconet continues, 'as a poet would be, who in a pathetic situation, instead of satisfying my expectation, to rid himself of the business, should say, that the sentiments of his hero are so far above whatever can be said on the occasion, that he shall say nothing.' And has not Homer, though he does not tell us this, acted upon a similar principle? has he not, when Ulysses addresses Ajax in Hades, in the most pathetic and conciliatory manner, instead of furnishing him with an answer, made him remain in indignant silence during the address, then turn his step and stalk away? has not the universal voice of genuine criticism with Longinus told us, and if it had not, would not Nature's own voice tell us, that that silence was characteristic, that it precluded, included, and soaring above all answer, con-

signed Ulysses for ever to a sense of inferiority? Nor is it necessary to render such criticism contemptible to mention the silence of Dido in Virgil, or the Niobe of Æschylus, who was introduced veiled, and continued mute during her presence on the stage.

But in hiding Agamemnon's face, Timanthes loses the honour of invention, as he is merely the imitator of Euripides, who did it before him?* I am not prepared with chronologic proofs to decide whether Euripides or Timanthes, who were contemporaries, about the period of the Peloponnesian war, fell first on this expedient; though the silence of Pliny and Quintilian on that head, seems to be in favour of the painter, neither of whom could be ignorant of the celebrated drama of Euripides, and would not willingly have suffered the honour

* It is observed by an ingenious Critic, that in the tragedy of Euripides, the procession is described, and upon Iphigenia's looking back on her father, he groans, and hides his face to conceal his tears; whilst the picture gives the moment that precedes the sacrifice, and the hiding has a different object and arises from another impression.

——— ὡς δ'εσειδεν Αγαμεμνων αναξ
ἐπι σφαγας στειχουσαν εἰς ἁλσος κορην
ἀνεστεναξε. Καμπαλιν στρεψας καρα
Δακρυα προηγεν. ὀμματων πεπλον προθεις.

of this master-stroke of an art they were so much better acquainted with than painting, to be transferred to another from its real author, had the poet's claim been prior: nor shall I urge that the picture of Timanthes was crowned with victory by those who were in daily habits of assisting at the dramas of Euripides, without having their verdict impeached by Colotes or his friends, who would not have failed to avail themselves of so flagrant a proof of inferiority as the want of invention, in the work of his rival:—I shall only ask, what is invention? if it be the combination of the most important moment of a fact with the most varied effects of the reigning passion on the characters introduced—the invention of Timanthes consisted in showing, by the gradation of that passion in the faces of the assistant mourners, the *reason why that of the principal* one, *was hid.* This he performed, and this the poet, whether prior or subsequent, did not and could not do, but left it with a silent appeal to our own mind and fancy.

In presuming to differ on the propriety of this mode of expression in the picture of Timanthes from the respectable authority I have quoted, I am far from a wish to invalidate the

equally pertinent and acute remarks made on the danger of its imitation, though I am decidedly of opinion that it is strictly within the limits of our art. If it be a 'trick,' it is certainly one that 'has served more than once.' We find it adopted to express the grief of a beautiful female figure on a basso-relievo formerly in the palace Valle at Rome, and preserved in the Admiranda of S. Bartoli; it is used, though with his own originality, by Michael Angelo in the figure of Abijam, to mark unutterable woe; Raphael, to show that he thought it the best possible mode of expressing remorse and the deepest sense of repentance, borrowed it in the expulsion from Paradise, without any alteration, from Masaccio; and like him, turned Adam out with both his hands before his face. And how has he represented Moses at the burning bush, to express the astonished awe of human in the visible presence of divine nature? by a double repetition of the same expedient; once in the ceiling of a Stanza, and again in the loggia of the Vatican, with both his hands before his face, or rather with his face immersed in his hands. As we cannot suspect in the master of expression the unworthy motive

of making use of this mode merely to avoid a difficulty, or to denote the insupportable splendour of the vision, which was so far from being the case, that, according to the sacred record, Moses stepped out of his way to examine the ineffectual blaze: we must conclude that Nature herself dictated to him this method as superior to all he could express by features; and that he recognized the same dictate in Masaccio, who can no more be supposed to have been acquainted with the precedent of Timanthes, than Shakspeare with that of Euripides, when he made Macduff draw his hat over his face.

Masaccio and Raphael proceeded on the principle, Gherard Lairesse copied only the image of Timanthes, and has perhaps incurred by it the charge of what Longinus calls *parenthyrsos*, in the ill-timed application of supreme pathos, to an inadequate call. Agamemnon is introduced covering his face with his mantle, at the death of Polyxena, the captive daughter of Priam, sacrificed to the manes of Achilles, her betrothed lover, treacherously slain in the midst of the nuptial ceremony, by her brother Paris. The death of Polyxena, whose charms

had been productive of the greatest disaster that could befall the Grecian army, could not perhaps provoke in its leader emotions similar to those which he felt at that of his own daughter: it must however be owned that the figure of the chief is equally dignified and pathetic; and that, by the introduction of the spectre of Achilles at the immolation of the damsel to his manes, the artist's fancy has in some degree atoned for the want of discrimination in the professor.

Such were the artists, who, according to the most corresponding data, formed the style of that second period, which fixed the end and established the limits of art, on whose firm basis arose the luxuriant fabric of the third or the period of refinement, which added grace and polish to the forms it could not surpass; amenity or truth to the tones it could not invigorate; magic and imperceptible transition to the abrupt division of masses; gave depth and roundness to composition; at the breast of Nature herself caught the passions as they rose, and familiarized expression: The period of Apelles, Protogenes, Aristides, Euphranor, Pausias, the pupils of Pamphilus and his mas-

ter Eupompus, whose authority obtained what had not been granted to his great predecessor and countryman Polycletus, the new establishment of the school of Sicyon.*

The leading principle of Eupompus may be traced in the advice which he gave to Lysippus (as preserved by Pliny), whom, when consulted on a standard of imitation, he directed to the contemplation of human variety in the multitude of the characters that were passing by, with the axiom, 'that Nature herself was to be imitated, not an artist.' Excellence, said Eupompus, is thy aim, such excellence as that of Phidias and Polycletus; but it is not obtained by the servile imitation of works, however perfect, without mounting to the principle which raised them to that height; that principle apply to thy purpose, there fix thy aim. He who, with the same freedom of access to Nature as another man, contents himself to approach her only through his medium, has resigned his birth-right and originality together; his master's manner will be his style. If Phidias and Polycletus have discovered the substance and established the permanent prin-

* Pliny, l. xxxv. c. 18.

ciple of the human frame, they have not exhausted the variety of human appearances and human character; if they have abstracted the forms of majesty and those of beauty, Nature, compared with their works, will point out a grace that has been left for thee; if they have pre-occupied man as he *is*, be thine to give him that air with which he actually *appears*.*

Such was the advice of Eupompus: less lofty, less ambitious than what the departed epoch of genius would have dictated, but better suited to the times, and better to his pupil's mind. When the spirit of liberty forsook the public, grandeur had left the private mind of Greece: subdued by Philip, the gods of Athens and Olympia had migrated to Pella, and Alexander was become the representative of Jupiter; still those who had lost the substance fondled the shadow of liberty; rhetoric mimicked the

* Lysippum Sicyonium—audendi rationem cepisse pictoris Eupompi responso. Eum enim interrogatum, quem sequeretur antecedentium, dixisse demonstrata hominum multitudine, naturam ipsam imitandam esse, non artificem. Non habet Latinum nomen symmetria, quam diligentissime custodivit, nova intactaque ratione quadratas veterum staturas permutando: Vulgoque dicebat, ab illis factos, quales essent, homines: à se, quales viderentur esse. Plin. xxxiv. 8.

thunders of oratory, sophistry and metaphysic debate that philosophy, which had guided life, and the grand taste that had dictated to art the monumental style, invested gods with human form and raised individuals to heroes, began to give way to refinements in appreciating the degrees of elegance or of resemblance in imitation: the advice of Eupompus however, far from implying the abolition of the old system, recalled his pupil to the examen of the great principle on which it had established its excellence, and to the resources which its inexhaustible variety offered for new combinations.

That Lysippus considered it in that light, his devotion to the Doryphorus of Polycletus, known even to Tully, sufficiently proved. That figure which comprised the pure proportions of juvenile vigour, furnished the readiest application for those additional refinements of variety, character, and fleshy charms, that made the base of his invention: its symmetry directing his researches amid the insidious play of accidental charms, and the claims of inherent grace, never suffered imitation to deviate into incorrectness; whilst its squareness and ele-

mental beauty melted in more familiar forms on the eye, and from an object of cold admiration became the glowing one of sympathy. Such was probably the method formed by Lysippus on the advice of Eupompus, more perplexed than explained by the superficial extract and the rapid phrase of Pliny.

From the statuary's we may form our idea of the painter's method. The doctrine of Eupompus was adopted by Pamphilus the Amphipolitan, the most scientific artist of his time, and by him communicated to Apelles of Cos, or as Lucian will have it, of Ephesus,* his pupil; in whom, if we believe tradition, Nature exhibited, *once*, a specimen what her union with education and circumstances could produce. The name of Apelles in Pliny is the synonyme of unrivalled and unattainable excellence, but the enumeration of his works points out the modification which we ought to apply to that superiority; it neither comprises exclusive sublimity of invention, the most acute discrimination of character, the widest

* Μαλλον δε Ἀπελλης ὁ Ἐφεσιος παλαι ταυτην προϋλαβε την εἰκονα· Και γαρ αὐ και ούτος διαβληθεις προς Πτολεμαιον——

Λουκιανού περι του μ. ῥ. Π. Τ. Δ.

sphere of comprehension, the most judicious and best balanced composition, nor the deepest pathos of expression: his great prerogative consisted more in the unison than in the extent of his powers; he knew better what he could do, what ought to be done, at what point he could arrive, and what lay beyond his reach, than any other artist. Grace of conception and refinement of taste were his elements, and went hand in hand with grace of execution and taste in finish; powerful and seldom possessed singly, irresistible when united: that he built both on the firm basis of the former system, not on its subversion, his well-known contest of lines with Protogenes, not a legendary tale, but a well-attested fact, irrefragably proves: what those lines were, drawn with nearly miraculous subtlety in different colours, one upon the other or rather within each other, it would be equally unavailing and useless to inquire; but the corollaries we may deduce from the contest, are obviously these, that the schools of Greece recognized all one elemental principle: that acuteness and fidelity of eye and obedience of hand form precision; precision, proportion; proportion, beauty: that it is the 'little more

or less,' imperceptible to vulgar eyes, which constitutes grace and establishes the superiority of one artist over another: that the knowledge of the degrees of things, or taste, presupposes a perfect knowledge of the things themselves: that colour, grace, and taste are ornaments not substitutes of form, expression and character, and when they usurp that title, degenerate into splendid faults.

Such were the principles on which Apelles formed his Venus, or rather the personification of Female Grace, the wonder of art, the despair of artists: whose outline baffled every attempt at emendation, whilst imitation shrunk from the purity, the force, the brilliancy, the evanescent gradations of her tints.*

The refinements of the art were by Aristides of Thebes applied to the mind. The passions which tradition had organized for Timanthes, Aristides caught as they rose from the breast or escaped from the lips of Nature herself; his volume was man, his scene society: he drew the subtle discriminations of mind in every stage of life, the whispers, the simple cry of

* Apelles was probably the inventor of what artists call *glazing*. See Reynolds on Du Fresnoy, note 37. vol. iii.

passion and its most complex accents. Such, as history informs us, was the suppliant whose voice you seemed to hear, such his sick man's half-extinguished eye and labouring breast, such Byblis expiring in the pangs of love, and above all, the half-slain mother shuddering lest the eager babe should suck the blood from her palsied nipple. This picture was probably at Thebes when Alexander sacked that town; what his feelings were when he saw it, we may guess from his sending it to Pella. Its expression, poised between the anguish of maternal affection and the pangs of death, gives to commiseration an image, which neither the infant piteously caressing his slain mother in the group of Epigonus,* nor the absorbed feature of the Niobe, nor the struggle of the Laocoon, excites. Timanthes had marked the limits that discriminate terror from the excess of horror; Aristides drew the line that separates it from disgust. His subject is one of those that touch the ambiguous line of a squeamish sense. —Taste and smell, as sources of tragic emotion, and in consequence of their power, command-

* In matri interfectæ infante miserabiliter blandiente. Plin. l. xxxiv. c. 9.

ing gesture, seem scarcely admissible in art or on the theatre, because their extremes are nearer allied to disgust, and loathsome or risible ideas, than to terror. The prophetic trance of Cassandra, who scents the prepared murder of Agamemnon at the threshold of the ominous hall; the desperate moan of Macbeth's queen on seeing the visionary spot still uneffaced infect her hand,—are images snatched from the lap of terror, — but soon would cease to be so, were the artist or the actress to inforce the dreadful hint with indiscreet expression or gesture. This, completely understood by Aristides, was as completely missed by his imitators, Raphael* in the *Morbetto*, and Poussin in his plague of the Philistines. In the group of Aristides, our sympathy is immediately interested by the mother, still alive, though mortally wounded, helpless, beautiful, and forgetting herself in the anguish for her child, whose situation still suffers hope to mingle with our fears; he is only approaching the nipple of the mother. In the group of Ra-

* A design of Raphael, representing the lues of the Trojans in Creta, known by the print of Marc Antonio Raymondi.

phael, the mother dead of the plague, herself an object of apathy, becomes one of disgust, by the action of the man, who bending over her, at his utmost reach of arm, with one hand removes the child from the breast, whilst the other, applied to his nostrils, bars the effluvia of death. Our feelings alienated from the mother, come too late even for the child, who, by his languor, already betrays the mortal symptoms of the poison he imbibed at the parent corpse. It is curious to observe the permutation of ideas which takes place, as imitation is removed from the sources of nature: Poussin, not content with adopting the group of Raphael, once more repeats the loathsome attitude in the same scene; he forgot, in his eagerness to render the idea of contagion still more intuitive, that he was averting our feelings with ideas of disgust.

The refinements of expression were carried still farther by the disciple of Aristides, Euphranor the Isthmian, who excelled equally as painter and statuary, if we may form our judgment from the Theseus he opposed to that of Parrhasius, and the bronze figure of Alexander

Paris, in whom, says Pliny,* the umpire of the goddesses, the lover of Helen, and yet the murder of Achilles might be traced. This account, which is evidently a quotation of Pliny's, and not the assumed verdict of a connoisseur, has been translated with an emphasis it does not admit of, to prove that an attempt to express different qualities or passions at once in the same object, must naturally tend to obliterate the effect of each. 'Pliny,' says our critic, 'observes, that in a statue of Paris by Euphranor, you might discover at the same time three different characters: the dignity of a judge of the goddesses, the lover of Helen, and the conqueror of Achilles. A statue in which you endeavour to unite stately dignity, youthful elegance, and stern valour, must surely possess none of these to any eminent degree.' The paraphrase, it is first to be observed, lends itself the mixtures to Pliny it disapproves of; we look in vain for the coalition of 'stately dignity, stern valour, and youthful elegance,' in

* Reynolds' Disc. V. vol. i. p. 120. Euphranoris Alexander Paris est: in quo laudatur quod omnia simul intelligantur, judex dearum, amator Helenæ, et tamen Achillis interfector. Plin. l. xxxiv. 8.

the Paris *he* describes: the murderer of Achilles was not his conqueror. But may not dignity, elegance, and valour, or any other not irreconcilable qualities, be visible at once in a figure without destroying the primary feature of its character, or impairing its expression? Let us appeal to the Apollo. Is he not a figure of character and expression, and does he not possess all three in a supreme degree? Will it imply mediocrity of conception or confusion of character, if we were to say that his countenance, attitude, and form combines divine majesty, enchanting grace, and lofty indignation? Yet not all three, one ideal whole irradiated the mind of the artist who conceived the divine semblance. He gave, no doubt, the preference of expression to the action in which the god is engaged, or rather, from the accomplishment of which he recedes with lofty and contemptuous ease.—This was the first impression which he meant to make upon us: but what contemplation stops here? what hinders us when we consider the beauty of these features, the harmony of these forms, to find in them the abstract of all his other qualities, to roam over the whole history of his atchievements? we see him enter

the celestial synod, and all the gods rise at his august appearance;* we see him sweep the plain after Daphne; precede Hector with the ægis and disperse the Greeks; strike Patroclus with his palm and decide his destiny.—And is the figure frigid because its great idea is inexhaustible? might we not say the same of the infant Hercules of Zeuxis or of Reynolds? Did not the idea of the man inspire the hand that framed the mighty child? his magnitude, his crushing grasp, his energy of will, are only the germ, the prelude of the power that rid the earth of monsters, and which our mind pursues. Such was no doubt the Paris of Euphranor: he made his character so pregnant, that those who knew his history might trace in it the origin of all his future feats, though first impressed by the expression allotted to the predominant quality and moment. The acute inspector, the elegant umpire of female form receiving the contested pledge with a dignified pause, or with enamoured eagerness presenting it to the arbitress of his destiny, was probably the predominant idea of the figure; whilst the de-

* See the Hymn (ascribed to Homer) on Apollo.

serter of Oenone, the seducer of Helen, the subtle archer, that future murderer of Achilles, lurked under the insidious eyebrow, and in the penetrating glance of beauty's chosen minion. Such appeared to me the character and expression of the sitting Paris in the voluptuous Phrygian dress, formerly in the cortile of the palace Altheims, at Rome. A figure nearly colossal, which many of you may remember, and a faint idea of whom may be gathered from the print among those in the collection published of the Museum Clementinum. A work, in my opinion, of the highest style and worthy of Euphranor, though I shall not venture to call it a repetition in marble of his bronze.

From these observations on the collateral and unsolicited beauties which must branch out from the primary expression of every great idea, it will not, I hope, be suspected, that I mean to invalidate the necessity of its unity, or to be the advocate of pedantic subdivision. All such division diminishes, all such mixtures impair the simplicity and clearness of expression: in the group of the Laocoon, the frigid ecstasies of German criticism have discovered pity like a vapour swimming on the father's eyes;

he is seen to suppress in the groan for his children the shriek for himself,—his nostrils are drawn upward to express indignation at unworthy sufferings, whilst he is said at the same time to implore celestial help. To these are added the winged effects of the serpent-poison, the writhings of the body, the spasms of the extremities: to the miraculous organization of such expression, Agesander, the sculptor of the Laocoon, was too wise to lay claim. His figure is a class, it characterizes every beauty of virility verging on age; the prince, the priest, the father are visible, but, absorbed in the man, serve only to dignify the victim of *one* great expression; though poised by the artist, for us to apply the compass to the face of the Laocoon, is to measure the wave fluctuating in the storm: this tempestuous front, this contracted nose, the immersion of these eyes, and above all, that long-drawn mouth, are separate and united, seats of convulsion, features of nature struggling within the jaws of death.

SECOND LECTURE.

ART OF THE MODERNS.

'ΟΙΤΙΝΕΣ ΗΓΕΜΟΝΕΣ ΚΑΙ ΚΟΙΡΑΝΟΙ ΗΣΑΝ.
ΠΛΗΘΥΝ Δ' ΟΥΚ ΑΝ ΕΓΩ ΜΥΘΗΣΟΜΑΙ ΟΥΔ' ΟΝΟΜΗΝΩ
ΟΥΔ' ΕΙ ΜΟΙ ΔΕΚΑ ΜΕΝ ΓΛΩΣΣΑΙ, ΔΕΚΑ ΔΕ ΣΤΟΜΑΤ' ΕΙΕΝ,
ΦΩΝΗ Δ' ΑΡΡΗΚΤΟΣ.

Homer. Iliad. B. 487.

ARGUMENT.

Introduction — different direction of the art. Preparative style—Masaccio—Lionardo da Vinci. Style of establishment — Michael Angelo, Raphael, Titiano, Correggio. Style of refinement, and depravation. Schools—of Tuscany, Rome, Venice, Lombardy. The Eclectic school—Machinists. The German school — Albert Durer. The Flemish school—Rubens. The Dutch school—Rembrant. Observations on art in Switzerland. The French school. The Spanish school. England — Conclusion.

SECOND LECTURE.

In the preceding discourse I have endeavoured to impress you with the general features of ancient art in its different periods of preparation, establishment and refinement. We are now arrived at the epoch of its restoration in the fifteenth century of our æra, when religion and wealth rousing emulation, reproduced its powers, but gave to their exertion a very different direction. The reigning church found itself indeed under the necessity of giving more splendour to the temples and mansions destined to receive its votaries, of subduing their senses with the charm of appropriate images and the exhibition of events and actions, which might stimulate their zeal and inflame their hearts: but the sacred mysteries of Divine Being, the method adopted by Revelation, the duties its doctrine imposed,

the virtues it demanded from its followers, faith, resignation, humility, sufferings, substituted a medium of art as much inferior to the resources of Paganism in a physical sense as incomparably superior in a spiritual one. Those public customs, that perhaps as much tended to spread the infections of vice as they facilitated the means of art, were no more; the heroism of the Christian and his beauty were internal, and powerful or exquisite forms allied him no longer exclusively to his God. The chief repertory of the artist, the sacred records, furnished indeed a sublime cosmogony, scenes of patriarchal simplicity and a poetic race, which left nothing to regret in the loss of heathen mythology; but the stem of the nation whose history is its exclusive theme, if it abounded in characters and powers fit for the exhibition of passions, did not teem with forms sufficiently exalted to inform the artist and elevate the art. Ingredients of a baser cast mingled their alloy with the materials of grandeur and of beauty. Monastic legend and the rubric of martyrology claimed more than a legitimate share from the labours of the pencil and the chisel, made nudity the exclusive property of emaciated hermits or decrepit age, and if the breast of man-

hood was allowed to bare its vigour, or beauty to expand her bosom, the antidotes of terror and of horror were ready at their side to check the apprehended infection of their charms. When we add to this the heterogeneous stock on which the reviving system of arts was grafted, a race indeed inhabiting a genial climate, but itself the fœces of barbarity, the remnants of Gothic adventurers, humanised only by the cross, mouldering amid the ruins of the temples they had demolished, the battered fragments of the images their rage had crushed, — when we add this, I say, we shall less wonder at the languor of modern art in its rise and progress, than be astonished at the vigour by which it adapted and raised materials partly so unfit and defective, partly so contaminated, to the magnificent system which we are to contemplate.

Sculpture had already produced respectable specimens of its reviving powers in the basso-relievos of Lorenzo Ghiberti, some works of Donato, and the Christ of Philippo Brunelleschi,* when the first symptoms of imitation

* See the account of this in Vasari; vita di P. Brunelleschi, tom. ii. 114. It is of wood, and still exists in the chapel of the family Gondi, in the church of S. Maria Novella. I know that near a century before Donato, Giotto is

appeared in the frescoes of Tommaso da St. Giovanni, commonly called Masaccio, from the total neglect of his appearance and person.* Masaccio first conceived that parts are to constitute a whole; that composition ought to have a centre; expression, truth; and execution, unity: his line deserves attention, though his subjects led him not to investigation of form, and the shortness of his life forbade his extending those elements which Raphael, nearly a century afterward, carried to perfection — it is sufficiently glorious for him to have been more than once copied by that great master of expression, and in some degree to have been the herald of his style: Masaccio lives more in the figure of Paul preaching on the areopágus, of the celebrated cartoon in our possession, and in the borrowed figure of Adam expelled from paradise in the loggia of the Vatican, than in his own mutilated or retouched remains.

said to have worked in marble two basso-relievoes on the campanile of the cathedral of Florence; they probably excel the style of his pictures as much as the bronze works executed by Andrea Pisani, from his designs, at the door of the Battisterio.

* Masaccio da S. Giovanni di Valdarno born in 1402, is said to have died in 1443. He was the pupil of Masolino da Panicale.

The essays of Masaccio in imitation and expression, Andrea Mantegna* attempted to unite with form; led by the contemplation of the antique, fragments of which he ambitiously scattered over his works: though a Lombard, and born prior to the discovery of the best ancient statues, he seems to have been acquainted with a variety of characters, from forms that remind us of the Apollo, Mercury or Meleager, down to the fauns and satyrs: but his taste was too crude, his fancy too grotesque, and his comprehension too weak to advert from the parts that remained to the whole that inspired them: hence in his figures of dignity or beauty we see not only the meagre forms of common models, but even their defects tacked to ideal Torsos; and his fauns and satyrs, instead of native luxuriance of growth and the sportive appendages of mixed being, are decorated with heraldic excrescences and arabesque absurdity. His triumphs are known to you all; they are a copious inventory of classic lumber, swept to-

* Andrea Mantegna died at Mantoua, 1505. A monument erected to his memory in 1517, by his sons, gave rise to the mistake of dating his death from that period.

gether with more industry than taste, but full of valuable materials. Of expression he was not ignorant: his burial of Christ furnished Raphael with the composition, and some of the features and attitudes in his picture on the same subject in the palace of the Borgheses, — the figure of St. John, however, left out by Raphael, proves that Mantegna sometimes mistook grimace for the highest degree of grief. His oil-pictures exhibit little more than the elaborate anguish of missal-painting; his frescoes, destroyed at the construction of the Clementine museum, had freshness, freedom, and imitation.

To Luca Signorelli, of Cortona,* nature more than atoned for the want of those advantages which the study of the antique had offered to Andrea Mantegna. He seems to have been the first who contemplated with a discriminating eye his object, saw what was accident and what essential; balanced light and shade, and decided the motion of his figures. He foreshortened with equal boldness and intelligence, and thence it is, probably, that Vasari fancies to have discovered in the last

* Luca Signorelli died at Cortona 1521, aged 82.

judgment of Michael Angelo traces of imitation from the Lunetta, painted by Luca, in the church of the Madonna, at Orvieto; but the powers which animated him there, and before at Arezzo, are no longer visible in the Gothic medley with which he filled two compartments in the chapel of Sixtus IV. at Rome.

Such was the dawn of modern art, when Lionardo da Vinci * broke forth with a splendour which distanced former excellence: made up of all the elements that constitute the essence of genius, favoured by education and circumstances, all ear, all eye, all grasp; painter, poet, sculptor, anatomist, architect, engineer, chemist, machinist, musician, man of science, and sometimes empiric,† he laid hold of every

* Lionardo da Vinci is said to have died in 1517, aged 75, at Paris.

† The flying birds of paste, the lions filled with lilies, the lizards with dragons' wings, horned and silvered over, savour equally of the boy and the quack. It is singular enough that there exists not the smallest hint of Lorenzo de Medici having employed or noticed a man of such powers and such early celebrity; the legend which makes him go to Rome with Juliano de Medici at the access of Leo X., to accept employment in the Vatican, whether sufficiently authentic or not, furnishes a characteristic trait of the man. The Pope passing through the room allotted for the pictures, and instead of designs and

beauty in the enchanted circle, but without exclusive attachment to one, dismissed in her turn each. Fitter to scatter hints than to teach by example, he wasted life, insatiate, in experiment. To a capacity which at once penetrated the principle and real aim of the art, he joined an inequality of fancy that at one moment lent him wings for the pursuit of beauty, and the next, flung him on the ground to crawl after deformity: we owe him chiaroscuro with all its magic, we owe him caricature with all its incongruities. His notions of the most elaborate finish and his want of perseverance were at least equal:—want of perseverance alone could make him abandon his cartoon destined for the great council-chamber at Florence, of which the celebrated contest of horsemen was

cartoons, finding nothing but an apparatus of distillery, of oils and varnishes, exclaimed, *Oimè, costui non è per far nulla, da che comincia a pensare alla fine innanzi il principio dell' opera!* From an admirable sonnet of Lionardo, preserved by Lomazzo, he appears to have been sensible of the inconstancy of his own temper, and full of wishes, at least, to correct it.

Much has been said of the honour he received by expiring in the arms of Francis I. It was indeed an honour, by which destiny in some degree atoned to that monarch for his future disaster at Pavia.

but one group; for to him who could organize that composition, Michael Angelo himself ought rather to have been an object of emulation than of fear: and that he was able to organize it, we may be certain from the remaining imperfect sketch in the 'Etruria Pittrice;' but still more from the admirable print of it by Edelinck, after a drawing of Rubens, who was Lionardo's great admirer, and has said much to impress us with the beauties of his Last Supper in the refectory of the Dominicans at Milano, the only one of his great works which he carried to ultimate finish, through all its parts, from the head of Christ to the least important one: it perished soon after him, and we can estimate the loss only from the copies that survive.

Bartolomeo della Porta, or di S. Marco, the last master of this period,* first gave gradation to colour, form, and masses to drapery, and a grave dignity, till then unknown, to execution. If he were not endowed with the versatility and comprehension of Lionardo, his principles were less mixed with base matter and less apt to mislead him. As a member of a religious

* Frà Bartolomeo died at Florence 1517, at the age of 48.

order, he confined himself to subjects and characters of piety; but the few nudities which he allowed himself to exhibit, show sufficient intelligence and still more style: he fore-shortened with truth and boldness, and whenever the figure did admit of it, made his drapery the vehicle of the limb it invests. He was the true master of Raphael, whom his tuition weaned from the meanness of Pietro Perugino, and prepared for the mighty style of Michael Angelo Buonarotti.

Sublimity of conception, grandeur of form, and breadth of manner are the elements of Michael Angelo's style.* By these principles he selected or rejected the objects of imitation. As painter, as sculptor, as architect, he attempted, and above any other man succeeded, to unite magnificence of plan and endless variety of subordinate parts with the utmost simplicity and breadth. His line is uniformly grand: character and beauty were admitted only as far as they could be made subservient to grandeur. The child, the female, meanness, deformity, were by him indiscriminately

* Michael Angelo Buonarotti, born at Castel-Caprese in 1474, died at Rome 1564, aged 90.

stamped with grandeur. A beggar rose from his hand the patriarch of poverty; the hump of his dwarf is impressed with dignity; his women are moulds of generation; his infants teem with the man; his men are a race of giants. This is the 'terribil via' hinted at by Agostino Carracci, though perhaps as little understood by the Bolognese as by the blindest of his Tuscan adorers, with Vasari at their head. To give the appearance of perfect ease to the most perplexing difficulty, was the exclusive power of Michael Angelo. He is the inventor of epic painting, in that sublime circle of the Sistine chapel which exhibits the origin, the progress, and the final dispensations of theocracy. He has personified motion in the groups of the cartoon of Pisa; embodied sentiment on the monuments of St. Lorenzo, unravelled the features of meditation in the Prophets and Sibyls of the Sistine chapel; and in the Last Judgement, with every attitude that varies the human body, traced the master-trait of every passion that sways the human heart. Though as sculptor, he expressed the character of flesh more perfectly than all who went before or came after him, yet he never submitted to copy an

individual; Julio the second only excepted, and in him he represented the reigning passion rather than the man.* In painting he contented himself with a negative colour, and as the painter of mankind, rejected all meretricious ornament.† The fabric of St. Peter, scattered into infinity of jarring parts by Bra-

* Like Silanion—'Apollodorum fecit, fictorem et ipsum, sed inter cunctos diligentissimum artis et inimicum sui judicem, crebro perfecta signa frangentem, dum satiare cupiditatem nequit artis, et ideo insanum cognominatum. Hoc in eo expressit, nec hominem ex ære fecit sed Iracundiam.' Plin. l. xxxiv. 7.

† When M. Angelo pronounced oil-painting to be *Arte da donna e da huomini agiati e infingardi*, a maxim to which the fierce Venetian manner has given an air of paradox, he spoke relatively to fresco: it was a lash on the short-sighted insolence of Sebastian del Piombo, who wanted to persuade Paul III. to have the Last Judgement painted in oil. That he had a sense for the beauties of oil-colour, its glow, its juice, its richness, its pulp, the praises which he lavished on Titiano, whom he called the only painter, and his patronage of Frà Sebastian himself, evidently prove. When young, M. Angelo attempted oil-painting with success; the picture painted for Angelo Doni is an instance, and probably the only entire work of the kind that remains. The Lazarus, in the picture destined for the cathedral at Narbonne, rejects the claim of every other hand. The Leda, the cartoon of which, formerly in the palace of the Vecchietti at Florence, is now in the possession of W. Lock, Esq. was painted in distemper (a tempera); all small or large oil-pictures

mante and his successors, he concentrated; suspended the cupola, and to the most complex gave the air of the most simple of edifices. Such, take him all in all, was M. Angelo, the salt of art: sometimes he no doubt had his moments of dereliction, deviated into manner, or perplexed the grandeur of his forms with futile and ostentatious anatomy: both met with armies of copyists; and it has been his fate to have been censured for their folly.

The inspiration of Michael Angelo was followed by the milder genius of Raphael Sanzio, * the father of dramatic painting; the painter of humanity; less elevated, less vigorous, but more insinuating, more pressing on our hearts, the warm master of our sympathies. What effect of human connexion, what feature of the mind, from the gentlest emotion to the most fervid burst of passion, has been left unobserved, has not received a characteristic stamp from that examiner of man? M. Angelo came to nature, nature came to Raphael—he trans-

shown as his, are copies from his designs or cartoons, by Marcello Venusti, Giacopo da Pontormo, Battista Franco, and Sebastian of Venice.

* Raphael Sanzio, of Urbino, died at Rome 1520, at the age of 37.

mitted her features like a lucid glass, unstained, unmodified. We stand with awe before M. Angelo, and tremble at the height to which he elevates us—we embrace Raphael, and follow him wherever he leads us. Energy, with propriety of character and modest grace, poise his line and determine his correctness. Perfect human beauty he has not represented; no face of Raphael's is perfectly beautiful; no figure of his, in the abstract, possesses the proportions that could raise it to a standard of imitation: form to him was only a vehicle of character or pathos, and to those he adapted it in a mode and with a truth which leaves all attempts at emendation hopeless. His invention connects the utmost stretch of possibility with the most plausible degree of probability, in a manner that equally surprises our fancy, persuades our judgment, and affects our heart. His composition always hastens to the most necessary point as its centre, and from that disseminates, to that leads back as rays, all secondary ones. Group, form, and contrast are subordinate to the event, and common-place ever excluded. His expression, in strict unison with and decided by character, whether calm, animated,

agitated, convulsed, or absorbed by the inspiring passion, unmixed and pure, never contradicts its cause, equally remote from tameness and grimace: the moment of his choice never suffers the action to stagnate or to expire; it is the moment of transition, the crisis big with the past and pregnant with the future. — If, separately taken, the line of Raphael has been excelled in correctness, elegance, and energy; his colour far surpassed in tone, and truth, and harmony; his masses in roundness, and his chiaroscuro in effect—considered as instruments of pathos, they have never been equalled; and in composition, invention, expression, and the power of telling a story, he has never been approached.

Whilst the superior principles of the art were receiving the homage of Tuscany and Rome, the inferior but more alluring charm of colour began to spread its fascination at Venice, from the pallet of Giorgione da Castel Franco*, and irresistibly entranced every eye that approached the magic of Titiano Vecelli

* Giorgio Barbarelli, from his size and beauty called Giorgione, was born at Castel Franco, in the territory of Venice, 1478, and died at Venice, 1511.

of Cador.* To no colourist before or after him, did Nature unveil herself with that dignified familiarity in which she appeared to Titiano. His organ, universal and equally fit for all her exhibitions, rendered her simplest to her most compound appearances with equal purity and truth. He penetrated the essence and the general principle of the substances before him, and on these established his theory of colour. He invented that breadth of local tint which no imitation has attained; and first expressed the negative nature of shade: his are the charms of glazing, and the mystery of reflexes, by which he detached, rounded, connected, or enriched his objects. His harmony is less indebted to the force of light and shade, or the artifices of contrast, than to a due balance of colour, equally remote from monotony and spots. His backgrounds seem to be dictated by nature. Landscape, whether it be considered as the transcript of a spot, or the rich combination of congenial objects, or as the scene of a phænomenon, dates its origin from him: he is the father of portrait-painting, of

* Titiano Vecelli, or, as the Venetians call him, Tiziàn, born at Cador in the Friulese, died at Venice, 1576, aged 99.

resemblance with form, character with dignity, and costume with subordination.

Another charm was yet wanting to complete the round of art—harmony: it appeared with Antonio Læti,* called Correggio, whose works it attended like an enchanted spirit. The harmony and the grace of Correggio are proverbial: the medium which by breadth of gradation unites two opposite principles, the coalition of light and darkness by imperceptible transition, are the element of his style.—This inspires his figures with grace, to this their grace is subordinate: the most appropriate, the most elegant attitudes were adopted, rejected, perhaps sacrificed to the most awkward ones, in compliance with this imperious principle: parts vanished, were absorbed, or emerged in obedience to it. This unison of a whole, predomi-

* The birth and life of Antonio Allegri, or, as he called himself, Læti, surnamed Correggio, is more involved in obscurity than the life of Apelles. Whether he was born in 1490 or 1494 is not ascertained; the time of his death in 1534 is more certain. The best account of him has undoubtedly been given by A. R. Mengs in his *Memorie concernenti la vita e le opere di Antonio Allegri denominato il Correggio.* Vol. ii. of his works, published by the Spaniard D. G. Niccola d'Azara.

nates over all that remains of him, from the vastness of his cupolâs to the smallest of his oil-pictures. — The harmony of Correggio, though assisted by exquisite hues, was entirely independent of colour: his great organ was chiaroscuro in its most extensive sense; compared with the expanse in which he floats, the effects of Lionardo da Vinci are little more than the dying ray of evening, and the concentrated flash of Giorgione discordant abruptness. The bland central light of a globe, imperceptibly gliding through lucid demitints into rich reflected shades, composes the spell of Correggio, and affects us with the soft emotions of a delicious dream.

Such was the ingenuity that prepared, and such the genius that raised to its height the fabric of modern art. Before we proceed to the next epoch, let us make an observation.

Form not your judgment of an artist from the exceptions which his conduct may furnish, from the exertions of accidental vigour, some deviations into other walks, or some unpremeditated flights of fancy, but from the predominant rule of his system, the general principle of his works. The line and style of Titian's

design, sometimes expand themselves like those of Michael Angelo. His Abraham prevented from sacrificing Isaac; his David adoring over the giant-trunk of Goliath; the Friar escaping from the murderer of his companion in the forest, equal in loftiness of conception and style of design, their mighty tone of colour and daring execution: the heads and groups of Raphael's frescoes and portraits sometimes glow and palpitate with the tints of Titian, or coalesce in masses of harmony, and undulate with graces superior to those of Correggio; who in his turn once reached the highest summit of invention, when he embodied silence and personified the mysteries of love in the voluptuous group of Jupiter and Io; and again exceeded all competition of expression in the divine features of his Ecce-Homo. But these sudden irradiations, these flashes of power are only exceptions from their wonted principles; pathos and character own Raphael for their master, colour remains the domain of Titian, and harmony the sovereign mistress of Correggio.

The resemblance which marked the two first periods of ancient and modern art vanishes altogether as we extend our view to the consi-

deration of the third, or that of refinement, and the origin of schools. The pre-eminence of ancient art, as we have observed, was less the result of superior powers, than of simplicity of aim and uniformity of pursuit. The Helladic and the Ionian schools appear to have concurred in directing their instruction to the grand principles of form and expression: this was the stamen which they drew out into one immense connected web. The talents that succeeded genius, applied and directed their industry and polish to decorate the established system, the refinements of taste, grace, sentiment, colour, adorned beauty, grandeur, and expression. The Tuscan, the Roman, the Venetian, and the Lombard schools, whether from incapacity, want of education, of adequate or dignified encouragement, meanness of conception, or all these together, separated, and in a short time substituted the medium for the end. Michael Angelo lived to see the electric shock which his design and style had given to art, propagated by the Tuscan and Venetian schools, as the ostentatious vehicle of puny conceits and emblematic quibbles, or the palliative of empty pomp and degraded luxuriance of colour. He

had been copied but was not imitated by Andrea Vannucchi, surnamed Del Sarto, who in his series of pictures on the life of John the Baptist, in preference adopted the meager style of Albert Durer. The artist who appears to have penetrated deepest to his mind, was Pelegrino Tibaldi, of Bologna;* celebrated as the painter of the frescoes in the academic institute of that city, and as the architect of the Escurial under Philip II. The compositions, groups, and single figures of the institute exhibit a singular mixture of extraordinary vigour and puerile imbecility of conception, of character and caricature, of style and manner. Polypheme groping at the mouth of his cave for Ulysses, and Æolus granting him favourable winds, are striking instances of both: than the Cyclops, Michael Angelo himself never conceived a form of savage energy, with attitude and limbs more in unison; whilst the god of winds is degraded to a scanty and ludicrous semblance of Thersites, and Ulysses with his companions travestied by the semi-barbarous look and costume of the age of Constantine or Attila; the manner of Michael

* Pelegrino Tibaldi died at Milano in 1592, aged 70.

Angelo is the style of Pelegrino Tibaldi; from him Golzius, Hemskerk, and Spranger borrowed the compendium of the Tuscan's peculiarities. With this mighty talent, however, Michael Angelo seems not to have been acquainted, but by that unaccountable weakness incident to the greatest powers, and the severe remembrancer of their vanity, he became the superintendant and assistant tutor of the Venetian Sebastiano*, and of Daniel Ricciarelli, of Volterra†; the first of whom, with an exquisite eye for individual, had no sense for ideal colour, whilst the other rendered great diligence and much anatomical erudition, useless by meagerness of line and sterility of ideas: how far Michael Angelo succeeded in initiating either in his principles, the far-famed pictures of the resuscitation of Lazarus, by the first, once in the cathedral of Narbonne, and since inspected by us all at the Lyceum here,‡ and the fresco of the descent from the cross, in the church of La Trinità del Monte, at Rome,

* Sebastiano, afterwards called Del Piombo from the office of the papal signet, died at Rome in 1547, aged 62.

† Daniel Ricciarelli, of Volterra, died in 1566, aged 57.

‡ Now the first ornament of the exquisite collection of J. J. Angerstein, Esq.—Since purchased for the National Gallery.—EDITOR.

by the second, sufficiently evince: pictures which combine the most heterogeneous principles. The group of Lazarus in Sebastian del Piombo's and that of the women, with the figure of Christ, in Daniel Ricciarelli's, not only breathe the sublime conception that inspired, but the master-hand that shaped them: offsprings of Michael Angelo himself, models of expression, style, and breadth, they cast on all the rest an air of inferiority, and only serve to prove the incongruity of partnership between unequal powers; this inferiority however is respectable, when compared with the depravations of Michael Angelo's style by the remainder of the Tuscan school, especially those of Giorgio Vasari,* the most superficial artist and the most abandoned mannerist of his time, but the most acute observer of men and the most dextrous flatterer of princes. He overwhelmed the palaces of the Medici and of the popes, the convents and churches of Italy, with a deluge of mediocrity, commended by rapidity and shameless 'bravura' of hand: he alone did more work than all the artists of Tuscany together, and to him may be truly applied,

* Giorgio Vasari, of Arezzo, died in 1584, aged 68.

what he had the insolence to say of Tintoretto, that he turned the art into a boy's toy.

Whilst Michael Angelo was doomed to lament the perversion of his style, death prevented Raphael from witnessing the gradual decay of his. The exuberant fertility of Julio Pipi called Romano,* and the less extensive but classic taste of Polydoro da Caravagio deserted indeed the standard of their master, but with a dignity and magnitude of compass which command respect. It is less from his tutored works in the Vatican, than from the colossal conceptions, the pathetic or sublime allegories, and the voluptuous reveries which enchant the palace del T, near Mantoua, that we must form our estimate of Julio's powers; they were of a size to challenge all competition, had he united purity of taste and delicacy of mind with energy and loftiness of thought; as they are, they resemble a mighty stream, sometimes flowing in a full and limpid vein, but oftener turbid with rubbish. He has left specimens of composition from the most sublime to the most extravagant; to a primeval simplicity of

* Julio Pipi, called Romano, died at Mantoua in 1546, aged 54.

conception in his mythologic subjects, which transports us to the golden age of Hesiod, he joined a rage for the grotesque; to uncommon powers of expression a decided attachment to deformity and grimace, and to the warmest and most genial imagery the most ungenial colour.

With nearly equal, but still more mixed fertility, Francesco Primaticcio* propagated the style and the conceptions of his master Julio on the Gallic side of the Alps, and with the assistance of Nicolo, commonly called Dell' Abbate after him, filled the palaces of Francis I. with mythologic and allegoric works, in frescoes of an energy and depth of tone till then unknown. Theirs was the cyclus of pictures from the Odyssea of Homer at Fontainbleau, a mine of classic and picturesque materials: they are destroyed, and we may estimate their loss, even through the disguise of the mannered and feeble etchings of Theodore Van Tulden.

The compact style of Polydoro,† formed on

* Francesco Primaticcio, made Abbé de St. Martin de Troyes, by Francis, I., died in France 1570, aged 80.

† Polydoro Caldara da Caravaggio was assassinated at Messina in 1543, aged 51.

the antique, such as it is exhibited in the best series of the Roman military bassrelievoes, is more monumental, than imitative or characteristic. But the virility of his taste, the impassioned motion of his groups, the simplicity, breadth, and never excelled elegance and probability of his drapery, with the forcible chiaroscuro of his compositions, make us regret the narrowness of the walk to which he confined his powers.

No painter ever painted his own mind so forcibly as Michael Angelo Amerigi, surnamed Il Caravaggi.* To none nature ever set limits with a more decided hand. Darkness gave him light; into his melancholy cell light stole only with a pale reluctant ray, or broke on it, as flashes on a stormy night. The most vulgar forms he recommended by ideal light and shade, and a tremendous breadth of manner.

The aim and style of the Roman school deserve little further notice here, till the appearance of Nicolas Poussin† a Frenchman, but

* Michael Angelo Amerigi, surnamed Il Caravaggi, knight of Malta, died 1609, aged 40.

† Nicolas Poussin, of Andely, died at Rome 1665, aged 71.

grafted on the Roman stock. Bred under Quintin Varin, a French painter of mediocrity, he found on his arrival in Italy that he had more to unlearn than to follow of his master's principles, renounced the national character, and not only with the utmost ardour adopted, but suffered himself to be wholly absorbed by the antique. Such was his attachment to the ancients, that it may be said he less imitated their spirit than copied their relics and painted sculpture; the costume, the mythology, the rites of antiquity were his element; his scenery, his landscape, are pure classic ground. He has left specimens to show that he was sometimes sublime, and often in the highest degree pathetic, but history in the strictest sense was his property, and in that he ought to be followed. His agents only appear, to tell the fact; they are subordinate to the story. Sometimes he attempted to tell a story that cannot be told: of his historic dignity the celebrated series of Sacraments; of his sublimity, the vision he gave to Coriolanus; of his pathetic power, the infant Pyrrhus; and of the vain attempt to tell by figures what words alone can tell, the testament of Eudamidas, are striking instances.

His eye, though impressed with the tint, and breadth, and imitation of Titiano, seldom inspired him to charm with colour; crudity and patches frequently deform his effects. He is unequal in his style of design; sometimes his comprehension fails him; he supplies, like Pietro Testa, ideal heads and torsos with limbs and extremities transcribed from the model. Whether from choice or want of power he has seldom executed his conceptions on a larger scale than that which bears his name, and which has perhaps as much contributed to make him the darling of this country, as his merit.

The wildness of Salvator Rosa* opposes a powerful contrast to the classic regularity of Poussin. Terrific and grand in his conceptions of inanimate nature, he was reduced to attempts of hiding by boldness of hand, his inability of exhibiting her impassioned, or in the dignity of character: his line is vulgar: his magic visions, less founded on principles of terror than on mythologic trash and caprice, are to the probable combinations of nature, what the paroxysms of a fever are to the flights

* Salvator Rosa, surnamed Salvatoriello, died at Rome 1673, aged 59.

of vigorous fancy. Though so much extolled and so ambitiously imitated, his banditti are a medley made up of starveling models, shreds and bits of armour from his lumber-room, brushed into notice by a daring pencil. Salvator was a satyrist and a critic, but the rod which he had the insolence to lift against the nudities of Michael Angelo, and the anachronism of Raphael, would have been better employed in chastising his own misconceptions.

The principle of Titiano, less pure in itself and less decided in its objcct of imitation, did not suffer so much from its more or less appropriate application by his successors, as the former two. Colour once in a very high degree attained, disdains subordination and engrosses the whole. Mutual similarity attracts, body tends to body, as mind to mind, and he who has once gained supreme dominion over the eye, will hardly resign it to court the more coy approbation of mind, of a few opposed to nearly all. Add to this the character of the place and the nature of the encouragement held out to the Venetian artists. Venice was the centre of commerce, the repository of the riches of the globe, the splendid toy-shop of the time: its

chief inhabitants princely merchants, or a patrician race elevated to rank by accumulations from trade, or naval prowess; the bulk of the people, mechanics or artisans, administering the means, and in their turn fed by the produce of luxury. Of such a system, what could the art be more than the parasite? Religion itself had exchanged its gravity for the allurements of ear and eye, and even sanctity disgusted, unless arrayed by the gorgeous hand of fashion. — Such was, such will always be the birth-place and the theatre of colour: and hence it is more matter of wonder that the first and greatest colourists should so long have foreborne to overstep the modesty of nature in the use of that alluring medium, than that they yielded by degrees to its golden solicitations.*

* Of the portraits which Raphael in fresco scattered over the compositions of the Vatican, we shall find an opportunity to speak. But in oil the real style of portrait began at Venice with Giorgione, flourished in Sebastian del Piombo, and was carried to perfection by Titiano, who filled the masses of the first without entangling himself in the minute details of the second. Tintoretto, Bassan, and Paolo of Verona, followed the principle of Titiano. After these, it migrated from Italy to reside with the Spaniard Diego Velasquez; from whom Rubens and Vandyck attempted to transplant it to Flanders, France, and England, with unequal success.

The principle of Correggio vanished with its author, though it found numerous imitators of its parts. Since him, no eye has conceived that expanse of harmony with which the voluptuous sensibility of his mind arranged and enchanted all visible nature. His grace, so much vaunted and so little understood, was adopted and improved to elegance by Francesco Mazzuoli, called Il Parmegiano,* but instead of making

France seized less on the delicacy than on the affectation of Vandyck, and soon turned the art of representing men and women into a mere remembrancer of fashions and airs. England had possessed Holbein, but it was reserved for the German Lely, and his successor Kneller, to lay the foundation of a manner, which, by pretending to unite portrait with history, gave a retrograde direction for near a century to both. A mob of shepherds and shepherdesses in flowing wigs and dressed curls, ruffled Endymions, humble Junos, withered Hebes, surly Allegroes, and smirking Pensierosas, usurped the place of truth, propriety and character. Even the lamented powers of the greatest painter whom this country and perhaps our age produced, long vainly struggled, and scarcely in the eve of life succeeded to emancipate us from this dastard taste.

* Francesco Mazzuoli, called Il Parmegiano, died at Casal Maggiore in 1540, at the age of 36. The magnificent picture of the St. John, we speak of, was begun by order of the Lady Maria Bufalina, and destined for the church of St. Salvadore del Lauro at Città di Castello. It probably never received the last hand of the master, who fled from Rome,

her the measure of propriety, he degraded her to affectation: in Parmegiano's figures action is the adjective of the posture; the accident of attitude; they 'make themselves air, into which they vanish.' That disengaged play of delicate forms, the 'Sueltezza' of the Italians, is the prerogative of Parmegiano, though nearly always obtained at the expense of proportion. His grandeur, as conscious as his grace, sacrifices the motive to the mode, simplicity to contrast: his St. John loses the fervour of the apostle in the orator; his Moses the dignity of the lawgiver in the savage. With incredible force of chiaroscuro, he united bland effects and fascinating hues, but their frequent ruins teach the important lesson, that the mixtures which anticipate the beauties of time, are big with the seeds of premature decay.

where he painted it, at the sacking of that city, under Charles Bourbon, in 1527; it remained in the refectory of the convent della Pace for several years, was carried to Città di Castello by Messer Giulio Bufalini, and is now in England. The Moses, a figure in Fresco at Parma, together with Raphael's figure of God in the vision of Ezekiel, is said, by Mr. Mason, to have furnished Gray with the head and action of his bard: if that was the case, he would have done well to acquaint us with the poet's method of making 'Placidis coire immitia.'

Such was the state of the art, when, towards the decline of the sixteenth century, Lodovico Carracci,* with his cousins Agostino† and Annibale, founded at Bologna that eclectic school, which by selecting the beauties, correcting the faults, supplying the defects and avoiding the extremes of the different styles, attempted to form a perfect system. But as the mechanic part was their only object, they did not perceive that the projected union was incompatible with the leading principle of each master. Let us hear this plan from Agostino Carracci himself, as it is laid down in his sonnet‡ on the

* Lodovico Carracci died at Bologna 1619, aged 64.

† Agostino Carracci died at Parma in 1602, at the age of 44. His is the St. Girolamo in the Certosa, near Bologna; his, the Thetis with the nereids, cupids, and tritons, in the gallery of the palace Farnese. Why, as an engraver, he should have wasted his powers on the large plate from the Crucifixion, painted by Tintoretto, in the hospitio of the school of St. Rocco, a picture, of which he could not express the tone, its greatest merit, is not easily unriddled. Annibale Carracci died at Rome in 1609, at the age of 49.

‡ SONNET OF AGOSTINO CARRACCI.

Chi farsi un buon Pittor cerca, e desia,
Il disegno di Roma habbia alla mano,
La mossa coll' ombrar Veneziano,
E il degno colorir di Lombardia,

ingredients required to form a perfect painter, if that may be called a sonnet which has more the air of medical prescription. 'Take,' says Agostino, 'the design of Rome, Venetian motion and shade, the dignified tone of Lombardy's colour, the terrible manner of Michael Angelo, the just symmetry of Raphael, Titiano's truth of nature, and the sovereign purity of Corregio's style: add to these the decorum and solidity of Tibaldi, the learned invention of Primaticcio, and a little of Parmegiano's grace: but to save so much study, such weary

Di Michel' Angiol la terribil via,
Il vero natural di Tiziano,
Del Correggio lo stil puro, e sovrano,
E di un Rafel la giusta simetria.

Del Tibaldi il decoro, e il fondamento,
Del dotto Primaticcio l'inventare,
E un po di gratia del Parmigianino.

Ma senza tanti studi, e tanto stento,
Si ponga l'opre solo ad imitare,
Che qui lasciocci il nostro Niccolino.

Malvasia, author of the *Felsina Pittrice*, has made this sonnet the text to his drowsy rhapsody on the frescoes of Lodovico Carracci and some of his scholars, in the cloisters of St. Michele in Bosco, by Bologna. He circumscribes the '*Mossa Veneziana*,' of the sonnet, by '*Quel strepitoso motivo e quel divincolamento*' peculiar to Tintoretto.

labour, apply your imitation to the works which our dear Nicolo has left us here.' Of such advice, balanced between the tone of regular breeding and the cant of an empiric, what could be the result? excellence or mediocrity? who ever imagined that a multitude of dissimilar threads could compose an uniform texture, that dissemination of spots would make masses, or a little of many things produce a legitimate whole? indiscriminate imitation must end in the extinction of character, and that in mediocrity, — the cipher of art.

And were the Carracci such? separate the precept from the practice, the artist from the teacher; and the Carracci are in possession of my submissive homage. Lodovico, far from implicitly subscribing to a master's dictates, was the sworn pupil of nature. To a modest style of form, to a simplicity eminently fitted for those subjects of religious gravity which his taste preferred, he joined that solemnity of hue, that sober twilight, the air of cloistered meditation, which you have so often heard recommended as the proper tone of historic colour. Too often content to rear the humbler graces of his subject, he seldom courted elegance,

but always when he did, with enviable success. Even now, though nearly in a state of evanescence, the three nymphs in the garden scene of St. Michele in Bosco, seem moulded by the hand, inspired by the breath of love. Agostino, with a singular modesty which prompted him rather to propagate the fame of others by his graver, than by steady exertion to rely on his own power for perpetuity of name, combined with some learning a cultivated taste, correctness, though not elegance of form, and a corregiesque colour. Annibale, superior to both in power of execution and academic prowess, was inferior to either in taste, and sensibility and judgment; for the most striking proof of this inferiority I appeal to his master-work, the work on which he rests his fame, the gallery of the Farnese palace: a work whose uniform vigour of execution nothing can equal but its imbecility and incongruity of conception. If impropriety of ornament were to be fixed by definition, the subjects of the Farnese gallery might be quoted as the most decisive instances. Criticism has attempted to dismiss Paolo Veronese and Tintoretto from the province of legitimate history

with the contemptuous appellation of ornamental painters, not for having painted subjects inapplicable to the public and private palaces, the churches and convents, which they were employed to decorate, but because they treated them sometimes without regard to costume, or the simplicity due to sacred, heroic or allegoric subjects: if this be just, where shall we class him, who with the Capella Sistina, and the Vatican before his eye, fills the mansion of religious austerity and episcopal dignity with a chaotic series of trite fable and bacchanalian revelry, without allegory, void of allusion, merely to gratify the puerile ostentation of dauntless execution and academic vigour? if the praise given to a work be not always transferable to its master; if, as Milton says, 'the work some praise and some the architect,' let us admire the splendour, the exuberance, the concentration of powers displayed in the Farnese gallery, whilst we lament their misapplication by Annibale Carracci.

The heterogeneous principle of the eclectic school soon operated its own dissolution: the great talents which the Carracci had tutored, soon found their own bias, and abandoned

themselves to their own peculiar taste. B. Schidone died young in 1615. Barto. Schidone, Guido Reni,* Giovanni Lanfranco, Francesco Albani, Domenico Zampieri, and Francesco Barbieri, called Guercino, differed as much in their objects of imitation as their names. Schidone, all of whose mind was in his eye, embraced, and often to meaner subjects applied the harmony and colour of Correggio, whilst Lanfranco strove, but strove without success, to follow him through the expanse of his creation and masses. Grace attracted Guido, but it was the studied grace of theatres: his female forms are abstracts of antique beauty, attended by languishing attitudes, arrayed by voluptuous fashions. His male forms, transcripts of models, such as are found in a genial climate, are sometimes highly characteristic of dignified manhood or apostolic fervour, like his Peter and Paul, formerly in the Zampieri at Bologna: sometimes stately,

* Guido Reni died in 1642, aged 68. Giov. Lanfranco died at Naples in 1647, aged 66. Franc. Albani died in 1660, aged 82. Domenico Zampieri, called Il Domenichino, died in 1641, aged 60. Franc. Barbieri of Cento, called Il Guercino, from a cast in his eye, died in 1667, aged 76.

courteous, insipid, like his Paris attending Helen, more with the air of an ambassador, by proxy, than carrying her off with a lover's fervour. His Aurora deserved to precede a more majestic sun, and hours less clumsy—his colour varies with his style, sometimes bland and harmonious, sometimes vigorous and stern, sometimes flat and insipid. Albani, chiefly attracted by soft mythologic conceits, formed nereids and oreads on plump Venetian models, and contrasted their pearly hues with the rosy tints of loves, the juicy brown of fauns and satyrs, and rich marine or sylvan scenery Domenichino, more obedient than the rest to his masters, aimed at the beauty of the antique, the expression of Raphael, the vigour of Annibale, the colour of Lodovico, and mixing something of each, fell short of all; whilst Guercino broke like a torrent over all academic rules, and with an ungovernable itch of copying whatever lay in his way, sacrificed mind, form and costume, to effects of colour, fierceness of chiaroscuro, and intrepidity of hand.

Such was the state of art when the spirit of machinery, in submission to the vanities and upstart pride of papal nepotism, destroyed what

yet was left of meaning; when equilibration, contrast, grouping, engrossed composition, and poured a deluge of gay common-place over the platfonds, panels and cupolas of palaces and temples. Those who could not conceive a figure singly, scattered multitudes; to count, was to be poor. The rainbow and the seasons were ransacked for their hues, and every eye became the tributary of the great but abused talents of Pietro da Cortona, and the fascinating but debauched and empty facility of Luca Giordano.*

The same revolution of mind that had organized the arts of Italy, spread, without visible communication, to Germany, and towards the decline of the fifteenth century, the uncouth essays of Martin Schön, Michael Wolgemuth, and Albrecht Altorfer, were succeeded by the finer polish and the more dextrous method of Albert Durer. The indiscriminate use

* Pietro Berretini, of Cortona, the painter of the ceiling in the Barberini hall, and of the gallery in the lesser Pamphili palace, the vernal suavity of whose fresco tints no pencil ever equalled, died at Rome in 1669, aged 73. Luca Giordano, nicknamed Fa-presto, or Dispatch, from the rapidity of his execution, the greatest machinist of his time, died in 1705, aged 76.

of the words genius and talent has perhaps nowhere caused more confusion than in the classification of artists. Albert Durer was in my opinion a man of great ingenuity, without being a genius. He studied, and, as far as his penetration reached, established certain proportions of the human frame, but he did not invent a style: every work of his is a proof that he wanted the power of imitation, of concluding from what he saw, to what he did not see, that he copied rather than selected the forms that surrounded him, and sans remorse tacked deformity and meagerness to fulness, and sometimes to beauty.* Such is his design; in composi-

* We are informed by the Editor of the Latin translation of Albert Durer's book, on the symmetry of the parts of the human frame, (Parisiis, in officina Caroli Perier in vico Bellovaco, sub Bellerophonte, 1557, fol.) that, during Albert's stay at Venice, where he resided for a short time, to procure redress from the Signoria for the forgery of Marc Antonio, he became familiar with Giovanni Bellini: and that Andrea Mantegna, who had heard of his arrival in Italy, and had conceived a high opinion of his execution and fertility, sent him a message of invitation to Mantoua, for the express purpose of giving him an idea of that form of which he himself had obtained a glimpse from the contemplation of the antique. Andrea was then ill, and expired before Albert, who immediately prepared to set out for Mantoua, could profit by his in-

tion copious without taste, anxiously precise in parts, and unmindful of the whole, he has rather shown us what to avoid than what to follow. He sometimes had a glimpse of the sublime, but it was only a glimpse: the expanded agony of Christ on the mount of Olives, and the mystic conception of his figure of Melancholy, are thoughts of sublimity, though the expression of the last is weakened by the rubbish he has thrown about her. His Knight attended by Death and the Fiend, is more capricious than terrible; and his Adam and Eve are two common models shut up in a

structions. This disappointment, says my author, Albert never ceased to lament during his life. How fit the Mantouan was to instruct the German, is not the question here; but Albert's regret seems to prove that he felt a want which his model could not supply; and that he had too just an idea of the importance of the art to be proud of dexterity of finger or facility of execution, when employed on objects essentially defective or comparatively trifling. The following personal account of Albert deserves to be given in the Latin Editor's own words: 'E Pannonia oriundum accepimus —Erat caput argutum, oculi micantes, nasus honestus et quem Greci Τετράγωνον vocant; proceriusculum collum, pectus amplum, castigatus venter, femora nervosa, crura stabilia: sed digitis nihil dixisses vidisse elegantius.'

Albert Durer was the scholar of Martin Schön and Michael Wolgemuth, and died at Nuremberg in 1528, aged 57.

rocky dungeon. If he approached genius in any part of art, it was in colour. His colour went beyond his age, and as far excelled in truth and breadth and handling the oil colour of Raphael, as Raphael excels him in every other quality. I speak of easel-pictures—his drapery is broad though much too angular, and rather snapped than folded. Albert is called the father of the German school, though he neither reared scholars, nor was imitated by the German artists of his or the succeeding century. That the exportation of his works to Italy should have effected a temporary change in the principles of some Tuscans who had studied Michael Angelo, of Andrea del Sarto, and Jacopo da Pontormo, is a fact which proves that minds at certain periods may be subject to epidemic influence as well as bodies.

Lucas of Leyden* was the Dutch imitator of Albert; but the forms of Aldegraver, Sebald Beheim, and George Pentz, appear to have been the result of careful inspection of Marc Antonio's prints from Raphael, of whom Pentz was probably a scholar; and ere long the style

* Lucas Jacob, called Lucas of Leyden, and by the Italians, Luca d'Ollanda, died at Leyden in 1533.

of Michael Angelo, as adopted by Pelegrino Tibaldi, and spread by the graver of Giorgio Mantuano, provoked those caravans of German, Dutch, and Flemish students, who on their return from Italy, at the courts of Prague and Munich, in Flanders and the Netherlands, introduced that preposterous manner, the bloated excrescence of diseased brains, which in the form of man left nothing human, distorted action and gesture with insanity of affectation, and dressed the gewgaws of children in colossal shapes; the style of Golzius and Spranger, Heynz and ab Ach: but though content to feed on the husks of Tuscan design, they imbibed the colour of Venice, and spread the elements of that excellence which distinguished the succeeding schools of Flanders and of Holland.

This frantic pilgrimage to Italy ceased at the apparition of the two meteors of art, Peter Paul Rubens,* and Rembrandt Van Rhyn;

* Peter Paul Rubens, of Cologne, the disciple of Adam Van Ort and Otho Venius, died at or near Antwerp in 1641, aged 63.

See the admirable character given of him by Sir Joshua Reynolds, annexed to his journey to Flanders, vol. ii. of his Works.

both of whom disdaining to acknowledge the usual laws of admission to the temple of fame, boldly forged their own keys, entered and took possession, each, of a most conspicuous place by his own power. Rubens, born at Cologne, in Germany, but brought up at Antwerp, then the depository of western commerce, a school of religious and classic learning, and the pompous seat of Austrian and Spanish superstition, met these advantages with an ardour and success of which ordinary minds can form no idea, if we compare the period at which he is said to have seriously applied himself to painting, under the tuition of Otho Van Veen, with the unbounded power he had acquired over the instruments of art when he set out for Italy; where we instantly discover him not as the pupil, but as the successful rival of the masters whose works he had selected for the objects of his emulation. Endowed with a full comprehension of his own character, he wasted not a moment on the acquisition of excellence incompatible with its fervour, but flew to the centre of his ambition, Venice, and soon compounded from the splendour of Paolo Veronese and the glow of Tintoretto, that florid system of man-

nered magnificence which is the element of his art and the principle of his school. He first spread that ideal pallet, which reduced to its standard the variety of nature, and once methodized, whilst his mind tuned the method, shortened or superseded individual imitation. His scholars, however dissimilar in themselves, saw with the eye of their master; the eye of Rubens was become the substitute of nature: still the mind alone that had balanced these tints, and weighed their powers, could apply them to their objects, and determine their use in the pompous display of historic and allegoric magnificence; for *that* they were selected, for *that* the gorgeous nosegay swelled: but when in the progress of depraved practice they became the mere palliatives of mental impotence, empty representatives of themselves, the supporters of nothing but clumsy forms and clumsier conceits, they can only be considered as splendid improprieties, as the substitutes for wants which no colour can palliate and no tint supply.

In this censure I am under no apprehension of being suspected to include either the illus-

trious name of Vandyck,* or that of Abraham Diepenbeck. Vandyck, more elegant, more refined, to graces, which the genius of Rubens disdained to court, joined that exquisite taste which, in following the general principle of his master, moderated, and adapted its applicacation to his own pursuits. His sphere was portrait, and the imitation of Titiano insured him the second place in that. The fancy of Diepenbeck, though not so exuberant, if I be not mistaken, excelled in sublimity the imagination of Rubens: his Bellerophon, Dioscuri, Hippolytus, Ixion, Sisyphus, fear no competitor among the productions of his master.

Rembrandt† was, in my opinion, a genius of the first class in whatever relates not to form. In spite of the most portentous deformity, and without considering the spell of his chiaroscuro, such were his powers of nature, such the grandeur, pathos, or simplicity of his composition,

* Anthony Vandyck died in London, 1641, at the age of 42. — The poetic conception of Abraham Diepenbeck may be estimated from the Temple des Muses of Mr. de Marolles; re-edited but not improved by Bernard Picart.

† Rembrandt died, at Amsterdam ? in 1674, aged 68.

from the most elevated or extensive arrangement to the meanest and most homely, that the best cultivated eye, the purest sensibility, and the most refined taste dwell on them, equally enthralled. Shakspeare alone excepted, no one combined with so much transcendant excellence so many, in all other men unpardonable faults—and reconciled us to them. He possessed the full empire of light and shade, and of all the tints that float between them: he tinged his pencil with equal success in the cool of dawn, in the noon-day ray, in the livid flash, in evanescent twilight, and rendered darkness visible. Though made to bend a steadfast eye on the bolder phenomena of Nature, yet he knew how to follow her into her calmest abodes, gave interest to insipidity or baldness, and plucked a flower in every desert. None ever like Rembrandt knew to improve an accident into a beauty, or give importance to a trifle. If ever he had a master, he had no followers; Holland was not made to comprehend his power. The succeeding school of colourists were content to tip the cottage, the hamlet, the boor, the ale-pot, the shambles, and the haze of winter, with orient hues, or the glow of setting summer suns.

In turning our eye to Switzerland we shall find great powers without great names, those of Hans Holbein* and Francis Mola only excepted. But the scrupulous precision, the high finish, and the Tizianesque colour of Hans Holbein, make the least part of his excellence for those who have seen his Designs of the Passion, and that series of emblematic groups, known under the name of Holbein's Dance of Death. From Belinzona to Basle, invention appears to have been the characteristic of Helvetic art: the works of Tobias Stimmer, Christopher Murer, Jost Amman, Gotthard Ringgli, are mines of invention, and exhibit a style of design, equally poised between the emaciated dryness of Albert Durer and the bloated corpulence of Golzius.

The seeds of mediocrity which the Carracci had attempted to scatter over Italy, found a more benign soil, and reared an abundant harvest in France: to mix up a compound from something of every excellence in the catalogue of art, was the principle of their theory and

* Hans Holbein, of Basle, died in London, 1544, at the age of 46. Peter Francis Mola, the scholar of Giuseppe d'Arpino and Franc. Albani, was born at the village of Coldre, of the diocese of Balerna, in the bailliage of Mendrisio, in 1621, and died at Rome in 1666.

their aim in execution. It is in France where Michael Angelo's right to the title of a painter was first questioned. The fierceness of his line, as they call it, the purity of the antique, and the characteristic forms of Raphael, are only the road to the academic vigour, the librated style of Annibale Carracci, and from that they appeal to the model; in composition they consult more the artifice of grouping, contrast and richness, than the subject or propriety; their expression is dictated by the theatre. From the uniformity of this process, not to allow that the school of France offers respectable exceptions, would be unjust; without recurring again to the name of Nicolas Poussin, the works of Eustache le Sueur,* Charles le Brun, Sebastien Bourdon, and sometimes Pierre Mignard, contain original beauties and rich materials. Le Sueur's series of pictures in the Chartreux exhibit the features of contemplative piety, in a purity of style and a placid breadth of manner that moves the heart. His dignified Martyrdom of St. Laurence, and the

* Eustache le Sueur, bred under Simon Voüet, died at Paris in 1655, at the age of 38. His fellow-scholar and overbearing rival, Charles le Brun, died in 1690, aged 71.

Burning of the Magic Books at Ephesus, breathe the spirit of Raphael. The powerful comprehension of a whole, only equalled by the fire which pervades every part of the Battles of Alexander, by Charles le Brun, would entitle him to the highest rank in history, had the characters been less mannered, had he not exchanged the Argyraspids and the Macedonian phalanx for the compact legionaries of the Trajan pillar; had he distinguished Greeks from barbarians, rather by national feature and form than by accoutrement and armour. The Seven Works of Charity by Seb. Bourdon teem with surprising pathetic and always novel images; and in the Plague of David, by Pierre Mignard, our sympathy is roused by energies of terror and combinations of woe, which escaped Poussin and Raphael himself.

The obstinacy of national pride,* perhaps more than the neglect of government or the frown of superstition, confined the labours of the Spanish school, from its obscure origin at

* For the best account of Spanish art, see Lettera di A. R. Mengs a Don Antonio Ponz. Opere di Mengs, vol. ii. Mengs was born at Ausig, in Bohemia, in 1728, and died at Rome in 1779.

Sevilla to its brightest period, within the narrow limits of individual imitation. But the degree of perfection attained by Diego Velasquez, Joseph Ribera, and Murillo, in pursuing the same object by means as different as successful, impresses us with deep respect for the variety of their powers.

That the great style ever received the homage of Spanish genius, appears not; neither Alfonso Berruguette, nor Pellegrino Tibaldi, left followers: but that the eyes and the taste fed by the substance of Spagnuoletto and Murillo, should without reluctance have submitted to the gay volatility of Luca Giordano, and the ostentatious flimsiness of Sebastian Conca, would be matter of surprise, did we not see the same principles successfully pursued in the platfonds of Antonio Raphael Mengs, the painter of philosophy, as he is styled by his biographer D'Azara. The cartoons of the frescoes painted for the royal palace at Madrid, representing the apotheosis of Trajan and the temple of Renown, exhibit less the style of Raphael in the nuptials of Cupid and Psyche at the Farnesina, than the gorgeous but empty bustle of Pietro da Cortona.

From this view of art on the Continent, let us cast a glance on its state in this country, from the age of Henry VIII. to our own. — From that period to this, Britain never ceased pouring its caravans of noble and wealthy pilgrims over Italy, Greece, and Ionia, to pay their devotions at the shrines of virtù and taste: not content with adoring the obscure idols, they have ransacked their temples, and none returned without some share in the spoil: in plaister or in marble, on canvass or in gems, the arts of Greece and Italy were transported to England, and what Petronius said of Rome, that it was easier to meet there with a god than a man, might be said of London. Without inquiring into the permanent and accidental causes of the inefficacy of these efforts with regard to public taste and support of art, it is observable, that, whilst Francis I. was busied, not to aggregate a mass of painted and chiselled treasures merely to gratify his own vanity, and brood over them with sterile avarice, but to scatter the seeds of taste over France, by calling, employing, enriching Andrea del Sarto, Rustici, Rosso, Primaticcio, Cellini, Niccolo; in England, Holbein and

Torregiano under Henry, and Federigo Zucchero under Elizabeth, were condemned to gothic work and portrait painting. Charles indeed called Rubens and his scholars to provoke the latent English spark, but the effect was intercepted by his destiny. His son, in possession of the cartoons of Raphael, and with the magnificence of Whitehall before his eyes, suffered Verio to contaminate the walls of his palaces, or degraded Lely to paint the Cymons and Iphigenias of his court; whilst the manner of Kneller swept completely what yet might be left of taste under his successors: such was the equally contemptible and deplorable state of English art, till the genius of Reynolds first rescued from the mannered depravation of foreigners his own branch, and soon extending his view to the higher departments of art, joined that select body of artists who addressed the ever open ear, ever attentive mind of our Royal Founder, with the first idea of this establishment. His beneficence soon gave it a place and a name, his august patronage, sanction, and individual encouragement: the annually increased merits of thirty exhibitions in this place, with the collateral ones contrived by

the speculations of commerce, have told the surprising effects: a mass of self-taught and tutored powers burst upon the general eye, and unequivocally told the world what might be expected from the concurrence of public encouragement — how far this has been or may be granted or withheld, it is not here my province to surmise: the plans lately adopted and now organizing within these walls for the dignified propagation and support of art, whether fostered by the great, or left to their own energy, must soon decide what may be produced by the unison of British genius and talent, and whether the painters' school of that nation which claims the foremost honours of modern poetry, which has produced with Reynolds, Hogarth, Gainsborough, and Wilson, shall submit to content themselves with a subordinate place among the schools we have enumerated.

THIRD LECTURE.

INVENTION.

PART I.

—— ΤΙ Τ' ΑΡ ΑΤ ΦΘΟΝΕΕΙΣ, ΕΡΙΗΡΟΝ ΑΟΙΔΟΝ
ΤΕΡΠΕΙΝ, ΟΠΠΗ ΟΙ ΝΟΟΣ ΟΡΝΥΤΑΙ; ΟΥ ΝΥ Τ' ΑΟΙΔΟΙ
ΑΙΤΙΟΙ, ΑΛΛΑ ΠΟΘΙ ΖΕΥΣ ΑΙΤΙΟΣ, 'ΟΣΤΕ ΔΙΔΩΣΙΝ
ΑΝΔΡΑΣΙΝ ΑΛΦΗΣΤΗΣΙΝ, ΟΠΩΣ ΕΘΕΛΗΣΙΝ ΕΚΑΣΤΩΙ.

Homer. Odyss. A. 346.

ARGUMENT.

Introduction. Discrimination of Poetry and Painting. General idea of Invention—its right to select a subject from Nature itself. Visiones—Theon — Agasias. Cartoon of Pisa — Incendio del Borgo. Specific idea of Invention: Epic subjects — Michael Angelo. Dramatic subjects — Raphael. Historic subjects — Poussin, &c. Invention has a right to adopt ideas — examples. Duplicity of subject and moment inadmissible. Transfiguration of Raphael.

THIRD LECTURE.

THE brilliant antithesis ascribed to Simonides, that 'painting is mute poesy and poetry speaking painting,' made, I apprehend, no part of the technic systems of antiquity: for this we may depend on the general practice of its artists, and still more safely on the philosophic discrimination of Plutarch *, who tells us, that as poetry and painting resemble each other in their uniform address to the senses, for the impression they mean to make on our fancy and by that on our mind, so they differ as essentially in their *materials* and their *modes* of application, which are regulated by the diversity of the organs they address, ear and eye.

* Ὑλῃ και τροποις μιμησεως διαφερουσι.
Πλουταρχ Π. Αθ. κατα Π. ἡ καθ' ἑ. ἐνδ.
See Lessing's Laokoon. Berlin, 1766. 8vo.

Successive action communicated by sounds, and *time*, are the medium of poetry; *form* displayed in *space*, and momentaneous energy, are the element of painting.

As if these premises be true, the distinct representation of continued action is refused to an art which cannot express even in a series of subjects, but by a supposed mental effort in the spectator's mind, the regular succession of their moments, it becomes evident, that instead of attempting to impress us by the indiscriminate usurpation of a principle out of its reach, it ought chiefly to rely for its effect on its great characteristics space and form, singly or in apposition. In forms alone the idea of existence can be rendered permanent. Sounds die, words perish or become obsolete and obscure, even colours fade, forms alone can neither be extinguished nor misconstrued; by application to their standard alone, description becomes intelligible and distinct. Thus the effectual idea of corporeal beauty can strictly exist only in the plastic arts: for as the notion of beauty arises from the pleasure we feel in the harmonious co-operation of the various parts of

some favourite object to one end at once, it implies their immediate co-existence in the mass they compose; and therefore can be distinctly perceived and conveyed to the mind by the eye alone: hence the representation of form in figure is the *physical* element of the Art.

But as bodies exist in time as well as in space; as the pleasure arising from the mere symmetry of an object is as transient as it is immediate; as harmony of parts, if the body be the agent of an internal power, depends for its proof on their application, it follows, that the exclusive exhibition of inert and unemployed form, would be a mistake of the medium for the end, and that character or action is required to make it an interesting object of imitation. And this is the *moral* element of the art.

Those important moments then which exhibit the united exertion of form and character in a single object or in participation with collateral beings, *at once*, and which with equal rapidity and pregnancy give us a glimpse of the past and lead our eye to what follows, furnish

the true materials of those technic powers, that select, direct, and fix the objects of imitation to their centre.

The most eminent of these, by the explicit acknowledgment of all ages, and the silent testimony of every breast, is *invention*. He whose eye athwart the outward crust of the rock penetrates into the composition of its materials, and discovers a gold mine, is surely superior to him who afterwards adapts the metal for use. Colombo, when he from astronomic and physical inductions concluded to the existence of land in the opposite hemisphere, was surely superior to Amerigo Vespucci who took possession of its continent; and when Newton improving accident by meditation, discovered and established the laws of attraction, the projectile and centrifuge qualities of the system, he gave the clue to all who after him applied it to the various branches of philosophy, and was in fact the author of all the benefits accruing from their application to society. Homer, when he means to give the principal feature of man, calls him inventor (αλφηστης).

From what we have said it is clear that the term *invention* never ought to be so far miscon-

strued as to be confounded with that of *creation*, incompatible with our notions of limited being, an idea of pure astonishment, and admissible only when we mention Omnipotence: to *invent* is to find: to find something, presupposes its existence somewhere, implicitly or explicitly, scattered or in a mass: nor should I have presumed to say so much on a word of a meaning so plain, had it not been, and were it not daily confounded, and by fashionable authorities too, with the term creation.

Form, in its widest meaning, the visible universe that envelopes our senses, and its counterpart the invisible one that agitates our mind with visions bred on sense by fancy, are the element and the realm of invention; it discovers, selects, combines the *possible*, the *probable*, the *known*, in a mode that strikes with an air of truth and novelty, at once. Possible strictly means an effect derived from a cause, a body composed of materials, a coalition of forms, whose union or co-agency imply in themselves no absurdity, no contradiction: applied to our art, it takes a wider latitude; it means the representation of effects derived from causes, or forms compounded from materials,

heterogeneous and incompatible among themselves, but rendered so plausible to our senses, that the transition of one part to another seems to be accounted for by an air of organization, and the eye glides imperceptibly or with satisfaction from one to the other and over the whole: that this was the condition on which, and the limits within which alone the ancients permitted invention to represent what was strictly speaking impossible, we may with plausibility surmise from the picture of Zeuxis, described by Lucian in the memoir to which he has prefixed that painter's name, who was probably one of the first adventurers in this species of imagery.—Zeuxis had painted a family of centaurs; the dam a beautiful female to the middle, with the lower parts gradually sliding into the most exquisite forms of a young Thessalian mare, half reclined in playful repose and gently pawing the velvet ground, offered her human nipple to one infant centaur, whilst another greedily sucked the ferine udder below, but both with their eyes turned up to a lion-whelp held over them by the male centaur their father, rising above the hillock on which

the female reclined, a grim feature, but whose ferocity was somewhat tempered by a smile.

The scenery, the colour, the chiaroscuro, the finish of the whole was no doubt equal to the style and the conception. This picture the artist exhibited, expecting that justice from the penetration of the public which the genius deserved that taught him to give plausibility to a compound of heterogeneous forms, to inspire them with suitable soul, and to imitate the laws of existence: he was mistaken. The novelty of the conceit eclipsed the art that had embodied it, the artist was absorbed in his subject, and the unbounded praise bestowed, was that of idle restless curiosity, gratified. Sick of gods and goddesses, of demigods and pure human combinations, the Athenians panted only for what was new. The artist, as haughty as irritable, ordered his picture to be withdrawn; "Cover it, Micchio," said he to his attendant, "cover it and carry it home, for this mob stick only to the clay of our art."—Such were the limits set to invention by the ancients; secure within these, it defied the ridicule thrown on that grotesque conglutination

which Horace exposes; guarded by these, their mythology scattered its metamorphoses, made every element its tributary, and transmitted the privilege to us, on equal conditions: their Scylla and the Portress of Hell, their dæmons and our spectres, the shade of Patroclus and the ghost of Hamlet, their naiads, nymphs, and oreads, and our sylphs, gnomes, and fairies, their furies and our witches, differ less in essence, than in local, temporary, social modifications: their common origin was fancy, operating on the materials of nature, assisted by legendary tradition and the curiosity implanted in us of diving into the invisible;* and they are suffered or invited to mix with or superintend real agency, in proportion of the analogy which we discover between them and ourselves. Pindar praises Homer less for that 'winged power' which whirls incident on incident with such rapidity, that absorbed by the whole, and drawn from the impossibility of single parts,

* All minute detail tends to destroy terror, as all minute ornament, grandeur. The catalogue of the cauldron's ingredients in Macbeth, destroys the terror attendant on the mysterious darkness of preternatural agency; and the seraglio trappings of Rubens, annihilate his heroes.

we swallow a tale too gross to be believed in a dream; than for the greater power by which he contrived to connect his imaginary creation with the realities of nature and human passions;* without this the fiction of the poet and the painter will leave us stupified rather by its insolence, than impressed by its power, it will be considered only as a superior kind of leger-demain, an exertion of ingenuity to no adequate end.

Before we proceed to the process and the methods of invention, it is not superfluous to advert to a question which has often been made, and by some has been answered in the negative; *whether it be within the artist's province or not, to find or to combine a subject from himself, without having recourse to tradition or the stores of history and poetry?* Why not, if the subject be within the limits of art and the combinations of nature, though it should have escaped

* Ἐγω δε πλεον ἐλπομαι
Λογον Ὀδυσσεος, ἠ παθεν,
Δια τον ἀδυεπη γενεσθ' Ὁμηρον
Ἐπει ψευδεεσσιν οἱ ποτανᾳ γε μαχανα
Σεμνον ἐπεστι τι. σοφια δε
Κλεπτει παραγοισα μυθοις.

Πινδαρ. Νεμ. Ζ.

observation? Shall the immediate avenues of the mind, open to all its observers, from the poet to the novelist, be shut only to the artist? shall he be reduced to receive as alms from them what he has a right to share as common property? Assertions like these, say in other words, that the Laocoon owes the impression he makes on us to his name alone, and that if tradition had not told a story and Pliny fixed it to that work, the artist's conception of a father with his sons, surprised and entangled by two serpents within the recesses of a cavern or lonesome dell, was inadmissible and transgressed the laws of invention. I am much mistaken, if, so far from losing its power over us with its traditional sanction, it would not rouse our sympathy more forcibly, and press the subject closer to our breast, were it considered only as the representation of an incident common to humanity. The ancients were so convinced of their right to this disputed prerogative that they assigned it its own class, and Theon the Samian is mentioned by Quintilian, whom none will accuse or suspect of confounding the limits of the arts, in his list of primary painters, as owing his celebrity to that intuition

into the sudden movements of nature, which the Greeks called *φαντασιας*, the Romans *visiones*, and we might circumscribe by the phrase of 'unpremeditated conceptions' the re-production of associated ideas; he explains what he understood by it in the following passage adapted to his own profession, rhetoric.* 'We give,' says he, 'the name of visions to what the Greeks call phantasies; that power by which the images of absent things are represented by the mind

* M. F. Quintilianus, l. xii. 10.—Concipiendis visionibus (quas ΦΑΝΤΑΣΙΑΣ vocant) Theon Samius—est præstantissimus.

At quomodo fiet ut afficiamur? neque enim sunt motus in nostra potestate. Tentabo etiam de hoc dicere. Quas *φαντασιας* Græci vocant, nos sanè visiones appellamus; per quas imagines rerum absentium ita repræsentantur animo, ut eas cernere oculis ac præsentes habere videamur: has quisquis bene conceperit, is erit in affectibus potentissimus. Hunc quidam dicunt *εὐφαντασιωτον*, qui sibi res, voces, actus, secundum verum optume finget: quod quidem nobis volentibus facile continget.

Nam ut inter otia animorum et spes inanes, et velut somnia quædam vigilantium, ita nos hæ de quibus loquimur, imagines persequuntur, ut peregrinari, navigare, præliari, populos alloqui, divitiarum quas non habemus, usum videamur disponere; nec cogitare, sed facere: hoc animi vitium ad utilitatem non transferemus? ut hominem occisum querar, non omnia quæ in re præsenti accidisse credibile est, in oculis habebo? non percussor ille subitus erumpet? non

with the energy of objects moving before our eyes: he who conceives these rightly will be a master of passions; his is that well-tempered fancy which can imagine things, voices, acts, as they really exist, a power perhaps in a great measure dependent on our will. For if these images so pursue us when our minds are in a state of rest, or fondly fed by hope, or in a kind of waking dream, that we seem to travel, to sail, to fight, to harangue in public, or to dispose of riches we possess not, and all this with an air of reality, why should we not turn to use this vice of the mind?—Suppose I am to plead the case of a murdered man, why should not every supposable circumstance of the act float before my eyes? Shall I not see the murderer unawares rush in upon him? in vain he tries to escape—see how pale he turns

expavescet circumventus? exclamabit, vel rogabit, vel fugiet? non ferientem, non concidentem videbo? non animo sanguis, et pallor et gemitus, extremus denique expirantis hiatus insidebit?

Idem, l. vi. c. 11.

Theon, numbered with the 'Proceres' by Quintilian, by Pliny with less discrimination is placed among the 'Primis Proximos;' and in some passage of Plutarch, unaccountably censured for impropriety of subject, ατοπια, in representing the madness of Orestes.

— hear you not his shrieks, his entreaties? do you not see him flying, struck, falling? will not his blood, his ashy semblance, his groans, his last expiring gasp, seize on my mind?'

Permit me to apply this organ of the orator for one moment to the poet's process: by this radiant recollection of associated ideas, the spontaneous ebullitions of nature, selected by observation, treasured by memory, classed by sensibility and judgment, Shakspeare became the supreme master of passions and the ruler of our hearts: this embodied his Falstaff and his Shylock, Hamlet and Lear, Juliet and Rosalind. By this power he saw Warwick uncover the corpse of Gloster, and swear to his assassination and his tugs for life; by this he made Banquo see the weird sisters bubble up from earth, and in their own air vanish; this is the hand that struck upon the bell when Macbeth's drink was ready, and from her chamber pushed his dreaming wife, once more to methodize the murder of her guest.

And this was the power of Theon;* such

* Αιλιανου ποικ. ἱστορ. l. ii. c. 44. Θεωνος του Ζωγραφου πολλα μεν και ἀλλα ὁμολογει την χειρουργιαν ἀγαθην οὐσαν, ἀ ταρ οὐν και τοδε το γραμμα. —— Και εἰπες

was the unpremeditated conception that inspired him with the idea of that warrior, who in the words of Ælian, seemed to embody the terrible graces and the enthusiastic furor of the god of war. Impetuous he rushed onward to oppose the sudden incursion of enemies; with shield thrown forward, and high brandished falchion, his step as he swept on, seemed to devour the ground: his eye flashed defiance; you fancied to hear his voice, his look denounced perdition and slaughter without mercy. This figure, single and without other accompaniments of war than what the havock of the distance showed, Theon deemed sufficient to answer the impression he intended to make on those whom he had selected to inspect it. He kept it covered, till a trumpet, prepared for the purpose, after a prelude of martial symphonies, at once, by his command, blew with invigorated fierceness a signal of attack — the curtain dropped, the terrific figure appeared to start from the canvass, and irresistibly assailed the astonished eyes of the assembly.

ἀν αὐτον ἐνθουσιᾶν, ὡσπερ ἐξ Ἄρεος μανεντα. —— Και σφαττειν βλεπων, και ἀπειλῶν δι' ὁλου του σχηματος, ὁτι μηδενος φεισεται.

To prove the relation of Ælian no hyperbolic legend, I need not insist on the magic effect which the union of two sister powers must produce on the senses: of what our art alone and unassisted may perform, the most unequivocal proof exists within these walls; your eyes, your feelings, and your fancy have long anticipated it: whose mind has not now recalled that wonder of a figure, the misnamed gladiator of Agasias, a figure, whose tremendous energy embodies every element of motion, whilst its pathetic dignity of character enforces sympathies, which the undisguised ferocity of Theon's warrior in vain solicits. But the same irradiation which showed the soldier to Theon, showed to Agasias the leader: Theon saw the passion, Agasias* its rule.

* The name of Agasias, the scholar or son of Dositheos, the Ephesian, occurs not in ancient record; and whether he be the Egesias of Quintilian or of Pliny, or these the same, cannot be ascertained; though the style of sculpture and the form of the letters in the inscription are not much at variance with the character which the former gives to the age and style of Calon and Egesias; "Signa—duriora et Tuscanicis proxima." The impropriety of calling this figure a gladiator has been shown by Winkelmann, and on his remark, that it probably exhibits the attitude of a soldier, who signalized himself in some moment of danger, Lessing has

But the most striking instance of the eminent place due to this intuitive faculty among

founded a conjecture, that it is the figure of Chabrias, from the following passage of Corn. Nepos: "Elucet maxime inventum ejus in prœlio, quod apud Thebas fecit, cùm Boetiis subsidio venisset. Namque in eo victoriæ fidente summo duce Agesilao, fugatis jam ab eo conductitiis catervis, reliquam phalangem loco vetuit cedere; obnixoque genu scuto, projectaque hasta, impetum excipere hostium docuit. Id novum Agesilaus intuens, progredi non est ausus, suosque jam incurrentes tubâ revocavit. Hoc usque eo in Græcia famâ celebratum est, ut illo statu Chabrias sibi statuam fieri voluerit, quæ publicè ei ab Atheniensibus in foro constituta est. Ex quo factum est, ut postea athletæ, *cæterique artifices* his statibus in statutis ponendis uterentur, in quibus victoriam essent adepti?"

On this passage, simple and unperplexed, if we except the words "cæterique artifices," where something is evidently dropped or changed, there can, I trust, be but one opinion — that the manœuvre of Chabrias was defensive, and consisted in giving the phalanx a stationary, and at the same time impenetrable posture, to check the progress of the enemy; a repulse, not a victory was obtained; the Thebans were content to maintain their ground, and not a word is said by the historian, of a pursuit, when Agesilaus, startled at the contrivance, called off his troops: but the warrior of Agasias rushes forward in an assailing attitude, whilst with his head and shield turned upwards he seems to guard himself from some attack above him. Lessing, aware of this, to make the passage square with his conjecture, is reduced to a change of punctuation, and accordingly transposes the decisive comma after "scuto," to "genu," and reads "obnixo

the principal organs of invention, is that celebrated performance, which by the united tes-

genu, scuto projectâque hastâ,—docuit." This alone might warrant us to dismiss his conjecture as less solid than daring and acute.

The statue erected to Chabrias in the Athenian forum was probably of brass, for "statua" and "statuarius," in Pliny at least, will, I believe, always be found relative to figures and artists in metal; such were those which at an early period the Athenians dedicated to Harmodios and Aristogiton: from them the custom spread in every direction, and iconic figures in metal, began, says Pliny, to be the ornaments of every municipal forum.

From another passage in Nepos, I was once willing to find in our figure an Alcibiades in Phrygia, rushing from the flames of the cottage fired to destroy him, and guarding himself against the javelins and arrows which the gang of Sysamithres and Bagoas showered on him at a distance. "Ille," says the historian, "sonitu flammæ excitatus, quod gladius ei erat subductus, familiaris sui subalare telum eripuit· et—flammæ vim transit. Quem, ut Barbari incendium effugisse viderunt, telis eminus missis, interfecerunt. Sic Alcibiades annos circiter quadraginta natus, diem obiit supremum."

Such is the age of our figure, and it is to be noticed that the right arm and hand, now armed with a lance, are modern; if it be objected, that the figure is iconic, and that the head of Alcibiades, cut off after his death, was carried to Pharnabazus, and his body burned by his mistress; it might be observed in reply, that busts and figures of Alcibides must have been frequent in Greece, and that the expression found its source in the mind of Agasias. On this conjec-

timony of contemporary writers, and the evident traces of its imitation, scattered over the works of contemporary artists, contributed alone more to the restoration of art and the revolution of style, than the united effort of the two centuries that preceded it: I mean the astonishing design commonly called the Cartoon of Pisa, the work of Michael Agnolo Buonarrotti, begun in competition with Lionardo da Vinci, and at intervals finished at Florence. This work, whose celebrity subjected those who had not seen it to the supercilious contempt of the luckier ones who had; which was the common centre of attraction to all the students of Tus-

ture, however, I shall not insist: let us only observe that the character, forms and attitude, might be turned to better use than what Poussin made of it. It might form an admirable Ulysses bestriding the deck of his ship to defend his companions from the descending fangs of Scylla, or rather, with indignation and anguish, seeing them already snatched up and writhing in the mysterious gripe:

Αυταρ εγω καταδυς κλυτα τευχεα, και δυο δουρε
Μακρ' εν χερσιν ελων, εις ικρια νηος εβαινον
Πρωρης ——— εκαμον δε μοι ὀσσε
Παντη παπλαινοντι προς ἡεροειδεα πετρην
Σκεψαμενος δε ———
Ἠδη των ενοησα ποδας και χειρας ὑπερθεν
Ὑψος ἀειρομενων. ——— Odyss. M. 328. seq.

cany and Romagna, from Raphael Sanzio to Bastian da St. Gallo, called Aristotile, from his loquacious descants on its beauties; this inestimable work itself is lost, and its destruction is with too much appearance of truth fixed on the mean villainy of Baccio Bandinelli, who, in possession of the key to the apartment where it was kept, during the revolutionary troubles of the Florentine republic, after making what use he thought proper of it, is said to have torn it in pieces. Still we may form an idea of its principal groups from some ancient prints and drawings; and of its composition from a small copy now existing at Holkham, the outlines of which have been lately etched. Crude, disguised, or feeble, as these specimens are, they will prove better guides than the half-informed rhapsodies of Vasari, the meagre account of Ascanio Condivi, better than the mere anatomic verdict of Benvenuto Cellini, who denies that the powers afterward exerted in the Capella Sistina, arrive at "half its excellence."*

* Sebbene il divino Michel Agnolo fece la gran Cappella di Papa Julio, dappoi non arrivò a questo segno mai alla metà, la sua virtù non aggiunse mai alla forza di quei primi studi. Vita di Benvenuto Cellini, p. 13.—Vasari, as ap-

It represents an imaginary moment relative to the war carried on by the Florentines against Pisa: and exhibits a numerous group of warriors, roused from their bathing in the Arno, by the sudden signal of a trumpet and rushing

pears from his own account, never himself saw the cartoon: he talks of an "infinity of combatants on horseback,"* of which there neither remains nor ever can have existed a trace, if the picture at Holkham be the work of Bastiano da St. Gallo. This he saw, for it was painted, at his own desire, by that master, from his small cartoon in 1542, and by means of Monsignor Jovio transmitted to Francis I. who highly esteemed it; from his collection it however disappeared, and no mention is made of it by the French writers for near two centuries. It was probably discovered at Paris, bought and carried to England by the late Lord Leicester. That Vasari, on inspecting the copy, should not have corrected the confused account he gives of the cartoon from hearsay, can be wondered at only by those who are unacquainted with his character as a writer. One solitary horse and a drummer on the imaginary background of the groups engraved by Agostino Venetiano, are all the cavalry remaining of Vasari's squadrons, and can as little belong to Michel Agnolo as the spot on which they are placed.

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* The following are his own words: "Si vedeva dalle divine mani di Michelagnolo chi affrettare lo armarsi per dare ajuto a'compagni, altri affibbiarsi la corazza, e molti metter altre armi indosso, ed infiniti combattendo a cavallo cominciare la zuffa."

Vasari, Vita di M. A. B. p. 183. ed. Bottari.

to arms. This composition may without exaggeration be said to personify with unexampled variety that motion, which Agasias and Theon embodied in single figures: in imagining this transient moment from a state of relaxation to a state of energy, the ideas of motion, to use the bold figure of Dante, seem to have showered into the artist's mind. From the chief, nearly placed in the centre, who precedes, and whose voice accompanies the trumpet, every age of human agility, every attitude, every feature of alarm, haste, hurry, exertion, eagerness, burst into so many rays, like sparks flying from the hammer. Many have reached, some boldly step, some have leaped on the rocky shore; here two arms emerging from the water grapple with the rock, there two hands cry for help, and their companions bend over or rush on to assist them; often imitated, but inimitable is the ardent feature of the grim veteran whose every sinew labours to force over the dripping limbs his clothes, whilst gnashing he pushes the foot through the rending garment. He is contrasted by the slender elegance of a half averted youth, who, though eagerly buckling the armour to his thigh, methodizes haste;

another swings the high-raised hauberk on his shoulder, whilst one who seems a leader, mindless of dress, ready for combat, and with brandished spear, overturns a third, who crouched to grasp a weapon—one naked himself, buckles on the mail of his companion, and he, turned toward the enemy, seems to stamp impatiently the ground.—Experience and rage, old vigour, young velocity, expanded or contracted, vie in exertions of energy. Yet in this scene of tumult one motive animates the whole, eagerness to engage with subordination to command; this preserves the dignity of action, and from a straggling rabble changes the figures to men whose legitimate contest interests our wishes.

This intuition into the pure emanations of nature, Raphael Sanzio possessed in the most enviable degree, from the utmost conflict of passions, to the enchanting round of gentler emotion, and the nearly silent hints of mind and character. To this he devoted the tremendous scenery of that magnificent fresco, known to you all under the name of the *Incendio del Borgo*, in which he sacrificed the historic and mystic part of his subject to the effusion of the

various passions roused by the sudden terrors of nocturnal conflagration. It is not for the faint appearance of the miracle which approaches with the pontiff and his train in the back-ground, that Raphael invites our eyes; the perturbation, necessity, hope, fear, danger, the pangs and efforts of affection grappling with the enraged elements of wind and fire, displayed on the foreground, furnish the pathetic motives that press on our hearts. That mother, who but half awake or rather in a waking trance, drives her children instinctively before her; that prostrate female half covered by her streaming hair, with elevated arms imploring Heaven; that other who over the flaming tenement, heedless of her own danger, absorbed in maternal agony, boldly reaches over to drop the babe into the outstretched arms of its father; that common son of nature, who careless of another's woe, intent only on his own safety, liberates a leap from the burning wall; the vigorous youth who followed by an aged mother bears the palsied father on his shoulder from the rushing wreck; the nimble grace of those helpless females that vainly strive to administer relief—these are the real objects of

the painter's aim, and leave the pontiff and the miracle, with taper, bell and clergy—unheeded in the distance.

I shall not at present expatiate in tracing from this source the novel combinations of affection by which Raphael contrived to interest us in his numerous repetitions of Madonnas and Holy Families, selected from the warmest effusions of domestic endearment, or in Milton's phrase, from "all the charities of father, son, and mother." Nor shall I follow it in its more contaminated descent, to those representations of local manners and national modifications of society, whose characteristic discrimination and humorous exuberance, for instance, we admire in Hogarth, but which, like the fleeting passions of the day, every hour contributes something to obliterate, which soon become unintelligible by time, or degenerate into caricature, the chronicle of scandal, the history-book of the vulgar.

Invention in its more specific sense receives its subjects from poetry or authenticated tradition; they are *epic* or sublime, *dramatic* or impassioned, *historic* or circumscribed by truth.

The first *astonishes;* the second *moves;* the third *informs.*

The aim of the epic painter is to impress one general idea, one great quality of nature or mode of society, some great maxim, without descending to those subdivisions, which the detail of character prescribes: he paints the elements with their own simplicity, height, depth, the vast, the grand, darkness, light; life, death; the past, the future; man, pity, love, joy, fear, terror, peace, war, religion, government: and the visible agents are only engines to force *one* irresistible idea upon the mind and fancy, as the machinery of Archimedes served only to convey *destruction,* and the wheels of a watch serve only to tell *time.*

Such is the first and general sense of what is called the *sublime,* epic, allegoric, lyric substance. Homer, to impress one forcible idea of *war,* its origin, its progress, and its end, set to work innumerable engines of various magnitude, yet none but what uniformly tends to enforce this and only this idea; gods and demigods are only actors, and nature but the scene of war; no character is discriminated but where discri-

mination discovers a new look of war; no passion is raised but what is blown up by the breath of war, and as soon absorbed in its universal blaze:—As in a conflagration we see turrets, spires, and temples illuminated only to propagate the horrors of destruction, so through the stormy page of Homer, we see his heroines and heroes but by the light that blasts them.

This is the principle of that divine series of frescoes, with which under the pontificates of Julius II. and Paul III. Michael Angelo adorned the lofty compartments of the *Capella Sistina*, and from a modesty or a pride for ever to be lamented, only not occupied the *whole* of its ample sides. Its subject is *theocracy* or the empire of religion, considered as the parent and queen of man; the origin, the progress, and final dispensation of Providence, as taught by the sacred records. Amid this imagery of primeval simplicity, whose sole object is the relation of the race to its Founder, to look for minute discrimination of character, is to invert the principle of the artist's invention: here is only God with man. The veil of eternity is rent; time, space, and matter teem in the creation of the elements and of earth; life issues from God

and adoration from man, in the creation of Adam and his mate; transgression of the precept at the tree of knowledge proves the origin of evil, and of expulsion from the immediate intercourse with God; the œconomy of justice and grace commences in the revolutions of the Deluge, and the covenant made with Noah; and the germs of social character are traced in the subsequent scene between him and his sons; the awful synod of prophets and sibyls are the heralds of the Redeemer, and the host of patriarchs the pedigree of the Son of Man; the brazen serpent and the fall of Haman, the giant subdued by the stripling in Goliah and David, and the conqueror destroyed by female weakness in Judith, are types of his mysterious progress, till Jonah pronounces him immortal; and the magnificence of the Last Judgment, by showing the Saviour in the judge of man, sums up the whole, and reunites the Founder and the race.

Such is the spirit of the Sistine Chapel, and the outline of its *general* invention with regard to the cycle of its subjects—as in their choice they lead to each other without intermediate chasms in the transition; as each preceding one

prepares and directs the conduct of the next, this the following; and as the intrinsic variety of all, conspires to the simplicity of one great end. The *specific* invention of the pictures separate, as each constitutes an independent whole, deserves our consideration next: each has its centre, from which it disseminates, to which it leads back all secondary points; arranged, hid, or displayed, as they are more or less organs of the inspiring plan: each rigorously is circumscribed by its generic character; no inferior, merely conventional, temporary, local, or disparate beauty, however in itself alluring, is admitted; each finally turns upon that transient moment, the moment of suspense, big with the past, and pregnant with the future; the action nowhere expires, for action and interest terminate together. Thus in the Creation of Adam, the Creator borne on a group of attendant spirits, the personified powers of Omnipotence, moves on toward his last, best work, the lord of his creation: the immortal spark, issuing from his extended arm, electrifies the new-formed being, who tremblingly alive, half raised, half reclined, hastens to meet his Maker. In the formation of Eve,

the astonishment of life, just organised, is absorbed in the sublimer sentiment of adoration; perfect, though not all disengaged from the side of her dreaming mate, she moves with folded hands and humble dignity towards the majestic Form whose half raised hand attracts her—what words can express the equally bland and irresistible velocity of that mysterious Being, who forms the sun and moon, and already past, leaves the earth, completely formed, behind him? Here apposition is the symbol of immensity.*

From these specimens of invention exerted in the more numerous compositions of this *sublime* cycle, let me fix your attention for a few moments on the powers it displays in the single figures of the Prophets, those organs of embodied sentiment: their expression and attitude, whilst it exhibits the unequivocal marks of inspired contemplation in all, and with equal variety, energy, and delicacy, stamps character on each; exhibits in the occupation of the present moment the traces of the past and

* Ὁ δὲ πως μεγεθυνει τα Δαιμονια; ——— Την Ὁρμην αὐτων κοσμικῳ διαστηματι καταμετρει.
Longinus, § 9.

hints of the future. Esaiah, the image of *inspiration*, sublime and lofty, with an attitude expressive of the sacred trance in which meditation on the Messiah had immersed him, starts at the voice of an attendant genius, who seems to pronounce the words, "to us a child is born, to us a son is given." Daniel, the humbler image of eager *diligence*, transcribes from a volume held by a stripling, with a gesture natural to those who, absorbed in the progress of their subject, are heedless of convenience; his posture shows that he had inspected the volume from which now he is turned, and shall return to it immediately. Zachariah personifies *consideration;* he has read, and ponders on what he reads. *Inquiry* moves in the dignified activity of Joel, hastening to open a sacred scroll, and to compare the scriptures with each other. Ezechiel, the fervid feature of *fancy*, the seer of resurrection, represented as on the field strewn with bones of the dead, points downward and asks, "can these bones live?" the attendant angel, borne on the wind that agitates his locks and the prophet's vestments, with raised arm and finger, pronounces, they shall rise: last, Jeremiah,

subdued by *grief* and exhausted by lamentation, sinks in silent woe over the ruins of Jerusalem. Nor are the sibyls, those female oracles, less expressive, less individually marked—they are the echo, the counterpart of the prophets; Vigilance, Meditation, Instruction, Divination, are personified. If the artist who, absorbed by the uniform power and magnitude of execution, saw only breadth and nature in their figures, must be told that he has discovered the least part of their excellence; the critic who charges them with affectation, can only be dismissed with our contempt.

On the immense plain of the Last Judgment, Michael Angelo has wound up the destiny of man, simply considered as the subject of religion, faithful or rebellious; and in one generic manner has distributed happiness and misery, the general feature of passions is given, and no more.—But had Raphael meditated that subject, he would undoubtedly have applied to our sympathies for his choice of imagery; he would have combined all possible emotions with the utmost variety of probable or real character: a father meeting his son, a mother torn from her daughter, lovers flying into each

other's arms, friends for ever separated, children accusing their parents, enemies reconciled; tyrants dragged before the tribunal by their subjects, conquerors hiding themselves from their victims of carnage; innocence declared, hypocrisy unmasked, atheism confounded, detected fraud, triumphant resignation; the most prominent features of connubial, fraternal, kindred connexion.—In a word, the heads of that infinite variety which Dante has minutely scattered over his poem—all domestic, politic, religious relations; whatever is not local in virtue and in vice: and the sublimity of the greatest of all events, would have been merely the minister of sympathies and passions.*

* Much has been said of the loss we have suffered in the marginal drawings which Michael Angelo drew in his Dante. Invention may have suffered in being deprived of them; they can, however, have been little more than hints of a size too minute to admit of much discrimination. The true terrors of Dante depend as much upon the medium in which he shows, or gives us a glimpse of his figures, as on their form. The characteristic outlines of his fiends, Michael Angelo personified in the dæmons of the Last Judgment, and invigorated the undisguised appetite, ferocity or craft of the brute, by traits of human malignity, cruelty, or lust. The Minos of Dante, in Messer Biagio da Cesena, and his Charon, have been recognized by all; but less the shivering

If opinions be divided on the respective advantages and disadvantages of these two modes; if to some it should appear, though from consideration of the plan which guided Michael Angelo I am far from subscribing to their notions, that the scenery of the Last Judgment might have gained more by the dramatic introduction of varied pathos, than it would have lost by the dereliction of its generic simplicity; there can, I believe, be but one opinion with regard to the methods adopted

wretch held over the barge by a hook, and evidently taken from the following passage in the xxiid of the Inferno:—

> Et Graffiacan, che gli era più di contra
> Gli arroncigliò l'impegolate chiome;
> E trasse 'l sù, che mi parve una lontra.

None has noticed as imitations of Dante in the xxivth book, the astonishing groups in the Lunetta of the brazen serpent; none the various hints from the Inferno and Purgatorio scattered over the attitudes and expressions of the figures rising from their graves. In the Lunetta of Haman, we owe the sublime conception of his figure to the subsequent passage in the xviith c. of Purgatory:

> Poi piobbe dentro al' alta phantasia
> Un Crucifisso, dispettoso e fiero
> Nella sua vista, e lo qual si moria.

The bassorelievo on the border of the second rock, in Purgatory, furnished the idea of the Annunziata, painted by

by him and Raphael in the invention of the moment that characterises the creation of Eve: both artists applied for it to their own minds, but with very different success: the elevation of Michael Angelo's soul, inspired by the operation of creation itself, furnished him at once with the feature that stamps on human nature its most glorious prerogative: whilst the characteristic subtilty, rather than sensibility of Raphael's mind, in this instance, offered nothing but a frigid succedaneum; a symptom

Marcello Venusti from his design, in the sacristy of St. Giov. Lateran, by order of Tommaso de' Cavalieri, the select friend and favourite of Michael Angelo.

We are told that Michael Angelo represented the Ugolino of Dante, inclosed in the tower of Pisa: if he did, his own work is lost; but if, as some suppose, the bassorelievo of that subject by Pierino da Vinci be taken from his idea, notwithstanding the greater latitude, which the sculptor might claim, in divesting the figures of drapery and costume; he appears to me to have erred in the means employed to rouse our sympathy. A sullen but muscular character, with groups of muscular bodies and forms of strength, about him, with the allegoric figure of the Arno at their feet, and that of famine hovering over their heads, are not the fierce Gothic chief, deprived of revenge, brooding over despair in the stony cage; are not the exhausted agonies of a father, petrified by the helpless groans of an expiring family, offering their own bodies for his food, to prolong his life.

incident to all, when after the subsided astonishment on a great and sudden event, the mind recollecting itself, ponders on it with inquisitive surmise. In Michael Angelo, all self-consideration is absorbed in the sublimity of the sentiment which issues from the august Presence that attracts Eve; "her earthly," in Milton's expression, "by his heavenly overpowered," pours itself in *adoration:* whilst in the inimitable cast of Adam's figure, we trace the hint of that half conscious moment when sleep began to give way to the vivacity of the dream inspired. In Raphael, creation is complete — Eve is presented to Adam, now awake: but neither the new-born charms, the submissive grace and virgin purity of the beauteous image: nor the awful presence of her Introductor, draw him from his mental trance into effusions of love or gratitude; at ease reclined, with fingers pointing at himself and his new mate, he seems to methodize the surprising event that took place during his sleep, and to whisper the words "flesh of my flesh."

Thus, but far better adapted, has Raphael personified *Dialogue,* moved the lips of *Solilo-*

quy, unbent or wrinkled the features and arranged the limbs and gesture of *Meditation*, in the pictures of the Parnassus and of the school of Athens, parts of the immense allegoric drama that fills the stanzas, and displays the brightest ornament of the Vatican; the immortal monument of the towering ambition, unlimited patronage, and refined taste of Julius II. and Leo X., its cycle represents the origin, the progress, extent, and final triumph of *church empire*, or ecclesiastic government; in the first subject, of the Parnassus, Poetry led back to its origin and first duty, the herald and interpreter of a first Cause, in the universal language of imagery addressed to the senses, unites man, scattered and savage, in social and religious bands. What was the surmise of the eye and the wish of hearts, is gradually made the result of reason, in the characters of the school of Athens, by the researches of philosophy, which from bodies to mind, from corporeal harmony to moral fitness, and from the duties of society, ascends to the doctrine of God and hopes of immortality. Here revelation in its stricter sense commences, and conjecture becomes a glorious reality: in the com-

position of the Dispute on the Sacrament, the Saviour after ascension seated on his throne, the attested Son of God and Man, surrounded by his types, the prophets, patriarchs, apostles and the hosts of heaven, institutes the mysteries and initiates in his sacrament the heads and presbyters of the church militant, who in the awful presence of their Master and the celestial synod, discuss, explain, propound his doctrine. That the sacred mystery shall clear all doubt and subdue all heresy, is taught in the miracle of the blood-stained wafer; that without arms, by the arm of Heaven itself, it shall release its votaries, and defeat its enemies, the deliverance of Peter, the overthrow of Heliodorus, the flight of Attila, the captive Saracens, bear testimony; that Nature itself shall submit to its power and the elements obey its mandates, the checked conflagration of the Borgo, declares; till hastening to its ultimate triumphs, its union with the state, it is proclaimed by the vision of Constantine, confirmed by the rout of Maxentius, established by the imperial pupil's receiving baptism, and submitting to accept his crown at the feet of the mitred pontiff.

Such is the rapid outline of the cycle painted or designed by Raphael on the compartments of the stanzas sacred to his name. Here is the mass of his powers in poetic conception and execution; here is every period of his style, his emancipation from the narrow shackles of Pietro Perugino, his discriminations of characteristic form, on to the heroic grandeur of his line. Here is that master-tone of fresco painting, the real instrument of history, which with its silver purity and breadth unites the glow of Titiano and Correggio's tints. Everywhere we meet the superiority of genius, but more or less impressive, with more or less felicity in proportion as each subject was more or less susceptible of dramatic treatment. From the bland enthusiasm of the Parnassus, and the sedate or eager features of meditation in the School of Athens, to the sterner traits of dogmatic controversy in the dispute of the sacrament, and the symptoms of religious conviction or inflamed zeal at the mass of Bolsena. Not the miracle, as we have observed, the fears and terrors of humanity inspire and seize us at the conflagration of the Borgo: if in the Heliodorus the sublimity of the vision balances sym-

pathy with astonishment, we follow the rapid ministers of grace to their revenge, less to rescue the temple from the gripe of sacrilege, than inspired by the palpitating graces, the helpless innocence, the defenceless beauty of the females and children scattered around; and thus we forget the vision of the labarum, the angels and Constantine in the battle, to plunge in the wave with Maxentius, or to share the agonies of the father who recognizes his own son in the enemy he slew.

With what propriety Raphael introduced portrait, though in its most dignified and elevated sense, into some compositions of the great work which we are contemplating, I shall not now discuss; the allegoric part of the work may account for it: he has, however, by its admission, stamped that branch of painting at once with its essential feature, character, and has assigned it its place and rank: ennobled by character, it rises to dramatic dignity; destitute of that, it sinks to mere mechanic dexterity, or floats, a bubble of fashion. Portrait is to historic painting in art, what physiognomy is to pathognomy in science; *that* shows the character and powers of the being which it delineates,

in its formation and at rest: *this* shows it in exertion. Bembo, Bramante, Dante, Gonzaga, Savonarola, Raphael himself may be considered in the inferior light of mere characteristic ornament; but Julius the Second authenticating the miracle at the mass of Bolsena, or borne into the temple, rather to authorize than to witness the punishment inflicted on its spoiler; Leo with his train calmly facing Attila, or deciding on his tribunal the fate of the captive Saracens, tell us by their presence that they are the heroes of the drama, that the action has been contrived for them, is subordinate to them, and has been composed to illustrate their character. For as in the epic, act and agent are subordinate to the maxim, and in pure history are mere organs of the fact; so the drama subordinates both fact and maxim to the agent, his character and passion: what in them was end is but the medium here.

Such were the principles on which he treated the beautiful tale of Amor and Psyche: the allegory of Apuleius became a drama under the hand of Raphael, though it must be owned, that with every charm of scenic gradation and lyric imagery, its characters, as exquisitely

chosen as acutely discriminated, exhibit less the obstacles and real object of affection, and its final triumph over mere appetite and sexual instinct, than the voluptuous history of his own favourite passion. The faint light of the maxim vanishes in the splendour which expands before our fancy the enchanted circle of wanton dalliance and amorous attachment.

But the power of Raphael's invention exerts itself chiefly in subjects where the drama, divested of epic or allegoric fiction, meets pure history, and elevates, invigorates, impresses the pregnant moment of a *real* fact, with character and pathos. The summit of these is that magnificent series of coloured designs commonly called the Cartoons, so well known to you all, part of which we happily possess; formerly when complete and united, and now, in the copies of the tapestry annually exhibited in the colonnade of the Vatican, they represent in thirteen compositions the origin, sanction, economy, and progress of the Christian religion. In whatever light we consider their invention, as parts of *one whole* relative to each other, or independent *each of the rest*, and as single subjects, there can be scarcely named a beauty or

a mystery of which the Cartoons furnish not an instance or a clue; they are poised between perspicuity and pregnancy of moment; we shall have opportunities to speak of all or the greater part of them, but that of Paul on the Areopagus will furnish us at present with conclusions for the remainder.

It represents the Apostle announcing his God from the height of the Areopagus. Enthusiasm and curiosity make up the subject; simplicity of attitude invests the speaker with sublimity; the parallelism of his action invigorates his energy; situation gives him command over the whole; the light in which he is placed, attracts the first glance; he appears the organ of a superior Power. The assembly, though selected with characteristic art for the purpose, are the natural offspring of place and moment. The involved meditation of the Stoic, the Cynic's ironic sneer, the incredulous smile of the elegant Epicurean, the eager disputants of the Academy, the elevated attention of Plato's school, the rankling malice of the Rabbi, the Magician's mysterious glance, repeat in louder or in lower tones the novel doctrine; but whilst curiosity and meditation, loud debate and fixed

prejudice, tell, ponder on, repeat, reject, discuss it, the animated gesture of conviction in Dionysius and Damaris, announce the power of its tenets, and hint the established belief of *immortality*.

But the powers of Raphael in combining the drama with pure historic fact, are best estimated when compared with those exerted by other masters on the same subject. For this we select from the series we examine that which represented the Massacre, as it is called, of the Innocents, or of the infants at Bethlem; an original, precious part of which still remains in the possession of a friend of art among us. On this subject Baccio Bandinelli, Tintoretto, Rubens, Le Brun, and Poussin, have tried their various powers.

The Massacre of the Infants by Baccio Bandinelli, contrived chiefly to exhibit his anatomic skill, is a complicated tableau of every contortion of human attitude and limbs that precedes dislocation; the expression floats between a studied imagery of frigid horror and loathsome abomination.

The stormy brush of Tintoretto swept individual woe away in general masses. Two im-

mense wings of light and shade divide the composition, and hide the want of sentiment in tumult.

To Rubens, magnificence and contrast dictated the actors and the scene. A loud lamenting dame, in velvet robes, with golden locks dishevelled, and wide extended arms, meets our first glance. Behind, a group of steel-clad satellites open their rows of spears to admit the nimble, naked ministers of murder, charged with their infant prey, within their ranks, ready to close again against the frantic mothers who pursue them: the pompous gloom of the palace in the middle ground is set off by cottages and village scenery in the distance.

Le Brun surrounded the allegoric tomb of Rachel with rapid horsemen, receiving the children whom the assassins tore from their parents' arms, and strewed the field with infant slaughter.

Poussin tied in one vigorous group what he conceived of blood-trained villany and maternal frenzy. Whilst Raphael, in dramatic gradation, disclosed all the mother through every image of pity and of terror; through tears, shrieks, resistance, revenge, to the stunned look

of despair; and traced the villain from the palpitations of scarce initiated crime to the sedate grin of veteran murder.

History, strictly so called, follows the drama: fiction now ceases, and invention consists only in selecting and fixing with dignity, precision, and sentiment, the moments of *reality*. Suppose that the artist choose the death of Germanicus—He is not to give us the highest images of *general* grief which impresses the features of a people or a family at the death of a beloved chief or father; for this would be epic imagery: we should have Achilles, Hector, Niobe. He is not to mix up characters which observation and comparison have pointed out to him as the fittest to excite the gradations of sympathy; not Admetus and Alceste, not Meleager and Atalanta; for this would be the drama. He is to give us the idea of a Roman dying amidst Romans, as tradition gave him, with all the real modifications of time and place, which may serve unequivocally to discriminate that moment of grief from all others. Germanicus, Agrippina, Caius, Vitellius, the legates, the centurions at Antioch; the hero, the husband, the father, the

friend, the leader, the struggles of nature and sparks of hope must be subjected to the physiognomic character and the features of Germanicus, the son of Drusus, the Cæsar of Tiberius. Maternal, female, connubial passion, must be tinged by Agrippina, the woman absorbed in the Roman, less lover than companion of her husband's grandeur: even the bursts of friendship, attachment, allegiance, and revenge, must be stamped by the military, ceremonial, and distinctive costume of Rome.

The judicious observation of all this does not reduce the historic painter to the anxiously minute detail of a copyist. Firm he rests on the true basis of art, imitation: the fixed character of things determines all in his choice, and mere floating accident, transient modes and whims of fashion, are still excluded. If defects, if deformities are represented, they must be permanent, they must be inherent in the character. Edward the First and Richard the Third must be marked, but marked, to strengthen rather than to diminish the interest we take in the man; thus the deformity of Richard will add to his terror, and the enor-

mous stride of Edward to his dignity. If my limits permitted, your own recollection would dispense me from expatiating in examples on this more familiar branch of invention. The history of our own times and of our own country has produced a specimen, in the death of a military hero, as excellent as often imitated, which, though respect forbids me to name it, cannot, I trust, be absent from your mind.

Such are the stricter outlines of general and specific invention in the three principal branches of our art; but as their near alliance allows not always a strict discrimination of their limits; as the mind and fancy of men, upon the whole, consist of mixed qualities, we seldom meet with a human performance exclusively made up of epic, dramatic, or pure historic materials.

Novelty and feelings will make the rigid historian sometimes launch out into the marvellous, or warm his bosom and extort a tear; the dramatist, in gazing at some tremendous feature, or the pomp of superior agency, will drop the chain of sympathy and be absorbed in the sublime; whilst the epic or lyric painter

forgets his solitary grandeur, sometimes descends and mixes with his agents. Thus Homer gave the feature of the drama in Hector and Andromache, in Irus and Ulysses; the spirit from the prison-house stalks like the shade of Ajax, in Shakspeare; the daughter of Soranus pleading for her father, and Octavia encircled by centurions, melt like Ophelia and Alceste, in Tacitus; thus Raphael personified the genius of the river in Joshua's passage through the Jordan, and again at the ceremony of Solomon's inauguration; and thus Poussin raised before the scared eye of Coriolanus, the frowning vision of Rome, all armed, with her attendant, Fortune.

These general excursions from one province of the art into those of its congenial neighbours, granted by judicious invention to the artist, let me apply to the grant of a more specific licence*: Horace, the most judicious of critics, when treating on the use of poetic words, tells his pupils, that the adoption of an old word, rendered novel by a skilful construc-

* Dixeris egregiè, notum si callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum. ——
Q. Horat. Flacci de A. P. v. 47.

tion with others, will entitle the poet to the praise of original diction. The same will be granted to the judicious adoption of figures in art.

Far from impairing the originality of invention, the unpremeditated discovery of an appropriate attitude or figure in the works of antiquity, or of the great old masters after the revival, and its adoption, or the apt transposition of one misplaced in some inferior work, will add lustre to a performance of commensurate or superior power, by a kind coalition with the rest, immediately furnished by nature and the subject. In such a case it is easily discovered whether a subject have been chosen merely to borrow an idea, an attitude or figure, or whether their eminent fitness procured them their place. An adopted idea or figure in a work of genius is a foil or a companion of the rest; but an idea of genius borrowed by mediocrity, tears all associate shreds, it is the giant's thumb by which the pigmy offered the measure of his own littleness. We stamp the plagiary on the borrower, who, without fit materials or adequate conceptions of his own, seeks to shelter impotence under purloined

vigour; we leave him with the full praise of invention, who by the harmony of a whole proves that what he adopted might have been his own offspring though anticipated by another. If he take now, he soon may give. Thus Michael Angelo scattered the Torso of Apollonius in every view, in every direction, in groups and single figures, over the composition of the Last Judgment; and in the Lunetta of Judith and her Maid gave an original turn to figures adopted from the gem of Pier Maria da Pescia: if the figure of Adam dismissed from Paradise, by Raphael, still own Masaccio for its inventor, he can scarcely be said to have furnished more than the hint of that enthusiasm and energy which we admire in Paul on the Areopagus: in the picture of the covenant with Noah, the sublimity of the vision, and the graces of the mother entangled by her babes, find their originals in the Sistine Chapel, but they are equalled by the fervour which conceived the Patriarch, who, with the infant pressed to his bosom, with folded hands, and prostrate on his knees, adores. What figure or what gesture in the Cartoon of Pisa

has not been imitated? Raphael, Parmegiano, Poussin, are equally indebted to it; in the Sacrament of Baptism, the last did little more than transcribe that knot of powers, the fierce feature of the veteran, who, eager to pull on his clothes, pushes his foot through the rending garment.—Such are the indulgences which invention grants to fancy, taste, and judgment.

But a limited fragment of observations must not presume to exhaust what in itself is inexhaustible; the features of invention are multiplied before me as my powers decrease: I shall therefore no longer trespass on your patience, than by fixing your attention for a few moments on one of its boldest flights, the transfiguration of Raphael; a performance equally celebrated and censured; in which the most judicious of inventors, the painter of propriety, is said to have not only wrestled for extent of information with the historian, but attempted to leap the boundaries, and, with a less discriminating than daring hand, to remove the established limits of the art, to have arbitrarily combined two actions, and consequently two different moments.

Were this charge founded, I might content myself with observing, that the Transfiguration, more than any other of Raphael's oil-pictures, was a public performance, destined by Julio de Medici, afterward Clement VII. for his archi-episcopal church at Narbonne; that it was painted in contest with Sebastian del Piombo, assisted in his rival picture of Lazarus by Michael Angelo; and thus, considering it as framed on the simple principles of the monumental style, established in my first discourse on the pictures of Polygnotus at Delphi, I might frame a plausible excuse for the modern artist; but Raphael is above the assistance of subterfuge, and it is sufficient to examine the picture, in order to prove the futility of the charge. Raphael has connected with the transfiguration not the *cure* of the maniac, but his *presentation for it;* if, according to the * Gospel record, this happened at the foot of the mountain, whilst the apparition took place at the top, what improbability is there in assigning the *same moment* to both?

Raphael's design was to represent Jesus as

* Matt. xvii. 5, 6. See Fiorillo, geschichte, &c. 104. seq.

the Son of God, and at the same time as the reliever of human misery, by an unequivocal fact. The transfiguration on Tabor, and the miraculous cure which followed the descent of Jesus, united, furnished that fact. The difficulty was how to combine two successive actions in one moment: he overcame it by sacrificing the moment of the cure to that of the apparition, by implying the lesser miracle in the greater. In subordinating the cure to the vision he obtained sublimity, in placing the crowd and the patient on the foreground, he gained room for the full exertion of his dramatic powers; it was not necessary that the dæmoniac should be represented in the moment of recovery, if its certainty could be expressed by other means: it is implied, it is placed beyond all doubt by the glorious apparition above; it is made nearly intuitive by the uplifted hand and finger of the apostle in the centre, who without hesitation, undismayed by the obstinacy of the dæmon, unmoved by the clamour of the crowd and the pusillanimous scepticism of some of his companions, refers the father of the maniac in an authoritative

manner for certain and speedy help to his master* on the mountain above, whom, though unseen, his attitude at once connects with all that passes below; here is the point of contact, here is that union of the two parts of the fact in one moment, which Richardson and Falconet could not discover.

* The vision on Tabor, as represented here, is the most characteristic produced by modern art. Whether we consider the action of the apostles overpowered by the divine effulgence, and divided between adoration and astonishment, or the forms of the prophets ascending like flame, and attracted by the lucid centre, or the majesty of Jesus himself, whose countenance is the only one we know expressive of his superhuman nature. That the unison of such powers should not, for once, have disarmed the burlesque of the French critic, rouses equal surprise and indignation.

FOURTH LECTURE.

INVENTION.

PART II.

ΦΘΟΝΕΡΑ Δ' ΑΛΛΟΣ 'ΑΝΗΡ ΒΛΕΠΩΝ,
ΓΝΩΜΑΝ ΚΕΝΕΑΝ ΣΚΟΤΩΙ ΚΤΛΙΝΔΕΙ
ΧΑΜΑΙΠΕΤΟΙΣΑΝ.

ΠΙΝΔΑΡ. ΝΕΜ. ΕΙΔ. Δ.

ARGUMENT.

Choice of subjects ; divided into positive, negative, repulsive. —Observations on the Parerga, or Accessories of Invention.

FOURTH LECTURE.

THE imitation of Nature, as it presents itself in space and figure, being the real sphere of plastic Invention, it follows, that whatever can occupy a place and be circumscribed by lines, characterised by form, substantiated by colour and light and shade, without provoking incredulity, shocking our conception by absurdity, averting our eye by loathsomeness or horror, is strictly within its province: but though all Nature seem to teem with objects of imitation, the "Choice" of subjects is a point of great importance to the Artist; the conception, the progress, the finish, and the success of his work depend upon it. An apt and advantageous subject rouses and elevates Invention, invigorates, promotes, and adds delight to labour; whilst a dull or repulsive one breeds

obstacles at every step, dejects and wearies—the Artist loses his labour, the spectator his expectation.

The first demand on every work of art is that it constitute one whole, that it fully pronounce its own meaning, that it tell itself; it ought to be independent; the essential part of its subject ought to be comprehended and understood without collateral assistance, without borrowing its commentary from the historian or the poet; for as we are soon wearied with a poem whose fable and motives reach us only by the borrowed light of annexed notes, so we turn our eye discontented from a picture or a statue whose meaning depends on the charity of a Cicerone, or must be fetched from a book.

As the condition that each work of art should fully and essentially tell its own tale, undoubtedly narrows the quantity of admissible objects, singly taken, to remedy this, to enlarge the range of subjects, Invention has contrived by a Cyclus or series to tell the most important moments of a long story, its beginning, its middle, and its end: for though some of these may not, in themselves, admit of distinct discri-

mination, they may receive and impart light by connection.

Of him who undertakes thus to personify a tale, the first demand is, that his Invention dwell on the firm basis of the story, on its most important and significant moments, or its principal actors. Next, as the nature of the art which is confined to the apparition of single moments forces him to leap many intermediate ones, he cannot be said to have invented with propriety, if he neglect imperceptibly to fill the chasm occasioned by their omission; and, finally, that he shall not interrupt or lose the leading thread of his plan in quest of episodes, in the display of subordinate or adventitious beauties. On the observation of these rules depends the perspicuity of his work, the interest we take in it, and, consequently, all that can be gained by the adoption of a historic series.

When form, colour, with conception and execution, are deducted from a work, its subject, the unwrought stuff only, the naked materials remain, and these we divide into three classes.

The first are positive, advantageous, commensurate with and adapted for the art. The

whole of the work lies prepared in their germ, and spontaneously meets the rearing hand of the Artist.

The second class, composed of subjects negative and uninteresting in themselves, depends entirely on the manner of treating; such subjects owe what they can be to the genius of the Artist.

The repulsive, the subjects which cannot pronounce their own meaning, constitute the third class. On them genius and talent are equally wasted, because the heart has no medium to render them intelligible. Taste and execution may recommend them to our eye, but never can make them generally impressive, or stamp them with perspicuity.

To begin with advantageous subjects, immediately above the scenes of vulgar life, of animals, and common landscape, the simple representation of actions purely human, appears to be as nearly related to the art as to ourselves; their effect is immediate; they want no explanation; from them, therefore, we begin our scale. The next step leads us to pure historic subjects, singly or in a series; beyond these

the delineation of character, or, properly speaking, the drama, invites; immediately above this we place the epic with its mythologic, allegoric, and symbolic branches.

On these four branches of Invention, as I have treated diffusely in the lecture published on this subject, and since successively in these prelections, I shall not at present circumstantially dwell, but as succinctly as possible remind you only of their specific difference and elements.

The first class, which, without much boldness of metaphor, may be said to draw its substance immediately from the lap of Nature, to be as elemental as her emotions, and the passions by which she sways us, finds its echo in all hearts, and imparts its charm to every eye; from the mutual caresses of maternal affection and infant simplicity, the whispers of love or eruptions of jealousy and revenge, to the terrors of life, struggling with danger, or grappling with death. The Madonnas of Raphael; the Ugolino, the Paolo and Frances of Dante; the Conflagration of the Borgo; the Niobe protecting her daughter; Hæmon piercing his

own breast, with Antigone hanging dead from his arm,* owe the sympathies they call forth to their assimilating power, and not to the names they bear: without names, without reference to time and place, they would impress with equal energy, because they find their counterpart in every breast, and speak the language of mankind. Such were the Phantasiæ of the ancients, which modern art, by indiscriminate laxity of application, in what is called Fancy-Pictures, has more debased than imitated. A mother's and a lover's kiss acquire their value from the lips they press, and suffering deformity mingles disgust with pity.

Historic Invention administers to truth. History, as contradistinguished from arbitrary or poetic narration, tells us not what might be, but what is or was; circumscribes the probable, the grand, and the pathetic, with truth of time, place, custom; gives "local habitation and a name:" its agents are the pure organs of a fact. Historic plans, when sufficiently distinct to be

* The group in the Ludovisi, ever since its discovery, absurdly misnamed Pætus and Arria, notwithstanding some dissonance of taste and execution, may with more plausibility claim the title of Hæmon and Antigone.

told, and founded on the basis of human nature, have that prerogative over mere natural imagery, that whilst they bespeak our sympathy, they interest our intellect. We were pleased with the former as men, we are attracted by this as members of society: bound round with public and private connections and duties, taught curiosity by education, we wish to regulate our conduct by comparisons of analogous situations and similar modes of society: these History furnishes; transplants us into other times; empires and revolutions of empires pass before us with memorable facts and actors in their train—the legislator, the philosopher, the discoverer, the polishers of life, the warrior, the divine, are the principal inhabitants of this soil: it is perhaps unnecessary to add, that nothing trivial, nothing grovelling or mean, should be suffered to approach it. This is the department of Tacitus and Poussin. The exhibition of character in the conflict of passions with the rights, the rules, the prejudices of society, is the legitimate sphere of dramatic invention. It inspires, it agitates us by reflected self-love, with pity, terror, hope and fear; whatever makes events, and time and place, the ministers

of character and pathos, let fiction or reality compose the tissue, is its legitimate claim: it distinguishes and raises itself above historic representation by laying the chief interest on the *actors*, and moulding the *fact* into mere situations contrived for their exhibition: they are the end, this the medium. Such is the invention of Sophocles and Shakspeare, and uniformly that of Raphael. The actors, who in Poussin and the rest of historic painters shine by the splendour of the fact, reflect it in Raphael with unborrowed rays: they are the luminous object to which the action points.

Of the epic plan, the loftiest species of human conception, the aim is to astonish whilst it instructs; it is the sublime allegory of a maxim. Here Invention arranges a plan by general ideas, the selection of the most prominent features of Nature, or favourable modes of society, visibly to substantiate some great maxim. If it admits history for its basis, it hides the limits in its grandeur; if it select characters to conduct its plan, it is only in the genus, their features reflect, their passions are kindled by the maxim, and absorbed in its universal blaze: at this elevation heaven and earth mingle their

boundaries, men are raised to demigods, and gods descend. This is the sphere of Homer, Phidias, and Michael Agnolo.

Allegory, or the personification of invisible physic and metaphysic ideas, though not banished from the regions of Invention, is equally inadmissible in pure epic, dramatic, and historic plans, because, wherever it enters, it must rule the whole.* It rules with propriety the mystic drama of the Vatican, where the characters dis-

* The whole of the gallery of Luxemburg by Rubens is but a branch of its magnificence: general as the elements, universal and permanent as the affections of human nature, allegory breaks the fetters of time, it unites with boundless sway mythologic, feodal, local incongruities, fleeting modes of society and fugitive fashions: thus, in the picture of Rubens, Minerva, who instructs, the Graces that surround the royal maiden at the poetic fount, are not what they are in Homer, the real tutress of Telemachus, the real dressers of Venus, they are the symbols only of the education which the princess received. In that sublime design of Michael Agnolo, where a figure is roused by a descending genius from his repose on a globe, on which he yet reclines, and with surprise discovers the phantoms of the passions which he courted, unmasked in wild confusion flitting round him, M. Agnolo was less ambitious to express the nature of a dream, or to bespeak our attention to its picturesque effect and powerful contrasts, than to impress us with the lesson, that all is vanity and life a farce, unless engaged by virtue and the pursuits of mind.

played are only the varied instruments of a mystery by which the church was established, and Julio and Leone are the allegoric image, the representatives of that church; but the epic, dramatic, and historic painter embellish with poetry or delineate with truth what either was or is supposed to be real; they must therefore conduct their plans by personal and substantial agency, if they mean to excite that credibility, without which it is not in their power to create an interest in the spectator or the reader.

That great principle, the necessity of a moral tendency or of some doctrine useful to mankind in the *whole* of an epic performance, admitted, are we therefore to sacrifice the uniformity of its parts, and thus to lose that credibility which *alone* can impress us with the importance of the maxim that dictated to the poet narration and to the artist imagery? Are the agents sometimes to be real beings, and sometimes abstract ideas? Is the Zeus of Homer, of whose almighty will the bard, at the very threshold of his poem, proclaims himself only the herald, by the purblind acuteness of a commentator, to be turned into æther;

and Juno, just arriving from her celestial toilet, changed into air, to procure from their mystic embraces the allegoric offspring of vernal impregnation? When Minerva, by her weight, makes the chariot of Diomede groan, and Mars wounded, roars with the voice of ten thousand, are they nothing but the symbol of military discipline, and the sound of the battle's roar? or Ate, seized by her hair, and by Zeus dashed from the battlements of heaven, is she only a metaphysic idea? Forbid it, Sense! As well might we say, that Milton, when he called the porteress of hell, Satan's daughter, *Sin*, and his son and dread antagonist, *Death*, meant only to impress us with ideas of privation and nonentity, and sacrificed the real agents of his poem to an unskilful choice of names? Yet it is their name that has bewildered his commentator and biographer in criticisms equally cold, repugnant and incongruous, on the admissibility and inadmissibility of allegory in poems of supposed reality. What becomes of the interest the poet and the artist mean to excite in us, if, in the moment of reading or contemplating, we do not believe what the one tells and the other shows? It is that magic which

places on the same basis of existence, and amalgamates the mythic or superhuman, and the human parts of the Ilias, of Paradise Lost, and of the Sistine Chapel, that enraptures, agitates, and whirls us along as readers or spectators.

When Poussin represented Coriolanus in the Volscian camp, he placed before him in suppliant attitude his mother, wife, and children, with a train of Roman matrons kneeling, and behind them the erect and frowning form of an armed female, accompanied by another with streaming hair, recumbent on a wheel. On these two, unseen to all else, Coriolanus, perplexed in the extreme, in an attitude of despair, his sword half drawn, as if to slay himself, fixes his scared eyes: who discovers not that he is in a trance, and in the female warrior recognises the tutelary genius of Rome, and her attendant Fortune, to terrify him into compliance? Shall we disgrace with the frigid conceit of an allegory the powerful invention which disclosed to the painter's eye the agitation in the Roman's breast and the proper moment for fiction? Who is not struck by the sublimity of a vision which, without diminishing the credibility of the fact, adds to its im-

portance, and raises the hero, by making him submit not to the impulse of private ties, but to the imperious destiny of his country?

Among the paltry subterfuges contrived by dulness to palliate the want of invention, the laborious pedantry of emblems ranks foremost, by which arbitrary and conventional signs have been substituted for character and expression. If the assertion of S. Johnson, that the plastic arts "can illustrate, but cannot inform," be false as a general maxim, it gains an air of truth with regard to this hieroglyphic mode of exchanging substance for signs; and the story which he adds in proof, of a young girl's mistaking the usual figure of Justice with a steel-yard for a cherry-woman, becomes here appropriate. The child had seen many stall and market-women, and always with a steel-yard or a pair of scales, but never a figure of Justice; and it might as well be pretended that one not initiated in the Egyptian mysteries should discover in the Scarabæus of an obelisk the summer solstice, as that a child, a girl, or a man not acquainted with Cæsar Ripa, or some other emblem-coiner, should find in a female holding a balance over her eyes, in another

with a bridle in her hand, in a third leaning on a broken pillar, and in a fourth loaded with children, the symbols of Justice, Temperance, Fortitude and Charity. If these signs be at all admissible, they ought, at least, to receive as much light from the form, the character, and expression of the figures they accompany, as they reflect on them, else they become burlesque, instead of being attributes. Though this rage for emblem did not become epidemic before the lapse of the sixteenth century, when the Cavalieri of the art, the Zucchari, Vasari and Porta's undertook to deliver more work than their brains could furnish with thought, yet even the philosophers of the art, in the classic days of Julio and Leo, cannot be said to have been entirely free from it. What analogy is there between an ostrich at the side of a female with a balance in her hand, and the idea of Justice? Yet thus has Raphael represented her in a stanza of the Vatican. Nor has he been constant to the same emblem, as on the ceiling of another stanza, he has introduced her with a scale, and armed with a sword. The *Night* of M. Agnolo, on the Medicean tombs, might certainly be taken for what she professes

to be, without the assistance of the mask, the poppies, and the owl at her feet, for the dominion of sleep is personified in her expression and posture: perhaps even her beautiful companion, whose faintly stretching attitude and half-opened eyes express the symptoms of approaching *morn*, might be conceived for its representative;* but no stretch of fancy can, in their male associates, reach the symbols of *full day* and *eve*, or in the females of the monument of Julio II. the ideas of *contemplative* and *active life*.

To means so arbitrary, confused and precarious, the ancients never descended: their general ideas had an uniform and general typus, which invention never presumed to alter or to transgress; but this typus lay less in the attributes than in the character and form. The inverted torch and moon-flower were the accompaniments, and not the substitutes, of *Death* and *Sleep*; neither *Psyche* nor *Victory* depended on her wings. Mercury was recognized without the caduceus or purse, and Apollo without his bow or lyre; various and similar, the branches of one family, their leading lines

* L'Aurora Sonnacchiosa.

descended from that full type of majesty which Phidias, the architect of gods, had stamped on his Jupiter. Whether we ought to consider the son of Charmidas as the inventor or the regulator of this supreme and irremovable standard, matters not, from *him* the ancient writers date the epoch of mythic invention; no revolutions of style changed the character of his forms, talent only polished with more or less success what his laws had established. Phidias, says Quintilian, was framed to form gods; Phidias, says Pliny, gave in his Jupiter a new motive to religion.

Whether or not, after the restoration of art, the Supreme Being, the eternal essence of incomprehensible perfection, ought ever to have been approached by the feeble efforts of human conception, it is not my office to discuss, perhaps it ought not — but since it has, as the Roman Church has embodied divine substance, and called on our arts for an auxiliary, it was to be expected that, to make assistance effectual, a full type, a supreme standard of form, should have been established for the author and the agents of the sacred circle: but, be it from the tyranny of religious barbarians, or inability,

or to avoid the imputation of copying each other, painters and sculptors, widely differing among themselves in the conception of divine or sainted form and character, agree in nothing but attributes and symbols: triangular glories, angelic ministry and minstrelsy, the colours of the drapery; the cross, the spear, the stigmata; the descending dove; in implements of ecclesiastic power or instruments of martyrdom.

The Biblic expression, as it is translated, "of the Ancient of Days" — which means, "He that existed before time," furnished the primitive artists, instead of an image of supreme majesty, only with the hoary image of age: and such a figure borne along by a globe of angels, and crowned with a kind of episcopal mitre, recurs on the bronzes of Lorenzo Ghiberti. The sublime mind of M. Agnolo, soaring beyond the idea of decrepitude and puny formality, strove to form a type in the elemental energy of the Creator of Adam, and darted life from His extended hand, but in the Creator of Eve sunk again to the idea of age. Raphael strove to compound a form from M. Angelo and his predecessors, to combine energy and rapidity with age: in the Loggia he follows

M. Agnolo, in the Stanza the prior artists; here his gods are affable and mild, there rapid, and perhaps more violent than energetic. After these two great names, it were profanation to name the attempts of their successors.

The same fluctuation perplexes the effigy of the Saviour. Lionardo da Vinci attempted to unite power with calm serenity, but in the Last Supper alone presses on our hearts by humanity of countenance. The Infant Christ of M. Agnolo is a superhuman conception, but as man and Redeemer with his cross, in the Minerva, he is a figure as mannered in form and attitude, as averting by stern severity; and, as the Judge of Mankind in the Last Judgment, he seems to me as unworthy of the artist's mind as of his master-hand. The Christs of Raphael, as infants, are seldom more than lovely children; as a man, the painter has poised His form between church tradition and the dignified mildness of his own character.

Two extremes appear to have co-operated to impede the establishment of a type in the formation of the Saviour: by one He is converted into a character of mythology, the other debases Him to the dregs of mankind.

"The character corresponding with that of Christ," says Mengs,* "ought to be a compound of the characters of Jupiter and of Apollo, allowing only for the accidental expression of the moment." What magic shall amalgamate the superhuman airs of Rhea's and Latona's sons, with patience in suffering and resignation? The critic in his exultation forgot the leading feature of his Master — condescending humility. In the race of Jupiter majesty is often tempered by emanations of beauty and of grace, but never softened to warm humanity. Here lies the knot: —

The Saviour of mankind extending his arm to relieve, without visible means, the afflicted, the hopeless, the dying, the dead, is a subject that visits with awe the breast of every one who calls himself after His name; the artist is in the sphere of adoration.

An exalted sage descending to every beneficent office of humanity, instructing ignorance,

* Speaking of the figure of Christ by Raphael in the Madonna del Spasimo, he calls it "Una Figura d'un Carattere fra quel di Giove, e quello d'Apollo; quale effettivamente deve esser quello, che corrisponde a Cristo, aggiungendovi soltanto l'espressione accidentale della passione, in cui si rappresenta." Opere 11. 83.

not only forgiving but excusing outrage, pressing his enemy to his breast, commands the sympathy of every man, though he be no believer; the artist is in the sphere of sentiment.

But a mean man, marked with the features of a mean race, surrounded by a beggarly, ill-shaped rabble and stupid crowds—may be mistaken for a juggler, that claims the attention of no man. Of this let Art beware.

From these observations on positive we now proceed to the class of *negative* subjects. Negative we call those which in themselves possess little that is significant, historically true or attractive, pathetic or sublime, which leave our heart and fancy listless and in apathy, though by the art with which they are executed they allure and retain the eye: here, if ever, the artist creates his own work, in raising, by ingenious combination, that to a positive subject which in its parts is none, or merely passive.

The first rank among these claims that mystic class of monumental pictures, allusive to mysteries of religion and religious institutions, asylums, charities; or votive pictures of those who dedicate offerings of gratitude for life saved or happiness conferred: in these the male

and female patrons of such creeds, societies and persons, prophets, apostles, saints, warriors and doctors, with and without the donor or the suppliant, combine in apposition or groups, and are suffered to flank each other without incurring the indignation due to anachronism, as they are always placed in the presence of the Divine Being, before whom the distance of epochs, place and races, the customs, dress and habits of different nations, are supposed to vanish; and the present, past and future to exist in the same moment.

These, which the simplicity of primitive art dismissed without more invention than elevating the Madonna with the infant Saviour, and arranging the saints and suppliants in formal parallels beneath, the genius of greater masters often, though not always, transformed to organs of sublimity, or connected in an assemblage of interesting and highly pleasing groups, by inventing a congruous action or scenery, which spread warmth over a subject that, simply considered, threatened to freeze the beholder. Let us give an instance.

The Madonna, called Dell' Impannato, by Raphael, is one of these: it is so called because

he introduced in the back-ground the old Italian linen or paper window. Maria is represented standing or raising herself to offer the Infant to St. Elizabeth, who stretches out her arms to receive him. Mary Magdalen behind, and bending over her, points to St. John, and caresses the child; he with infantine joy escapes from her touch, and looking at her, leaps up to his mother's neck. St. John, as the principal figure, is placed in the fore-ground on a leopard's skin, and with raised hand seems to prophesy of Christ; he appears to be eight or ten years old, Christ scarcely two. At this anachronism, or the much bolder one committed in the admission of M. Magdalen, who was probably younger than Christ, those only will be shocked who have not considered the nature of a votive picture: this was dedicated to St. John, as the tutelary saint of Florence, and before it was transferred to the Pitti Gallery, was the altar-piece in a domestic chapel of the Medicean family.*

The greater part of this audience are acquainted, some are familiar, with the celebrated

* It is engraved by Villamena.

painting of Correggio, formerly treasured in the Pilotta of Parma; transported to the Louvre and again replaced. In the invention of this work, which exhibits St. Jerome, to whom it is dedicated, presenting his translation of the Scriptures, by the hand of an angel, to the infant seated in the lap of the Madonna, the patron of the piece is sacrificed in place to the female and angelic group which occupies the middle. The figure that chiefly attracts, has, by its suavity, for centuries attracted, and still absorbs the general eye, is that charming one of the Magdalen, in a half kneeling, half recumbent posture, pressing the foot of Jesus to her lips. By doing this, the painter has, undoubtedly, offered to the Graces the boldest and most enamoured sacrifice which they ever received from art. He has been rewarded, accordingly, for the impropriety of her usurping the first glance, which ought to fix itself on the Divinity, and the Saint vanishes in the amorous gaze on her charms. If the Magdalen has long possessed the right of being present where the Madonna presides, she ought to assist the purpose of the picture in subordinate

entreaty; her action should have been that of supplication; as it is, it is the effusion of fondling, unmixed love.

The true medium between dry apposition and exuberant contrast, appears to have been kept by Titian, in an altar-piece of the Franciscans, or Frati, in spite of French selection, still at Venice; and of which the simple grandeur has been balanced by Reynolds against the artificial splendour of Rubens in a similar subject. It probably was what it represents, the thanks-offering of a noble family, for some victory obtained, or conquest made in the Morea. The heads of the family, male and female, presented by St. Francis, occupy the two wings of the composition, kneeling, and with hands joined in prayer, in attitudes nearly parallel. Elevated in the centre, St. Peter stands at the altar, between two columns, his hand in the Gospel-book, the keys before him, addressing the suppliants. Above him, to the right, appears the Madonna, holding the infant, and with benign countenance, seems to sanction the ceremony. Two stripling cherubs on an airy cloud, right over the centre, rear the cross; an armed warrior with the standard of victory,

and behind him a turbaned Turk or Moor, approach from the left and round the whole.

Such is the invention of a work, which, whilst it fills the mind, refuses utterance to words; of which it is difficult to say, whether it subdue more by simplicity, command by dignity, persuade by propriety, assuage by repose, or charm by contrast. A great part of these groups consists of portraits in habiliments of the time, deep, vivid, brilliant; but all are completely subject to the tone of gravity that emanates from the centre; a sacred silence enwraps the whole; all gleams and nothing flashes. Steady to his purpose, and penetrated by his motive, though brooding over every part of his work, the artist appears nowhere.*

Next to this higher class of negative subjects, though much lower, may be placed the magnificence of ornamental painting, the pompous machinery of Paolo Veronese, Pietro da Cortona, and Rubens. Splendour, contrast, and profusion, are the springs of its invention. The painter, not the story, is the principal subject

* The composition, and in some degree the lines, but neither its tone nor effect, may be found among the etchings of Le Fevre.

here. Dazzled by piles of Palladian architecture, tables set out with regal luxury, terrasses of plate, crowds of Venetian nobles, pages, dwarfs, gold-collared Moors, and choirs of vocal and instrumental music, embrowned and tuned by meridian skies, what eye has time to discover, in the brilliant chaos, the visit of Christ to Simon the Pharisee, or the sober nuptials of Canah? but when the charm dissolves, though avowedly wonders of disposition, colour, and unlimited powers of all-grasping execution, if considered in any other light than as the luxurious trappings of ostentatious wealth, judgment must pronounce them ominous pledges of irreclaimable depravity of taste, glittering masses of portentous incongruities and colossal baubles.

The next place to representation of pomp among negative subjects, but far below, we assign to Portrait. Not that characteristic portrait by which Silanion, in the face of Apollodorus, personified habitual indignation; Apelles, in Alexander, superhuman ambition; Raphael, in Julio the IId., pontifical fierceness; Titian, in Paul IIId., testy age with priestly subtlety; and in Machiavelli and Cæsar Borgia,

the wily features of conspiracy and treason.—Not that portrait by which Rubens contrasted the physiognomy of philosophic and classic acuteness with that of genius in the conversation-piece of Grotius, Meursius, Lipsius, and himself; not the nice and delicate discriminations of Vandyk, nor that power which, in our days, substantiated humour in Sterne, comedy in Garrick, and mental and corporeal strife, to use his own words, in Samuel Johnson. On that broad basis, portrait takes its exalted place between history and the drama. The portrait I mean is that common one, as widely spread as confined in its principle; the remembrancer of insignificance, mere human resemblance, in attitude without action, features without meaning, dress without drapery, and situation without propriety. The aim of the artist and the sitter's wish are confined to external likeness; that deeper, nobler aim, the personification of character, is neither required, nor, if obtained, recognised. The better artist, condemned to this task, can here only distinguish himself from his duller brother by execution, by invoking the assistance of back-ground, chiaroscuro and picturesque effects, and thus

sometimes produces a work which delights the eye, and leaves us, whilst we lament the misapplication, with a strong impression of his power; him we see, not the insignificant individual that usurps the centre, one we never saw, care not if we never see, and if we do, remember not, for his head can personify nothing but his opulence or his pretence; it is furniture.

If any branch of art be once debased to a mere article of fashionable furniture, it will seldom elevate itself above the taste and the caprice of the owner, or the dictates of fashion; for its success depends on both; and though there be not a bauble thrown by the sportive hand of fashion which taste may not catch to advantage, it will seldom be allowed to do it, if fashion dictate the mode. Since liberty and commerce have more levelled the ranks of society, and more equally diffused opulence, private importance has been increased, family connections and attachments have been more numerously formed, and hence portrait painting, which formerly was the exclusive property of princes, or a tribute to beauty, prowess, genius, talent, and distinguished character, is now become a kind of family calendar, engrossed by

the mutual charities of parents, children, brothers, nephews, cousins, and relatives of all colours.

To portrait painting, thus circumstanced, we subjoin, as the last branch of uninteresting subjects, that kind of landscape which is entirely occupied with the tame delineation of a given spot; an enumeration of hill and dale, clumps of trees, shrubs, water, meadows, cottages, and houses, what is commonly called Views. These, if not assisted by nature, dictated by taste, or chosen for character, may delight the owner of the acres they enclose, the inhabitants of the spot, perhaps the antiquary or the traveller, but to every other eye they are little more than topography. The landscape of Titian, of Mola, of Salvator, of the Poussins, Claude, Rubens, Elzheimer, Rembrandt and Wilson, spurns all relation with this kind of map-work. To them, nature disclosed her bosom in the varied light of rising, meridian, setting suns; in twilight, night and dawn. Height, depth, solitude, strike, terrify, absorb, bewilder in their scenery. We tread on classic or romantic ground, or wander through the characteristic groups of rich congenial objects. The usual choice of

the Dutch school, which frequently exhibits no more than the transcript of a spot, borders, indeed, nearer on the negative kind of landscape; but imitation will not be entitled to the pleasure we receive, or the admiration we bestow, on their genial works, till it has learnt to give an air of choice to necessity, to imitate their hues, spread their masses, and to rival the touch of their pencil.

Subjects which cannot in their whole compass be brought before the eye, which appeal for the best part of their meaning to the erudition of the spectator and the refinements of sentimental enthusiasm, seem equally to defy the powers of invention. The labour of disentangling the former, dissolves the momentary magic of the first impression, and leaves us cold: the second evaporates under the grosser touch of sensual art. It may be more than doubted whether the resignation of Alcestis can ever be made intuitive: the pathos of the story consists in the heroic resolution of Alcestis to save her husband's life by resigning her own. Now the art can show no more than Alcestis dying: the cause of her death, her

elevation of mind, the disinterested heroism of her resolution to die, are beyond its power.

Raffaelle's celebrated Donation of the Keys to St. Peter in the Cartoon before us, as ineffectually struggles with more than the irremovable obscurity, with the ambiguity of the subject: a numerous group of grave and devout characters, in attitudes of anxious debate and eager curiosity, press forward to witness the behests of a person who, with one hand, seems to have consigned two massy keys to their foremost companion on his knees, and with the other hand points to a flock of sheep, grazing behind. What associating power can find the connection between those keys and the pasturing herd? or discover in an obtrusive allegory the only real motive of the emotions that inspire the apostolic group? the artist's most determined admirer, if not the slave of pontifical authority, ready to transubstantiate whatever comes before him, must confine his homage to the power that interests us in a composition without a subject.

Poussin's extolled picture of the Testament of Eudamidas is another proof of the inefficacy

to represent the enthusiasm of sentiment by the efforts of art. The figures have simplicity, the expression energy, it is well composed, in short, it possesses every requisite but that which alone could make it what it pretends to be:—you see an elderly man on his death-bed; a physician, pensive, with his hand on the man's breast, his wife and daughter desolate at the foot of the bed; one, who resembles a notary, eagerly writing; a buckler and a lance on the wall; and the simple implements of the scene, tell us the former occupation and the circumstances of Eudamidas;—but his legacy—the secure reliance on the friend to whom he bequeaths his daughter—the noble acceptance and magnanimity of that friend,—these we ought to see, and seek in vain for them; what is represented in the picture may be as well applied to any other man who died, made a will, and left a daughter and a wife, as to the Corinthian Eudamidas.

This is not the only instance in which Poussin has mistaken erudition and detail of circumstances for evidence. The Exposition of Infant Moses on the Nile, is a picture as much celebrated as the former: a woman shoves a

child placed in a basket from the shore. A man mournfully pensive walks off followed by a boy who turns towards the woman and connects the groups; a girl in the back-ground points to a distance, where we discover the Egyptian princess, and thus anticipate the fate of the child. The statue of a river god recumbent on the sphinx, a town with lofty temples, pyramids and obelisks, tell Memphis and the Nile; and smoking brick-kilns still nearer allude to the servitude and toil of Israel in Egypt: not one circumstance is omitted that could contribute to explain the meaning of the whole; but the repulsive subject completely baffled the painter's endeavour to show the *real* motive of the action. We cannot penetrate the *cause* that forces these people to expose the child on the river, and hence our sympathy and participation languish, we turn from a subject that gives us danger without fear, to admire the expression of the parts, the classic elegance, the harmony of colours, the mastery of execution.

The importance of some secondary points of invention, of scenery, back-ground, drapery,

ornament, is frequently such, that, independent of the want of more essential parts, if possessed in a very eminent degree, they have singly raised from insignificance to esteem, names that had few other rights to consideration; and neglected, in spite of superior comprehension, in the choice or conception of a subject, in defiance of style and perhaps of colour, of expression, and sometimes composition, often have left little but apathy to the contemplation of works produced by men of superior grasp and essential excellence. Fewer would admire Poussin were he deprived of his scenery, though I shall not assert with Mengs, that in his works the subject is more frequently the appendix than the principle of the back-ground; what right could the greater part of Andrea del Sarto's historic compositions claim to our attention, if deprived of the parallelism, the repose and space in which his figures are arranged, or the ample draperies that invest them, and hide with solemn simplicity their vulgarity of character and limbs: it often requires no inconsiderable degree of mental power and technic discrimination to separate the sublimity of Michael Agnolo, and the pathos of Raffaelle

from the total neglect or the incongruities of scenery and back-ground, which frequently involve or clog their conceptions, to add by fancy the place on which their figures ought to stand, the horizon that ought to elevate or surround them, and the masses of light and shade indolently neglected or sacrificed to higher principles. How deeply the importance of scenery and situation, with their proper degree of finish, were felt by Tiziano, before and after his emancipation from the shackles of Giov. Bellino, every work of his during the course of nearly a centenary practice proves: to select two from all, the Martyrdom of the Dominican Peter, that summary of his accumulated powers, and the Presentation of the Virgin, one of his first historic essays, owe, if not all, their greatest effect, to scenery: loftiness and solitude of site assist the sublimity of the descending vision to consecrate the actors beyond what their characters and style of limbs could claim, and render the first an object of submissive admiration, whilst its simple grandeur renders the second one of cheerful and indulgent acquiescence; and reconciles us to a detail of portrait-painting, and the impropriety of associating domestic

and vulgar imagery with a consecrated subject.

It is for these reasons that the importance of scenery and back-ground has been so much insisted on by Reynolds; who frequently declared, that whatever preparatory assistance he might admit in the draperies or other parts of his figures, he always made it a point to keep the arrangement of the scenery, the disposition and ultimate finish of the back-ground to himself.

By the choice and scenery of the back-ground we are frequently enabled to judge how far a painter entered into his subject, whether he understood its nature, to what class it belonged, what impression it was capable of making, what passion it was calculated to rouse: the sedate, the solemn, the severe, the awful, the terrible, the sublime, the placid, the solitary, the pleasing, the gay, are stamped by it. Sometimes it ought to be negative, entirely subordinate, receding or shrinking into itself; sometimes more positive, it acts, invigorates, assists the subject, and claims attention; sometimes its forms, sometimes its colour ought to command. — A subject in itself bor-

dering on the usual or common, may become sublime or pathetic by the back-ground alone, and a sublime or pathetic one may become trivial and uninteresting by it: a female leaning her head on her hand on a rock might easily suggest itself to any painter of portrait, but the means of making this figure interesting to those who are not concerned in the likeness, were not to be picked from the mixtures of the palette: Reynolds found the secret in contrasting the tranquillity and repose of the person by a tempestuous sea and a stormy shore in the distance; and in another female contemplating a tremulous sea by a placid moonlight, he connected elegance with sympathy and desire.

Whatever connects the individual with the elements, whether by abrupt or imperceptible means, is an instrument of sublimity, as, whatever connects it in the same manner with, or tears it from the species, may become an organ of pathos: in this discrimination lies the rule by which our art, to astonish or move, ought to choose the scenery of its subjects. It is not by the accumulation of infernal or magic machinery, distinctly seen, by the introduction of

Hecate and a chorus of female demons and witches, by surrounding him with successive apparitions at once, and a range of shadows moving above or before him, that Macbeth can be made an object of terror, — to render him so you must place him on a ridge, his down-dashed eye absorbed by the murky abyss; surround the horrid vision with darkness, exclude its limits, and shear its light to glimpses.

This art of giving to the principal figure the command of the horizon, is perhaps the only principle by which modern art might have gained an advantage over that of the ancients, and improved the dignity of composition, had it been steadily pursued by its great restorers, the painters of Julio II. and Leone X., though we find it more attended to in the monumental imagery of the Capella Sistina than in the Stanze and the Cartoons of Raffaello, which being oftener pathetic or intellectual than sublime, suffered less by neglecting it.

The same principle which has developed in the cone, the form generally most proper for composing a single figure or a group, contains the reason why the principal figure or group should be the most elevated object of a com-

position, and locally command the accidents of scenery and place. The Apollo of Belvedere, singly or in a group, was surely not composed to move at the bottom of a valley, nor the Zeus of Phidias to be covered with a roof.

The improprieties attendant on the neglect of this principle are, perhaps, in no work of eminence more offensively evident than in the celebrated Resuscitation of Lazarus by Sebastian del Piombo, whose composition, if composition it deserved to be called, seems to have been dictated by the back-ground. It usurps the first glance; it partly buries, everywhere throngs, and in the most important place squeezes the subject into a corner. The horizon is at the top, Jesus, Maria, and Lazarus at the bottom of the scene. Though its plan and groups recede in diminished forms, they advance in glaring opaque colour, nor can it avail in excuse of the artist, to say that the multitude of figures admitted are characters chosen to show in different modes of expression the effect of the miracle, whilst their number gives celebrity to it and discriminates it from the obscure trick of a juggler: all this, if it had been done, though perhaps it has not, for by far the greater part

are not spectators, might have been done with subordination: the most authentic proof of the reality of the miracle ought to have beamed from the countenance of Him who performed it, and of the restored man's sister.—In every work something must be first, something last; that is essential, this optional; that is present by its own right, this by courtesy and convenience.*

The rival picture of the resuscitation of Lazarus, the Transfiguration of Christ by Raffaello, avoids the inconvenience of indiscriminate crowding, and the impertinent *luxuriance* of scenery which we have censured, by the artifice of escaping from what is strictly called back-ground, and excluding it altogether: the action on the fore-ground is the basis and Christ

* I cannot quit this picture without observing, that it presents the most incontrovertible evidence of the incongruities arising from the jarring coalition of the grand and ornamental styles. The group of Lazarus may be said to contain the most valuable relic of the classic time of modern, and perhaps the only specimen left of M. Agnolo's oil-painting; an opinion which will scarcely be disputed by him who has examined the manner of the Sistine Chapel, and in his mind compared it with the group of the Lazarus, and that with the style and treatment of the other parts.

the apex of the cone, and what they might have suffered from diminution of size is compensated by elevation and splendour. In sacrificing to this principle the rules of a perspective which he was so well acquainted with, Raffaello succeeded to unite the beginning, the middle, and the end of the event which he represented in one moment; he escaped every atom of common-place or unnecessary embellishment with a simplicity and so artless an air, that few but the dull, the petulant, and the pedant, can refuse him their assent, admiration and sympathy; if he has not, strictly speaking, embodied possibility, he has perhaps done more, he has done what Homer did, by hiding the unmanageable but less essential part of his materials, he has transformed it to probability.

I have said that by the choice of scenery alone we may often, if not always, judge how far an artist has penetrated his subject, what emotion in treating it he meant to excite. No subjects can elucidate this with so much perspicuity as those generally distinguished by the name of Madonnas: subjects stamped with a mystery of religion, and originally contrived under the bland images of maternal fondness to

subdue the heart. In examining the considerable number of those by Raffaello, we find generally some reciprocal feature of filial and parental love, "the charities of father, son, and mother," sometimes varied by infant play and female caresses, sometimes dignified by celestial ministry and homage; the endearments of the nursery selected and embodied by forms more charming than exalted, less beautiful than genial—accordingly the choice of scenery consists seldom in more than a pleasing accompaniment: the flower and the shrub, the rivulet and grove, enamel the seat or embower the repose of the sacred pilgrims under the serenity of a placid sky, expanded or breaking through trees, or sheltering ruins; whilst in those surrounded by domestic scenery, a warm recess veils the mother, now hiding her darling from profane aspect, now pressing him to her bosom, or contemplating in silent rapture his charms displayed on her lap—accompaniments and actions, though appropriate, without allusion to the mysterious personages they profess to exhibit —to discriminate them the chair, the window, the saddle on which Joseph sits in one, the flowers which he kneeling presents in another,

the cradle, the bath, are called on. Raffaello was less penetrated by a devout than by an amorous principle; his design was less to stamp maternal affection with the seal of religion than to consecrate the face he adored; his Holy Families, with one exception, are the apotheosis of his Fornarina.

This exception, as it proves what had been advanced of the rest, so it proves likewise that the omission of its beauties in them was more a matter of choice than want of comprehension. Than the face and attitude of the Madonna of Versailles, known from a print by Edelinck, copied by Giac. Frey, nature and art combined never offered to the sense and heart a more exalted sentiment, or more correspondent forms. The face still, indeed, offers his favourite lines, lines not of supreme beauty, but they have assumed a sanctity which is in vain looked for in all its sister faces: serious without severity, pure without insipidity, humble though majestic, charming and modest at once, and without affectation graceful: face and figure unite what we can conceive of maternal beauty, equally poised between effusion of affection and the mysterious sentiment of superiority in the

awful Infant, whom she bends to receive from his slumbers.

The bland imagery of Raffaello was exalted to a type of devotion by M. Angelo, and place and scenery are adjusted with allegoric or prophetic ornament: thus in the picture painted for Angelo Doni, where the enraptured mother receives the Infant from the hands of Joseph, the scene behind exhibits the new sacrament in varied groups of Baptists, immersing themselves or issuing from the fount. In another, representing the annunciation, we discover in the awful twilight of a recess, the figure of Moses breaking the tables he received on Sinai, an allusion to the abolition of the old law—an infringement of Jewish habits, for the figure is not an apparition, but a statue, readily forgiven to its allegoric beauty. Even in those subjects relating to Christ and his family, where the back-ground is destitute of allusive ornament, it appears the seat of meditation or virgin purity, and consecrates the sentiment or action of the figures, as in the salutation of St. Giovanni in Laterano, and in that where Maria contemplates her son spread in her lap, and seems to bend under the presentiment of the

terrible moment which shall spread him at her feet, under the cross; but in that monumental image of Jesus expired on the cross, with the Madonna and John on each side, what is the scenery but the echo of the subject? The surrounding element sympathises with the woe of the sufferers in the two mourning Genii emerging from the air — a sublime conception, which Vasari fancied to have successfully imitated and perhaps improved, when in a repetition of the same subject, he travestied them to Phœbus and Diana extinguishing their orbs, as symbols of sun and moon eclipsed.*

What has been said of the luxuriance of Poussin's scenery, leads to that intemperate

* In a picture which he painted at Rome for Bindo Altoviti, it represented " Un Cristo quanto il vivo, levato di croce, e posto in terra a' piedi della Madre; e nell' aria Febo, che oscura la faccia del sole, e Diana quella della Luna. Nel paese poi, oscurato da queste Tenebre, si veggiono spezzarsi alcuni monti di pietra, mossi dal terremoto, e certi corpi morti di santi risorgendo, uscire de sepolcri in vari modi; il quale quadro, finito che fu, per sua grazia non dispiacque al maggior pittore, scultore, e architetto, che sia stato a' tempi nostri passati?" The compliment was not paid to M. Agnolo himself, for the word " passati" tells that he was no more, but it levied a tribute on posterity.

Vita di Giorgio Vasari.

abuse which allots it a greater space, a more conspicuous situation, a higher finish and effect than the importance of the subject itself permits — by which, unity is destroyed, and it becomes doubtful to what class a work belongs, whether it be a mixture of two or more, or all, where portrait with architecture, landscape with history for "mastery striving, each rules a moment." It cannot be denied that some of the noblest works of art are liable to this imputation, and that the fond admiration of the detailed beauties in the scenery of the Pietro Martire of Titian, if it does not detract from the main purpose for which the picture was or ought to have been painted, certainly adds nothing to its real interest—nature finishes all, but an attempt to mimic nature's universality palsies the hand of art; the celebrated "Cene," or Supper-Scenes of Paolo Cagliari can escape this imputation only by being classed as models of ornamental painting; and were it not known, that notwithstanding their grandeur, propriety, and pathos of composition, the Cartoons of Raffaello had been originally destined still more for popular amusement than the poised admiration of select judges, it would be difficult

to excuse or to account for the exuberance, not seldom the impropriety of accompaniment and of scenery, with which some of them are loaded: in the Cartoon of the miraculous draught of fishes, perhaps Giovanni d' Udine would not have been allowed to treat us with fac-similes of the herons of the lake on its fore-ground; in that of Paul on the Areopagus, there would probably have been less agglomeration of finished, unfinished, or half demolished buildings; in the Miracle of Peter and John, the principal agents would scarcely have been hemmed in by a barbaric colonnade, loaded with profane ornament; or in the Massacre of the Infants, the humble cottages of Bethlehem been transformed to piles of Ionian architecture, girt with gods in intercolumnar niches, and the metropolitan pomp of Rome.

FIFTH LECTURE.

COMPOSITION, EXPRESSION.

ΠΟΛΛΑ Δ' ΕΝ
ΚΑΡΔΙΑΙΣ ΑΝΔΡΩΝ ΕΒΑΛΟΝ
'ΩΡΑΙ ΠΟΛΥΑΝΘΕΜΟΙ ΑΡ
ΧΑΙΑ ΣΟΦΙΣΜΑΘ'. 'ΑΠΑΝ Δ' ΕΥΡΟΝΤΟΣ ΕΡΓΟΝ.

ΠΙΝΔΑΡ. ΟΛΥΜΠ. Π.

ARGUMENT.

Elements of Composition; Grouping; M. Agnolo; Correggio; Raffaello; Breadth; — Expression; its Classes, its Limits.

FIFTH LECTURE.

INVENTION is followed by Composition. Composition, in its stricter sense, is the dresser of Invention, it superintends the disposition of its materials.

Composition has physical and moral elements: those are Perspective and Light with shade; these, Unity, Propriety and Perspicuity; without Unity it cannot span its subject; without Propriety it cannot tell the story; without Perspicuity it clouds the fact with confusion; destitute of light and shade it misses the effect, and heedless of perspective it cannot find a place.

Composition, like all other parts of style, had a gradual progress; it began in monotony and apposition, emerged to centre and depth, established itself on harmony and masses, was

debauched by contrast and by grouping, and finally supplanted by machinery, common-place, and manner.

Of sculpture, as infant painting had borrowed its first theory of forms, so it probably borrowed its method of arranging them; and this is Apposition, a collateral arrangement of figures necessary for telling a single or the scattered moments of a fact. If statuary indulged in the combination of numerous groups, such as those of the Niobe, it might dispose them in composition, it might fix a centre and its rays, and so produce an illusion as far as colourless form is capable of giving it. But sculpture, when it was first consulted by painting, was not yet arrived at that period which allowed the display of such magnificence; a single figure or a single group could not sufficiently inform the painter; he was reduced to consult basso-relievo, and of that, Apposition is the element.

And in this light we ought to contemplate a great part of the Capella Sistina. Its plan was monumental, and some of its compartments were allotted to Apposition, not because M. Agnolo was a sculptor, but because it was a more comprehensive medium to exhibit his

general plan than the narrower scale of composition. He admitted and like a master treated composition, whenever his subject from the primeval simplicity of elemental nature retreated within the closer bounds of society: his Patriarchs, his Prophets and his Sibyls, singly considered or as groups, the scenery of the Brazen Serpent, of David and of Judith, of Noah and his sons, are models of the roundest and grandest composition. What principle of composition do we miss in the creation of Adam and of Eve? Can it grasp with more unity, characterise with more propriety, present with brighter perspicuity, give greater truth of place or round with more effect? If collateral arrangement be the ruling plan of the Last Judgment, if point of sight and linear and aerial perspective in what is elevated, comes forward or recedes, if artificial masses and ostentatious roundness, on the whole, be absorbed by design or sacrificed to higher principles, what effects has the greatest power of machinery ever contrived to emulate the conglobation of those struggling groups where light and shade administered to terror or sublimity? What, to emulate the boat of Charon disemboguing its crew of criminals,

flung in a murky mass of shade across the pallid concave and bleak blast of light that blows it on us? A meteor in the realms of chiaroscuro which obscures whatever the most daring servants of that power elsewhere produced.

If the plan of M. Agnolo must be estimated by other principles, his process must be settled by other rules than the plan and process of Correggio at Parma. Though the first and greatest, Correggio was no more than a Machinist. It was less the Assumption of the Virgin, less a monument of triumphant Religion he meditated to exhibit by sublimity of conception or characteristic composition, than by the ultimate powers of linear and aerial perspective at an elevation which demanded eccentric and violent fore-shortening, set off and tuned by magic light and shade, to embody the medium in which the actors were to move; and to the splendour and loftiness of that he accommodated the subject and subordinated the agents. Hence his work, though moving in a flood of harmony, is not legitimate Composition. The synod that surrounds the glory, the glory itself that embosoms the Virgin and her angelic choir, Christ who precipitates him-

self to meet the glory, are equally absorbed in the *bravura* of the vehicle, they radiate, reflect and mass, but show us little more than limbs. This makes the cupola of Correggio less epic or dramatic than ornamental. The technic part of Composition alone, though carried to the highest pitch of perfection, if its ostentation absorb the subject, stamps inferiority on the master. Take away Homer's language, and you take much, but you leave the epic poet unimpaired; take it from Virgil, strip him of the majesty, the glow, the propriety of his diction, and the remainder of his claim to epic poetry will nearly be reduced to what he borrowed from Homer's plan. What is it we remember when we leave the cupolas of Correggio? what when we leave the Chapel of Sixtus? There, a man who transferred to a colossal scale the dictates of his draped or naked model, applied them with a comprehensive eye and set them off by magic light and shade and wide expanded harmony of tone; here an epic plan combined and told in simple modes of grandeur. Each man gave what he had: Correggio, limbs and effect; M. Agnolo, being, form and meaning. If the cupola of Correggio

be in its kind unequalled by earlier or succeeding plans, if it leave far behind the effusions of Lanfranchi and Pietro da Cortona, it was not the less their model; the ornamental style of machinists dates not the less its origin from him.

Various are the shapes in which Composition embodies its subject and presents it to our eye. The cone or pyramid, the globe, the grape, flame and stream, the circle and its segments, lend their figure to elevate, concentrate, round, diffuse themselves or undulate in its masses. It towers in the Apollo, it darts its flame forward in the warrior of Agasias, its lambent spires wind upward with the Laocoon; it inverts the cone in the Hercules of Glycon, it doubles it or undulates in Venus and the Graces. In the bland central light of a globe imperceptibly gliding through lucid demi-tints into rich reflected shades, it composes the spell of Correggio, and entrances like a delicious dream; whilst like a torrent it rushes from the hand of Tintorett over the trembling canvass in enormous wings of light and shade, and sweeps all individual importance in general effects. But whether its groups be imbrowned

on a lucid sky, or emerge from darkness, whether it break like a meridian sun on the reflected object with Rubens, or from Rembrandt, flash on it in lightning, whatever be its form or its effect, if it be more or less than what it ought to be — a vehicle, if it branch not out of the subject as the produce of its root, if it do not contain all that distinguishes it from other subjects, if it leave out aught that is characteristic and exclusively its own, and admit what is superfluous or commonplace — it is no longer composition, it is grouping only, an ostentatious or useless scaffolding about an edifice without a base; such was not the Composition of Raffaello.

The leading principle of Raffaello's composition is that simple air, that artlessness which persuades us that his figures have been less composed by skill than grouped by Nature; that the fact must have happened as we see it represented. Simplicity taught him to grasp his subject, propriety to give it character and form, and perspicuity to give it breadth and place. The School of Athens in the Vatican, the Death of Ananias, and the Sacrifice at Lystra, among the Cartoons, may serve as instances.

A metaphysical composition, if it be numerous, will be oftener mistaken for dilapidation of fragments than regular distribution of materials. The School of Athens communicates to few more than an arbitrary assemblage of speculative groups. Yet if the subject be the dramatic representation of Philosophy, as it prepares for active life, the parts of the building are not connected with more regular gradation than those groups. Archimedes and Pythagoras, Plato and Socrates, Aristotle and Democritus, Epictetus, Diogenes and Aristippus, in different degrees of characteristic modes, tell one great doctrine, that, fitted by physical and intellectual harmony, man ascends from himself to society, from society to God. For this, group balances group, action is contrasted by repose, each weight has its counterpoise; unity and variety shed harmony over the whole.

In the Cartoon of Ananias, at the first glance, and even before we are made acquainted with the particulars of the subject, we become partners of the scene. The disposition is amphitheatric, the scenery a spacious hall, the heart of the action is the centre, the wings assist,

elucidate, connect it with the ends. The apoplectic man before us is evidently the victim of a supernatural power, inspiring the apostolic figures, who on the raised platform with threatening arm pronounced, and with the word enforced his doom. The terror occasioned by the sudden stroke is best expressed by the features of youth and middle age on each side of the sufferer; it is instantaneous, because its shock has not yet spread beyond them, a contrivance not to interrupt the dignity due to the sacred scene, and to stamp the character of devout attention on the assembly. What preceded and what followed is equally implied in their occupation, and in the figure of a matron entering and absorbed in counting money, though she approaches the fatal centre, and whom we may suppose to be Sapphira, the accomplice and the wife of Ananias, and the devoted partner of his fate. In this composition of near thirty figures, none can be pointed out as a figure of common place or mere convenience; legitimate offsprings of one subject, they are linked to each other and to the centre by one common chain, all act and all have room to act; repose alternates with energy.

The Sacrfice at Lystra, though as a whole it has more of collateral arrangement than depth of Composition, as it traces in the moment of its choice the motive that produced and shows the disappointment that checks it, has collected actors and faces the most suitable to express both: actors and features of godlike dignity, superstitious devotion and eager curiosity: the scene is the vestibule of the temple of Hermes, and Paul, the supposed representative of that deity, though not placed in the centre or a central light, by his elevation, gesture, and the whole of the composition streaming toward him, commands the first glance. At the very onset of the ceremony the sacrificer is arrested in the act of smiting the victim, by the outstretched arm of a young man bursting through the hymning throng of priests and victimarii, observing Paul indignant rending his garment in horror of the idolatrous perversion of his miracle.* The miracle itself is personified in that characteristic figure of the healed man, who with eyes flashing joy and gratitude on the Apostle, and hands joined in adoration,

* A miracle means an act performed by virtue of an unknown law of Nature.

rushes in, accompanied by an aged man of gravity and rank, who, lifting up part of the garment that covered his thigh, attests him to have been the identic owner of those crutches that formerly supported him, though now as useless thrown on the pavement.

Among the Cartoons which we do not possess, and probably exist only in the tapestries of Rome and Madrid, and engravings copied from them, the Resurrection of Christ and his Ascension, equally mark Raphael's discriminative powers in their contrasted compositions. The Resurrection derives its interest from the convulsive rapidity, the Ascension from its calmness of motion. In that, the hero like a ball of fire shoots up from the bursting tomb and sinking cerements, and scatters astonishment and dismay. What apprehension dared not to suspect, what fancy could not dream of, no eye had ever beheld and no tongue ever uttered, blazes before us: the passions dart in rays resistless from the centre. Fear, terror, conviction, wrestle with dignity and courage in the centurion; convulse brutality, overwhelm violence, enervate resistance, absorb incredulity in the guard. The whole is tempestuous. The

Ascension is the majestic last of many similar scenes: no longer with the rapidity of a conqueror, but with the calm serenity of triumphant power, the Hero is borne up in splendour, and gradually vanishes from those who by repeated visions had been taught to expect whatever was amazing. Silent and composed, with eyes more absorbed in adoration than wonder, they follow the glorious emanation; till addressed by the white-robed messengers of their departed king, they relapse to the feelings of men.

We have considered hitherto the mental part of Raffaello's composition, let us say a word of the technic. His excellence in this is breadth of masses, and of positive light and shade.

Breadth, or that quality of execution which makes a whole so predominate over the parts as to excite the idea of uninterrupted unity amid the greatest variety, modern art, as it appears to me, owes to M. Agnolo. The breadth of M. Agnolo resembles the tide and ebb of a mighty sea: waves approach, arrive, retreat, but in their rise and fall, emerging or absorbed, impress us only with the image of the power that raises, that directs them; whilst

the discrepance of obtruding parts in the works of the infant Florentine, Venetian and German schools, distracts our eye like the numberless breakers of a shallow river, or as the brambles and creepers that entangle the paths of a wood, and instead of showing us our road, perplex us only with themselves. By breadth the artist puts us into immediate possession of the whole, and from that, gently leads us to the examination of the parts according to their relative importance: hence it follows, that in a representation of organized surfaces, breadth is the judicious display of fullness, not a substitute of vacuity. Breadth might be easily obtained if emptiness could give it. Yet even in that degraded state, if gratification of the eye be a first indispensable duty of an art that can impress us only by that organ, it is preferable to the laboured display of parts ambitiously thronging for admittance at the expense of the whole; to that perplexed diligence which wearies us with impediment before we can penetrate a meaning or arrive at the subject, whose clear idea must be first obtained before we can judge of the propriety or impropriety of parts. The principle which constitutes the

breadth of Raphael was neither so absolute nor so comprehensive as that of M. Agnolo's. But his perspicacity soon discovered, that great, uninterrupted masses of light and shade, bespeak, satisfy, conduct and give repose to the eye; that opposition of light and shade gives perspicuity. Convinced of this, he let their mass fall as broad on his figures as their importance, attitude and relation to each other permitted, and as seldom as possible, interrupted it. Masses of shade he opposed to light, and lucid ones to shade. The strict observation of this rule appears to be the cause why every figure of Raffaello, however small, even at a considerable distance, describes itself, and strikes the eye with distinctness; so that even the comparatively diminutive figures of his Loggia are easily discriminated from the Cortile below. To this maxim he remained faithful in all his works, a few instances excepted, when instead of light and shade he separated figures by reflexes of a different colour; exceptions more dictated by necessity than choice, and which serve rather to confirm than to impair the rule.

It cannot be denied that, if this positive

opposition gave superior distinctness, it occasioned sometimes abruptness. Each part is broad, but separation is too visible. Reflexes he uniformly neglects, and, from whatever cause, is often inattentive to transition; he does not sufficiently connect with breadth of demi-tint the two extremes of his masses; and, though much less in fresco than in oil, seems not always to have had a distinct idea of the gradations required completely to round as well as to spread a whole; to have been more anxious to obtain breadth itself than its elemental harmony.

It does not appear that the great masters of legitimate composition in the sixteenth century attended to or understood the advantages which elevation of site and a low horizon are capable of giving to a subject. They place us in the gallery to behold their scenes; but, from want of keeping, the horizontal line becomes a perpendicular, and drops the distance on the foreground; the more remote groups do not approach, but fall or stand upon the foremost actors. As this impedes the principles of unity and grandeur in numerous compositions, so it impairs each individual form; which, to be

grand, ought to rise upward in moderate foreshortening, command the horizon, or be in contact with the sky. Reverse this plan in the composition of Pietro Martyre by Tizian, let the horizontal line be raised above the friar on the fore-ground, space, loftiness, and unity, vanish together. What gives sublimity to Rembrandt's Ecce Homo more than this principle?—a composition, which though complete, hides in its grandeur the limits of its scenery. Its form is as a pyramid whose top is lost in the sky, as its base in tumultuous murky waves. From the fluctuating crowds who inundate the base of the tribunal, we rise to Pilate, surrounded and perplexed by the varied ferocity of the sanguinary synod, to whose remorseless gripe he surrenders his wand; and from him we ascend to the sublime resignation of innocence in Christ, and regardless of the roar below, securely repose on his countenance. Such is the grandeur of a conception, which in its blaze absorbs the abominable detail of materials too vulgar to be mentioned; had the materials been equal to the conception and composition, the Ecce Homo of Rembrandt, even unsupported by

the magic of its light and shade, or his spell of colours, would have been an assemblage of superhuman powers.

Far, too far, from having answered all the demands of composition, my limits force me, and my subject requires, to give a faint sketch of the most prominent features of Expression, its assistant and interpreter. They interweave themselves so closely with each other, and both with Invention, that we can scarcely conceive one without supposing the presence of the rest, and applying the principles of each to all; still they are separate powers, and may be possessed singly. The figure of Christ by M. Agnolo in the Minerva, embracing his cross and the instruments of suffering, is sublimely conceived, powerfully arranged; but neither his features nor expression are those of Christ.

Expression is the vivid image of the passion that affects the mind; its language, and the portrait of its situation. It animates the features, attitudes, and gestures, which Invention selected, and Composition arranged; its principles, like theirs, are simplicity, propriety, and energy.

It is important to distinguish the materials and the spirit of expression. To give this we must be masters of the forms and of the hues that embody it. Without truth of line no true expression is possible; and the passions, whose inward energy stamped form on feature, equally reside, fluctuate, flash or lower on it in colour, and give it energy by light and shade.

To make a face speak clearly and with propriety, it must not only be well constructed, but have its own exclusive character. Though the element of the passions be the same in all, they neither speak in all with equal energy, nor are circumscribed by equal limits. Though joy be joy, and anger anger, the joy of the sanguine is not that of the phlegmatic, nor the anger of the melancholy that of the fiery character; and the discriminations established by complexion are equally conspicuous in those of climate, habit, education, and rank. Expression has its classes. Decebalus and Syphax, though both determined to die, meet death with eye as different as hues. The tremulous emotion of Hector's breast when he approaches Ajax, is not the palpitation of Paris when he discovers Menelaus; the frown of the Hercy-

nian Phantom may repress the ardour, but cannot subdue the dignity of Drusus; the fear of Marius cannot sink to the panic of the Cimber, who drops the dagger at entering his prison, nor the astonishment of Hamlet degenerate into the fright of vulgar fear.

Le Sueur was not aware of this when he painted his Alexander. Perhaps no picture is, in spite of common sense, oftener quoted for its expression than Alexander sick on his bed, with the cup at his lips, observing the calumniated physician. The manner in which he is represented is as inconsistent with the story as injurious to the character of the Macedonian hero. The Alexander of Le Sueur has the prying look of a spy. He who was capable of that look would no more have ventured on quaffing a single drop of the suspected medicine, than on the conquest of the Persian empire. If Alexander, when he drank the cup, had not the most positive faith in the incorruptibility of Philippus, he was more than an idiot, he was a felon against himself and a traitor to his army, whose safety depended on the success of the experiment. His expression ought to be open and unconcerned confidence

—as that of his physician, a contemptuous smile, or curiosity suspended by indignation, or the indifference of a mind conscious of innocence, and fully relying on its being known to his friend. Le Sueur, instead of these, has given him little more than a stupid stare and vulgar form.

The emanations of the passions, which pathognomy has reduced to the four principal sources of *calm emotion, joy, grief simple, or with pain,* and *terror;*—may be divided into internal and external ones: those hint their action only, they influence a feature or some extremity: these extend their sway over the whole frame—they animate, agitate, depress, convulse, absorb form. The systematic designers of pathognomy have given their element, their extremes, the mask; the ancients have established their technic standard, and their degrees of admissibility in art. The Apollo is animated; the Warrior of Agasias is agitated; the dying Gladiator or herald suffers in depression; the Laocoon is convulsed; the Niobe is absorbed. The greater the mental vigour, dignity, or habitual self-command of a person, the less perceptible to superficial ob-

servation or vulgar eyes will be the emotion of his mind. The greater the predominance of fancy over intellect, the more ungovernable the conceits of self-importance, so much the more will passion partake of outward and less dignified energy. The Jupiter of Homer manifests his will and power by the mere contraction of his eyebrows; Socrates in the School of Athens only moves his finger, and Ovid in the Parnassus only lays it over his lips, and both say enough; but Achilles throws himself headlong, and is prevented from slaying himself by the grasp of his friend. Only then, when passion or suffering become too big for utterance, the wisdom of ancient art has borrowed a feature from tranquillity, though not its air. For every being seized by an enormous passion, be it joy or grief, or fear sunk to despair, loses the character of its own individual expression, and is absorbed by the power of the feature that attracts it. Niobe and her family are assimilated by extreme anguish; Ugolino is petrified by the fate that swept the stripling at his foot, and sweeps in pangs the rest. The metamorphoses of ancient mythology are founded on this principle, are allegoric.

Clytia, Biblis, Salmacis, Narcissus, tell only the resistless power of sympathetic attraction.

Similar principles award to Raffaello the palm of expression among the moderns: driven to extremes after his demise by Julio Romano and a long interval of languor, it seemed to revive in Domenichino; I say seemed, for his sensibility was not supported by equal comprehension, elevation of mind, or dignity of motion; his sentiment wants propriety, he is a mannerist in feeling, and tacks the imagery of Theocritus to the subjects of Homer. A detail of petty though amiable conceptions, is rather calculated to diminish than to enforce the energy of a pathetic whole: a lovely child taking refuge in the lap or bosom of a lovely mother, is an idea of nature, and pleasing in a lowly, pastoral or domestic subject; but, perpetually recurring, becomes common-place, and amid the terrors of martyrdom is a shred sewed to a purple robe. In touching the characteristic circle that surrounds the Ananias of Raffaello, you touch the electric chain, a genuine spark irresistibly darts from the last as from the first, penetrates, subdues; at the Martyrdom of St. Agnes by Domenichino, you saun-

ter among the adventitious mob of a lane, where the silly chat of neighbouring gossips announces a topic as silly, till you find with indignation, that instead of a broken pot or a petty theft, you are to witness a scene for which heaven opens, the angels descend, and Jesus rises from his throne.

It is however but justice to observe, that there is a subject in which Domenichino has not unsuccessfully wrestled, and, in my opinion, even excelled Raffaello; I mean the demoniac boy among the series of frescoes at Grotto Ferrata: that inspired figure is evidently the organ of an internal, superior, preternatural agent, darted upward without contortion, and considered as unconnected with the story, never to be confounded with a merely tumultuary distorted maniac, which is not perhaps the case of the boy in the Transfiguration; the subject too being within the range of Domenichino's powers, domestic, the whole of the persons introduced is characteristic: awe, with reliance on the Saint who operates the miracle or cure, and terror at the redoubled fury of his son, mark the rustic father; nor could the agonizing female with the infant in her arm, as she is the

mother, be exchanged to advantage, and with propriety occupies that place which the fondling females in the pictures of St. Sebastian, St. Andrew, and St. Agnes only usurp.

The Martyrdom, or rather the brutally ostentatious murder of St. Agnes leads us to the *limits* of expression: sympathy and disgust are the irreconcileable parallels that must for ever separate legitimate terror and pity from horror and aversion. We cannot sympathise with what we detest or despise, nor fully pity what we shudder at or loathe. So little were these limits understood by the moderns, M. Agnolo excepted, that even the humanity and delicacy of Raffaello did not guard him from excursions into the realms of horror and loathsomeness: it is difficult to conceive what could provoke him to make a finished design of the inhumanities that accompany the martyrdom of St. Felicitas at which even description shudders; a design made on purpose to be dispersed over Europe, perpetuated and made known to all by the graver of Marc Antonio: Was it to prove to Albert Durer and the Germans of his time that they had not exhausted the sources of abomination? He made an equal mistake

in the Morbetto, where, though not with so lavish a hand as Poussin after him, instead of the moral effects of the plague, he has personified the effluvia of putrefaction. What *he* had not penetration to avoid, could not be expected to be shunned by his scholars. Julio Romano delighted in studied images of torture as well as of the most abandoned licentiousness. Among his contemporaries, Correggio even attempted to give a zest to the most wanton cruelty by an affectation of grace in the picture of the Saints Placido and Flavia: but the enamoured trance of Placido with his neck half cut, and the anthem that quivers on the lips of Flavia whilst a sword is entering her side, in vain bespeak our sympathy, for whilst we detest the felons who slaughter them, we loathe to inspect the actual process of the crime; mangling is contagious, and spreads aversion from the slaughterman to the victim. If St. Bartholomew and St. Erasmus are subjects for painting, they can only be so before, and neither under nor after the operation of the knife or windlass. A decollated martyr represented with his head in his hand, as Rubens did, and a headless corpse with the head lying by

it, as Correggio, can only prove the brutality, stupidity, or bigotry of the employer, and the callus or venality of the artist.

The gradations of expression within, close to, and beyond its limits cannot perhaps be elucidated with greater perspicuity than by comparison; and the different moments which Julio Romano, Vandyke and Rembrandt, have selected to represent the subject of Samson betrayed by Delilah, offers one of the fairest specimens furnished by art. Considering it as a drama, we may say that Julio forms the plot, Vandyke unravels it, and Rembrandt shows the extreme of the catastrophe.

In the composition of Julio, Samson, satiated with pleasure, plunged into sleep, and stretched on the ground, rests his head and presses with his arm the thigh of Delilah on one side, whilst on the other a nimble minion busily, but with timorous caution, fingers and clips his locks; such is his fear, that, to be firm, he rests one knee on a foot-stool tremblingly watching the sleeper, and ready to escape at his least motion. Delilah, seated between both, fixed by the weight of Samson, warily turns her head toward a troop of warriors in the back ground, with the left arm stretched out

she beckons their leader, with the finger of the right hand she presses her lip to enjoin silence and noiseless approach. The Herculean make and lion port of Samson, his perturbed though ponderous sleep, the quivering agility of the curled favourite employed, the harlot graces and meretricious elegance contrasted by equal firmness and sense of danger in Delilah, the attitude and look of the grim veteran who heads the ambush, whilst they give us the clue to all that followed, keep us in anxious suspense, we palpitate in breathless expectation; this is the plot.

The terrors which Julio made us forebode, Vandyke summons to our eyes. The mysterious lock is cut; the dreaded victim is roused from the lap of the harlot-priestess. Starting unconscious of his departed power, he attempts to spring forward, and with one effort of his mighty breast and expanded arms to dash his foes to the ground and fling the alarmed traitress from him — in vain; shorn of his strength he is borne down by the weight of the mailed chief that throws himself upon him, and overpowered by a throng of infuriate satellites. But though overpowered, less aghast than indignant, his eye flashes reproach on the perfi-

dious female whose wheedling caresses drew the fatal secret from his breast; the plot is unfolded, and what succeeds, too horrible for the sense, is left to fancy to brood upon, or drop it.

This moment of horror the gigantic but barbarous genius of Rembrandt chose, and, without a metaphor, *executed* a subject, which humanity, judgment and taste taught his rivals, only to *treat;* he displays a scene which no eye but that of Domitian or Nero could wish or bear to see. Samson, stretched on the ground, is held by one Philistine under him, whilst another chains his right arm, and a third clenching his beard with one, drives a dagger into his eye with the other hand. The pain that blasts him, darts expression from the contortions of the mouth and his gnashing teeth to the crampy convulsions of the leg dashed high into the air. Some fiend-like features glare through the gloomy light which discovers Delilah, her work now done, sliding off, the shears in her left, the locks of Samson in her right hand. If her figure, elegant, attractive, such as Rembrandt never conceived before or after, deserve our wonder rather than our praise, no words can do justice to the expression that animates

her face, and shows her less shrinking from the horrid scene than exulting in being its cause. Such is the work whose magic of colour, tone and chiaroscuro irresistibly entrap the eye, whilst we detest the brutal choice of the moment.*

Let us in conclusion contrast the stern pathos of this scenery with the placid emotions of a milder subject, in the celebrated pictures which represent the Communion or death of St. Jerome by Agostino Caracci and his scholar Domenichino—that an altar-piece in the Certosa near Bologna, this in the church of St. Girolamo della Carità at Rome; but for some time both exhibited in the gallery of the Louvre at Paris. What I have to say on the Invention, Expression, Characters, Tone and Colour of either is the result of observations lately made on both

* The form, but not the soul, of Julio's composition has been borrowed by Rubens, or the master of the well-known picture in the gallery of Dulwich college. Few can be unacquainted with the work of Vandyke, spread by the best engravers of that school. The picture of Rembrandt is the chief ornament of the collection in the garden-house of the Schönborn family, in one of the suburbs of Vienna: has been etched on a large scale, and there is a copy of it in the gallery at Cassel. A circumstantial account of it may be found in the Eighth Letter, vol. iii. of Kütner's Travels.

in that gallery, where then they were placed nearly opposite to each other.

In each picture, St. Jerome, brought from his cell to receive the sacrament, is represented on his knees, supported by devout attendants; in each the officiating priest is in the act of administering to the dying saint; the same clerical society fills the portico of the temple in both, in both the scene is witnessed from above by infant angels.

The general opinion is in favour of the Pupil, but if in the economy of the whole Domenichino surpasses his master, he appears to me greatly inferior both in the character and expression of the hero. Domenichino has represented Piety scarcely struggling with decay, Agostino triumphant over it, his saint becomes in the place where he is, a superior being, and is inspired by the approaching god: that of Domenichino seems divided between resignation, mental and bodily imbecility and desire. The saint of Agostino is a lion, that of Domenichino a lamb.

In the sacerdotal figure administering the viaticum, Domenichino has less improved than corrected the unworthy choice of his master.

The priest of Agostino is one of the Frati Godenti of Dante, before they received the infernal hood; a gross, fat, self-conceited terrestrial feature, a countenance equally proof to elevation, pity or thought. The priest of Domenichino is a minister of grace, stamped with the sacred humility that characterized his master, and penetrated by the function of which he is the instrument.

We are more impressed with the graces of youth than the energies of manhood verging on age: in this respect, as well as that of contrast with the decrepitude of St. Jerome, the placid contemplative beauty of the young deacon on the foreground of Domenichino, will probably please more than the poetic trance of the assistant friar with the lighted taper in the foreground of Agostino. This must however be observed, that as Domenichino thought proper to introduce supernatural witnesses of the ceremony in imitation of his master, their effect seems less ornamental, and more interwoven with the plan, by being perceived by the actors themselves.

If the attendant characters in the picture of Agostino are more numerous, and have on

the whole, furnished the hints of admission to those of Domenichino, this, with one exception, may be said to have used more propriety and judgment in the choice. Both have introduced a man with a turban, and opened a portico to characterize an Asiatic scene.

With regard to composition, Domenichino undoubtedly gains the palm. The disposition on the whole he owes to his master, though he reversed it, but he has cleared it of that oppressive bustle which rather involves and crowds the principal actors in Agostino than attends them. He spreads tranquillity with space, and repose without vacuity.

With this corresponds the tone of the whole. The evening-freshness of an oriental day tinges every part; the medium of Agostino partakes too much of the fumigated inside of a Catholic chapel.

The draperies of both are characteristic, and unite subordination with dignity, but their colour is chosen with more judgment by Domenichino; the imbrowned gold and ample folds of the robe of the administering priest are more genial than the cold blue, white and yellow on the priest of his master; in both, perhaps, the

white draperies on the foreground figures have too little strength for the central colours, but it is more perceived in Carracci than in Domenichino.

The forms of the saint in Carracci are grander and more ideal than in the saint of Domenichino; some have even thought them too vigorous: both, in my opinion, are in harmony with the emotion of the face and expression of either. The eagerness that animates the countenance of the one may be supposed to spread a momentary vigour over his frame. The mental dereliction of countenance in the other with equal propriety relaxes and palsies the limbs which depend on it.

The colour of Carracci's saint is much more characteristic of fleshy though nearly bloodless substance than that chosen by his rival, which is withered, shrivelled, leathery in the lights, and earthy in the shades; but the head of the officiating priest in Domenichino, whether considered as a specimen of colour independent of the rest or as set off by it, for truth, tone, freshness, energy, is not only the best Domenichino ever painted, but perhaps the best that can be conceived.

SIXTH LECTURE.

CHIAROSCURO.

Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem.
Horat. de Arte Poet. L. 143.

ARGUMENT.

Definition.—Lionardo da Vinci.—Giorgione.—Antonio da Correggio.

SIXTH LECTURE.

THE term Chiaroscuro, adopted from the Italian, in its primary and simplest sense means the division of a single object into light and shade, and in its widest compass comprises their distribution over a whole composition: whether the first derive its splendour by being exposed to a direct light, or from colours in its nature luminous; and whether the second owe their obscurity directly to the privation of light, or be produced by colours in themselves opaque. Its exclusive power is, to give substance to form, place to figure, and to create space. It may be considered as legitimate or spurious: it is legitimate when, as the immediate offspring of the subject, its disposition, extent, strength or sweetness are subservient to form, expression, and invigorate or illustrate charac-

ter, by heightening the primary actor or actors, and subordinating the secondary; it is spurious when from an assistant aspiring to the rights of a principal, it becomes a substitute for indispensable or more essential demands. As such, it has often been employed by the machinists of different schools, for whom it became the refuge of ignorance, a palliative for an incurable disease, and the asylum of emptiness; still, as even a resource of this kind proves a certain vigour of mind, it surprises into something like unwilling admiration and forced applause.

Of every subject Unity is the soul: unity, of course, is inseparable from legitimate chiaroscuro: hence the individual light and shade of every figure that makes part of a given or chosen subject, whether natural or ideal, as well as the more compound one of the different intermediate groups, must act as so many rays emanating from one centre and terminate, blazing, evanescent, or obscured, in rounding it to the eye.

Truth is the next requisite of chiaroscuro, whatever be the subject. Some it attends without ambition, content with common ef-

fects; some it invigorates or inspires: but in either case, let the effect be that of usual expanded day-light, or artificial and condensed, it ought to be regulated by truth in extent, strength, brilliancy, softness, and above all, by simplicity in its positive and purity in its negative parts. As shade is the mere absence of light, it cannot, except from reflexes, possess any hue or colour of its own, and acquires all its charms from transparency.

But to the rules which art prescribes to Chiaroscuro, to round each figure of a composition with truth, to connect it with the neighbouring groups, and both with the whole —it adds, that all this should be done with strict adherence to propriety, at the least possible expense of the subordinate parts, and with the utmost attainable degree of effect and harmony — demands which it is not my duty to inquire, whether they entered ever with equal evidence the mind of any one artist, ancient or modern: whether, if it be granted possible that they did, they were ever balanced with equal impartiality; and grant this, whether they ever were or could be executed with equal felicity. A character of equal universal

power is not a human character — and the nearest approach to perfection can only be in carrying to excellence one great quality with the least alloy of defects. Thus in the School of Athens, Raffaello's great aim being to embody on the same scene the gradations, varieties and utmost point of human culture *as it proceeds from the individual to society, and from that ascends to God;* he suffered expression and character to preponderate over effect and combination of masses, and contriving to unite the opposite wings with the centre by entrance and exit at each extremity, as far as expression could do it, succeeded, to make what in itself is little more than apposition of single figures or detached groups, one grand whole.—I say, as far as expression could satisfy a mind qualified to contemplate and penetrate his principle, however unsatisfied a merely picturesque eye might wander over a scattered assemblage of figures equally illuminated and unconnected by a commanding mass of light and shade.

From this deficiency of effect in the composition we speak of, it is evident, that mere natural light and shade, however separately or individually true, is not always legitimate Chi-

aroscuro in art. Nature sheds or withholds her ray indiscriminately, and every object has what share it can obtain by place and position, which it is the business of art to arrange by fixing a centre and distributing the rays according to the more or less important claims of the subject: as long as it regulates itself by strict observance of that principle, it matters not whether its principal mass radiate from the middle, wind in undulating shapes, dart in decided beams from the extremities; emanate from one source, or borrow additional effect from subordinate ones: let it mount like flame or descend in lightning; dash in stern tones terror on the eye, emergent from a dark or luminous medium; through twilight immerse itself in impenetrable gloom or gradually vanish in voluptuous repose, guided by the subject the most daring division of light and shade becomes natural and legitimate, and the most regular, spurious and illegitimate without it.

To attain in the execution the highest possible and widest expanded effect of light, with equal depth and transparence in the shade, brilliancy of colour is less required than unison: a sovereign tone must pervade the whole,

which, though arbitrary and dependent on choice, decides all subordinate ones, as the tone of the first instrument in a regular concert tunes all the rest; their effect entirely depends on being in unison with it, and discord is produced whenever they revolt: by thus uniting itself with the whole, the simplest tone well managed may become, not only harmonious, but rich and splendid, it is then the tone of Nature: whilst the most brilliant one, if contradicted or disappointed by the detail of the inferior, may become heavy, leathern, and discordant.

Though every work of Correggio is an illustration of this principle, and none with brighter evidence than his "Notte," in which the central light of the infant irradiates the whole; perhaps the most decisive, because the most appropriate proof of it, is in its companion the less known picture of St. Sebastian, at Dresden; in which the central light of a glory, not only surprises the eye with all the splendour of a sun, though its colour is a yellow comparatively faint, and terminates in brown, but tinges the whole, perfectly transparent, with its emanation.

That not before the lapse of two hundred years after the resurrection of Art, the discovery of Chiaroscuro, as a principle of beauty in single figures and of effect in composition, should be awarded to Lionardo da Vinci, a patriarch of that school which time has shown of all others the least inclined to appreciate its advantages, is at once a proof of the singularity that marks the local distribution of powers, and of the inconceivable slowness which attends human perception in the progress of study: but without generally admitting what has been said with more energy than judgment or regard to truth, that modern art literally sprang from the loins of Lionardo, it must be granted that no work anterior or contemporary with his essays in Chiaroscuro now exists to disprove his claim to the first vision of its harmony; its magic lent the charm, by which his females allure, to forms neither ideal nor much varied; sisters of one family, they attract by the light in which they radiate, by the shade that veils them—for the features of Giotto's or Memmi's Madonnas or virgin-saints floating in the same medium, would require little more to be their equals.

This principle Lionardo seems seldom if ever to have extended to relieve or recommend his larger compositions and male figures, if we except the group of contending horsemen which made or was intended for some part of his rival Cartoon in the Sala del Consiglio: a knot of supreme powers in Composition and Chiaroscuro: though, as we know it chiefly from a copy of P. P. Rubens engraved by Edelinck, the gross evidence of Flemish liberties taken with the style, makes it probable that the original simplicity of light and shade has been invigorated by the artificial contrasts of the copyist. Lionardo's open scenery, tinged with the glareless evenness of plain daylight, seldom warrants effects so concentrated. Unostentatious gravity marks the characters of his Last Supper, and in sober evening tones marked probably the Chiaroscuro of the groups and scenery, if we may be allowed to form our judgment from the little that remains unimpaired by the ravages of time and the more barbarous ones of renovators.

To the discovery of central radiance the genius of Lionardo with equal penetration added its counterpart, *purity* of shade and the

coalescence of both through imperceptible demi-tints. Whatever tone of light he chose, he never forgot that the shade intended to set it off was only its absence, and not a positive colour, and that both were to be harmonized by demi-tints composed of both; a principle of which no school anterior to him has left a trace.

That the discovery of a principle big with advantages as obvious as important to art should have been reserved for the penetration of Lionardo, however singular, is less strange than that, when discovered and its powers demonstrated, it should, with the exception of one name, have not only met with no imitators, but with an ambiguous and even discouraging reception from the pupils of his own school, and some next allied to it. Vasari, his panegyrist rather than biographer, talks of it more as a singular phænomenon than as an evident principle, and avowing that he introduced a certain depth of shade into oil-painting, which enabled succeeding artists to relieve their figures more forcibly,* persevered to discolour walls

* Nella arte della pittura aggiunse costui alla maniera del colorire ad olio, una certa oscurità; donde hanno dato i moderni gran forza e rilievo alle loro figure. Vasari vita di Lion. da Vinci, p. 559. ed. 1550.

and pannels with washy flat insipidity. Bartolomeo della Porta alone appears to have had sufficient compass of mind to grasp its energy and connect it with colour: from him, through Andrea del Sarto down to Pietro Berettini, who owed his effects rather to opposition of tints than to legitimate Chiaroscuro, the Tuscan school gradually suffered it to dwindle into evanescence. Unless we were to consider its astonishing effects in some of Michael Angelo's works in the light of imitations rather than as emanations of his own genius; which perhaps we are the less warranted to presume, as he seems to have paid no attention to Lionardo's discovery in its brightest period; for the groups of his celebrated cartoon exhibit little more than individual light and shade.

What the Tuscan school treated with neglect, the Roman appears not to have been eager to adopt: if Raffaello did not remain a stranger to the theories of Lionardo and Fra. Bartolomeo, he suffered the principle to lie dormant; for no production of his during his intercourse with them is marked by concentration of light or purity of shade or subordinate masses: nor is the interval between his last departure from

Florence and his entrance of the Vatican discriminated by any visible progress in massing and illuminating a whole: the upper and lower parts of the Dispute on the Sacrament, cut sheer asunder, as a whole, are little relieved in either; and if the Parnassus and the School of Athens have the beginning, middle, and end of legitimate composition, they owe it to expression and feeling; nor can the more vigorous display of Chiaroscuro in the works of the second stanza, the Deliverance of Peter, the Fall of Heliodorus, the Attila, the Mass of Bolsena be referred to a principle of imitation, when we see it neglected in a subject where it might have ruled with absolute sway, in the Incendio del Borgo, and on the whole in every Composition of the third and fourth stanza; a series of evidence that Raffaello considered Chiaroscuro as a subordinate vehicle, and never suffered its blandishments or energies to absorb meaning or to supplant expression and form:* but the har-

* In the greater part of the Cartoons, it does not appear that chiaroscuro had more than an ordinary share of attention.

In the Miraculous Draught plain day-light prevails.

In the Miracle at the Temple-gate a more forcible and

mony which immediately after him Giulio Pipi, and Polydoro only excepted, the rest of his pupils had sacrificed or consecrated to higher beauties, their successors, the subsequent Roman school from the Zuccari through Giuseppo Cesari down to C. Maratta, if they did not entirely lose in a heavy display of academic pedantry, or destroy by the remorseless "bravura" of mannered practice, they uniformly polluted by bastard theories and adulterated methods of shade.

When I say that the Roman school uniformly erred in their principle of shade, I have not forgot M. Angelo da Caravaggio, whose darks

more sublime effect would have been obtained from a cupola-light and pillars darkened on the foreground.

In the Excecation of Elymas, composition and expression owe little of their roundness and evidence to chiaroscuro.

Apposition seems to have arranged the Sacrifice at Lystra.

If Dionysius and Damaris, in the cartoon of the Areopagus, had more forcibly refracted by dark colours or shade, the light against the speaker, effect and subject would have gained.

Considered individually or in masses, the chiaroscuro in the cartoon of Ananias appears to be perfect; but the Donation of the Keys owes what impression it makes on us in a great measure to the skilful distribution of its light and shade.

are in such perfect unison with the lights of his chiaroscuro, that A. Caracci declared he did not grind colour but flesh itself for his tints (" che macinava carne"), and whom for that reason and on such authority I choose rather to consider as the head of his own school than as the member of another: in some of his surviving works, but far more frequently in those which without sufficient authenticity are ascribed to him, an abrupt transition from light to darkness, without an intervening demi-tint, has offended the eye and provoked the sarcasm of an eminent critic: but as long as the picture of the Entombing of Christ in the Chiesa Nuova at Rome may be appealed to; as long as the Pilgrim's kneeling before the Madonna with the child in her arms, of St. Agostino at Rome, shall retain their tone; or the Infant Jesus, once in the Spada palace, crushing the serpent's head, shall resist the ravages of time — it will be difficult to produce in similar works of any other master or any other school, from Lionardo down to Rembrandt, a system of chiaroscuro which shall equal the severe yet mellow energy of the first; the departing evening ray and veiled glow of the second; or,

with unimpaired harmony, the bold decision of masses and stern light and shade of the third.

The homage sparingly granted or callously refused to chiaroscuro by the two schools of design was with implicit devotion paid to it by the nurse of colour, the school of Venice. Whether as tradition, on the authority of Vasari, maintains, they received it as a principle of imitation from the perspicacity, or as a native discovery from the genius of Giorgione Barbarelli, though from what has been advanced on both sides of the question, it would be presumptuous positively to decide on either, it must be allowed, that if the Venetian received a hint from the Florentine, he extended it through a system, the harmony of which was all his own, and excelled in breadth and amenity the light which it could not surpass in splendour, added transparence to purity of shade, rounded by reflexes and discovered by the contrast of deep with aerial colour, that energy of effect which mere chiaroscuro could not have reached, and which was carried near perfection by Paolo Cagliari.

Among the varied mischief poured into this country by the rapacious sophistry of traders

and the ambitious cullibility of wealthy collectors, no fraud perhaps has been more destructive to the genuine appreciation of original styles than the baptism of pictures with names not their own: by this prolific method worse ones than those of Luini, Aretusi, Timoteo della Vite, Bonifacio, are daily graced with the honours due to Lionardo, Correggio, Raffaello, Tizian; though none have suffered more by the multiplication than Giorgione, whom shortness of life, a peculiar fatality of circumstances, and the ravages of time, have conspired to render one of the scarcest as well as least authenticated artists even in Italy: to whom his earliest and latest biographers have been as critically unjust as chronologically inattentive; Vasari by transferring to another his principal work; Fiorillo by making him paint the portrait of Calvin the Reformer.*

* In the following absurd description of the well-known picture in the Palace Pitti: "It consists of three half-figures, one of which represents Martin Luther in the habit of an Augustine Monk, who plays on a harpsichord: Calvin stands by him in a chorister's dress, with a violin in his hand: opposite you see a young lively girl in a bonnet with a plume of white feathers; by her Giorgione meant to represent the noted Catharine, Luther's mistress and wife," &c. Fiorillo,

To form our opinion therefore of Giorgione's chiaroscuro from a few portraits or single figures, if legitimate, often restored, or from the crumbling remnants of his decayed frescoes, would be to form an estimate of a magnificent fabric from some loose fragment or stone: to do full justice to his powers we must have recourse to his surprising work in the School of S. Marco at Venice; a composition whose terrific graces Vasari descants on with a fervour inferior only to the artist's own inspiration, though he unaccountably ascribes it to the elder Palma.*

"In the School of S. Marco he painted the story of the ship which conducts the body of St. Mark through a horrible tempest, with other barges assailed by furious winds; and besides,

vol. ii. p. 63. To expose the ignorant credulity which dictated this passage, it is sufficient to observe, that Giorgione died 1511, and that Calvin was born 1508.

* In every edition of the Vite subsequent to his own of 1550. The following passage deserves to be given in his own words: "Giorgione di Castel franco; il quale sfumò le sue pitture e dette una terribil' movenzia a certe cose come è una storia nella Scuola di San Marco a Venezia, dove è un tempo turbido che tuona, et trema il dipinto, et le figure si muovono & si spiccano da la tavola per una certa oscurità di ombre bene intese."—Proemio della terza Parle delle Vite, p. 558.

groups of aërial apparitions, and various forms of fiends who vent their blasts against the vessels, that by dint of oars and energy of arms strive to force their way through the mountainous and hostile waves which threaten to submerge them. You hear the howling blast, you see the grasp and fiery exertion of the men, the fluctuation of the waves, the lightning that bursts the clouds, the oars bent by the flood, the flood broke by the oars, and dashed to spray by the sinews of the rowers. What more? In vain I labour to recollect a picture that equals the terrors of this, whose design, invention, and colour make the canvass tremble! Often when he finishes, an artist, absorbed in the contemplation of parts, forgets the main point of a design, and as the spirits cool, loses the vein of his enthusiasm; but this man, never losing sight of the subject, guided his conceit to perfection."

The effect of this work, when it drew such a stream of eulogy from lips else so frugal in Venetian praise, may be guessed at from the impression it makes in its present decay—for even now, it might defy the competition of the most terrific specimens in chiaroscuro, the boat

of Charon in M. Angelo's Last Judgment, perhaps, only excepted. Yet its master was defrauded of its glory by his panegyrist, whilst it was exciting the wonder and curiosity of every beholder: Lanzi is the only historian who notices its remains, and the real author;* we look in vain for it in Ridolfi, who in his Life of Giorgione treats us instead of it with a delectable account of a night-piece which he painted, exhibiting the tragi-comedy of castrating a cat.

It has been treated as a mistake to confine the chiaroscuro of a subject exclusively to one source; nor can it be doubted that often it is and has been proved to be both necessary and advantageous to admit more; this is however a licence to be granted with considerable caution, and it appears to be the privilege of superior powers to raise a subject, by the admission of subordinate, sometimes diverging, sometimes opposite streams of light, to assist and invigorate the effect of the primary one, without impairing that unity which alone can

* A la Scuola di S. Marco la Tempestà Sedata dal Santo, ove fra le altre cose sono tre remiganti ignudi, pregiatissimi pel disegno, e per le attitudini. Lanzi Storia, &c. Tomo II. parte prima. Scuola Veneta.

ensure a breadth to effect, without which each part, for mastery striving, soon would be lost in confusion, or crumble into fragments. The best instances of the advantages gained by the superinduction of artificial light, appear to be the Pietro Martire and the S. Lorenzo of Tiziano: if selection can be made from the works of a master, where to count is to choose. In the first, the stern light of evening far advanced in the background, is commanded by the celestial emanation bursting from above, wrapping the summit in splendour, and diffusing itself in rays more or less devious over the scenery. The subject of S. Lorenzo, a nocturnal scene, admits light from two sources—the fire beneath the Saint, and a raised torch: but receives its principal splendour from the aërial reflex of the vision on high, which sheds its mitigating ray on the martyr.

The nocturnal studies of Tintoretto from models and artificial groups have been celebrated: these, prepared in wax or clay, he arranged, raised, suspended, to produce masses, foreshortening, and variety of effect: it was thence he acquired that decision of chiaroscuro unknown to more expanded daylight, by

which he divided his bodies, and those wings of obscurity and light by which he separated the groups of his composition, though the mellowness of his eye nearly always instructed him to connect the two extremes by something intermediate that partook of both, as the extremes themselves by reflexes with the background or the scenery. The general rapidity of his process, by which he baffled his competitors and often overwhelmed himself, did not indeed always permit him to attend deliberately to this principle, and often hurried him into an abuse of practice, which in the lights turned breadth into mannered or insipid flatness, and in the shadows into total extinction of parts: of all this, he has in the schools of S. Rocco and Marco given the most unquestionable instances; the Resurrection of Christ and the Massacre of the Innocents, comprehend every charm by which chiaroscuro fascinates its votaries: in the Vision, dewy dawn melts into deep but pellucid shade, itself rent or reflected by celestial splendour and angelic hues: whilst in the Infant-massacre at Bethlehem alternate sheets of stormy light and agitated gloom dash horror on the astonished eye.

He pursued, however, another method to create, without more assistance from chiaroscuro than individual light and shade, an effect equivalent and perhaps superior to what the utmost stretch of its powers could have produced, in the Crucifixion of the Albergo, or Guest-room of S. Rocco, the largest and most celebrated of his works. The multitudinous rabble dispersed over that picture, (for such, rather than composition, one group excepted, that assemblage of accidental figures deserves to be called,) he connected by a sovereign tone, ingulphing the whole in one mass of ominous twilight, an eclipse, or what precedes a storm, or hurricane, or earthquake; nor suffering the captive eye to rest on any other object than the faint gleam hovering over the head of the Saviour in the centre, and in still fainter tones dying on the sainted group gathered beneath the Cross. Yet this nearly superhuman contrivance, which raises above admiration a work whose incongruous parts else must have sunk it beneath mediocrity, Agostino Carracci, in his print, with chalcographic callus, has totally overlooked; for notwithstanding the iron sky that overhangs the whole, he has spread, if not

sunshine, the most declared daylight from end to end, nor left the eye uninformed of one motley article, or one blade of grass.

With Iacopo Robusti may be named, though adopted by another school, Belisario Corenzio, an Achæan Greek, his pupil, his imitator in the magic of chiaroscuro, and with still less compunction his rival in dispatch and rapidity of hand: the immense compositions in which he overflowed, he encompassed, and carried to irresistible central splendour by streams of shade, and hemmed his glories in with clouds, or showery, or pregnant with thunder. The monasteries and churches of Naples and its dependencies abound in his frescoes.

The more adscititious effects of chiaroscuro produced by the opposition of dark to lucid, opaque to transparent bodies, and cold to warm tints, though fully understood by the whole Venetian school, were nearly carried to perfection by Paolo Cagliari. There is no variety of harmonious or powerful combination in the empire of colour, as a substitute of light and shade, which did not emanate from his eye, variegate his canvass, and invigorate his scenery. Many of his works, however, and principally

the masses scattered over his Suppers, prove that he was master of that legitimate chiaroscuro which, independent of colour, animates composition: but the gaiety of his mind, which inspired him with subjects of magnificence and splendour, of numerous assemblies canopied by serene skies or roving lofty palaces, made him seek his effects oftener in opposed tints, than in powerful depths of light and shade.

But all preceding, contemporary, and subsequent schools, with their united powers of chiaroscuro, were far excelled both in compass and magnitude of its application by the genius of Antonio Allegri, from the place of his nativity surnamed Correggio. To them light and shade was only necessary as the more or less employed, or obedient attendant on design, composition, and colour. But design, composition, and colour, were no more than the submissive vehicles, or enchanted ministers of its charms to Correggio. If, strictly speaking, he was not the inventor of its element, he fully spanned its measure, and expanded the powers of its harmony through Heaven and earth; in his eye and hand it became the organ of sublimity; the process of his cupolas made it no

longer a question whether an art circumscribed by lines and figure could convey ideas of reality and immensity at once. Entranced by his spell, and lapped in his elysium, we are not aware of the wide difference between the conception of the medium, the place, space, and mode in which certain beings ought, or may be supposed to move, and that of those beings themselves; and forget, though fully adequate to the first, that Correggio was unequal to the second; that though he could build Heaven, he could not people it. If M. Agnolo found in the depth of his mind and in grandeur of line the means of rendering the immediate effect of will and power intuitive in the Creation of Adam, by darting life from the finger of Omnipotence, the coalition of light and darkness opened to the entranced eye of Correggio the means of embodying the Mosaic "Let there be light," and created light in that stream of glory which, issuing from the divine Infant in his Notte, proclaims a God. If Thought be personified in the Prophets and Sibyls of the Sistine Chapel, he has made Silence audible in the slumbering twilight that surrounds the

Zingara; and filled the gloom which enbosoms Jupiter and Io, with the whispers of Love.

And though perhaps we should be nearer truth by ascribing the cause of Correggio's magic to the happy conformation of his organs, and his calm serenity of mind, than to Platonic ecstasies, a poet might at least be allowed to say "that his soul, absorbed by the contemplation of infinity, soared above the sphere of measurable powers, knowing that every object whose limits can be distinctly perceived by the mind, must be within its grasp; and however grand, magnificent, beautiful, or terrific, fall short of the conception itself, and be less than sublime."—In this, from whatever cause, consists the real spell of Correggio—which neither Parmegiano nor Annibale Carracci seem to have been able to penetrate: the Bolognese certainly not; for if we believe himself in his letters to Ludovico, expressive of his emotions at the first sight of Correggio's cupolas, he confines his admiration to the foreshortening and grace of forms, the successful imitation of flesh, and rigorous perspective.

Of Correggio's numerous pretending imita-

tors Ludovico Carracci appears to be the only one who penetrated his principle: the axiom, that the less the traces appear of the means by which a work has been produced, the more it resembles the operations of nature, is not an axiom likely to spring from the infancy of art. The even colour, veiled splendour, the solemn twilight; that tone of devotion and cloistered meditation, which Ludovico Carracci spread over his works, could arise only from the contemplation of some preceding style, analogous to his own feelings and its comparison with nature; and where could that be met with in a degree equal to what he found in the infinite unity and variety of Correggio's effusions? They inspired his frescoes in the cloisters of St. Michele in Bosco: the foreshortenings of the muscular Labourers at the Hermitage, and of the ponderous Dæmon that mocks their toil, the warlike splendour in the homage of Totila, the nocturnal conflagration of Monte Cassino, the wild graces of deranged beauty, and the insidious charms of the sister nymphs in the garden-scene, equally proclaim the pupil of Correggio.

His triumph in oil is the altar-piece of St.

John preaching, in a chapel of the Certosa at Bologna, whose lights seem embrowned by a golden veil, and the shadowy gleam of Vallombrosa; though he sometimes indulged in tones austere, pronounced, and hardy: such is the Flagellation of Christ in the same church, whose tremendous depth of flesh-tints contrasts the open wide-expanded sky, and less conveys than dashes its terrors on the astonished sense.

The schools of Bologna, Parma, Milano, with more or less geniality, imitated their predecessors, but added no new features to the theory of light and shade. As to its progress on this side of the Alps, it is better to say nothing than little on the wide range of Rubens, and the miracles of Rembrandt.

SEVENTH LECTURE.

ON DESIGN.

SEVENTH LECTURE.

It is perhaps unnecessary to premise, that by the word Design I mean here not what that word denotes in a general sense, the plan of a whole, but what it applies in its narrowest and most specific sense, the *drawing* of the figures and component parts of the subject. The Arts of Design have been so denominated from their nearly exclusive power of representing Form, the base and principal object of plastic in contradistinction to vocal imitation. In forms alone the idea of existence can be rendered intuitive and permanent. Languages perish; words succeed each other, become obsolete and die; even colours, the dressers and ornaments of bodies, fade; Lines alone can neither be obliterated nor misconstrued; by application to their standard alone, discrimination takes place,

and description becomes intelligible. Here is the only ostensible seat of corporeal Beauty; here only it can strictly exist; for, as the notion of Beauty arises from the pleasure we feel in the harmonious co-operation of the component forms of some favourite object towards *one* end at *once* — it implies their immediate co-existence in the mass they compose; and as that immediately and at once can be perceived and conveyed to the mind by the eye alone, — Figure is the legitimate vehicle of Beauty, and Design the physical element of the Art.

Of Design, the element is correctness and style; its extinction, incorrectness and manner. On the first principle of correctness, or the power of copying and drawing with precision the proportions of any object singly, or in relation with others, — as it may be considered in the light of an elementary qualification without which none would presume to enter himself a student of the Academy, -- I should perhaps forbear to speak, did I not consider it as the basis of *Design*, and were I not apprehensive that from the prevalent bend of the reigning taste, you do not lay on it all the stress you ought, and that, if you neglect the acquisition

of the power to *copy* with purity and precision any given object, you will never acquire that of *imitating* what you have chosen for your model.

Our language generally confounds, or rather those who use it, when they speak of the art, the two words *copy* and *imitation*, though essentially different in their operation, as well as their meaning. An eye geometrically just, with a hand implicitly obedient, is the requisite of the former, without all choice, without selection, amendment, or omission; whilst choice, directed by judgment and taste, constitutes the essence of imitation, and raises the humble copyist to the noble rank of an artist.

Those who have stopped short at the acquisition of the former faculty have made a means their end, have debased the designer to the servile though useful draughtsman of natural history: and those who have aspired to the second without gaining the first, have substituted air for substance, and attempted to raise a splendid fabric on a quicksand: the first have retarded the progress of the art; the second have perverted its nature: each has erred, to prove that the coalition of both is indispensable.

It has been said by a high authority within these walls, and indeed in the whole province of modern art, that as painting is the student's ultimate aim, the sooner you acquire the power of using the pencil, the better; but I am persuaded that we should pervert the meaning of the great artist we speak of, were we to conclude, that by this observation rather than precept, he meant to discourage the acquisition of correctness. The zealous votary of M. Agnolo could never mean this; he was too well acquainted with the process of that great man's studies, who placed the compass in the eye, not to find in the precision with which he had traced the elements, the foundation of his style. His breadth, he knew, was only the vehicle of his comprehension, and not vacuity; for breadth might easily be obtained, if emptiness can give it. All he meant to say was, that it mattered not whether you acquired correctness by the pencil, the crayon, or the pen, and that, as the sculptor models, the painter may paint his line; for though neither he who anxiously forms lines without the power of embodying them, nor he who floats loosely on masses of colour, can be said to design, this being merely

the slave of a brush, that of a point, yet both tools may serve alternately or indiscriminately the purposes of the real designer. It is with the same intention of emancipating your practice from an exclusive and slavish attachment to any particular tool, that you are reminded by the same authority of the proverbial expression " Io tengo il disegno alle punta dei pennelli," " My design is at the point of my brush;"— though I am afraid the expression is dignified with the great name of Correggio through a lapse of memory, as it appears from Vasari that it was the petulant effusion of Girolamo da Trevigi, an obscure painter, in derision of the elaborate cartoon prepared by Pierino del Vaga for his fresco-painting in the great saloon of the Palace Doria at Genoa.

The same authority has repeatedly told us, that if we mean to be correct, we must scrutinize the principles on which the ancients reared their forms. What were those principles?

I shall not digress in search of them to that primitive epoch when the cestrum performed the functions of light and shade, and perhaps supplied linear painting with the faint hues of a stained drawing; nor yet to the second

period, when practice had rendered the artist bolder, and the pencil assisted the cestrum; when Parrhasius, on the subtile examination of line and outline, established the canon of divine and heroic form; we shall find them acknowledged with equal submission in the brightest æra of Grecian execution, and the honour of exclusively possessing them contested by the most eminent names of that æra, Apelles and Protogenes. The name of Apelles, in ancient record, is the synonyme of unrivalled and unattainable excellence—he is the favourite mortal in whom, if we believe tradition, Nature exhibited *for once* a specimen of what her union with education and circumstances could produce; though the enumeration of his works by Pliny points out the modification which we ought to apply to the idea of that superiority. It consisted more in the union than in the extent of his powers; he knew better what he could do, what ought to be done, at what point he could arrive, and what lay beyond his reach, than any other artist. Grace of conception and refinement of taste were his elements, and went hand in hand with grace of execution and taste in finish.

That he built both, not on the precarious and volatile blandishments of colour, or the delusive charms of light and shade, but on the solid foundation of form, acquired by precision and obedience of hand — not only the confessed inability of succeeding artists to finish his ultimate Venus, but his well-known contest of lines with Protogenes (the correctest finisher of his time), not a legendary tale, but a well attested fact, irrefragably proves. The panel on which they were drawn made part of the Imperial collection in the Palatium, existed in the time of Pliny, and was inspected by him; their evanescent subtilty, the only trait by which he mentions them, was not, as it appears, the effect of time, but of a delicacy, sweep, and freedom of hand nearly miraculous. What they were, drawn in different colours, and with the point of a brush, one upon the other, or rather within each other, it would be equally unavailing and useless for our purpose to enquire; but the corollaries we may deduce from the contest are obviously these: that all consists of elements; that the schools of Greece concurred in one elemental principle, fidelity of eye, and obedience of hand; that these

form *precision*, precision *proportion*, *proportion *symmetry*, and symmetry *Beauty*: that it is the "little more or less," imperceptible to vulgar eyes, which constitutes *Grace*, and establishes the superiority of one artist over another: that the knowledge of the degrees of things, or *Taste*, presupposes a comparative knowledge of things themselves: that colour, grace, and taste are companions, not substitutes of form, expression, and character, and, when they usurp that title, degenerate into splendid faults.

This precision of hand and eye presupposed, we now come to its application and object, Imitation, which rests on Nature.

Imitation is properly divided into Iconic and Ideal. Iconic imitation is confined to an individuum or model, whose parts it delineates according to their character and essence, already distinguishing the native and inherent, from the accidental and adventitious parts. By the first it forms its standard, and either omits or subordinates the second to them, so as not to impede or to affect the harmony of a whole. This is properly the province of the Portrait

* Analogia. Vitruv. Commensio ?

and the strictly Historic painter, whose chief object and essential requisite is Truth. Portrait in general, content to be directed by the rules of Physiognomy, which shows the animal being it represents at rest, seldom calls for aid on Pathognomy, which exhibits that being agitated, or at least animated and in motion; but when it does—and, though in a gentler manner than History, it always ought to do it —it differs in nothing from that, but in extent and degree, and already proceeds on the firm *permanent basis of* NATURE.

By Nature, I understand the general and permanent principles of visible objects, not disfigured by accident or distempered by disease, not modified by fashion or local habits. Nature is a collective idea, and though its essence exist in each individual of the species, can never *in its perfection* inhabit a *single* object: our ideas are the offspring of our senses; without a previous knowledge of many *central* forms, though we may copy, we can no more imitate, or, in other words, rise to the principle of action and penetrate the character of our model, than we can hope to create the form of a being we have not seen, without retrospect to one we have.

Meanness of manner is the infallible consequence that results from the exclusive recourse to one model: why else are those who have most closely adhered to, and most devoutly studied the model, exactly the most incorrect, the most remote from the real human form? Can there be any thing more disgusting to an eye accustomed to harmony of frame, than the starveling forms of Albert Durer, unless it be the swampy excrescences of Rembrandt? the figures of the former, proportions without symmetry; those of the Dutch artist, uniform abstracts of lumpy or meagre deformity: and yet the German was a scientific man, had measured, had in his opinion reduced to principles, the human frame; whilst the Dutchman, form only excepted, possessed every power that constitutes genius in art, seldom excelled in invention and composition, and the creator of that magic combination of colour with chiaroscuro, never perhaps before, and surely never since attained. And did not the greatest master of colour but one, Tintoretto, if we believe his biographer Ridolfi, declare, that "to design from natural bodies, or what is the same, from the model, was the task of men experienced in

art, inasmuch as those bodies were generally destitute of grace and a good form." We are informed by the Latin Editor of Albert Durer's book on the Symmetry of the Human Body, that during his stay at Venice he was requested by Andrea Mantegna, who had conceived a high opinion of his execution and certainty of hand, to pay him a visit at Mantoua, for the express purpose of giving him an idea of that form, of which he himself had had a glimpse from the contemplation of the Antique. Andrea was then ill, and expired before Albert could profit by his instructions:* this disappointment, says the author of the anecdote, Albert never ceased to lament during his life. How fit the Mantouan was to instruct the German, is not the question here; the fact proves that Albert felt a want which he found his model could not supply, and had too just an idea of the importance of the art to be proud of dexterity of finger or facility of execution,

* If this happened at all, it must have happened before 1505, at least before the expiration of that year: Giov. Bellino, with whom the author of the preface makes Albert acquainted too, died in 1512. Albert Durer was born in 1471.

when exerted only to transcribe or perpetuate defects—though these defects, almost incredible to tell, soon after invaded Italy, gave a check to the imitation of M. Agnolo, supplanted his forms, and produced a temporary revolution of style in the Tuscan School, of which the frescoes of Andrea del Sarto and Franciabigio in S. Giovanni dei Scholchi, and the latter productions of Jacopo da Puntormo are indisputable proofs. But without recurring to other proofs, the method adopted by the Academy in the process of study, appears to be founded on the insufficiency of the model for attaining correctness. Why has it decreed that the student, before he be permitted to study life, should devote a certain period to the study of the Antique? If you fancy the motive lay in the comparative facility of drawing from a motionless object, you lend your own misconception to the Academy; for, though in general it be undoubtedly more easy to draw an immoveable object than one that, however imperceptibly, is in perpetual motion, and always varies its points of sight, it cannot be the case when applied to the Antique; for where is the great name among the moderns that ever

could reach the line and the proportions of the ancients? M. Agnolo filled part of the Capella Sistina with imitations, and sometimes transcripts of the Torso,—will any one stand forth and say that he reached it? Compare the Restoration of Montorsoli, Giacomo della Porta and Bernini, or Baccio Bandinello's Laocoon, with the rest of the figures, or the original, and deplore the palpable inferiority. What was it that the Academy intended by making the Antique the basis of your studies? what? but to lead you to the sources of Form; to initiate you in the true elements of human essence; to enable you to judge at your transition from the marble to life what was substance and possession in the individual, and what excrescence and want, what homogeneous, what discordant, what deformity, what beauty. It intended, by making you acquainted with a variety of figures, to qualify you for classing them according to character and function, what exclusively belongs to some or one, and what is the common law of all; to make you sensible that the union of simplicity and variety produces harmony, and that monotony or confusion commences where either is neglected, or each

intrudes upon the other; in short, to supply by its stores, as far as time and circumstances permitted, what the *public* granted to the artists of Greece; what Zeuxis demanded and obtained from the people of Croton; what Eupompus pointed out to Lysippus; what Raffaello, with better will than success, searched in his own mind; and what Andrea Mantegna, however unqualified to find himself, desired to impress on the mind of Albert Durer—a standard of FORM.*

I shall not here recapitulate the reasons and the coincidence of fortunate circumstances which raised the Greeks to the legislation of form: the standard they erected, the canon they set, fell not from heaven; but as they fancied themselves of divine origin, and religion was the first mover of their art, it followed that they should endeavour to invest their authors with the most perfect forms, and finding *that* the privilege of man, they were led to a complete and reasoned study of his elements and constitution; this with their climate, which allowed that form to grow and to show itself to the greatest advantage, with their civil and

* Idealismus.

political institutions, which established and encouraged exercises, manners, and opportunities, of all others best calculated to rear, accomplish, and produce that form, gave in successive periods birth to that style which beginning with the *essence*, proportion, proceeded to *character*, and rose to its height by uniting both with Beauty. Of all three classes specimens in sufficient numbers have survived the ravages of time, the most considerable of which, accumulated within these walls, form the ample stores of information which the Academy displays before its students; but—I say it with reluctance, though as teacher my office, as your reader my duty, demand it — displays not always with adequate success. Too often the precipitation with which admission from the Plaster to the Life-room is solicited; the total neglect of the Antique after they have once invaded the model, and the equally slovenly, authoritative, and uninformed manner of drawing from it, prove the superficial impression of the forms previously offered to their selection. The reason of all this lies perhaps in a too early admission to either room. They enter without elements, and proceed without success; they

are set to arrange and polish before they are acquainted with the rough materials. To one or both of these causes it is probably owing, that some consider it still as an undecided question whether the student, when admitted to draw from the living model, should confine himself to drawing punctiliously what he sees before him, or exercise that judgment which his course in the Antique Academy has matured, and draw forms corresponding with each other. To me, after considering carefully what has been advanced on either side, it appears demonstrated, that the student is admitted to the life to avail himself of the knowledge he acquired from the previous study of classic forms. Here the office and the essential duties of the *visitor*, I speak with deference, begin, to confirm him where he is right, to check presumption, to lend him his own eyes, and, if it be necessary, to convince him by demonstration and example. But the human system cannot be comprehended by mere contemplation, or even the copy of the surface. The centre of its motion must be fixed, justly to mark the emanation of the rays. The uninterrupted undulation of outward forms, the waves of life,

originate within, and, without being traced to that source, instruct less than confound. The real basis of sight is knowledge, and that knowledge is internal; for though, to speak with Milton, in Poetry gods and demigods, "vital in every part, all heart, all eye, all ear, as they please limb themselves, and colour, shape, and size assume as likes them best;" in Art their substance is built on the brittle strength of bones, they act by human elements, and to descend must rise: hence, though a deep and subtle knowledge of *anatomy* be less necessary to the painter than to the physician or surgeon; though the visible be his sphere and determine his limits, a precise and accurate acquaintance with the skeleton, the basis of the machine, is indispensable; he must make himself master of the muscles, tendons, and ligaments that knit the bones or cover and surround them, their antagonismus of action and reaction, their issues, their insertions, and the variety of shapes which they assume, when according to their relative foreshortenings, laxity, position, they indicate energy or slackness of action or of frame, its greater or less elasticity, furnish the characters of the passions, and by their irritability in

louder or fainter tones become the echoes of every impression.

Nor can *Physiognomy*, the companion of Anatomy, which from the measure of the *solid* parts ascertains the precise proportion of the *moveable*, be dispensed with. There have been, perhaps there are, teachers of art, who, whilst they admit physiognomy in the mass, refuse to acknowledge it in detail, or in other words, who admit a language, and reject its elements: as if the whole harmony of every proportionate object did not consist in the correspondence of singly imperceptible, or seemingly insignificant elements, and would not become a deformed mass without them. Let the twelfth part of an inch be added to, or taken from, the space between the upper lip of the Apollo, and the God is lost.

The want of this necessary qualification is one of the chief causes of MANNER, the capital blemish of Design, in contradistinction to Style: Style pervades and consults the subject, and co-ordinates its means to its demands; Manner subordinates the subject to its means. A Mannerist is the paltry epitomist of Nature's immense volume; a juggler, who pretends to

mimic the infinite variety of her materials by the vain display of a few fragments of crockery. He produces, not indeed the monster which Horace recommends to the mirth of his friends, the offspring of grotesque fancy, and rejected with equal disdain or incredulity by the vulgar and refined, but others not less disgusting, though perhaps confined to a narrower circle of judges.

Mannerists may be divided into three classes:

1st. Those who never consult Nature, but at second hand; only see her through the medium of some prescription, and fix her to the test of a peculiar form.

2ndly. Those who persevere to look for her or to place her on a spot where she cannot be found, some individual one or analogous models; and

3rdly. Those who, without ascending to the principle, content themselves with jumbling together an aggregate of style and model, tack deformity to beauty, and meanness to grandeur.

Of all Taste, the standard lies in the middle between extravagance and scantiness; the best becomes a flaw, if carried to an extreme, or indiscriminately applied. The Apollo, the Her-

cules of Glycon, and the figure misnamed Gladiator, are each models of style in their respective classes; but their excellence would become a flaw if indiscriminately applied to the distinct demand of different subjects. Neither the Apollo, the Hercules, nor the Gladiator, can singly supply the forms of a Theseus, Meleager, or Achilles, any more than the heroes on Monte Cavallo theirs. It must however be owned, that he would commit a more venial error, and come nearer to the form we require in the Achilles of Homer, who should substitute the form of the Apollo or Hercules with the motion of the Gladiator to the real form, than he who should copy him from the best individual he could meet with: the reason is clear, there is a greater analogy between their form and action and that of Achilles, than between him and the best model we know alive. From the same principle, he who in a subject of pure history would attempt to introduce the generic and patriarchal forms in the Capella Sistina would become ludicrous by the excess of contrast; for to him the organic characteristics of national proportion are little less essential than to the draughtsman of natural history or the

portrait painter. The skull of an European, though tinged with African hues, will not assimilate with the legitimate skull of a negro, nor can the foot of Meleager, or even of the Laocoon, ever be exchanged for that of a Mongul or Chinese; and he has probably mistaken his information, who fancies that the expression, gait, and limbs of the Apollo can find their counterpart on the Apalachian mountains, or are related to the unconquered tribes of Florida.

The least pardonable of all Mannerists appears to be he who applies to meanness to furnish him with the instruments to dignity and grandeur. He who relies for all upon his model, should treat no other subject but his model; and I will venture to say, that even the extravagant forms, and, if you will, caricatures of Goltzius seduced by Spranger are preferable to those of Albert Durer or Caravaggio, though recommended by the precision of the one and the chiaroscuro of the other, when applied to a pure heroic or symbolic subject; for though eccentric and extreme, they are eccentricities and extremes of the great style, in which meanness of conception is of all other blemishes the

least excusable. From this blemish the mighty genius of Raffaello, before it emerged from the dregs of Pietro Perugino, was not entirely free;—whether from timidity or languor of conception, the Christ in the Dispute on the Sacrament, though the principal figure, the centre from which all the rest like radii emanate and ought to emanate in due subordination, is a tame, mean figure, and, the placidity of the face perhaps excepted, for even that has a tincture of meanness, inferior to all the patriarchs and doctors of that numerous composition.

The *third* class, or those who mix up a motley assemblage of ideal beauty and common nature, such as was pounded together by Pietro Testa and Gherard Lairesse, and from which neither Guido nor Poussin were entirely free—though perhaps not strictly chargeable with the absolute impropriety of the first and the lowness of the second class, must be content with what we can spare of disapprobation from either: they surprise us into pleasure by glimpses of character and form, and as often disappoint us by the obtrusion of heterogeneous or vulgar forms. But this disappointment is not so general, because we want that critical ac-

quaintance with the principles of ancient art which can assign each trunk its head, each limb its counterpart: a want even now so frequent, notwithstanding the boasted refinements of Roman and German criticisms, that a Mercury, if he have left his caduceus, may exchange his limbs with a Meleager, and he with an Antinous; perhaps a Jupiter on Ida his torso with that of a Hercules anapauomenos, an Ariadne be turned into the head of a hornless Bacchus, and an Isis be substituted for every ideal female.

EIGHTH LECTURE.

COLOUR.—IN FRESCO PAINTING.

EIGHTH LECTURE.

THE Painter's art may be considered in a double light, either as exerting its power over *the senses* to reach the intellect and heart, or merely as their handmaid, teaching its graces to charm their organs for their amusement only: in the first light, the senses, like the rest of its materials, are only a vehicle; in the second, they are the principal object and the ultimate aim of its endeavours.

I shall not enquire here whether the Arts, as mere ministers of sensual pleasure, still deserve the name of liberal, or are competent exclusively to fill up the time of an intellectual being. Nature, and the masters of Art, who pronounce the verdicts of Nature in Poetry and Painting, have decided, that they neither can attain their highest degree of ac-

complishment, nor can be considered as useful assistants to the happiness of society, unless they subordinate the vehicle, whatever it be, to the real object, and make sense the minister of mind.

When this is their object, *Design*, in its most extensive as in its strictest sense, is their basis; when they stoop to be the mere playthings, or debase themselves to be the debauchers of the senses, they make *Colour* their insidious foundation.

The greatest master of Colour in our time, the man who might have been the rival of the first colourists in every age, Reynolds, in his public instruction uniformly persisted to treat Colour as a subordinate principle. Though fully aware that, without possessing at least a competent share of its numberless fascinating qualities, no man, let his style of design or powers of invention be what they may, can either hope for professional success, or can even properly be called a painter, and giving it as his opinion, on the authority of tradition, the excellence of the remaining monuments in sculpture, and the discovered though inferior relics of ancient painting, that, if the coloured

masterpieces of antiquity had descended to us in tolerable preservation, we might expect to see works designed in the style of the Laocoon, painted in that of Titian;—he still persisted in the doctrine that even the colour of Titian, far from adding to the sublimity of the Great style, would only have served to retard, if not to degrade, its impression. He knew the usurping, the ambitious principle inseparable from Colour, and therefore thought it his duty, by making it the basis of ornamental styles, not to check its legitimate rights, but to guard against its indiscriminate demands.

It is not for me, (who have courted and still continue to court Colour as a despairing lover courts a disdainful mistress,) to presume, by adding my opinion, to degrade the great one delivered; but the attachments of fancy ought not to regulate the motives of a teacher, or direct his plan of art: it becomes me therefore to tell you, that if the principle which animates the art gives rights and privilege to Colour not its own; if from a medium, it raises it to a representative of all; if what is claimed in vain by form and mind, it fondly

grants to colour; if it divert the public eye from higher beauties to be absorbed by its lures—then the art is degraded to a mere vehicle of sensual pleasure, an implement of luxury, a beautiful *but trifling* bauble, or a splendid fault.

To Colour, when its bland purity tinges the face of innocence and sprouting life, or its magic charm traces in imperceptible transitions the forms of beauty; when its warm and ensanguined vigour stamps the vivid principle that animates full-grown youth and the powerful frame of manhood, or in paler gradations marks animal decline; when its varieties give truth with character to individual imitation, or its more comprehensive tone pervades the scenes of sublimity and expression, and dictates the medium in which they ought to move, to strike our eye in harmony;—to Colour, the florid attendant of form, the minister of the passions, the herald of energy and character, what eye, not tinged by disease or deserted by Nature, refuses homage?

But of Colour, when equally it overwhelms the forms of infancy, the milky germ of life, and the defined lines of manhood and of beauty

with lumpy pulp; when from the dresser of the Graces it becomes the handmaid of deformity, and with their spoils decks her limbs —shakes hands with meanness, or haunts the recesses of loathsomeness and horror*—when it exchanges flesh for roses, and vigour for vulgarity—absorbs character and truth in hues of flattery, or changes the tone demanded by sublimity and pathos into a mannered medium of playful tints;—of Colour the slave of fashion and usurper of propriety, if still its charms retain our eye, what mind unseduced by prejudice or habit can forbear to lament the abuse?

The principles of Colour, as varied, are as immutable as those of Nature. The gradations of the system that connects *light* with *shade* are immense, but the variety of its imitation is regulated by the result of their union, Simplicity—Clearness if obtained by Harmony!

Simplicity represents of every individual its unity, its whole. Light, and its organ the

* S. Bartolomeo del Spagnuoletto. S. Agatha Martirizzata nelle poppe di Seb. del Piombo. Il Porco Sventrato di Ostade. Il Macello dei Carracci. La Caccia Pidocchi di Murillo.

eye, show us the whole of a being before its parts, and then diffuse themselves in visual rays over the limbs. Light with its own velocity fixes a point, the focus of its power; but as no central light can be conceived without radiation, nor a central form without extension, their union produces that immutable law of harmony which we call breadth.

One point is the brightest in the eye as on the object; this is the point of light: from it in all directions the existent parts advance or recede, by, before, behind each other; the two extremes of light and shade make a whole, which the local or essential colour defines,—its coalition with the demi-tint, the shade and reflexes, rounds,—and the correspondence of each colour with all, tunes.

The principles that regulate the choice of colours are in themselves as invariable as the light from which they spring, and as the shade that absorbs them. Their economy is neither arbitrary nor phantastic. Of this every one may convince himself who can contemplate a prism. Whatever the colours be, they follow each other in regular order; they emerge from, they flow into each other. No confusion can

break or thwart their gradations, from blue to yellow, from yellow to red; the flame of every light, without a prisma, establishes this immutable scale.

From this theory you will not expect that I should enter into chemic disquisitions on the materials, or into technic ones on the methods of painting. When you are told that *simplicity and keeping* are the basis of purity and harmony, that *one* colour has a greater power than a combination of two, that a mixture of three impairs that power still more, you are in possession of the great elemental principles necessary for the economy of your palette. Method, handling, and the modes of execution are taught by trial, comparison, and persevering practice, but chiefly by the nature of the object you pursue. The lessons of repetition, disappointment, and blunder, impress more forcibly than the lessons of all masters. Not that I mean to depreciate or to level the comparative value or inferiority of materials, or that instruction which may shorten your road to the essential parts of study; but he is as far from Nature who sees her only through the medium of his master, as he from colour who fancies it lies in

costly, scarce, or fine materials, in curious pre parations, or mouldy secrets, in light, in dark, in smooth, in rough, or in absorbent grounds: it may be in all, but is in none of these. The masters of ancient colour had for their basis only four, and this simplicity made Reynolds conclude that they must have been as great in colour as in form. He who cannot make use of the worst must disgrace the best materials; and he whose palette is set or regulated by another's eye, renounces his own, and must become a mannerist. There is no compendious method of becoming great; the price of excellence is labour, and time that of immortality.

Colour, like Design, has two essential parts, Imitation and Style. It begins in glare, is caught by deception, emerges to imitation, is finished by style, and debauched by manner.

Glare is always the first feature of a savage or an infant taste. The timid or barbarous beginner, afraid of impairing the splendour by diminishing the mass, exults in the Egyptian glare which he spreads over a surface unbroken by tint and not relieved by shade. Such are in

general the flaming remnants of feudal decoration. This is the stage of missal painting; what Dante called "alluminar," the art of Cimabue; its taste continued, though in degrees less shocking, to the time of M. Agnolo and Raffaello. Gods, and mothers of Gods, Apostles and Martyrs, attracted devotion in proportion to the more or less gaudy colours in which they were arrayed. It was for this reason that Julius the Second wished M. Agnolo had added to the majesty of the Patriarchs and Sibyls by gold and lapis lazuli.

Deception follows glare; attempts to substitute by form or colour the image for the thing, always mark the puerility of taste, though sometimes its decrepitude. The microscopic precision of Denner, and even the fastidious, though broader detail of Gherard Douw, were symptoms of its dotage. The contest of Zeuxis and Parrhasius, if not a frolic, was an effort of puerile dexterity. But Deception, though at its ultimate pitch never more than the successful mimicry of absent objects, and for itself below the aim of art, is the mother of Imitation. We must penetrate the

substances of things, acquaint ourselves with their peculiar hue and texture, and colour them in detail, before we can hope to seize their principle and give their general air.

Tiziano laboured first to make facsimiles of the stuffs he copied, before he changed them into drapery, and gave them local value and a place; he learnt first to distinguish tint from tint, and give the skeleton of colour, before he emboldened himself to take the greatest quantity of colour in an object for the whole; to paint flesh which abounded in demi-tints, entirely in demi-tints, and to deprive of all, that which had but a few. It was in the school of Deception he learnt the difference of diaphanous and opaque, of firm and juicy colour; that this refracts and that absorbs the light, and hence their place; those that cut and come forward, first, and those which more or less partake of the surrounding medium in various degrees of distance. It was here he learnt the contrast of the tints, of what is called warm and cold, and by their balance, diffusion, echo, to poise a whole. His eye as musical, if I may be allowed the metaphor, as his ear, abstracted here, that colour acts, affects, delights, like

sound; that stern and deep-toned tints rouse, determine, invigorate the eye, as warlike sound or a deep bass the ear; and that bland, rosy, gray, and vernal tints soothe, charm, and melt like a sweet melody.

Such were the principles whose gradual evolution produced that coloured imitation which, far beyond the fascination of Giorgione, irresistibly entranced every eye that approached the magic of Tiziano Vecelli. To no colourist before or after him, did Nature unveil herself with that dignified familiarity in which she appeared to Tiziano. His organ, universal and equally fit for all her exhibitions, rendered her simplest to her most compound appearances with equal purity and truth. He penetrated the essence and the general principle of the substances before him, and on these established his theory of colour. He invented that breadth of local tint which no imitation has attained, and first expressed the negative nature of shade: his are the charms of glazing, and the mystery of reflexes, by which he detached, rounded, corrected or enriched his objects. His harmony is less indebted to the force of light and shade, or the artifices of contrast, than to a due balance

of colour equally remote from monotony and spots. His tone springs out of his subject, solemn, grave, gay, minacious, or soothing; his eye tinged Nature with gold without impairing her freshness: she dictated his scenery. Landscape, whether it be considered as the transcript of a spot, or the rich combination of congenial objects, or as the scene of a phenomenon, as subject and as background, dates its origin from him. He is the father of portrait-painting, of resemblance with form, character with dignity, and costume with subordination.

Colour may be considered relatively to the whole or the detail of the parts that compose a picture. In that point of view it depends on the choice of a sovereign tone; in this on the skilful disposition, gradation, rounding, and variety of the subordinate tones, their principal light, the local colour, the half tints, the shades, and the reflexes.

The general regulation of the primary tone, and the specific arrangement of the subordinate ones for the rounding of every figure, is the same. In both, the attention is to be directed to obtain a principal mass of light, and a predominant colour. This is to be supported by the

mutual assistance and reciprocal relief of secondary ones, must be associated with the demi-tint and the shades, and recalled and relieved by the reflexes.

When treating on Chiaroscuro, we have observed what may now be applied to Colour, that the primary tone depends on choice, and is arbitrary; but it decides all the rest, as the tone of the first violin in a regular concert tunes all the voices and all the instruments. Its effect entirely depends on the union of the surrounding tones with it, and has no other value but what it derives from contrast. By this the simplest tone, well managed, may become rich, splendid, and harmonious; it is then the tone of nature; whilst the most brilliant colour, if contradicted or disappointed by the detail of inferior ones, may become heavy, leathern, and discordant.

The best illustration of these principles is in the celebrated Notte of Correggio, where the Infant from the centre tinges the whole with his rays; but perhaps still more in its companion at Dresden, the less known picture of St. Sebastian; for to produce union and tone in the nearly equilateral composition of a votive

picture, required a deeper comprehension and a steadier eye. Like the picture of Raffaello at Foligno, it represents the Madonna with the Infant in her arms, throned on clouds, in a central glory of sunny radiance, attended by angels, and surrounded by angelic forms: below are St. Geminian with a maiden by his side, St. Rocco and Sebastian tied to a tree. The first surprise is caused by the central light of the glory, which has all the splendour of a sun, though its colour is a yellow comparatively faint, and terminates in brown. The Madonna, dressed in a robe of glowing lake and a dark blue mantle, seems to start from this body of light as from a sombre ground, and as the Infant from her. The carnation of both is of a low tint, to support the keeping of their distance. The two angels at her side, in tints reflected from the centre, address the Saints below, and connect the upper with the lower part of the picture, which emerges from the darksome clouds on which they stand, and gathers its tones of light from the emanations of the central one, but in subordinate flashes, vanishing from twilight into massy shade. By those who have not seen this picture, a faint idea of

its tone may be formed from the votive one of Parmegiano, at the Marquis of Abercorn's, which, had it received its last harmony, would probably have emulated the principle of that we have described.

The tones fit for Poetic painting are like its styles of design, generic or characteristic. The former is called negative, or composed of little more than chiaroscuro; the second admits, though not ambitiously, a greater variety and subdivision of tint. The first is the tone of M. Agnolo, the second that of Raffaello. The sovereign instrument of both is undoubtedly the simple, broad, pure, fresh, and limpid vehicle of Fresco. Fresco, which does not admit of that refined variety of tints that are the privilege of oil painting, and from the rapidity with which the earths, its chief materials, are absorbed, requires nearly immediate termination, is for those very reasons the immediate minister and the aptest vehicle of a great design. Its element is purity and breadth of tint. In no other style of painting could the generic forms of M. Agnolo have been divided, like night and day, into that breadth of light and shade which stamps their character. The

silver purity of Correggio is the offspring of Fresco; his oil paintings are faint and tainted emanations of the freshness and "limpidezza" in his Frescoes. Oil, which rounds and conglutinates, spreads less than the sheety medium of Fresco, and if stretched into breadth beyond its natural tone, as the spirits which are used to extenuate its glue escape, returns upon itself, and oftener forms surfaces of dough, or wood, or crust, than fleshy fibre. Oil impeded the breadth even of the elemental colours of Tiziano in the Salute. The minute process inseparable from oil, is the reason why M. Agnolo declared oil painting to be a woman's method, or of idle men. The master of the colour we see in the Sistina could have no other: for though colour be the least considerable of that constellation of powers that blaze in its compartments, it is not the last or least accomplishment of the work. The flesh of the academic figures on the frames of the ceiling is a flesh even now superior to all the flesh of Annibale Carracci in the Farnese, generally pale though not cold, and never bricky though sometimes sanguine. The Jeremiah among the Prophets, glows with the glow of Tiziano, but

in a breadth unknown to Giorgione and to him. The Eve under the Tree has the bland pearly harmony of Correggio; and some of the bodies in air on the lower part of the Last Judgement, less impaired by time or accident than the rest, for juice and warmth may still defy all competition. His colour sometimes even borders on characteristic variety, as in the composition of the Brazen Serpent. That a man who mastered his materials with such power, did reject the certain impediments and the precarious and inferior beauties of oil, which Sebastian del Piombo proposed for the execution of the Last Judgement, and who punished him for the proposal with his disdain for life, cannot be wondered at. If I have mentioned particular beauties of colour, it was more for others than to express what strikes *me* most. The parts, in the process of every man's work, are always marked with more or less felicity; and great as the beauties of those which I distinguished are, they would not be beauties in my eye, if obtained by a principle discordant from the rest.

The object of my admiration in M. Agnolo's colour is the tone, that comprehensive union

of tint and hue spread over the whole, which seems less the effect of successive labour than a sudden and instantaneous exhalation, one principle of light, local colour, demi-tint and shade. Even the colours of the draperies, though perhaps too distinct, and often gayer than the gravity of their wearers or the subject allowed, are absorbed by the general tone, and appear so only on repeated inspection or separation from the rest. Raffaello did not come to his great work with the finished system, the absolute power over the materials, and the conscious authority of M. Agnolo. Though the august plan which his mind had conceived, admitted of lyric and allegoric ornament, it was, upon the whole, a drama and characteristic: he could not therefore apply to its mass the generic colour of the Sistina. Hence we see him struggling at the onset between the elements of that tone which the delineation of subdivided character and passions demanded, and the long imbibed habits and shackles of his master. But one great picture decided the struggle. This is evident from the difference of the upper and lower part of the Dispute on the Sacrament. The upper is the summit of

Pietro Perugino's style, dignified and enlarged; the lower is his own. Every feature, limb, motion, the draperies, the lights and shades of the lower part, are toned and varied by character. The florid bloom of youth tinged with the glow of eagerness and impatience to be admitted; the sterner and more vigorous tint of long initiated and authoritative manhood; the inflamed suffusion of disputative zeal; the sickly hue of cloistered meditation; the brown and sun-tinged hermit, and the pale decrepit elder, contrast each other; but contrasted as they are, their whole action and colour remain subordinate to the general hue diffused by the serene solemnity of the surrounding medium, which is itself tinctured by the effulgence from above. A sufficient balance of light and shade maintains the whole, though more attention be paid to individual discrimination than masses. In the economy of the detail we find the lights no longer so white, the local colour no longer so crude, the passages to the demi-tints not so much spotted with red, nor the demi-tints themselves of so green a cast as in the four Symbolic Pictures on golden grounds of the ceiling.

It appears to me upon the whole, that for a general characteristic tone, Raffaello has never exceeded the purity of this picture. If in the School of Athens he has excelled it in individual tints, in tints that rival less than challenge the glow and juice of Titian, they are scattered more in fragments than in masses, and at the expense or with neglect of general unison, if we except the central and connecting figure of Epictetus. The predominance of tender flesh, and white or tinted drapery on the foreground, whilst the more distant groups are embrowned by masculine tints and draperies of deeper hue, prove, that if Raffaello could command individual colour, he had not penetrated its general principle.

The Parnassus in the same room has a ruling tone, but not the tone of a poetic fancy. Aërial freshness was his aim, and he is only frigid. Its principal actors are ideals of divine nature, and ought to move in a celestial medium, and Raffaello had no more an adequate colour than adequate forms for either. But whatever is characteristic, from the sublimity of Homer to the submissive affable courtesy of

Horace and the directing finger of Pindar, is inimitable and in tune.

The ultimate powers of Raffaello, and, as far as I can judge, of Fresco, appear to me collected in the astonishing picture of the Heliodorus. This is not the place to dwell on the loftiness of conception, the mighty style of design, the refined and appropriate choice of character, the terror, fears, hopes, palpitation of expression, and the far more than Corregiesque graces of female forms; the Colour only, considered as a whole or in subordination, is our object. Though by the choice of the composition the back-ground, which is the sanctuary of the temple, embrowned with gold, diffuses a warmer gleam than the scenery of the foreground, its open area, yet by the dexterous management of opposing to its glazed cast a mass of vigorous and cruder flesh tints, a fiercer ebullition of impassioned hues, — the flash of steel and iron armour, and draperies of indigo, deep black and glowing crimson, the foreground maintains its place, and all is harmony.

Manifold as the subdivisions of character are,

angelic, devout, authoritative, violent, brutal, vigorous, helpless, delicate; and various as the tints of the passions that sway them appear, elevated, warmed, inflamed, depressed, appalled, aghast, they are all united by the general tone that diffuses itself from the interior repose of the sanctuary, smoothens the whirlwind that fluctuates on the foreground, and gives an air of temperance to the whole.

NINTH LECTURE.

COLOUR.—OIL PAINTING.

NINTH LECTURE.

HAVING finished the preceding lecture with observations on Fresco, a method of painting almost as much out of use as public encouragement, and perhaps better fitted for the serene Italian than the moist air of more northern climates, I now proceed to Oil Painting. The general medium of paint is Oil; and in that, according to the division of our illustrious commentator on Du Fresnoy, "all the modes of harmony, or of producing that effect of colours which is required in a picture, may be reduced to three, two of which belong to the Grand style, and the other to the Ornamental. The first may be called the Roman manner, where the colours are of a full and strong body, such as are found in the Transfiguration. The next is that harmony which is produced by what

the ancients called the *corruption* * of the colours, by mixing and breaking them till there is a general union in the whole, without any thing that shall bring to your remembrance the painter's palette or the original colours: this may be called the Bolognian style, and it is this hue and effect of colours which Ludovico Carracci seems to have endeavoured to produce, though he did not carry it to that perfection which we have seen since his time in the small works of the Dutch school, particularly Jan Steen, where art is completely concealed, and the painter, like a great orator, never draws the attention from the subject on himself. The last manner belongs properly to the ornamental style, which we call the Venetian, being first practised at Venice, but is perhaps better learned from Rubens: here the brightest colours possible are admitted, with the two extremes of warm and cold, and these reconciled by being dispersed over the picture, till the whole appears like a bunch of flowers."

As I perfectly coincide with this division, and the practical corollaries deduced from it,

* Φθορα.

what I have to say relatively to each of these classes or styles will rather be a kind of commentary on it than a text containing a doctrine of my own.

If the Roman style of Historic colour be the style of Raffaello in the Transfiguration, it died with him; it is certainly not that Roman style which distinguishes that school from Giulio Romano to Carlo Maratti.

Though the Transfiguration be more remarkable for the characteristic division of its parts than for its masses, yet it has more than the breadth, a closer alliance and larger proportion of correspondent colours, and a much purer theory of shade than we meet with in the subsequent pictures of the same school; the picture at Genoa of the Lapidation of St. Stephen, by Giulio Romano, only excepted, which was probably soon after framed on the principles of the Transfiguration.

The crudeness of colour and asperity of tone observable in the Roman School, though founded on simplicity, is perhaps a greater proof of their want of eye and taste than of a pure historic principle. Harmony of colour consists in the due balance of all, equally re-

mote from monotony and from spots. Though each part of Roman pictures be painted with sufficient breadth of manner, their discordance is such that they do not coalesce into one whole, but appear unconnected fragments in apposition. Their theory of shade is so defective, that the parts deprived of light of the same body, or the same piece of drapery, are not effaced, but coloured. If the positive reds and blues of the Roman school invigorate the eye, they likewise command it, and counteract the grandeur of History in a degree not much inferior to the bad effect produced by the imitation of stuffs discriminated according to their texture; their bright asperity, and bleak purity, equally pervert the negative and subordinate character of drapery, and attract a larger share of attention from the beholder than they deserve. A Madonna in the hands of Carlo Maratti, and sometimes even of Raffaello, at least in his earlier productions, is the least visible part of herself. The most celebrated Madonna of Andrea del Sarto, though in Fresco, is certainly more indebted to her drapery than her face, perhaps still more to the

sack on which her husband rests, and from which the picture got its name.

From this censure we ought to except M. Angelo Caravaggi, and Andrea Sacchi, whose works, though else so dissimilar in principle and execution, coincide in reducing colour frequently to little more than chiaroscuro; the one for melancholy and forcible, the other for visionary or devotional effects.

The Pilgrims adoring the Madonna with the Infant in St. Agostino, by the former, seem not painted but tinged in the last golden ray of departing eve; whilst the Vision of St Romualdo, by the latter, surrounds us with gray twilight and gradual evanescence.

A general style of colours thus amalgamated, appears to me a principle much superior to that of *corruption* of them, which Plutarch mentions as the invention of Apollodorus the Athenian, when painting had scarcely emerged from the linear process, and it required some courage to wield a brush. If the ancients ever possessed the Bolognese corruption of colours, it must have been in periods of refinement. The Φθορα of Apollodorus was probably the

invention of demi-tints, the effect of which is produced by "corrupting" or lowering the elemental purity of the two of which it is composed. The axiom, that the less the traces appear of the means by which a work has been produced, the more it resembles the operations of nature,—is not an axiom likely to spring from the infancy of Art.

The even colour, veiled splendour, the solemn twilight, that tone of devotion and cloistered meditation which Lodovico Carracci spread over his works, could arise only from the contemplation of various preceding styles, or their comparison with nature and the object of his choice.

The ideal of his style is a harmony equally remote from affected brilliancy and vulgar resemblance of tints. Its element is gravity, and whenever this inspires not its imitation, it will be less serious than sullen, flat not even, heavy without vigour, and the despatching tool of mediocrity.

If this be that dignified colour of Lombardy, recommended by Agostino Carracci, his own picture of the Communion of St. Jerome, and the Dead Christ among the Maries

by Annibale, (which we have seen here,) excepted, its principle was not adopted by that third ruler of the Carracci school, nor any of its pupils.

Annibale, from want of feelings, changed the mild evening ray of his Cousin to the sullen light of a cloudy day, and in the exultation of mechanic power swims on his work like oil: Guido was too gay and affected; Guercino too cutting and vulgar; Albano too airy and insubstantial for it. Under the hand and guided by the sensibility of Lodovico, it communicated itself even to the open silvery tone of Fresco.

In the cloisters of St. Michele in Bosco, it equally moderates the deep-toned tints of the muscular labourers of the hermitage and of the ponderous demon who mocks their toil, the warlike splendour in the homage of Totila, the flash of the nocturnal conflagration, and the three insidious Nymphs in the garden scene, who even now, though nearly in a state of evanescence, seem moulded by the hand and tinged by the breath of Love; all are sainted by this solemn tone.

Its triumph in Oil is the altar-piece of St.

John preaching, in a chapel of the Certosa, whose lights seem embrowned by a golden veil, and the shadowy gleam of Valombrosa; but Lodovico sometimes indulged in tones austere, pronounced, and hardy. Such is the Flagellation of Christ in the same church, of which the tremendous depth of flesh-tints contrasts the open, wide-expanded sky, and less conveys, than dashes its terrors on the astonished sense.

The third, or Ornamental style, could scarcely arise in any other state of Italy than Venice. Venice was the centre of commerce, the repository of the riches of the globe, the splendid toy-shop of the time: its chief inhabitants princely merchants, or a patrician race elevated to rank by accumulations from trade or naval prowess; the bulk of the people mechanics or artisans, administering the means, and, in their turn, fed by the produce of luxury. Of such a system, what could the Art be more than the parasite? Religion itself had exchanged its gravity for the allurements of ear and eye, and even sanctity disgusted, unless arrayed by the gorgeous hand of fashion. Such was, such will always be the birth-place and the theatre of Colour; and hence it is more matter of wonder

that the first and greatest colourists should so long have foreborne to overstep the modesty of Nature in the use of that alluring medium, than that they sacrificed, *in part*, propriety to its golden solicitation.

I say *in part*, for Tiziano perhaps never, Paolo and Tintoretto, though by much too often, yet not always, spread the enchanting nosegay, which is the characteristic of this style, with indiscriminate hand. The style of Tiziano may be divided into three periods: when he copied, when he imitated, when he strove to generalize, to elevate, or invigorate the tones of Nature. The first is anxious and precise, the second beautiful and voluptuous, the third sublime. In the second the parts lead to the whole, in this the whole to the parts; it is that master-style which in discriminated tones imparts to ornament a monumental grandeur. It gave that celestial colour which consideration like an angel spread over the Salutation in St. Rocco; the colour that wafts its wide expanse and elemental purity over the primitive scenes of his Abel, Abraham, and David, in the Salute; the colour that tinged with artless solemn majesty the Apotheosis of

the Virgin in the church de' Frati, embodied adoration in its portraits, and changed the robes of pomp and warlike glitter to servants of simplicity. Such is the tone which diffuses its terrors and its glories in Pietro Martyre over the martyred hermits of the mountain forest, and taught the painter's eye to "glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven." If this be ornament, what but the Vatican can the schools of Design oppose to its grandeur and propriety!

If all ornament be allegoric, if it imply something allusive to the place, the person, or the design for which it is contrived, from that of a public building or a temple, to that of a library or the decorations of a toilette, how have the schools of Design, after the demise of M. Agnolo and Raffaello, observed its principle? Annibale Carracci, with the Capella Sistina and the Vatican before his eye, has filled the mansion of Episcopal dignity with a chaotic series of trite fable and bacchanalian revelry, without allegory, void of allusion, merely to gratify the puerile ostentation of dauntless execution and academic skill. And if we advert to a greater name, that of Pellegrino Tibaldi, is it easy to

discover what relation exists between the adventures of Ulysses and the purposes and pursuits of the academical Institute of Bologna? and is it sufficient to exculpate him from impropriety of choice in his plan, if we say that the ceiling of Pellegrino Tibaldi is a doctrine of style, and that design and style are the principal pursuit of the students?

But perhaps it is not to Tiziano, but to Tintoretto and Paolo Cagliari, that the debaucheries of Colour and blind submission to fascinating tints, the rage of scattering flowers to no purpose, are ascribed. Let us select from Tintoretto's most extensive work the Scola of St. Rocco, the most extensive composition, and his acknowledged masterpiece, the Crucifixion, and compare its tone with that of Rubens and of Rembrandt for the same subject. What impression feels he, who for the first time casts a glance on the immense scenery of that work? a whole whose numberless parts are connected by a lowering, mournful, minacious tone. A general fearful silence hushes all around the central figure of the Saviour suspended on the cross, his fainting mother, and a group of male and female mourners at his foot:—a group of

colours that less imitate than rival Nature, and tinged by grief itself; a scale of tones for which even Tiziano offers to me no parallel: yet all equally overcast by the lurid tone that stains the whole, and like a meteor hangs in the sickly air. Whatever inequality or derelictions of feeling, whatever improprieties of common place, of local and antique costume, the master's rapidity admitted to fill his space, and they are great, all vanish in the power which compresses them into a single point, and we do not detect them till we recover from our terror.

The picture of Rubens, which we oppose to Tintoretto, was painted for the church of St. Walburgha at Antwerp, after his return from Italy, and has been minutely described, and as exquisitely criticised by Reynolds: "Christ," he says, "is nailed to the cross, with a number of figures exerting themselves to raise it. The invention of throwing the cross obliquely from one corner of the picture to the other, is finely conceived; something in the manner of Tintoretto:" so far Reynolds. In Tintoretto it is the cross of one of the criminals that they attempt to raise, who casts his eye on Christ already raised. The body of Christ is the

grandest, in my opinion, that Rubens ever painted; it seems to be imitated from the Torso of Apollonius, and that of the Laocoon. How far it be characteristic of Christ, or correspondent with the situation, I shall not here enquire; my object is the ruling tone of the whole, and of this the criticism quoted says not a word, though much of local colour and gray and ochry balance. Would so great a master of tone as Reynolds have forgot this master-key, if he had found it in the picture? The fact is, the picture has no other than the painter's usual tone: Rubens came to his work with gay technic exultation, and, by the magic of his palette, changed the terrors of Golgotha to an enchanted garden and clusters of flowers. Rembrandt, though on a smaller scale of size and composition, concentrated the tremendous moment in one flash of pallid light. It breaks on the body of Christ, shivers down his limbs, and vanishes on the armour of a crucifix; the rest is gloom.

Of Paolo Veronese, who was by far the most intemperate and florid of ornamental masters, the political allegories on the platfonds and compartments of the Ducal Palace, and the

religious legends painted in the refectories of the convents, or as altar-pieces in the churches of Venice, differ materially in tone and style. Those were painted for the Senate, these for the people; and the superior orders were supposed to be better judges of real grandeur and propriety, than monastic ignorance and the bigoted and vulgar majority of the crowds that thronged the churches.

If, therefore, I were able to dissent in any thing relative to Colour from the great Master whose classification I comment, I should probably hesitate on the advice of adopting the palette of Rubens for the regulation of the tones that compose the Venetian style, of which his flowery tint formed but a part. What has been said of M. Agnolo in FORM, may be said of Rubens in COLOUR: they had but one. As the one came to Nature, and moulded her to his generic form, the other came to Nature and tinged her with his colour—the colour of gay magnificence. He levelled his subject to his style, but seldom if ever his style with his subject; whatever be the subject of Rubens, legend, allegoric, stern, mournful, martyrdom, fable, epic, dramatic, lyric, grave or gay—the

hues that embody, the air that tinges them, is indiscriminate expanse of gay magnificence. If the economy of his colours be that of an immense nosegay, he has not always connected the ingredients with a prismatic eye; the balance of the iris is not arbitrary, the balance of his colour often is. It was not to be expected that correctness of form should be the object of Rubens, though he was master of drawing, and even ambitious in the display of anatomic knowledge; but there is no mode of incorrectness, unless what directly militated against his style, such as meagreness, of which his works do not set an example. His male forms, generally the brawny pulp of slaughtermen; his females, hillocks of roses in overwhelmed muscles, grotesque attitudes, and distorted joints, are swept along in a gulph of colours, as herbage, trees and shrubs are whirled, tossed, and absorbed by inundation.

But whenever a subject comes genially within the vortex of his manner, such as that of the Gallery of Luxembourg, it then is not only characteristically excellent, but includes nearly a superhuman union of powers. In whatever light we consider that astonishing work, whe-

ther as a series of the most sublime conceptions, regulated by an uniform comprehensive plan, or as a system of colours and tones, exalting the subject, and seconded by magic execution, whatever may be its Venetian or Flemish flaws of mythology and Christianity, ideal and contemporary costume promiscuously displayed, it leaves all plans of Venetian allegory far behind, and rivals all their execution; if it be not equal in simplicity, or emulate in characteristic dignity, the plans of M. Agnolo and Raffaello, it excels them in the display of that magnificence which no modern eye can separate from the idea of Majesty.

TENTH LECTURE.

THE METHOD OF FIXING A STANDARD AND DEFINING THE PROPORTIONS OF THE HUMAN FRAME, WITH DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT IN COPYING THE LIFE.

TENTH LECTURE.

THE methods of fixing a standard and defining the proportions of the human frame, are either *analytic* or *synthetic*, from the whole to the parts, or from the parts to the whole, and have been promiscuously adopted. The human is the measure of perfection in Vitruvius; he applies its rules to architecture, and indeed to every object of taste.

The length of human proportion in Vitruvius, measured by a perpendicular, or a horizontal, from the middle finger points of both arms extended, is ten heads, the head measured from the chin to the hair-roots of the front; and eight if the head be measured from the extremity of the chin to the vertex of the crown. Three is the favourite number by which the theorists of proportion have divided the human

structure, as containing a beginning, a middle, and an end; and Pliny observes that we attain the half of our growth in the third year. The body, as well as all its members, consists of three main parts, which correspond with each other, in the same proportion as the parts of the subordinate members among themselves: the head and body are in the same unison of measure with the thighs and legs, as the thighs with the legs and feet, or the upper part of the arm to the elbow and the hand. Thus the face is divided into three parts, or three times the length of the nose: never into four, as some have imagined; for the upper part of the head, from the hair-roots on the front to the top, measured perpendicularly, has only three-fourths of the nose length, or is in proportion to the nose as nine to twelve.

The rules of proportion originated, probably, with sculpture, but in the progress of art received their final determination from the painter: this is the praise of Parrhasius, and Praxiteles applied to Nicias for the ultimate decision and refinement of his forms. The foot was the main medium of ancient measurement; and six feet, according to Vitruvius, became the

measured length of proportion for their statues. Measure is the method of ascertaining an unknown quantity from a known one; and the proportion of the foot is subject to less variation than the head or face. Lomazzo, when he makes the foot of Hercules the seventh part of his length, and fixes ten faces as the standard of ancient proportion for a Venus, nine for a Juno, and eight for Neptune, talked from fancy, and relied on the credulity of his reader.

This relation of the foot to the whole fabric, as established by Nature, the ancients regulated according to ideal or divine, and human or characteristic proportions. Of the Apollo, whose height is somewhat more than seven heads, the standing foot is three inches of a Roman palm longer than the head. The Medicean Venus, however 'suelt,' however small her head, has in length no more than seven heads and a half; and yet her foot measures a palm and a half, and the whole height of the figure six palms and a half.

Of such observations on proportion it would be easier to continue a long series than to make them intelligible or useful without actual demonstration or figures. From Vitruvius with

his commentators, and Lionardo da Vinci, to Albert Durer, Lomazzo, and Jerome Cardan, from the corrected measurements of Du Fresnoy and De Piles, to Watelet, Winkelman, and Lavater, it would be easy to show that the mass of variance, peculiarity, and contradiction, greatly overbalances the coincidence of experiment and measure. "The descriptions of the proportions of the human frame," says Mengs, "are infinite, but seldom agree among themselves. Some are too obscure to give the artist a clear idea; some have too much limited the combinations which might produce, or are capable of, proportions homogeneously uniform: others, on the contrary, have, like Albert Durer, displayed a great quantity and variety of proportions, to little purpose for any one who should not choose to imitate his taste. The ordinary method is that of dividing the figure into a fixed number of heads or faces; but this division is of more use to the sculptor than the painter, who never can see the just size of the head, because perspective hides at least a third of the upper fourth; nor does the breadth of the limbs, in painting, admit of

sculpture measure, as they would appear meagre and scanty on a flat surface, in comparison of the mass they circumscribe in perspective; because the habit of looking at objects with both eyes swells their mass beyond its just diameter, in reality as well as in sculpture. This difference of limbs the ancients observed in their best basso-relievoes; they exceed in volume the limbs of their statues. Such are the forms of the sacrificing group in the gardens of the Medicean Villa at Rome, represented in the Admiranda of Santes Bartoli, and imitated by Raffaello in the Cartoon of the Sacrifice at Lystra."

The painter is infinitely more in want of variety than the sculptor, and consequently cannot submit to the same restriction of rule. Raffaello, who in a certain sense did no more than multiply the antique style of the second order, uniting it with a certain air of truth not within the reach of sculpture, whether from rule or taste, made use of every kind of proportion without a seeming predilection for any. There are figures of his which have little more than six heads and a half: such as the St.

Peter in the Cartoon of the Temple Gate; a proportion insufferable in any other painter but Raffaello.

It is reasonable to suppose, that in endeavouring to form a standard or a canon of proportion for the human figure, the Greeks began with the head, its form, its position, the manner in which it is attached to the trunk; they found that man alone carries his head erect, and that thence he derives a face and a countenance. Of all the brute creation, what is called the head is only an extremity of the horizontal body, whose under parts are shoved forward to seek food or seize prey; front and upper part are driven back, are shortened, and, in more than one genus, hardly perceivable. The more the brute is raised before and erects the neck, the more it gains variety of aspect; still it hangs forward, an appendix to the trunk: it cannot be properly said to have a head; the etymology of the word implies an erect position. A head, strictly speaking, is the prerogative of man, formed beneath a skull which rounds the forehead and determines the face. The more the front recedes and inclines to the horizontal, so much the nearer a head

approaches the form of a brute; the more it inclines to the perpendicular, the more it gains of man. This observation has been demonstrated in the least fallible manner by Camper, the anatomist, who, by a contrivance equally ingenious and unequivocal, appears to have ascertained, not only the difference of the *faceal* line in animals, but that which discriminates nations. Placing the skull or head to be measured into a kind of sash or frame, pierced at equidistant intervals to admit the plummet and horizontal and perpendicular threads, he draws a straight line from the aperture of the ear to the under part of the nose, and another from the utmost projection of the frontal bone to the most prominent part of the upper jaw. The whole is divided into ninety or even one hundred degrees, from the actual maximum and minimum of Nature to those of Art. Birds describe the smallest angles, which widen in proportion as the animal approaches the human form: the heads of apes reach from forty-two to fifty degrees, which last approaches man. The Negro and Kalmuck reach seventy, the European eighty; the ancient Roman artists ascended to ninety-five, the Greeks raised

the ideal *from ninety* to one hundred degrees. What goes beyond this line becomes portentous; the head appears misshapen, and assumes the appearance of a hydrocephalus. It is the limit set by Art, and established on this physical principle: that the more the form of the head reclines to the horizontal or overshoots the given perpendicular, the more the maxillæ are protruded or the more the front, the less it retains of the true human form, and degenerates into brute or monster.

From a head so determined, arose an harmonious system of features. Under a front as full as open, the frontal muscles assumed the seat of meaning; the cavity of the eyes became deeper, and took a regular and equal distance from the centre of the nose, a feature of which few of the moderns ever had a distinct idea; the mouth and lips were shaped for organs of command and persuasion, rather than appetite; and the apodosis of the whole, resolution and support, was given in the chin.

From a head so regulated, and placed on the most beautiful of all columns, the neck, the thinking artist could not fail to conclude to the rest of the body. As the under parts of the

head were subordinate to the front, so was the lower part of the torso to the breast. The organs of mere nutrition, or appetite, and secretion, receded and were subjected to the nobler seats of action and vigour. Such harmony of system was not only the result of numeric proportion, of length and breadth of parts; it was the conception of one indivisibly connected whole, variously uniform: — god, goddess, hero, heroine, male, female, infancy, youth, virility and age, majesty, energy, agility, beauty, character, and passions, directed the method of treatment, and formed STYLE.

The sculptured monuments left by the ancients, that have escaped the wreck of time and compose the magnificent collections of the Academy and the Museum, amply prove that these assertions are not the visionary brood of fancy and sanguine wishes, whilst they offer to the student advantages which, perhaps, no ancient, certainly no modern schools ever could or can offer to theirs, not even that of formerly the real and still the nominal metropolis of Art—Rome.

These monuments may be aptly divided into three classes:

1st. Imitations, not seldom transcripts of *Essential Nature.*

2nd. Homogeneous delineations of *Character;* and

3rd. The highest and last—*Ideal* Figures.

The first shows to advantage what exists or existed; the second collects in one individual, what is scattered in his class; the third subordinates existence and character to beauty and sublimity.

The astonishing remains of gods, demigods, and heroes treasured in the Museum, from the Parthenon and the Temple of Phigalia, constitute the first epoch. They establish the elements of proportion, they show what is essential in the composition and construction of the human frame. The artist's principle remained, however, negative; he understood the best he saw, but did not attempt to add, or conclude from what was, to what might be. These works are commonly considered as the produce of the school of Phidias, and the substantiation of his principles: if they are, and there can be little doubt but they are, it must be owned, that the eulogies lately lavished on them, as presenting, even on their mutilated

and battered surfaces, more of the real texture of the human frame, a better discrimination of bone, muscle, and tendon, than most of the works ascribed to more advanced periods, little agree with the verdict of the ancients, as pronounced by Pliny, on the real character of Phidias, the architect of gods, fitter to frame divinities than men, and leave him little more share in the formation of our figures than the conception. In beholding them, we say, such is man, real unsophisticated man, man warm from the hand of Nature, but not yet distinguished by her endless variety and difference of character. The Dioscuri of the Quirinal, the Lapithæ in conflict with the Centaurs from the Parthenon, and the heroes from the fabric of Ictinus, are brothers, and only differ in size and finish; whilst the Panathenaic processions offer the unvaried transcript of Athenian youth.

Delineation of character forms the second class of the figures in our possession, and the distinguishing feature of its artists. They found that, as *all* were connected by the genus and a central principle of form, so they were divided into classes, and from each other

separated by an individual stamp, by *character:* to unite this with the simplicity of the *generic* principle was their aim; the symmetry prescribed by general proportion was modified and adapted, not sacrificed, to the demands of the peculiar quality which distinguished the attribute they undertook to personify. Thus the Hercules of Glycon, though the symbol of absolute, irresistible, and uniform strength, appears to be swift as a stag and elastic like a ball; and thus Agasias, the author of what the barbarity of custom still continues to misname the "Fighting Gladiator," though its style, evidently Iconic, be more connected with individual than generic nature, has spread over its whole the rapidity of lightning, and substantiated in its *motion* all Homer says of Hector rushing through the shattered portals of the Grecian wall — that, at that instant, nothing could have stopped him but a God.

The wounded Cornicularius, known by the name of the Dying Gladiator, the Savage whetting his knife to excoriate Marsyas, the enraged Shepherd Boy ludicrously transformed to a young Patroclus, are too undisguised portraits to deserve being ranked with this

higher class of characteristic delineation. We with more exultation subjoin to it the Pathetic Groups which, to the historic artist, at once disclose the whole *extent* and *limits* of dramatic composition — the agonies of Niobe and her Progeny; the pangs of the Laocoon; Menelaus raising Patroclus slain by Hector; the Warrior who deserves to be called Hæmon, with Antigone, self-slain, hanging on his arm—the softer and more familiar expression of Æthra and Theseus, maternal enquiry and filial simplicity; Orestes and Pylades pouring libations to Agamemnon's shade; Venus expostulating with Amor, Amor embracing Psyche: works of different periods and different styles, but true to the same unerring principles, — principles not abandoned in the lascivious dream of the Hermaphrodite, the gross sonorous repose of the Faun, and the tottering inebriety of Hercules.

The artists of the third epoch concluded from existence to possibility. The simple purity of the first, and the energetic harmonious variety of the second period, were its bases; it amalgamated their artless angular line and rigid precision with the suavity of undulating contours, elegance of attitude, the soft inflexions of flesh:

and created a standard of ideal beauty which regulated the whole, from the most prominent, conspicuous, and interesting, to the most remote and minute parts. The Apollo, the Venus, the Torso, arose to prove that in the same degree as in an image of art the idea of *simplicity*, or of *one*, predominates, it will partake of *grandeur*; and that in the degree as the idea of *variety* prevails, it will partake of *beauty*: variety leads to simplicity in images of beauty, simplicity to variety in images of grandeur, and the union of both produces the sublime.

Such are the splendid, and I repeat it, unparalleled advantages that surround you; but lest, by their specious display, I should be suspected of more enthusiasm than becomes the sober office of a teacher, and you be led to delusive expectations and false conclusions, remember that, though even the best directed labour cannot supply what Nature has refused, still it remains an experiment uniformly sanctioned by time, that without unwearied toil, obstinate perseverance, and submissive resignation, neither the theory nor the practice of the

art can be fully acquired, and that without them genius is a bubble and talent a trifle.

And now permit me to finish this fragment of observations on Design with a few remarks on our mutual situation, as teachers and as pupils of this Institution: if the advancement of art be the cause and the ultimate aim of its foundation.

When in recommending the antique as the student's guide in copying the life, I comparatively might have seemed to depreciate the servile adherence to the model, I was perfectly aware that the use of life alone can supply the artist with the real expression, and consequently the real appearances of bones and muscles in varied action. It will not be suspected, I trust, that I meant to recommend the frigid introduction of that marble style, that pedantic stiffness, which, under the abused name of correctness, frequently disfigures the labours of those who, at too late a period for successful attempts at changing their manner, abjure or lose the courage to use what they had learnt before, and content themselves with being the tame transcribers of the dead letter, instead of

the spirit of the ancients, and importers of nothing but forms and attitudes of stone.

It is to life we must recur,—to warm, fleshy, genial life,—for animated forms. To Nature and life Zeuxis applied, to embody the forms of Polycletus and Alcamenes: and what was the prerogative of Lysippus, but to give the air, the "morbidezza," the soft transitions, the illusions of palpitating life, to bronze and marble? The pedantry of geometrically *straight* lines is not only no idealism, it is a solecism in Nature. *Organization*, your object, is inseparable from *life; motion* from organization: where organization and life are, there is a seat of life, a *punctum saliens*, acting through veins and branching arteries, consequently with *pulsation*, and by that, undulating and rounding the passages of parts to parts. Of the milliards of commas, or points, that Nature mediately or immediately produces, no two are alike: how, then, could she produce straight lines, which are all similar, and by their nature cut, divide, interrupt, destroy?

The province delegated by the Academy to its teachers must be, — where hope promises success and sparks of genius appear, to foster,

to encourage; but where necessity commands, rather to deter than to delude, and thus to check the progress of that compendiary method, which, according to your late President, has ruined the Arts of every country, by reducing execution to a recipè, substituting manner for style, ornament for substance, and giving admission to mediocrity.

If the students of this Academy must be supposed to have overcome the rudiments, and to be arrived at that point from which it may be discovered whether Nature intended them for mere craftsmen or real artists, near that point, where, in the phrase of Reynolds, "genius begins and rules end," it behoves us not to mistake the mere children of necessity, or the pledges of vanity, for the real nurselings of public hope, or the future supporters of the beneficent establishment that rears them. Instruction, it is true, may put them in possession of every attainable part of the Art in a decent degree; they may learn to draw with tolerable correctness, to colour with tolerable effect, to put their figures together tolerably well, and to furnish their faces with a tolerable expression — it may not be easy for any one

to pick any thing intolerably bad out of their works; but when they have done all this—and almost all may do all this, for all this may be taught—they will find themselves exactly at the point where all that gives value to Art begins—Genius, which cannot be taught—at the threshold of the Art, in a state of mediocrity. "Gods, men, and fame," says Horace, "reject mediocrity in poets." Why? Neither Poetry nor Painting spring from the necessities of society, or furnish necessaries to life; offsprings of fancy, leisure, and lofty contemplation, organs of religion and government, ornaments of society, and too often mere charms of the senses and instruments of luxury, they derive their excellence from novelty, degree, and polish. What none indispensably want, all may wish for, but few only are able to procure, acquires its value from some exclusive quality, founded on intrinsic or some conventional merit, and that, or an equal substitute, mediocrity cannot reach: hence, by suffering it to invade the province of genius and talent, we rob the plough, the shop, the loom, the school, perhaps the desk and pulpit, of a thousand useful hands. A good mechanic, a trusty labourer, an honest

tradesman, are beings more important, of greater use to society, and better supporters of the state, than an artist or a poet of mediocrity. When I therefore say that it is the duty of the Academy to deter rather than to delude, I am not afraid of having advanced a paradox hostile to the progress of real Art. The capacities that time will disclose, genius and talents, cannot be deterred by the exposition of difficulties, and it is the interest of society that all else should.

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