heightened by the imagination of the artist. The scholar who has thus made himself familiar with the antique, when he begins to imitate nature, will immediately discern her striking beauties, which, had he not seen them in the antique, separated entirely from her blemishes, he might never have learnt from his own taste to separate in the objects of nature ; and here, it may be remarked by the way, lies the difference between the Flemish and the Italian schools. The Flemings were ignorant of the antique, and some of them, as Rembrandt, for example, held it in contempt. Nature was their prototype, which, it must be allowed, they have successfully imitated ; but wanting judgment to discern her striking beauties, or to separate them from her defects, and utterly unconscious of that ideal beauty which results from this judgment, and towers far above nature, they have produced nothing noble, nothing graceful, nothing truly great.

I have said that the ancients, in the imitation of the human figure, had nature constantly before their eyes in her most graceful and sublimest aspects. The games of Greece, where the youth contended naked in the Palæstra, afforded a noble school for the improvement of sculpture and painting. Their artists there saw the finest figures of Greece in all the possible variety of attitudes—an advantage which no modern academy of design can furnish. What is it that strikes the intellectual eye in the ancient Greek statues? It is a grandeur united with simplicity—an unaffected air of beauty or of dignity, which is the result of the artist's observation of nature unconstrained. The naked model in our academies of painting, who is desired to throw his body into such an attitude of exertion as the painter wishes to copy, will show that attitude much more constrained and unnatural than a gladiator, for instance, or a wrestler, who is thrown into it unconsciously by a natural effort in a real combat in the arena. Could the artist who cut the admirable figure of the Dying Gladiator in the Capitol, have copied the wonderfully simple and natural position of the limbs, the relaxing muscles, and failing strength ; or the lineaments of the face, expressive of the utmost anguish, yet endured with manly fortitude ; could the sculptor have copied all this from the model of a figure in the academy? It is utterly impossible ; no artificial disposition of the body could give the smallest idea of it. It is this same statue of the Dying Gladiator of which Pliny speaks, and which he has so admirably characterized in a few words : "*Cresilas vulneratum deficientem fecit, in quo possit intelligi quantum restet animæ.*"*

In like manner, in the admirable group of Niobe and her children, believed by some to be the work of Praxiteles, and by others

* "With such admirable art was the statue of the Dying Gladiator sculptured by Cresilas, that one could judge how much of life remained."

of Scopas,* the various attitudes there exhibited, though the most impassioned that can well be conceived, are yet altogether so natural, so simple, and unaffected, that they demonstrate the source from which they were drawn to have been nature itself, under the actual influence of passions similar to what the sculptor has expressed. Even in those single statues unexpressive of passion, and where no particular action is represented, as in the Antinous and the little Apollo, there is an ease and freedom of attitude which convinces us at first sight that the sculptor was not the servile copyist of a figure planted before him and directed to throw his limbs into a proper position, as a model in the academy. The sculptors of those statues drew from nature, but it was from nature unconstrained ; it was that their eyes were familiarly acquainted with those attitudes ; they saw them daily in their games and spectacles, and that habit of observation enabled them faithfully to represent them.

From this air of unrestrained nature, and particularly from that expression of calmness and of ease which is observable in many of the ancient statues, and which indicates the freedom of gesture of a person alone and unconscious of being observed, results that wonderful grace, which so few of the modern artists have attained the ability of expressing. Perhaps we may even doubt whether many of those artists have ever felt its excellence. To most modern artists and modern connoisseurs, the sedate grandeur, the simple and quiet attitude, appear lifeless and insipid. "The figure," they will tell you, "wants spirit: where is the air of the head? The limbs are carelessly disposed ; they want attitude:" and the critic, to illustrate his meaning, will throw himself into a stage posture, or what are faithful copies of those postures, the paintings of the French school. Hogarth, in his *Analysis of Beauty*, has happily ridiculed this miserable taste, by representing a French dancing-master standing by the side of the beautiful figure of the *Antinous*, and teaching the awkward youth to hold up his head, and put on the air of a man of fashion. Such indeed are the fantastic innovations introduced by modern manners and fashion in disguising the human figure, that the sculptor or painter has no longer nature for his school of instruction, nor can any otherwise form a conception of her genuine and unsophisticated features than by contemplating them reflected in the precious works of the ancient masters.

* Praxiteles flourished 269 B. C. His merits, and an enumeration of his principal works in sculpture, may be found in Pliny, lib. 34, c. 8 ; and lib. 36, c. 5. He excelled chiefly in female beauty, and more particularly in the heads and arms of his figures, which were consummately graceful. The famous courtesan, Phryne, was the model for his Cnidian Venus, which is yet preserved, and known to the moderns by the name of the Venus de Medici. Scopas flourished 430 B. C. Many of his works are enumerated by Pliny, lib. 36, c. 5 ; and it is sufficient argument of his talents to say that the best judges of antiquity deemed many of his statues equal to those of Praxiteles.

Among the Greeks, Nature was not only seen without disguise, and in her noblest and most graceful attitudes; she was in reality in the human figure superior to what we now see in the ordinary race of men. Without indulging the whimsical hypothesis of some philosophers, that the moderns, compared with the ancients, are a degenerate breed, it may safely be asserted, that among the ancient Greeks, the youth, trained from infancy in the daily practice of gymnastic exercises, must have exhibited a finer form of body, a more perfect symmetry of limbs, and a shape more picturesque, than what must necessarily result from the constraint of the modern method of clothing, and the luxurious and comparatively effeminate system of modern education. The varied forms of manly beauty exhibited in the Pythian Apollo, the Antinous, and the Fighting Gladiator, (if this statue be rightly so named,) are evidently far beyond the model of the human figure as we see it in the present race of men; but we have every reason to believe that their prototypes were to be found in those ages to which we now refer, though doubtless we must at the same time make allowance for the genius of the artist, in exalting and improving even that excellent Nature which presented itself to his eyes. In contemplating the figure of the *Farnesian Hercules*, the work of Glycon, (what Horace, by an allowable metonymy, has termed the *invicti membra Glyconis*,*) and in considering the prodigious strength of the back and shoulders, and strongly-marked distinction of the muscles in the breast and arms, we are apt at first view to censure the form as exaggerated beyond all nature: but in this superficial judgment we forget what was that nature which the sculptor had for his model of imitation, and do not consider, that to personify a divinity whose characteristic attribute was strength, it was necessary that that nature, superior as it was, should be amplified and exalted by the imagination of the artist. Of this heightening of nature the Greek sculptors have given the noblest examples in the representation of their gods: "Non vidit Phidias Jovem," says Seneca, "nec stetit ante oculos ejus Minerva: dignus tamen illa arte animus et concepit deos, et exhibuit." †

And this leads me to remark what must have been likewise another and a very powerful source of the advancement of the arts of design among the Greeks. The Grecian mythology furnished a most ample source for the exercise of the genius of the painter and sculptor. The distinct and characteristic attributes of the several deities, their actions, and the poetical fables connected

* "The limbs of the invincible Glycon," for the invincible limbs of his statue.

* "Phidias never saw Jupiter, nor did Minerva present herself to his eyes: but his mind, worthy of his art, both formed those divine conceptions and represented them."

with their history, furnished an inexhaustible supply of sublime, beautiful, and highly pleasing subjects. We know, since the revival of the arts, how much those of painting and sculpture have been indebted to the Roman Catholic religion, which furnishes not only an abundant demand for the works of the artist, but supplies him with an endless variety of subjects in the lives of its numerous saints and martyrs. But in this respect at least the Roman Catholic religion must yield to that of Greece, that the painful and often shocking scenes which it presents for the pencil will bear no comparison with the varied, gay, and amusing pictures of the pagan mythology.

Of the ability of the Greeks in painting, we must speak with more diffidence than we have done of their superiority in sculpture. Of the latter, those admirable works yet remaining, justify the highest encomium that can be bestowed upon them. Of the former, it would be unjust to form any estimate from those inconsiderable specimens supposed of Grecian painting, which time has yet left undestroyed. The paintings discovered in Herculaneum, the celebrated picture of a marriage in the Aldobrandini collection, those found in the *Sepulchrum Nasonianum* at Rome, and other pieces enumerated by Dutens,* were probably the work of Greek artists; for we have no evidence that the Romans ever carried any of the arts depending on design to much perfection. But with regard to the Greeks the case is very different. Their excellence in the art of painting is loudly proclaimed by all antiquity. Of their eminence in the kindred art of sculpture we are ourselves the judges. Now we cannot reasonably call in question the taste of those ancient authors who have written in praise of the paintings of the Greeks, when we find the same judgment which they have

* As M. Dutens, in his amusing and instructive essay on the Discoveries attributed to the Moderns, has enumerated, it is believed, all the existing remains of the genuine paintings of the ancients, it may afford satisfaction to readers of curiosity, to see the complete catalogue as given by that author. "The ancient paintings still to be seen at Rome are, a reclining Venus at full length, in the palace of Barberini, the Aldobrandine nuptials, a Coriolanus in one of the cells of Titus' baths, and seven other pieces taken out of a vault at the foot of Mount Palatine, among which are a Satyr drinking out of a horn, and a landscape with figures, both of the utmost beauty. There are also a sacrificial piece consisting of three figures, and an Œdipus and a Sphinx, all of which formerly belonged to the tomb of Ovid. The pictures discovered at Herculaneum disclose beyond all others a happiness of design and boldness of expression that could proceed only from the hands of the most accomplished artists. The picture of Theseus vanquishing the Minotaur, that of the birth of Telephus, Chiron, and Achilles, and Pan and Olympe, present innumerable beauties to all persons of discernment. There were found, also, in the ruins of that city, four capital pictures, wherein beauty of design seems to vie with the most skilful management of the pencil, and which appear to be of an earlier date than those before spoken of."—*Dutens*, p. 370. [Some paintings of great spirit have, since our author wrote, been discovered at Pompeii; but these were only the *furniture-pictures*, so to speak, of a private residence in a provincial town.]

given upon the works of sculpture, confirmed by the universal assent of modern critics. If we find that Pliny is not guilty of exaggeration or censurable for false taste when he extols the noble group of *Laocoon and his sons*,* terming it "a work excelling all that the arts of painting and sculpture have ever produced," why should we suppose that he exaggerated, or that his taste was not equally just, when he celebrates the praises and critically characterizes the different manners and distinct merits of Zeuxis,† Apelles, Aristides the Theban,‡ Parrhasius, Protogenes and Timanthes? Parrhasius seems to have been the Correggio of antiquity; possessing the talent, and displaying the pleasing, elegant, and rounded contour of this artist. Pliny, (lib. 35, c. 10,) in characterizing the paintings of this artist, commends chiefly in his figures the *argutias vultus, elegantiam capilli, et venustatem oris*,§ and highly praises the correctness of his outline. The same writer mentions an allegorical painting of Parrhasius, representative of the character of the Athenians, in which the artist seems to have formed a just idea of that inconstant and fickle populace. "*Pinxit et Demon Atheniensium, argumento quoque ingenioso: volebat namque varium, iracundum, injustum, inconstantem—eundem exorabilem, clementem, misericordem, excelsum, gloriosum, humilem, ferocem, fugacemque, et omnia pariter ostendere.*" ‖ It were to be

* "Sicut in Laocoonte, qui est in Titi Imperatoris domo, opus omnibus et picturæ et statuariæ artis præferendum, ex uno lapide eum et liberos draconumque mirabiles nexus de consilii sententia fecere summi artifices Agesander et Polydorus et Athenodorus Rhodii."—*Plin.* l. xxxvi. c. 5.

† Zeuxis flourished 397 B. C. The ancient authors are very high in their praises of the works of this great painter. He was peculiarly excellent in painting female beauty. Dionysius of Halicarnassus informs us that the people of Crotona, wanting him to paint a naked Helen, sent him five of the most beautiful young women of their city, whose separate perfections he united in his picture, and produced a miracle of beauty. Cicero gives the story at large, and *con amore*. He tells us that Zeuxis was brought to the Palæstra and shown a great number of the most beautiful boys. "These," said his conductors, "have as many sisters, whose beauty you may easily guess from what you now see." "Nay, but," said Zeuxis, "send me the young women." The Crotonians held a public council on that request, and it was agreed to furnish him with what he demanded.—*Cic. de Invent. Rhet.* l. 2.

‡ Aristides flourished in the age of Alexander the Great, and was contemporary with Apelles, Parrhasius, and Timanthes. Pliny says of Aristides, that his paintings were the first which gave the expression of the soul and the feelings: and as an instance, he mentions a celebrated picture of Aristides, in which, in a besieged city, a mother is represented dying of a wound in her breast, and holding back her child lest it should suck blood instead of milk; a picture which is supposed to be the subject of a beautiful epigram in the Anthologia, thus happily translated by Webb, in his Beauties of Painting:

> "Suck, little wretch, while yet thy mother lives,
> Suck the last drop her fainting bosom gives:
> She dies; her tenderness survives her breath,
> And her fond love is provident in death."

§ "The arch expression, the beauty of the hair, and charm of the mouth.

‖ "He painted also an ingenious allegorical picture of the Genius of the Athenians, representing a being at one and the same time fickle, irascible, unjust, inconstant, yet placable and compassionate, vainglorious yet humble, ferocious yet cowardly."

wished that Pliny had given us some idea of the composition of a picture so extraordinary in point of subject.

If Parrhasius was the Correggio, Apelles was indisputably the Raphael of antiquity: "*Omnes prius genitos, futurosque postea superavit Apelles*,"* are the words of Pliny, who, in his estimates of the works of art, is generally supposed to speak less from his own taste than from the common opinion of the best judges of antiquity. The peculiar excellence of Apelles, as of Raphael, lay in that consummate gracefulness of air which he imparted to his figures, and in which he surpassed all his rivals in the arts. "*Præcipua Apellis in arte venustas fuit, cum eâdem ætate maximi pictores essent; quorum opera quum admiraretur, collaudatis omnibus, deesse iis unam illam venerem dicebat quam Græci Χάριτα vocant: cætera omnia contigisse, sed hac soli sibi neminem parem.*"†—Plin. l. 35, c. 10. It is well known that Alexander the Great had the highest esteem of this artist; and having employed him to paint his mistress Campaspe, showed a singular example of generosity and self-command, in bestowing her as a gift on his friend the painter, who had fallen in love with his beautiful model. It was a high testimony to the merits of the artists, but it was at the same time a judicious policy for himself, that Alexander would suffer no other painter, statuary, or engraver, to form his effigy, than Apelles, Lysippus, and Pyrgoteles; a fact which accounts for the singular beauty and excellence of all the figures yet remaining of that prince.

To the merits of Protogenes, a critic of genuine taste among the ancients has borne a high testimony: I speak of Petronius Arbiter. That author, mentioning his having seen in the palace of Trimalchio (Nero) some sketches by the hand of Protogenes, says that on handling them, he felt a reverential awe, as if they had been something more than human.‡ It was to the high excellence of Protogenes as an artist, that the city of Rhodes, the place of his nativity, owed its preservation when besieged by Demetrius Poliorcetes. When that prince saw no other means of reducing the

* "Apelles surpassed all who had gone before, and all who will ever come after him."

† "In the grace of his pictures Apelles surpassed all the great painters of his age: whatever praise was bestowed on their works, still that peculiar beauty which the Greeks term Χαριτα (Grace) was wanting; in the other qualities of his art, others may have attained equal perfection, but in this he was unrivalled."

‡ In pinacothecam perveni vario genere tabularum mirabilem; nam et Zeuxidos manus vidi, nondum vetustatis injuria victas: et Protogenis rudimenta cum ipsius naturæ veritate certantia, non sine quodam horrore tractavi. Jam vero Apellis quam Græci *monocnemon* appellant, etiam adoravi. Tanta enim subtilitate extremitates imaginum erant ad similitudinem præcisæ, ut crederes etiam animorum esse picturam.—Pet. Arb. Satyr.

city than by setting it on fire in a particular quarter, in which there was a celebrated painting of Protogenes, he chose rather to abandon the enterprise than hazard the destruction of what was, in his opinion, of the highest value.

On the whole, if we have not the same demonstrative evidence of the attainments of the Greeks in painting that we have of their eminence in sculpture, namely, the existing monuments of the art, we have every degree of presumptive evidence which the subject can admit to warrant an opinion of an equal degree of excellence. These arts require the same talents, their progress is influenced by the same moral causes, they owe their advancement to the same taste and genius; and it is impossible to suppose the one to have been successfully cultivated in any age or nation, while the other remained in a rude and imperfect state.*

If any apology were necessary for the length of the preceding observations on the state of the arts in Greece, I would remark, that as it is the province of history to exhibit the character and genius of nations, so the national character of the Greeks was in nothing more signally displayed than in those branches of art to which I have called the reader's attention in this chapter. In tracing the mutual relation of moral and political causes, this peculiar genius of the Greeks will be found to have extended its influence to the revolutions of their states, and to their fate as a nation. Its advancement marked the decline of the severer morals and the fall of the martial spirit; for the fine arts cannot exist in splendor, but in a soil of luxury and of ease. The taste for these supplanted the appetite for national glory, and at length ignominiously supplied the place of public virtue. The degenerate Greeks were consoled for the loss of their liberty by the flattering distinction of being the humanizers of their conquerors, the *magistri et arbitri elegantiarum* to the unpolished Romans.

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* For a most ample account of the ancient painters, sculptors, and architects, drawn from the writings of the Greek and Roman authors, the reader is referred to the learned work of *Junius de Pictura Veterum*, and the catalogue of artists subjoined to that work. See likewise a very ingenious and learned Dissertation on the Painting of the Ancients, by T. Cooper, Esq., in the third volume of Mem. of the Lit. and Phil. Soc. of Manchester.

CHAPTER VIII.

Public games of Greece—Effects on character—Manners—Poetical composition anterior to prose — Homer—Hesiod—Archilochus—Terpander—Sappho—Pindar — Anacreon — The Greek epigram — The Greek comedy, distingushed into the old, the middle, and the new — Aristophanes — Menander — Greek tragedy—Æschylus—Euripides — Sophocles — Mode of dramatic representation — The ancient drama set to music —The Mimes and Pantomimes — Of the Greek historians—Herodotus—Thucydides—Xenophon — Polybius — Diodorus Siculus—Dionysius of Halicarnassus —Arrian—Plutarch.

Under the early part of the Grecian history we had occasion to treat of the origin, and somewhat of the nature, of the public games of Greece. Among all nations, in that period of society when war is not reduced to a science, but every battle is a multitude of single combats, we find those exercises in frequent use which tend to increase the bodily strength and activity. The Greeks, however, seem to have been the first who reduced the athletic exercises to a system, and considered them as an object of general attention and importance. The Panathenæan, and afterwards the Olympic, the Pythian, the Nemæan, and the Isthmian games, were under the sanction of the laws, and subject to the regulations laid down by the ablest statesmen and legislators. They were resorted to, not only by the citizens of all the states of Greece, but even by the neighboring nations. Thus not only was a spirit of union and good understanding kept up between the several states, which, in spite of their frequent dissensions and hostilities, made them always regard each other as countrymen, and unite cordially against a common enemy; but this partial intercourse which the games produced with the inhabitants of other countries, induced an acquaintance with their manners and genius, and contributed very early to polish away the rust of barbarism. In those games, therefore, we may see the cause of two opposite effects: that Greece, in the early period of her history, was distinguished for martial ardor and military prowess; and that in the latter ages, elegance, politeness, and refinement were her predominant characteristics.

This passion of the Greeks for shows and games, extremely laudable, and even beneficial, when confined within due bounds, was carried, at length, to a most blamable and pernicious excess. The victor, in the Olympic games, who had gained the first prize at running, wrestling, or driving a chariot, was crowned with higher honors than the general who had gained a decisive battle. His