

AN

ESSAY

ON

PRINTS.

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TO THE HONORABLE

HORACE WALPOLE,

IN DEFERENCE TO HIS TASTE

IN THE POLITE ARTS;

AND THE

VALUABLE RESEARCHES HE HAS MADE

TO IMPROVE THEM;

THE FOLLOWING WORK

IS INSCRIBED BY

HIS MOST OBEDIENT

AND VERY

HUMBLE SERVANT,

WILLIAM GILPIN.

PREFACE.

THE chief intention of the following work, was to put the elegant amusement of collecting prints, on a more rational footing; by giving the *unexperienced* collector a few principles, and cautions to assist him.

With this view the author thought it necessary to apply the principles of painting to prints: and as his observations are not always new, he hath at least made them concise.

His account of artists might easily have been enlarged, by having recourse to books: particularly he could have availed himself much of the ingenious researches of Mr. Walpole. He did not however choose to swell his volume with what others had said; but wished rather to rest on such observations, as he had himself made. He had many opportunities of seeing some of the best collections of prints in England; and occasionally availed himself of them by minuting down remarks.

Of the works of living artists the author hath purposely said little.

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He thought himself not at liberty to find fault; and when he mentions a modern print, he means not, by praising one, to imply inferiority in another; but merely to illustrate his subject, when he had occasion, with such prints, as occurred to his memory.

The author wishes to add, that when he speaks *positively* in any part of the following work, he means not to speak *arbitrarily*: but only to avoid the tedious repetition of qualifying phrases.

N. B. When the figures on the *right hand* are spoken of, those are meant, which are opposite to the spectator's right hand: and so of the left.

EXPLANATION

OF

TERMS.

Composition, in its *large* sense means, a picture in general: in its *limited* one, the art of grouping figures, and combining the parts of a picture. In this latter sense it is synonymous with *disposition*.

Design, in its strict sense, applied chiefly to *drawing*: in its more enlarged one, defined page 2. In its most enlarged one, sometimes taken for a picture in general.

A whole: The idea of *one* object, which a picture should give in its comprehensive view.

Expression: its strict meaning defined page 16: but it often means the force, by which objects of *any* kind are represented.

Effect

Effect arises chiefly from the management of light ; but the word is sometimes applied to the general view of a picture.

Spirit, in it's strict sense, defined page 21 : but it is sometimes taken in a more enlarged one, and means the *general* effect of a masterly performance.

Manner, synonymous with *execution*.

Picturesque : a term expressive of that peculiar kind of beauty, which is agreeable in a picture.

Picturesque grace : an agreeable form given, in a picture, to a clownish figure.

Repose, or *quietness* applied to a picture, when the *whole* is harmonious ; when nothing glares either in the light, shade, or colouring.

To *keep down*, *take down*, or *bring down*, signify throwing a degree of shade upon a glaring light.

A middle tint, is a medium between a strong light, and strong shade : the phrase is not at all expressive of colour.

Catching

Catching lights are strong lights, which strike on some particular parts of an object, the rest of which is in shadow.

Studies are the sketched ideas of a painter, not wrought into a whole.

Freedom is the result of quick execution.

Extremities are the hands and feet.

Air, expresses chiefly the graceful action of the head; but often means a graceful attitude.

Contrast, is the opposition of one part to another.

Needle is the instrument used in etching.

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CHAPTER I.

The principles of Painting considered, so far as they relate to Prints.

A PAINTING, or picture, is distinguished from a print only by colouring, and the manner of execution. In other respects, the foundation of beauty is the same in both; and we consider a print, as we do a picture, in a double light, with regard to the *whole*, and with regard to its *parts*. It may have an agreeable effect as a *whole*, and yet be very culpable in its *parts*. It may be likewise the reverse. A man may make a good appearance on the *whole*; tho his *limbs*, examined separately, may be wanting in exact proportion. His *limbs* on the other hand, may be exactly formed, and yet his person, on the *whole*, may be awkward, and displeasing.

To make a print agreeable as a *whole*, a just observance of those rules is necessary,

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which

which relate to *design, disposition, keeping,* and the *distribution of light*: to make it agreeable in its *parts*—of those which relate to *drawing, expression, grace,* and *perspective*.

We consider the *whole* before its *parts*, as it naturally precedes in practice. The painter first forms his general ideas; and disposes them, yet crude, in such a manner, as to receive the most beautiful form, and the most beautiful effect of light. His last work is to finish the several parts: as the statuary shapes his block, before he attempts to give delicacy to the limbs.

By *design*, (a term which painters sometimes use in a more limited sense) we mean the general conduct of the piece, as a representation of such a particular story. It answers, in the historical relation of a fact, to a judicious choice of circumstances; and includes a *proper time, proper characters,* the *most affecting manner of introducing those characters,* and *proper appendages*.

With regard to a *proper time*, the painter is assisted by good old dramatic rules; which inform him, that *one* point of time only should be taken—the most affecting in the action; and that no other part of the story should
interfere

interfere with it. Thus *in the death of ANANIAS*, if the instant of his falling down be chosen, no anachronism should be introduced; every part of the piece should correspond; each character should be under the strongest impression of astonishment, and horror: those passions being yet unallayed by any cooler passions succeeding.

With regard to *characters*, the painter must suit them to his piece, by attending to historical truth, if his subject be history; or to heathen mythology, if it be fabulous.

He must also *introduce them properly*. They should be ordered in so advantageous a manner, that the principal figures, those which are most concerned in the action, should catch the eye *first*, and engage it *most*. This is very essential in a well-told story. In the first place, they should be the least embarrassed of the group. This alone gives them distinction. But they may be farther distinguished, sometimes by a *broad light*; sometimes by a *strong shadow*, in the midst of a light; sometimes by a remarkable *action*, or *expression*; and sometimes by a combination of two or three of these modes of distinction.

The last thing included in *design* is the use of *proper appendages*. By *appendages* are meant animals, landscape, buildings, and in general, whatever is introduced into the piece by way of ornament. Every thing of this kind should correspond with the subject, and rank in a proper subordination to it. BASSAN would sometimes paint a scripture-story: and his method was, to crowd his foreground with cattle; while you seek for his story, and at length with difficulty find it in some remote corner of his picture. Indeed neither the *landscape*, nor the *story* is principal; but his cattle. A *story* therefore is an absurd appendage.

When all these rules are observed, when a proper point of time is chosen; when characters corresponding with the subject are introduced, and these ordered so judiciously as to point out the story in the strongest manner; and lastly when all the appendages, and under-parts of the piece are suitable, and subservient to the subject; then the story is well told, and of course the *design* is perfect.

The second thing to be considered with regard to a *whole*, is *disposition*. By this word is meant the art of grouping figures, and of combining the several parts of a picture. *Design* considers the several parts as producing a *whole*;—but a *whole*, arising from the *unity of the subject*, not the *effect of the object*. For the figures in a piece may be so ordered, as to tell a story in an affecting manner, which is as far as *design* goes; and yet may want that agreeable *combination*, which is necessary to please the eye. To produce such a combination is the business of *disposition*. In the cartoon of St. PAUL *preaching at Athens*, the *design* is perfect; and the characters in particular, are so ordered, as to tell the story in a very affecting manner: yet the several parts of the picture are far from being agreeably combined. If RUBENS had had the *disposition* of the materials of this picture, its effect as a *whole* had been very different.

Having thus distinguished between *design* and *disposition*, I shall explain the latter a little farther.

It is an obvious principle, that one object at a time is enough to engage either the senses, or the intellect. Hence the necessity of *unity*, or a *whole*, in painting. The eye, on a complex view, must be able to comprehend the picture as *one object*, or it cannot be satisfied. It may be pleased indeed by feeding on the parts separately: but a picture, which can please no otherwise, is as poor a production as a machine; whose springs and wheels are finished with nicety, but are unable to act in concert, and effect the intended movement.

Now *disposition*, or the art of grouping and combining the figures, and several parts of a picture, contributes greatly to make the picture appear as *one object*. When the parts are scattered, they have no dependence on each other; they are still only parts: but when, by an agreeable grouping, they are massed together, they become a *whole*.

In disposing figures, great artifice is necessary to make each group open itself in such a manner, as to set off advantageously the several figures,

figures, of which it is composed. The *action* at least of each figure should appear.

No group can be agreeable without *contrast*. By *contrast* is meant the opposition of one part to another. A sameness in attitude, action, or expression, among figures in the same group, will always disgust the eye. In the cartoon of St. PAUL *preaching at Athens*, the contrast among the figures is incomparably fine; and the want of it, *in the death of ANANIAS*, makes the group of the apostles a disagreeable one.

Nor indeed is *contrast* required only among the *figures* of the *same* group, but also among the *groups themselves*, and among *all the parts*, of which the piece is composed. In the *beautiful gate of the temple*, the figures of the principal group are very well contrasted; but the adjoining group is disposed almost in the same manner; which, together with the formal pillars, introduce a disagreeable regularity into the picture.

The judicious painter, however, whether he group, combine, or contrast, will always avoid the *appearance of artifice*. The several

parts of his picture will be so suited to each other, that his art will seem the result of chance. In the *sacrifice at Lystra*, the head of the ox is bowed down, with a design, no doubt, to group the figures around it more harmoniously: but their action is so well suited to the posture of the ox, and the whole is managed with so much judgment, that, altho the figures are disposed with the utmost art, they appear with all the ease of nature. The remaining part of the group is an instance of the reverse; in which a number of heads appear manifestly stuck in to fill up vacuities.

But farther, as a *whole*, or *unity*, is an essential of beauty, *that disposition* is certainly the most perfect, which admits but of *one* group. All subjects, however, will not allow this *close* observance of unity. When this is the case, the several groups must again be combined; chiefly by a proper distribution of light, so as to constitute a *whole*.

But as the *whole* will soon be lost, if the constituent *parts* become *numerous*, it follows, that *many* groups must not be admitted.

Judicious

Judicious painters have thought *three* the utmost number, that can be allowed. Some subjects indeed, as battles and triumphs, necessarily require a great number of figures, and of course various combinations of groups. In the management of *such* subjects, the greatest art is necessary to preserve a *whole*. Confusion in the figures must be expressed without confusion in the picture. A writer should treat his subject *clearly*, tho he write upon *obscurity*.

With regard to *disposition*, I shall only add, that the *shape* or *form* of the group should also be considered. The *triangular* form MICHAEL ANGELO thought the most beautiful. And indeed there is a lightness in it, which no other form can receive. The group of the apostles, in the cartoon of *giving the keys*, and the same group, in the *death of ANANIAS*, are both exceedingly heavy; and this heaviness arises from nothing more than from the form of a parallelogram, within the lines of which these groups are contained. The triangular form too is capable of the most variety: for the vertical angle of a group so disposed may either be acute, or obtuse, in any degree. Or a *segment* only of a triangle
may

may be taken, which still encreases the variety.

I know well, that many of these remarks (on the cartoons especially) oppose the opinions of very great masters. The sublimity of the Roman school, they say, totally disregarded the mechanical construction of a group. And without doubt, simplicity, and a sameness of figure, are ingredients of the sublime. But perhaps this theory, like other theories, may be carried too far. I cannot conceive, that the group of the apostles in the cartoon of ANANIAS, for instance, would be less sublime in the form of a triangle, than in that of a parallelogram. The triangle is certainly the more simple figure, as it consists of three sides only, while the parallelogram occupies four. Besides, Raphael himself, by no means, adopted the square form as a *ruling principle*.—But I speak with diffidence on this subject; nor indeed is this a place to discuss it.

A third thing to be considered in a picture, with regard to a *whole*, is *keeping*. This word implies the different degrees of strength and faintness,

faintness, which objects receive from nearness, and distance. A nice observance of the gradual fading of light and shade contributes greatly towards the production of a *whole*. Without it, the distant parts, instead of being connected with the objects at hand, appear like foreign objects, without meaning. Diminished in *size* only, they unite Lilliput and Brobdignag in one scene. *Keeping* is generally found in great perfection in DELLA BELLA'S prints: and the want of it, as conspicuously in TEMPESTA'S

Nearly allied to *keeping* is the doctrine of *harmony*, which equally contributes towards the production of a *whole*. In *painting*, it has great force. A judicious arrangement of according tints will strike even the unpractised eye. The *effect* of every picture, in a great measure, depends on one principal and master-tint; which, like the key-tone in music, prevails over the whole piece. Of this ruling tint, whatever it is, every object in the picture should in a degree participate. This theory is founded on principles of truth; and produces a fine effect from the *harmony*,
in

in which it unites every object. Harmony is opposed to glaring and gaudy colouring. Yet the skilful painter fears not, when his subject allows it, to employ the greatest variety of rich tints; and tho he may depreciate their value in shadow, he will not scruple in his lights, to give each it's utmost glow. His art lies deeper. He takes the glare from one vivid tint by introducing another; and from a nice assemblage of the brightest colours, each of which alone would stare, he creates a glow in the highest degree harmonious. But these great effects are only to be produced by the magic of colours. The harmony of a print is a more simple production: and yet unless a print possess the same *tone of shadow*, if I may so express myself, there will always appear great harshness in it. We often meet with hard touches in a print; which, standing alone, are unharmonious: but if every contiguous part should be touched-up to that *tone*, the effect would be harmony.—*Keeping* then proportions a proper degree of strength to the near and distant parts, in respect to *each other*. *Harmony* goes a step farther, and keeps each part quiet, with respect to the *whole*. I shall only add, that in sketches,
and

rough etchings, no *harmony* is expected: it is enough, if *keeping* be observed. *Harmony* is looked for only in finished prints. If you would see the want of it in the strongest light, examine a worn-print, harshly touched by some bungler.

The last thing, which contributes to produce a *whole*, is a proper *distribution of light*. This, in a print especially, is most essential. Harmony in colouring may, in some measure, supply it's place in painting: but a print has no succedaneum. Were the *design, disposition,* and *keeping* ever so perfect, beautiful, and just; without this essential, instead of a whole, we should have only a piece of patch-work. Nay, such is the power of *light*, that by an artificial management of it we may even harmonize a bad disposition.

The general rule which regards the distribution of *light*, is, that it should be spread in *large masses*. This gives the idea of a *whole*. Every grand object catches the light only on one large surface. Where the light is in spots, we have the idea of several objects; or at least of an incoherent one, if
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the object be single ; which the eye surveys with difficulty. It is thus in painting. When we see, on a *comprehensive* view, *large masses* of light and shade, we have, of course, the idea of a *whole*—of *unity* in that picture. But where the light is scattered, we have the idea of several objects, or at least one broken and confused. TITIAN'S known illustration of this point by a bunch of grapes is beautiful, and explanatory. When the light falls upon the *whole bunch* together (one side being illuminated, and the other dark) we have the representation of those large masses, which constitute a *whole*. But when the grapes are stripped from the bunch, and scattered upon a table (the light shining upon each separately) a *whole* is no longer preserved.

Having thus considered those essentials of a print, which produce a *whole*, it remains to consider those, which relate to the *parts*—*drawing*, *expression*, *grace*, and *perspective*. With regard to these, let it be first observed, that in order, they are inferior to the other. The production of a *whole* is the great effect, that should be aimed at in a picture. A
picture

picture without a *whole* is properly only a study: and those things, which produce a *whole*, are of course the *principal* foundation of beauty. So thought a great master of composition. With him no man was intitled to the name of artist, who could not produce a *whole*. However exquisitely he might finish, he would still be defective.

Infelix operis summâ, quia ponere totum
Nesciet.-----

By *drawing* we mean the exactness of the out-line. Without a competent knowledge of this there can be no just representation of nature. Every thing will be distorted and offensive to the eye. *Bad* drawing therefore is that disgusting object which no practised eye can bear.

Drawing, however, may be very tolerable, tho it fall short, in a *certain degree*, of absolute perfection. The defect will only be observed by the most critical, and anatomical eye: and we may venture to say, that drawing is ranked too high, when the *niceties* of it are considered
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in preference to those essentials, which constitute a *whole*.

Expression is the life and soul of painting. It implies a just representation of *passion*, and of *character*: of *passion*, by exhibiting every emotion of the mind, as outwardly discovered by any peculiarity of gesture; or the extention, and contradiction of the features: of *character*, by representing the different manners of men, as arising from their particular tempers, or professions. The cartoons are full of examples of the first kind of *expression*; and with regard to the second, commonly called *manners-painting*, it would be invidious not to mention our countryman HOGARTH; whose works contain a variety of characters, *represented* with more force, than most men can *conceive* them.

Grace consists in such a disposition of the parts of a figure, as forms it into an agreeable attitude. It depends on *contrast* and *ease*. *Contrast*, when applied to a single figure, means the same, as when applied to a group; the
opposition

opposition of one part to another. It may be considered with reference to the *body*, the *limbs*, and the *head*; the graceful attitude arising sometimes from a contrast in one, sometimes in another, and sometimes in all. With reference to the *body*, contrast consists in giving it an easy turn, opposing concave parts to convex. Of this St. PAUL in *the sacrifice at Lystra* is an instance.—With reference to the *limbs*, it consists in the opposition between extension and contraction. MICHAEL ANGELLO's illustration by a triangle, or pyramid, may here likewise again be introduced; this form giving grace and beauty to a *single figure*, as well as to a *group*. Only here a greater liberty may be allowed. In *grouping*, the triangle should, I think, always rest upon its base; but in a *single figure*, it may be inverted, and stand upon its apex. Thus if the lower parts of the figure be extended, the upper parts should be contracted; but the same beautiful form is given by extending the arms, and drawing the feet to a point.—Lastly, contrast often arises from the air of the head; which is given by a turn of the neck from the line of the body. The cartoons abound with ex-

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amples of this species of *grace*. It is very remarkable in the figure of St. JOHN healing the cripple: and the same cartoon affords eight or nine more instances. I say the less on this subject, as it hath been so well explained by the ingenious author of the *Analysis of Beauty*.

Thus *contrast* is the foundation of *grace*; but it must ever be remembered, that *contrast* should be accompanied with *ease*. The body should be *turned*, not *twisted*; every *constrained* posture avoided; and every motion such, as nature, which loves ease, would dictate.

What hath been said on this head relates equally to *all* figures; those drawn from *low*, as well as those from *high* life. And here we may distinguish between *picturesque* grace, and that grace which arises from *dignity of character*. Of the *former* kind, which is the kind here treated of, *all* figures should partake: you find it in BERGHEM's clowns, and in CALLOT's beggars: but it belongs to *expression* to mark those characteristics, which distinguish the *latter*.

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I shall only observe farther, that when the piece consists of many figures, the contrast of *each single* figure should be subordinate to the contrast of the *whole*. It will be improper therefore, in many cases, to practise the rules, which have been just laid down. They ought, however, to be a general direction to the painter; and at least to be observed in the *principal* figures.

Perspective is that proportion, with regard to *size*, which near and distant objects, with their parts, bear to each other. It is an attendant on *keeping*: one gives the out-line; and the other fills it up. Without a competent knowledge of *perspective* very absurd things would be introduced: and yet to make a vain shew of it, is pedantic.—Under this head may be mentioned *fore-shortning*. But unless this be done with the utmost art, it were better omitted: it will otherwise occasion great awkwardness. RUBENS is famous for *fore-shortning*; but the effect is chiefly seen in his *paintings*; seldom in his *prints*.

To this summary of the rules, which relate to the *whole* of a picture, and to its *parts*, I shall just add a few observations on *execution*; which relates equally to both.

By *execution* is meant that manner of working, by which each artist produces his effect. Artists may differ in their *execution* or *manner*, and yet all excel. CALLOT, for instance, uses a strong, firm stroke; SALVATOR, a slight, and loose one; while REMBRANDT executes in a manner different from them both, by scratches seemingly at random.

Every artist is in some degree a *mannerist*: that is, he executes in a *manner* peculiar to himself. But the word *mannerist* has generally a closer sense. Nature should be the standard of imitation: and every object should be executed, as nearly as possible, in *her manner*. Thus WALTERLO's trees are all strongly impressed with the character of nature. Other masters again, deviating from this standard, execute in some manner of their own. They have a particular touch for a figure, or a tree:

tree: and this they apply on all occasions. Instead therefore of representing that endless variety which nature exhibits on every subject, a sameness runs through all their performances. Every figure, and every tree bears the same stamp. Such artists are *properly* called *mannerists*. TEMPEST, CALLOT, and TESTA are all *mannerists* of this kind.

By the *spirit* and *freedom* of execution, we mean something, which it is difficult to explain. A certain heaviness always follows, when the artist is not sure of his stroke, and cannot execute his idea with precision. The reverse is the case, when he is certain of it, and gives it boldly. I know not how to explain better what is meant by *spirit*. Mere *freedom* a quick execution will give; but unless that *freedom* be attended with precision, the stroke, however free, will be so unmeaning as to lose it's effect.

To these observations, it may not be improper to add a short comparative view of the *peculiar* excellences of pictures, and prints; which will shew us, in what points the picture has the advantage.

In *design* and *composition* the effect of each is equal. The print exhibits them with as much force and meaning, as the picture.

In *keeping* the picture has the advantage. The *haziness* of distance cannot well be expressed by any thing but the *hue of nature*, which the pencil is very able to give. The print *endeavours* to preserve this haziness; and to give the idea: but does it imperfectly. It does little more than aid the memory. We know the appearance exists in nature: and the print furnishes a hint to recollect it.

In the *distribution of light* the comparison runs very wide. Here the painter avails himself of a thousand varied tints, which assist him in this business; and by which he can harmonize his gradations from light to shade with an almost infinite variety. Harmonious colouring has in itself the effect of a proper distribution of light. The engraver, in the mean time, is left to work out his effect with two materials only, plain white
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and black.—In the print, however, you can more easily trace the *principles* of light and shade. The pencil is the implement of deception; and it requires the eye of a master to distinguish between the effect of light, and the effect of colour: but in the print, even the unpractised eye can readily catch the mass; and follow the distribution of it through all its variety of middle tints.—One thing more may be added: If the picture has no harmony in its colouring, the tints being all at discord among themselves, which is often the case in the works even of reputable painters, a good print, from such a picture, is more beautiful than the picture itself. It preserves what is valuable, (upon a supposition there is any thing valuable in it) and removes what is offensive.

Thus the comparison runs with regard to those essentials, which relate to a *whole*: with regard to *drawing, expression, grace, and perspective*, we can pursue it only in the two former: in the latter, the picture and print have equal advantages.—With regard to *perspective* indeed, the lines of the print verging

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more conspicuously to one point, mark the *principles* of it more strongly.

Drawing, in a *picture*, is effected by the contiguity of two different colours: in a *print* by a positive line. In the *picture*, therefore, *drawing*, has more of nature in it, and more of effect: but the student in anatomy finds more precision in the print; and can more easily trace the line, and follow it in all its windings through light and shade.—In *mezzotinto* the comparison fails; in which, *drawing* is effected nearly as it is in painting.

With regard to *expression*, the painter glories in his many advantages. The passions receive their force almost as much from *colour*, as from the emotion of feature. Nay lines, without colour, have frequently an effect very opposite to what is intended. Violent expressions, when lineal only, are often grotesque. The complexion should support the distortion. The bloated eyes of immoderate grief degenerate into coarse features, unless the pencil add those high-blown touches, which mark
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the passion. Ask the engraver, why he could not give the dying faint of DOMINICHINO his true expression? * Why he gave him that ghastly horror, instead of the serene languor of the original? The engraver may with justice say, he went as far as lines could go; but he wanted DOMINICHINO's pencil to give those pallid touches, which alone could make his lines expressive.—Age also, and sex, the bloom of youth, and the wan cheek of sickness, are equally indebted for their most characteristic marks, to the pencil.—In *portrait*, the different hues of hair, and complexion;—in *animal-life* the various dyes of furs, and plumage;—in *landscape*, the peculiar tints of seasons; of morning, and evening; the light azure of a summer-sky; the sultry glow of noon; the bluish, or purple tinge, which the mountain assumes, as it recedes, or approaches; the grey moss upon the ruin; the variegated greens, and mellow browns of foliage, and broken ground: in short, the colours of every part of nature, have a wonderful force in strengthening the expression

* JAC FREH's copy of DOMINICHINO's St. Jerome.

of objects.—In the room of all this, the deficient print has only to offer mere form, and the gradations of simple light. Hence the sweet touches of the pencil of CLAUDE, mark his pictures with the strongest expressions of nature, and render them invaluable; while his prints are generally the dirty shapes of something, which he could not express.

The idea also of *distant magnitude*, the print gives very imperfectly. It is expressed chiefly by colour. Air, which is naturally blue, is the medium through which we see; and every object participates of this blueness. When the distance is small, the tinge is imperceptible: as it increases, the tinge grows stronger; and when the object is very remote, it intirely loses it's natural colour, and becomes blue. And indeed this is so familiar a criterion of distance, at least with those who live in mountainous countries, that if the object be visible at all, after it has received the full *ether-tinge*, if I may so speak, the sight immediately judges it to be very large. The eye ranging over the plains of Egypt, and catching the blue point of a pyramid, from the colour concludes

concludes the distance; and is struck with the magnitude of an object, which, through such a space, can exhibit form.—Here the print fails: this criterion of distant magnitude, it is unable to give.

I cannot forbear inserting here a short criticism on a passage in VIRGIL. The poet describing a tower retiring from a vessel in full sail, says,

Protinus aërias Phæacum abscondimus arces.

RUÆUS, and other commentators, explain *aërias* by *altas*, or some equivalent word; which is magnifying an idea which in nature should be diminished. The idea of magnitude is certainly not the striking idea that arises from a retiring object: I should rather imagine that VIRGIL, who was of all poets perhaps the most picturesque, meant to give us an idea of colour, rather than of shape; the tower, from its distance, having now assumed the *aerial* tinge.

The print equally fails, when the medium itself receives a foreign tinge from a strength
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of colour behind it. The idea of horror, impressed by an expanse of air glowing, in the night, with distant fire, cannot be raised by black and white. VANDERVELDE has contrived to give us a good idea of the dreadful glare of a fleet in flames: but it were ridiculous for an engraver to attempt such a subject; because he cannot express that idea, which principally illustrates his story.

Transparency, again, the print is unable to express. Transparency is the united tinge of two colours, one behind the other; each of which, in part, discovers itself singly. If you employ one colour only, you have the idea of opaqueness. A fine carnation is a white transparent skin, spread over a multitude of small blood vessels, which blush through it. When the breath departs, these little fountains of life cease to flow: the bloom fades; and livid paleness, the colour of death, succeeds. — The happy pencil marks both these effects. It spreads the glow of health over the cheek of beauty; and with equal facility it expresses the cold, wan, tint of human clay. The print can express neither; representing, in
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the same dry manner, the bright transparency of the one, and the inert opaqueness of the other.

Lastly, the print fails in the expression of *polished bodies*; which are indebted for their chief lustre to *reflected colours*. The print indeed goes farther here, than in the case of transparency. In this it can do very little; in *polished bodies*, it can at least give *reflected shapes*. It can shew the *forms* of hanging woods upon the edges of the lake; tho unable to give the kindred tinge. But in many cases the *polished* body receives the *tinge*, without the *shape*. Here the engraver is wholly deficient: he knows not how to stain the gleaming silver with the purple liquor it contains; nor is he able to give the hero's armour it's highest polish from the tinge of the crimson vest, which covers it.

A single word upon the subject of *execution*, shall conclude these remarks. Here the advantage lies wholly on the side of painting. *That* manner which can best give the idea of
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the surface of an object, is the best ; and the lines of the finest engraving are harsh in comparison of the smooth flow of the pencil. *Mezzotinto*, tho deficient in some respects, is certainly in this the happiest mode of execution ; and the ancient *wooden print*, in which the middle tint is used, has a softness, when well executed, which neither etching, nor engraving can give.

C H A P. II.

Observations on the different Kinds of Prints.

TH E R E are three kinds of prints, *engravings, etchings, and mezzotintos.* The characteristic of the first is *strength*; of the second, *freedom*; and of the third, *softness.* All these, however, may in some degree be found in each.

From the shape of the engraver's tool, each stroke is an angular incision; which must of course give the line strength, and firmness; if it be not very tender. From such a line also, as it is a deliberate one, correctness may be expected; but no great freedom: for it is a laboured line, ploughed through the metal; and must necessarily, in a degree, want ease.

Unlimited *freedom*, on the other hand, is the characteristic of *etching.* The needle, gliding
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along the surface of the copper, meets no resistance; and easily takes any turn the hand pleases to give it. Etching indeed is mere drawing: and may be practised with the same facility.—But as *aqua-fortis* bites in an *equable* manner, it cannot give the lines that strength, which they receive from a pointed graver cutting into the copper. Besides, it is difficult to prevent it's biting the plate *all over* alike. The *distant parts* indeed may easily be covered with wax, or varnish, and the *general effect* of the *keeping* preserved; but to give each *smaller* part it's proper relief, and to *harmonize* the *whole*, requires so many different degrees of strength, such easy transitions from one into another, that *aqua-fortis* alone is not equal to it. Here, therefore, engraving hath the advantage; which by a stroke, deep or tender, at the artist's pleasure, can vary strength and faintness in any degree.

As engraving, therefore, and etching have their respective advantages, and deficiencies, artists have endeavoured to unite their powers; and to correct the faults of each, by joining the *freedom* of the one, with the *strength* of the
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the other. In most of our modern prints, the plate is first etched, and afterwards strengthened, and finished by the graver. And when this is *well* done, it has a happy effect. The flatness, which is the consequence of an equable strength of shade, is taken off; and the print gains a new effect, by the relief given to those parts which *hang* (in the painter's language) on the parts behind them.—But great art is necessary in this business. We see many a print, which wanted only a *few* touches, receive afterwards so *many*, as to become laboured, heavy, and disgusting.

In *etching*, we have the greatest variety of excellent prints. The case is, it is so much the same as *drawing*, that we have the very works themselves of the most celebrated masters: many of whom have left behind them prints in this way; which, however slight and incorrect, will always have something *masterly*, and of course *beautiful* in them.

In the muscling of human figures, of any considerable size, *engraving* hath undoubtedly

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the advantage of *etching*. The soft and delicate transitions, from light to shade, which are there required, cannot be so well expressed by the needle: and, in general, *large prints* require a strength which *etching* cannot give; and are therefore fit subjects for *engraving*.

Etching, on the other hand, is more particularly adapted to sketches, and slight designs: which, if executed by an engraver, would entirely lose their freedom; and with it their beauty. Landscape too, in general, is the object of *etching*. The foliage of trees, ruins, sky, and indeed every part of landscape, requires the utmost freedom. In finishing an *etched* landscape with the *tool*, (as it is called) too much care cannot be taken to prevent heaviness. We remarked before the nicety of touching upon an etched plate; but in landscape the business is peculiarly delicate. The foregrounds, and the boles of such trees as are placed upon them, may require a few strong touches; and here and there a few harmonizing strokes will add to the effect: but if the engraver venture much farther, he has good luck if he do no mischief.

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An *engraved* plate, unless it be cut very slightly, will cast off seven or eight hundred good impressions: and yet this depends, in some degree, on the hardness of the copper. An *etched* plate will not give above two hundred; unless it be eaten very deep, and then it may perhaps give three hundred. After that, the plate must be retouched, or the impressions will be faint.

Before I conclude the subject of etching, I should mention an excellent mode of practising it on a *soft ground*; which has been lately brought into use, and approaches still nearer to drawing, than the common mode. On a thin paper, somewhat larger than the plate, you trace a correct outline of the drawing you intend to etch. You then fold the paper, thus traced, over the plate; and laying the original drawing before you, finish the outline on the traced one with a black lead pencil. Every stroke of the pencil, which you make on one side, licks up the soft ground on the other. So that when you have finished your drawing with

black-lead, and take the paper off the plate, you will find a compleat, and very beautiful drawing on the reverse of the paper; and the etching likewise as compleat on the copper. You then proceed to bite it with aqua-fortis, in the common mode of etching: only as your ground is softer, the aqua-fortis must be weaker.

Besides these several methods of engraving on *copper*, we have prints engraven on pewter, and on wood. The pewter plate gives a coarseness and dirtiness to the print, which is often disagreeable. But engraving upon wood is capable of great beauty. Of this species of engraving more shall elsewhere be said.

Mezzotinto is very different from either *engraving* or *etching*. In these you cut out the *shades* on a smooth plate. In *mezzotinto*, the plate is covered with a rough ground; and you scrape the lights. The plate would otherwise give an impression intirely black.

Since the time of it's invention by Prince RUPERT, as is commonly supposed, the art
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of scraping *mezzotintos* is greatly more improved than either of it's sister-arts. Some of the earliest *etchings* are perhaps the best; and *engraving*, since the times of GOLTZIUS and MULLER, hath not perhaps made any great advances. But *mezzotinto*, compared with it's original state, is, at this day, almost a new art. If we examine some of the modern pieces of workmanship in this way; by our best mezzotinto-scrapers, they as much exceed the works of WHITE and SMITH, as those masters did BECKET and SIMONS. It must be owned, at the same time, they have better originals to copy. KNELLER's portraits are very paltry, compared with those of our modern artists; and are scarce susceptible of any effects of light and shade. As to Prince RUPERT's works, I never saw any, which were *certainly* known to be his: but those I have seen for his, were executed in the same black, harsh, disagreeable manner, which appears so strong in the masters who succeeded him. The invention however was noble; and the early masters have the credit of it: but the truth is, the ingenious mechanic hath been called into the painter's aid; and hath invented a manner of

laying ground, wholly unknown to the earlier masters: and they who are acquainted with *mezzotinto*, know the *ground* to be a very capital consideration.

The characteristic of *mezzotinto* is *softness*; which adapts it chiefly to portrait, or history, with a few figures, and these not too small. Nothing, except paint, can express flesh more naturally, or the flowing of hair, or the folds of drapery, or the catching lights of armour. In engraving and etching we must get over the prejudices of cross lines, which exist on no natural bodies: but *mezzotinto* gives us the strongest representation of the real *surface*. If however, the figures are too crowded, it wants strength to detach the several parts with a proper relief: and if they are very small, it wants precision, which can only be given by an outline; or, as in painting, by a different tint. In miniature-works also, the unevenness of the ground will occasion bad drawing, and awkwardness—in the extremities especially. Some inferior artists have endeavoured to remedy this, by terminating their figures with an engraved, or etched line: but they have tried the experiment with bad success. The strength of the line, and the softness of the ground, accord

accord ill together. I speak not here of that judicious mixture of *etching* and *mezzotinto*, which was formerly used by WHITE; and which our best mezzotinto-scrapers at present use, to give a strength to particular parts; I speak only of a harsh, and injudicious lineal termination.

Mezzotinto excels each of the other species of prints, in it's capacity of receiving the most beautiful effects of light and shade: as it can the most happily unite them, by blending them insensibly together.—Of this REMBRANDT seems to have been aware. He had probably seen some of the first mezzotintos; and admiring the effect, endeavoured to produce it in etching, by a variety of intersecting scratches.

You cannot well cast off more than an hundred good impressions from a mezzotinto plate. The rubbing of the hand soon wears it smooth: And yet by constantly repairing it, it may be made to give four or five hundred, with tolerable strength. The first impressions are not always the best. They are too black and harsh. You will commonly have the best impressions from the fortieth to the sixtieth: the harsh edges will be softened-down; and yet there will be spirit and strength enough left.

I should not conclude these observations, without mentioning the manner of working with the *dry needle*, as it is called; a manner between etching and engraving. It is performed by cutting the copper with a steel point, held like a pencil; and differs from etching only in the force with which you work. This method is used by all engravers in their skies, and other tender parts; and some of them carry it into still more general use.

Since the last edition of this work was published, a new mode of etching hath come much into use, called aquatinta. It is so far similar to the common mode of etching, that the shadows are bitten into copper by aquafortis, from which the lights are defended by a prepared, *granulated* ground. Through the minute interstices of this ground the aquafortis is admitted, and forms a kind of wash. In the composition of this *granulation*, the great secret of the art, I understand, consists; and different artists have their different modes of preparing their ground. Some also strengthen the aquatinta wash by the use of
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the needle, as in common etching; which, in landscape especially, has a good effect. The secret of the art however, does not entirely consist in preparing, and laying on the ground. Much experience is necessary in the management of it.

The great advantage of this mode of etching is, that it comes nearer the idea of drawing, than any other species of working on copper: the shades are thrown in by a wash, as if with a brush. It is also, when perfectly understood, well calculated for dispatch. In general indeed, it seems better adapted to a rough sketch, than a finished work; yet in skilful hands, when assisted by the needle, or the engraver's tool, it may be carried to a great height of elegant finishing.

On the other hand, the great disadvantage of this mode of etching arises from the difficulty of making the shades graduate softly into the lights. When the artist has made too harsh an edge, and wishes to burnish it off, there is often a middle tint below it: in burnishing off the one, he disturbs the other; and instead of leaving a soft graduating edge, he introduces, in its room, an edging of light.

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The aquatinta mode of etching was first introduced into England, tho but little known, about thirty, or forty years ago, by a Frenchman of the name of La Prince: but whether he was the inventor of it, I never heard. It has since been improved by several artists. Mr. Sandby has used it very happily in several of his prints. Mr. Jukes also, and Mr. Malton have done some good things in this way: but, as far as I can judge, Mr. Alken has carried it to the highest degree of perfection; and has some secret in preparing, and managing his ground, which gives his prints a very superior effect.

C H A P. III.

Characters of the most noted Masters.

MASTERS IN HISTORY.

ALBERT DURER, tho not the inventor, was one of the first improvers of the art of engraving. He was a German painter, and at the same time a man of letters, and a philosopher. It may be added in his praise, that he was the intimate friend of Erasmus; who revised, it is supposed, some of the pieces which he published. He was a man of business also; and was, during many years, the leading magistrate of Nuremburg.—His prints, considered as the first efforts of a new art, have great merit. Nay, we may add, that it is astonishing to see a new art, in it's earliest essays, carried to such a length. In some of those prints, which he executed on copper, the engraving is elegant to a great degree. His *Hell-scene* particularly, which was engraved in the year 1513, is as highly finished

finished a print as ever was engraved, and as happily finished. The labour he has bestowed upon it, has it's full effect. In his wooden prints too we are surpris'd to see so much meaning, in so early a master; the heads so well marked; and every part so well executed. —This artist seems to have understood the principles of design. His composition too is often pleasing; and his drawing generally good: but he knows very little of the management of light; and still less of grace: and yet his ideas are purer, and more elegant, than we could have suppos'd from the awkward archetypes, which his country and education afforded. He was certainly a man of a very extensive genius; and, as *Vasari* remarks, would have been an extraordinary artist, if he had had an Italian, instead of a German education. His prints are numerous. They were much admired in his own life-time, and eagerly bought up: which put his wife, who was a teasing woman, on urging him to spend more time upon engraving, than he was inclin'd to do. He was rich, and chose rather to practise his art as an amusement, than as a business. He died in the year 1527.

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The immediate successors, and imitators of ALBERT DURER, were LUCAS VAN LEIDEN, ALDGRAVE, PENS, HISBEN, and some others of less note. Their works are very much in their master's style; and were the admiration of an age which had seen nothing better. The best of ALDGRAVE's works are two or three small pieces of the story of Lot.

GOLTZIUS flourished a little after the death of these masters; and carried engraving to a great height. He was a native of Germany, where he learned his art: but travelling afterwards into Italy, he improved his ideas. We plainly discover in him a mixture of the Flemish and Italian schools. His forms have sometimes a degree of elegance in them; but, in general, the Dutch master prevails. GOLTZIUS is often happy in *design* and *disposition*; and fails most in the *distribution of light*. But his chief excellence lies in *execution*. He engraves in a noble, firm, expressive manner; which hath scarce been excelled by any succeeding

ceeding masters. There is a variety too in his mode of execution, which is very pleasing. His print of the *circumcision* is one of the best of his works. The story is well told; the groups agreeably disposed; and the execution admirable: but the figures are Dutch; and the whole, through the want of a proper distribution of shade, is only a glaring mass.

MULLER engraved very much in the style of GOLTZIUS—I think in a still bolder and firmer manner. We have no where greater master-pieces in execution, than the works of this artist exhibit. The *baptism of JOHN* is perhaps the most beautiful specimen of bold engraving, that is extant.

ABRAHAM BLOEMART was a Dutch master also, and contemporary with GOLTZIUS. We are not informed what particular means of improvement he had; but it is certain he designed in a more elegant taste, than any of his countrymen. His figures are often graceful; excepting only, that he gives them sometimes an affected twist; which
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is still more conspicuous in the fingers; an affectation which we sometimes also find in the prints of GOLTZIUS.—The *resurrection of LAZARUS* is one of BLOEMART's master-pieces; in which are many faults, and many beauties; both very characteristic.

While the Dutch masters were thus carrying the art of engraving to so great a height, it was introduced into Italy by ANDREA MANTEGNA; to whom the Italians ascribe the invention of it. The paintings of this master abound in noble passages, but are formal and disagreeable. We have a specimen of them at Hampton-Court, in the triumph of JULIUS CÆSAR.—His prints, which are said to have been engraved on tin plates, are transcripts from the same ideas. We see in them the chaste, correct out-line, and noble simplicity of the Roman school; but we are to expect nothing more; not the least attempt towards an agreeable *whole*.—And indeed, we shall perhaps find, in general, that the masters of the Roman school were more studious of those essentials of painting, which regard the *parts*; and the Flemish masters,

masters, of those, which regard the *whole*. The former therefore drew better *figures*; the latter made better *pictures*.

MANTEGNA was succeeded by PARMIGIANO and PALMA, both masters of great reputation. PARMIGIANO having formed the most accurate taste on a thorough study of the works of RAPHAEL, and MICHAEL ANGELO, published many single figures, and some designs engraven on wood, which abounded with every kind of beauty; if we may form a judgment of them from the few which we sometimes meet with. Whether PARMIGIANO invented the art of engraving on wood, does not certainly appear. His pretensions to the invention of etching are less disputable. In this way he published many slight pieces, which do him great credit. In the midst of his labours, he was interrupted by a knavish engraver, who pilaged him of all his plates. Unable to bear the loss, he forswore his art, and abandoned himself to chymistry.

PALMA

PALMA was too much employed as a painter to have much leisure for etching. He hath left several prints, however, behind him; which are remarkable for the delicacy of the drawing, and the freedom of the execution. He etches in a loose, but masterly manner. His prints are scarce; and indeed we seldom meet with any that deserve more than the name of sketches.

FRANCIS PARRIA seems to have copied the manner of PALMA with great success. But his prints are still scarcer than his master's; nor have we a sufficient number of them, to enable us to form much judgment of his merit.

But the great improver of the art of engraving on wood; and who at once carried it to a degree of perfection, which hath not since been exceeded; was ANDREA ANDREANI, of Mantua. The works of this master are remarkable for the freedom, strength, and spirit

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of the execution ; the elegant correctness of the drawing ; and in general for their effect. Few prints come so near the idea of painting. They have a force, which a pointed tool on copper cannot reach : and the wash, of which the middle tint is composed, adds often the softness of drawing. But the works of this master are seldom seen in perfection. They are scarce ; and when we do meet with them, it is a chance if the impressions be good : and very much of the beauty of these prints depends on the goodness of the impression. For often the outline is left hard, the middle tint being lost ; and sometimes the middle tint is left without its proper termination. So that on the whole, I should not judge this to be the happiest mode of engraving.

Among the ancient Italian masters, we cannot omit MARK ANTONIO ; and AUGUSTIN of Venice. They are both celebrated ; and have handed down to us many engravings from the works of RAPHAEL : but their *antiquity*, not their *merit*, seems to have recommended them. Their execution is harsh, and formal to the last degree : and if their prints
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give us any idea of the works of RAPHAEL, we may well wonder; as PICART observes, how that master got his reputation.—But we cannot, perhaps, in England, form an adequate idea of these masters. I have been told, their best works are so much valued in Italy, that they are engrossed there by the curious: that very few of them find their way into other countries; and that what we have, are, in general, but the refuse.

FREDERIC BAROCCHI was born at Urbino; where the genius of RAPHAEL inspired him. In his early youth he travelled to Rome: and giving himself up to intense study, he acquired a great name in painting. At his leisure hours he etched a few prints from his own designs; which are highly finished, and executed with great softness and delicacy. The *Salutation* is his capital performance: of which we seldom meet with any impressions, but those taken from the retouched plate, which are very harsh.

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ANTHONY TEMPESTA was a native of Florence, but resided chiefly at Rome; where he was employed in painting by GREGORY XIII. —His prints are very numerous: all from his own designs. Battles and huntings are the subjects in which he most delighted. His merit lies in expression, both in feature and in action; in the grandeur of his ideas; and in the fertility of his invention. His figures are often elegant, and graceful; and his heads marked with great spirit, and correctness. His horses, tho' fleshy and ill drawn, and evidently never copied from nature; are, however, noble animals; and display an endless variety of beautiful actions.—His imperfections at the same time, are glaring. His composition is generally bad. Here and there you have a good group; seldom an agreeable whole. He had not the art of preserving his back-grounds tender; so that we are not to expect any effect of keeping. His execution is harsh; and he is totally ignorant of the distribution of light.—But notwithstanding all his faults, such is his merit, that, as studies at least, his prints deserve a much higher rank in the cabinets of
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connoisseurs, than they generally find ; you can scarce pick out one of them, which does not furnish materials for an excellent composition.

AUGUSTIN CARACCI has left a few etchings ; which are admired for the delicacy of the drawing, and the freedom of the execution. But there is great flatness in them, and want of strength. Etchings, indeed, in this style are rather meant as sketches, than as finished prints.—I have heard his print of St. Jerome much commended ; but I find no remarks upon it in my own notes.

GUIDO's etchings, most of which are small, are esteemed for the simplicity of the design ; the elegance and correctness of the outline ; and that grace, for which this master is generally—perhaps too generally, esteemed. The extremities of his figures are particularly touched with great accuracy. But we have the same flatness in the works of GUIDO, which we find in those of his master CARACCI ; accompanied, at the same time, with less freedom.

dom. The *parts* are finished; but the *whole* neglected.

CANTARINI copied the manner of GUIDO, as PARRA did that of PALMA; and so happily, that it is often difficult to distinguish the works of these two masters.

CALLOT was little acquainted with any of the grand principles of painting: of composition, and the management of light he was totally ignorant. But tho he could not make a picture, he was admirably skilled in drawing a figure. His attitudes are generally graceful, when they are not affected; his expression strong; his drawing correct; and his execution masterly, tho rather laboured. His *Fair* is a good epitome of his works. Considered as a *whole*, it is a confused jumble of ideas; but the *parts*, separately examined, appear the work of a master. The same character may be given of his most famous work, the *Miseries of war*: in which there is more expression, both in action and feature, than was ever perhaps shewn in so small a compass. And yet I know not
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whether his *Beggars* be not the more capital performance. In the *Miseries of war*, he aims at composition, in which he rarely succeeds: his *Beggars* are detached figures, in which lay his strength. I have seen a very large work, by this master, in two prints; each of them near four feet square, representing the siege of Toulon. They are rather indeed perspective plans, than pictures. The pains employed on them, is astonishing. They contain multitudes of figures; and, in miniature, represent all the humour, and all the employment of a camp.—I shall only add, that a vein of drollery runs through all the designs of this master: which sometimes, when he chuses to indulge it freely, as in the *Temptation of St. ANTHONY*, displays itself in a very facetious manner.

COUNT GAUDE contracted a friendship at Rome with ADAM ELSHAMAR; from whose designs he engraved a few prints. GAUDE was a young nobleman on his travels; and never practised engraving as a profession. This would call for indulgence, if his prints wanted it: but in their way, they are beautiful; tho

on the whole, formal, and unpleasant. They are highly finished; and this correctness has deprived them of freedom. Moon-lights, and torch-lights are the subjects he chuses; and his great excellence lies in preserving the effects of these different lights. His prints are generally small. I know only one, the *Flight into Egypt*, of a larger size.

SALVATOR ROSA painted landscape more than history; but his *prints* are chiefly historical. He was bred a painter; and understood his art; if we except the *management of light*, of which he seems to have been ignorant. The capital landscape of this master at Chiswick, is a noble picture. The contrivance, the composition, the distances, the figures, and all the parts and appendages of it are fine: but in point of light it might perhaps have been improved, if the middle ground, where the figures of the second distance stand, had been thrown into sun-shine. — In *design*, and generally in *composition*, SALVATOR is often happy. His figures, which he drew in good taste, are graceful, and expressive, well grouped, and varied in agreeable attitudes. In the legs, it must be owned, he
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is a *mannerist*: they are well drawn; but all cast in one mould. There is a stiffness too in the backs of his extended hands: the palms are beautiful. But these are trivial criticisms.—His *manner* is slight; so as not to admit either softness or effect: yet the simplicity and elegance of it are pleasing; and bear that strong characteristic of a master's hand, *sibi quis speret idem*.—One thing in his manner of shading, is disagreeable. He will often shade a *face* half over with long lines; which, in so small and delicate an object, gives an unpleasant abruptness. It is treating a face like an egg: no distinction of feature is observed.—SALVATOR was a man of genius, and of learning: both which he has found frequent opportunities of displaying in his works. His style is grand; every object that he introduces is of the heroic kind; and his subjects in general shew an intimacy with ancient history, and mythology.—A roving disposition, to which he is said to have given a full scope, seems to have added a wildness to all his thoughts. We are told, he spent the early part of his life in a troop of banditti: and that the rocky and desolate scenes, in which he was accustomed to take refuge, furnished him with those romantic ideas

ideas in landscape, of which he is so exceedingly fond; and in the description of which he so much excels. His *Robbers*, as his detached figures are commonly called, are supposed to have been taken from the life.

REMBRANDT'S excellency, as a painter, lay in colouring; which he possessed in such perfection, that it almost screens every fault in his pictures. His prints, deprived of this palliative, have only his inferior qualifications to recommend them. These are expression, and skill in the management of light, execution, and sometimes composition. I mention them in the order in which he seems to have possessed them. His expression has the most force in the character of age. He marks as strongly as the hand of time. He possesses too, in a great degree, that inferior kind of expression, which gives its proper, and characteristic touch to drapery, fur, metal, and every object he represents.—His management of light consists chiefly in making a very strong contrast; which has often a good effect: and yet in many of his prints, there is no effect at all; which gives us reason to think, he ei-
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ther had no principles, or published such prints before his principles were ascertained.—His execution is peculiar to himself. It is rough, or neat, as he meant a sketch, or a finished piece ; but always free and masterly. It produces it's effect by strokes intersected in every direction ; and comes nearer the idea of painting than the execution of any other master in etching.—Never painter was more at a loss than REMBRANDT, for that species of grace, which is necessary to support an elevated character. While he keeps within the sphere of his genius, and contents himself with low subjects, he deserves any praise. But when he attempts beauty, or dignity, it were good-natured to suppose, he means only burlesque and caricature. He is a strong contrast to SALVATOR. The one drew all his ideas from nature, as she appears with grace and elegance : The other caught her in her meanest images ; and transferred those images into the highest characters. Hence SALVATOR exalts banditti into heroes : REMBRANDT degrades patriarchs into beggars. REMBRANDT, indeed, seems to have affected awkwardness. He was a man of humour ; and would laugh at those artists who studied the antique. “ I'll
shew

shew you my antiques," he would cry; and then he would carry his friends into a room furnished with head-dresses, draperies, household-stuff, and instruments of all kinds: "These," he would add, "are worth all your antiques."—His best etching is that, which goes by the name of the *hundred-guildres-print*; which is in such esteem, that I have known thirty guineas given for a good impression of it. In this all his excellences are united: and I might add, his imperfections also. Age and wretchedness are admirably described; but the principal figure is ridiculously mean.—REMBRANDT is said to have left behind him near three hundred prints; none of which are dated before 1628; none after 1659. They were in such esteem, even in his own life time, that he is said to have retouched some of them four or five times.

PETER TESTA studied upon a plan very different from that, either of SALVATOR, or REMBRANDT. Those masters drew their ideas from nature: TESTA, from what he esteemed a superior model—the antique. Smitten with the love of painting, this artist travelled

velled to Rome in the habit of a pilgrim ; destitute of the means of improvement, but what mere genius furnished. He had not even interest to procure a recommendation ; nor had he any address to substitute in it's room. The works of sculpture fell most obviously in his way ; and to these he applied himself with so much industry, copying them over, and over, that he is said to have gotten them all by heart. Thus qualified, he took up the pencil. But he soon found the school, in which he had studied, an insufficient one to form a painter. He had neglected colouring ; and his pictures were in no esteem. I have heard it said, that some of his pictures were excellent : and that if the Medici had continued to direct the taste of Italy, his works would have taken the lead among the first productions of the age. But it was TESTA's misfortune to live when the arts were under a less discerning patronage : and P. DA CORTONA, who was TESTA's rival, tho' far inferior to him in genius, carried the palm. Disappointed and mortified, he threw aside his pallet, and applied himself to etching ; in which he became a thorough proficient.— His prints have great merit ; tho' they are little esteemed. We are seldom, indeed, to expect

a coherency of design in any of them. An enthusiastic vein runs through most of his compositions ; and it is not an improbable conjecture, that his head was a little disturbed. He generally crowds into his pieces such a jumble of inconsistent ideas ; that it is difficult sometimes only to guess at what he aims. He was as little acquainted with the distribution of light, as with the rules of design : and yet, notwithstanding all this, his works contain an infinite fund of entertainment. There is an exuberance of fancy in him, which, with all its wildness, is agreeable : his ideas are sublime and noble ; his drawing is elegantly correct ; his heads are touched with uncommon spirit, and expression ; his figures are graceful, rather too nearly allied to the antique ; his groups often beautiful ; and his execution, in his best etchings, (for he is sometimes unequal to himself,) very masterly.* Perhaps, no prints afford more useful studies for a painter.—The *procession of SILENTS*, if we may guess at so confused a design, may illustrate all that hath been said. The *whole* is as incoherent, as the *parts* are

* Some of his works are etched by CÆS. TESTA.

beautiful.—This unfortunate artist was drowned in the Tyber ; and it is left uncertain, whether by accident or design.

SPANIOLET etched a few prints in a very spirited manner. No master understood better the force of every touch. *SILENUS and BACCHUS*, and the *Martyrdom of St. BARTHOLOMEW*, are the best of his historical prints : and yet these are inferior to some of his caricatures, which are admirably executed.

MICHAEL DORIGNY, or OLD DORIGNY, as he is often called, to distinguish him from NICHOLAS, had the misfortune to be the son-in-law of SIMON VOUET ; whose works he engraved, and whose imperfections he copied. His execution is free, and he preserves the lights extremely well on single figures : his drapery too is natural, and easy : but his drawing is below criticism ; in the extremities especially. In this his master misled him. VOUET excelled in composition ; of which we have many beautiful instances in DORIGNY's prints.

VILLAMENA was inferior to few engravers. If he be deficient in strength and effect, there is a delicacy in his manner, which is inimitable. One of his best prints is, the *Descent from the cross*.—But his works are so rare, that we can scarce form an adequate idea of his merit.

STEPHEN DE LA BELLA was a minute genius. His manner wants strength for any larger work ; but in small objects it appears to advantage : there is great freedom in it, and uncommon neatness. His figures are touched with spirit ; and sometimes his composition is good : but he seldom discovers any skill in the management of light ; though the defect is less striking, because of the smallness of his pieces. His *Pont Neuf* will give us an idea of his pieces. Through the bad management of the light, it makes no appearance as a *whole* ; tho the composition, if we except the modern architecture, is tolerable. But the figures are marked with great beauty ; and the distances extremely fine.—Some of his single heads are very elegant.

LA FAGE'S works consist chiefly of sketches: The great excellency of this master lay in drawing; in which he was perfectly skilled. However unfinished his pieces are, they discover him to have been well acquainted with anatomy and proportion. There is very little in him besides, that is valuable; grace, and expression sometimes; seldom composition: his figures are generally too much crowded, or too diffuse. As for light and shade, he seems to have been totally ignorant of their effect; or he could never have shewn so bad a taste, as to publish his designs without, at least, a bare expression of the masses of each. Indeed, we have positive proof, as well as negative. Where he has attempted an effect of light, he has only shewn how little he knew of it.—His genius chiefly displays itself in the gambols of nymphs and satyrs; in routs and revels: but there is so much obscenity in his works of this kind, that, altho otherwise fine, they scarce afford an innocent amusement.—In some of his prints, in which he has attempted the sublimest characters, he has given them a wonderful dignity. Some of his figures of Christ

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are not inferior to the ideas of RAPHAEL : and in a slight sketch, intitled, *Vocation de Moyse*, the Deity is introduced with surprizing majesty. —His best works are slightly etched from his drawings by ERTINGER ; who has done justice to them.

BOLSWERT engraved the works of RUBENS, and in a style worthy of his master. You see the same free, and animated manner in both. It is said that RUBENS touched his proofs : and it is probable ; the ideas of the painter are so exactly transfused into the works of the engraver.

PONTIUS too engraved the works of RUBENS ; and would have appeared a greater master, if he had not had such a rival as BOLSWERT.

SCIAMINOSI etched a few small plates, of the *mysteries of the rosary*, in a masterly style. There is no great beauty in the composition ; but the drawing is good ; the figures are generally
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rally graceful; and the heads touched with spirit.

ROMAN LE HOOGHE is inimitable in execution. Perhaps, no master etches in a freer and more spirited manner: there is a richness in it likewise, which we seldom meet with. His figures too are often good; but his composition is generally faulty: it is crowded, and confused. He knows little of the effect of light. There is a flutter in him too, which hurts an eye pleased with simplicity. His prints are generally historical. The *deluge at Coeverden* is finely described.—LE HOOGHE was much employed, by the authors of his time, in composing frontispieces; some of which are very beautiful.

LUIKEN etches in the manner of LE HOOGHE, but it is a less masterly manner. His *history of the bible* is a great work; in which there are many good figures, and great freedom of execution: but poor composition, much confusion, and little skill in the distribution of light. This master hath also etched a

book of various kinds of capital punishment ; amongst which, tho the subject is disgusting, there are many good prints.

GERRARD LAIRESSE etches in a loose, and unfinished ; but free, and masterly manner. His light is often well distributed ; but his shades have not sufficient strength to give his pieces effect. Tho he was a Dutch painter, you see nothing of the Dutchman in his works. His composition is generally elegant and beautiful ; especially where he has only a few figures to manage. His figures themselves are graceful, and his expression strong.—It may be added, that his draperies are particularly excellent. The simple and sublime ideas, which appear every where in his works, acquired him the title of the *Dutch* RAPHAEL ; a title which he well deserves. LAIRESSE may be called an ethic painter. He commonly inculcates some truth either in morals, or religion ; which he illustrates by a Latin sentence at the bottom of his print.

CASTIG-

CASTIGLIONE was an Italian painter of eminence. He drew human figures with grace and correctness: yet he generally chose such subjects as would admit the introduction of animal life, which often makes the more distinguished part.—There is a simplicity in the designs of this master, which is beautiful. In composition he excels. Of his elegant groups we have many instances, in a set of prints, etched from his paintings, in a slight, free manner, by C. MACEE; particularly in those of the *patriarchal journeyings*. He hath left us several of his *own* etchings, which are very valuable. The subjects, indeed, of some of them, are odd and fantastic; and the composition not equal to some prints we have from his paintings, by other hands; but the execution is greatly superior. Freedom, strength, and spirit, are eminent in them; and delicacy likewise, where he chuses to finish highly; of which we have some instances.—One of his best prints is, the *entering of NOAH into the ark*. The composition; the distribution of light; the spirit and expression, with which

the animals are touched; and the freedom of the execution, are all admirable.

TIEPOLO was a distinguished master: but by his merit; rather than the number of his etchings. He was chiefly employed, I have heard, in the Escorial, and other palaces in Spain. The work, on which his reputation as an etcher is founded, is a series of twenty plates, about nine inches long, and seven broad. The subject of them is emblematical; but of difficult interpretation. They contain, however, a great variety of rich, and elegant composition; of excellent figures; and of fine old heads and characters. They are scarce; at least, they have rarely fallen in my way.—I have seen a few other prints by this master: but none, except these, which I have thought excellent. He was a strange, whimsical man; and, perhaps, his best pieces were those, in which he gave a loose to the wildness of his imagination.

VANDER MUILEN has given us historical representations of several modern battles.

Lewis

Lewis XIV. is his great hero. His prints are generally large, and contain many good figures, and agreeable groups: but they have no effect, and seldom produce a *whole*. A disagreeable monotony (as the musical people speak) runs through them all.

OTHO VENIUS has entirely the air of an Italian, tho of Dutch parentage. He had the honour of being master to RUBENS; who chiefly learned from him his knowledge of light and shade. This artist published a book of love-emblems; in which the Cupids are engraved with great elegance. His pieces of fabulous history have less merit.

GALESTRUZZI was an excellent artist. There is great firmness in his stroke; great precision; and, at the same time, great freedom. His drawing is good; his heads are well touched, and his draperies beautiful. He has etched several things from the antique; some of them, indeed, but indifferently. The best of his works, which I have seen, is the

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Story of NIOBE, (a long, narrow print) from
POLIDORE.

MELLAN was a whimsical engraver. He shadowed entirely with parallel lines ; which he winds round the muscles of his figures, and the folds of his draperies, with great variety and beauty. His manner is soft and delicate ; but void of strength and effect. His compositions of course make no *whole*, tho his single figures are often elegant. His saints and statues are, in general, his best pieces. There is great expression in many of the former ; and his drapery is often incomparable. One of his best prints is inscribed, *Per se surgens* : and another very good one, with this strange passage from St. AUSTIN ; *Ego evangelio non crederem, nisi me catholicæ ecclesiæ commoveret auctoritas*.—His head of Christ, effected by a single spiral line, is a masterly, but whimsical performance.

OSTADE's etchings, like his pictures, are admirable representations of low life. They abound in humour and expression ; in which
lies

lies their merit. They have little besides to recommend them. His composition is generally very indifferent; and his execution no way remarkable. Sometimes, but seldom, you see an effect of light.

CORNELIUS BEGA etches very much in the manner of OSTADE; but with more freedom.

VAN TULDEN has nothing of the Dutch master in his design; which seems formed on the study of the antique. It is chaste, elegant, and correct. His manner is rather firm, and distinct; than free, and spirited. His principal work is, *the voyage of ULYSSES, in fifty-eight plates*; in which we have a great variety of elegant attitudes, excellent characters of heads, good drawing; and tho not much effect, yet often good grouping. His drapery is heavy.

JOSEPH PARROCELLE painted battles for LEWIS XIV. He etched also several of his own designs. The best of his works are eight
small

small battles, which are very scarce. Four of these are of a size larger than the rest; of which, the *battle*, and *stripping the slain*, are very fine. Of the four smaller, that entitled *vesper* is the best.—His manner is rough, free, and masterly; and his knowledge of the effect of light considerable.—His greatest undertaking was, the *Life of Christ*, in a series of plates: but it is a hasty, and incorrect work. Most of the prints are mere sketches: and many of them, even in that light, are bad; tho the freedom of the manner is pleasing in the worst of them. The best plates are the 14th, 17th, 19th, 22d, 28th, 39th, 41st, 42d, and 43d.

V. LE FEBRE etched many designs from TITIAN and JULIO ROMANO, in a very miserable manner. His drawing is bad; his drapery frittered; his lights ill-preserved; and his execution disgusting: and yet we find his works in capital collections.

BELLANGE's prints are highly finished, and his execution is not amiss. His figures also have something in them, which looks like
 grace;

grace; and his light is tolerably well massed. But his heads are ill set on; his extremities incorrectly touched; his figures badly proportioned; and, in short, his drawing in general very bad.

CLAUDE GILLOT was a French painter: but finding himself rivalled, he laid aside his pencil, and employed himself entirely in etching. His common subjects are *dances* and *revels*; adorned with satyrs, nymphs, and fauns. By giving his sylvans a peculiar cast of eye, he has introduced a new kind of character. The invention, and fancy of this master are pleasing; and his composition is often good. His manner is slight; which is the best apology for his bad drawing.

WATTEAU has great defects; and, it must be owned, great merit. He abounds in all that flutter, and affectation, which is so disagreeable in the generality of French painters. But, at the same time, we acknowledge, he draws well; gives grace and delicacy to his figures; and produces often a beautiful effect
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of light. I speak, chiefly of such of his works, as have been engraved by others.—He etched a few slight plates himself, with great freedom and elegance. The best of them are contained in a small book of figures, in various dresses and attitudes.

CORNELIUS SCHUT excels chiefly in execution; sometimes in composition: but he knows nothing of grace; and has, upon the whole, but little merit.

WILLIAM BAUR etches with great spirit. His largest works are in the historical way. He has given us many of the sieges and battles, which wasted Flanders in the sixteenth century. They *may* be exact, and probably they *are*; but they are rather plans than pictures; and have little to recommend them but historic truth, and the freedom of the execution. BAUR'S best prints are, some characters he has given us of different nations; in which the peculiarities of each are well observed. His OVID is a poor performance.

COYPEL hath left us a few prints of his own etching; the principal of which is, an *Ecce homo*, touched with great spirit. Several of his own designs he etched, and afterwards put into the hands of engravers to finish. It is probable he overlooked the work: but we should certainly have had better prints, if we had received them pure from his own needle. What they had lost in force, would have been amply made up in spirit.

PICART was one of the most ingenious of the French engravers. His *imitations* are among the most entertaining of his works. The taste of his day, ran wholly in favour of antiquity: "No modern masters were worth looking at." PICART, piqued at such prejudice, etched several pieces in imitation of ancient masters; and so happily, that he almost out-did, in their own excellences, the artists whom he copied. These prints were much admired, as the works of GUIDO, REMBRANDT, and others. Having had his joke, he published them under the title of *Impostures innocentes*.

centes.—PICART's own manner is highly finished; yet, at the same time, rich, bold, and spirited: his prints are generally small; and most of them from the designs of others. One of the best is from that beautiful composition of POUSSIN, in which *Truth is delivered by Time, from Envy.*

ARTHUR POND, our countryman, succeeded admirably in this method of imitation; in which he hath etched several valuable prints; particularly two oval landscapes after SALVATOR—a monkey in red chalk after CARRACHE—two or three ruins after PANINI, and some others equally excellent.

But this method of imitation hath been most successfully practised by *Count CAYLUS*, an ingenious French nobleman; whose works, in this way, are very voluminous. He hath ransacked the French king's cabinet; and hath scarce left a master of any note, from whose drawings he hath not given us an excellent specimen. Infomuch, that if we had nothing remaining of those masters, but *Count CAYLUS's* works,

works, we should not want a very sufficient idea of them. So versatile is his genius, that with the same ease he presents us with an elegant outline from RAPHAEL, a rough sketch from REMBRANDT, and a delicate portrait from VANDYKE.

LE CLERC was an excellent engraver; but chiefly in miniature. He immortalized ALEXANDER, and LEWIS XIV. in plates of four or five inches long. His genius seldom exceeds these dimensions; within which he can draw up twenty thousand men with great dexterity. No artist, except CALLOT and DELLA BELLA, could touch a small figure with so much spirit. He seems to have imitated CALLOT's manner; but his stroke is neither so firm, nor so masterly.

PETER BARTOLI etched with freedom; tho his manner is not agreeable. His capital work is LANFRANK's gallery.

JAC.

JAC. FREIH is an admirable engraver. He unites, in a great degree, strength, and softness ; and comes as near the force of painting, as an engraver can well do. He has given us the strongest ideas of the works of several of the most eminent masters. He preserves the drawing, and expression of his original ; and often, perhaps, improves the effect. There is a richness too in his manner, which is very pleasing. You see him in perfection, in a noble print from C. MARATTI, intitled, *In conspectu angelorum psallam tibi.*

R. V. AUDEN AERD copied many things from C. MARATTI, and other masters, in a style indeed very inferior to JAC. FREIH, (whose rich execution he could not reach) but yet with some elegance. His manner is smooth, and finished ; but without effect. His drawing is good, but his lights are frittered.

S. GRIBELIN is a careful, and laborious engraver ; of no extensive genius ; but painfully

fully exact. His works are chiefly small; the principal of which are his copies from the Banqueting-House at Whitehall; and from the Cartoons. His manner is formal; yet he has contrived to preserve the spirit of his original. I know no copies of the Cartoons so valuable as his. It is a pity he had not engraved them on a larger scale.

LE BAS etches in a clear, distinct, free manner; and has done great honour to the works of TENIERS, WOVERMAN, and BERGHEM; from whom he chiefly copied. The best of his works are after BERGHEM.

BISCHOP'S etching has something very pleasing in it. It is loose, and free; and yet has strength, and richness. Many of his statues are good figures: the drawing is sometimes incorrect; but the execution is always beautiful. Many of the plates of his drawing-book are good. His greatest single work, is the representation of JOSEPH *in Egypt*; in which there are many faults, both in the drawing and effect; some of which are chargeable on himself, and others on the artist from
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whom he copied ; but on the whole, it is a pleasing print.

FRANCIS PERRIER was the debauched son of a goldsmith in Franche-comté. His indiscretion forcing him from home, his inclination led him to Italy. His manner of travelling thither was whimsical. He joined himself to a blind beggar, whom he agreed to lead for half his alms. At Rome, he applied to painting ; and made a much greater proficiency than could have been expected from his dissipated life. He published a large collection of statues and other antiquities ; which are etched in a very masterly manner. The drawing is often incorrect ; but the attitudes are well chosen, and the execution spirited. Many of them seem to have been done hastily ; but there are marks of genius in them all.

MAROT, architect to K. WILLIAM, hath etched some statues likewise, in a masterly manner. Indeed all his works are well executed ; but they consist chiefly of ornaments in the way of his profession.

FRAN.

FRAN. ROETTIERS etches in a very bold manner, and with a good deal of spirit; but there is a harshness in his outline, which is disagreeable; tho' the less so, as his drawing is generally good. Few artists manage a crowd better; or give it more effect by a proper distribution of light. Of this management we have some judicious instances in his two capital prints, the *Assumption of the cross*, and the *Crucifixion*.

NICHOLAS DORIGNY was bred a lawyer: but not succeeding at the bar, he studied painting; and afterwards applied to engraving. His capital work is, the *Transfiguration*; which Mr. ADDISON calls the noblest print in the world. It is unquestionably a noble work; but DORIGNY seems to have exhausted his genius upon it: for he did nothing afterwards worth preserving. His Cartoons are very poor. He engraved them in his old age; and was obliged to employ assistants, who did not answer his expectation.

MASTERS IN PORTRAIT.

Among the masters in portrait, REMBRANDT takes the lead. His heads are admirable copies from nature; and perhaps the best of his works. There is great expression in them, and character.

VAN ULIET followed REMBRANDT's manner; which he hath in many things excelled. Some of his heads are exceedingly beautiful. The force which he gives to every feature, the roundness of the muscle, the spirit of the execution, the strength of the character, and the effect of the whole, are all admirable.

J. LIEVENS etches in the same style. His heads are executed with great spirit; and deserve

serve a place in any collection of prints; tho they are certainly inferior to ULIET'S.—ULIET, and LIEVENS etched some historical prints; particularly the latter, whose *Lazarus*, after REMBRANDT, is a noble work; but their portraits are their best prints.

Among the imitators of REMBRANDT, we should not forget our countryman WORLIDGE; who has very ingeniously followed the manner of that master; and sometimes improved upon him. No man understood the drawing of a head better.—His small prints also, from antique gems, are neat, and masterly.

Many of VAN DYKE'S etchings do him great credit. They are chiefly to be found in a collection of the portraits of eminent artists, which VAN DYKE was at the expence of getting engraved. They are done slightly; but bear the character of a master. LUKE VOSTERMAN is one of the best. It is probable VAN DYKE made the drawings for most of them: his manner is conspicuous in them all.

—A very finished etching of an *Ecce homo*, passes under the name of this master. It is a good print, but not equal to what we might have expected from VAN DYKE.

We have a few prints of SIR PETER LELY's etching likewise ; but there is nothing in them that is very interesting.

R. WHITE was the principal engraver of portraits, in CHARLES the second's reign ; but his works are miserable performances. They are said to be good likenesses ; and they may be so ; but they are wretched prints.

BECKET and SIMONS are names which scarce deserve to be mentioned. They were in their time, mezzotinto-scrapers of note, only because there were no others.

WHITE, the mezzotinto scraper, son of the engraver, was an artist of great merit. He
copied

copied after Sir GODFREY KNELLER ; whom he teased so much with his proofs, that it is said Sir GODFREY forbid him his house. His mezzotintos are very beautiful. BAPTISTE, WING, STURGES, and HOOPER are all admirable prints. He himself used to say, that old and young PARR were the best portraits he ever scraped. His manner was peculiar, at the time he used it : tho it hath since been adopted by other masters. He first etched his plate, and then scraped it. Hence his prints preserve a spirit to the last, which few mezzotintos do.

SMITH was the pupil of BECKET ; but he soon excelled his master. He was esteemed the best mezzotinto-scraper of his time ; tho, perhaps, inferior to WHITE. He hath left a very numerous collection of portraits : so numerous, that they are often bound in two large folios. He copied chiefly from Sir GODFREY ; and is said to have had an apartment in his house.—LORD SOMERS was so fond of the works of this master ; that he seldom travelled, without carrying them with him in the seat

of his coach.—Some of his best prints are two holy families, ANTHONY LEIGH, MARY MAGDALENE, SCALKEN, a half-length of Lady ELIZABETH CROMWELL, the duke of SCHOMBERG on horse-back, the countess of SALISBURY, GIBBON the statuary, and a very fine hawking piece from WYKE.—After all, it must be owned, that the best of these mezzotintos are inferior to what we have seen executed by the masters of the present age.

MELLAN'S portraits are the most indifferent of his works. They want strength, spirit, and effect.

PITTERI hath lately published a set of heads, from PIAZZETA, in the style of MELLAN; but in a much finer taste, both as to the composition, and the manner. Tho, like MELLAN, he never crosses his stroke; yet he has contrived to give his heads more force and spirit.

J. MORIN'S

J. MORIN's heads are engraved in a very peculiar manner. They are stippled with a graver, after the manner of mezzotinto; and have a good effect. They have force; and, at the same time, softness. Few portraits, on the whole, are better. GUIDO BENTIVOLIUS from VAN DYKE is one of the best.

J. LUTMA's heads are executed in the same way: we are told, with a chisel and mallet. They are inferior to Morin's; but are not without merit.

EDM. MARMION etched a few portraits in the manner of VAN DYKE, and probably from him; in which there is ease and freedom. He has put his name only to one of them.

WOLFANG, a German engraver, managed his tools with softness, and delicacy; at the same time preserving a considerable degree of spirit.

spirit. But his works are scarce. I make these remarks indeed, from a single head, that of HÜET, bishop of Auranches ; which is the only work of his, that I have seen.

DREVET's portraits are neat, and elegant; but laboured to the last degree. They are copied from RIGAUD, and other French masters ; and abound in all that flutter, and licentious drapery, so opposite to the simple and chaste ideas of true taste. DREVET excels chiefly in copying RIGAUD's frippery ; lace, silk, fur, velvet, and other ornamental parts of dress.

RICHARDSON hath left us several heads, which he etched for Mr. POPE, and others of his friends. They are slight, but shew the spirit of a master. Mr. POPE's profile is the best.

VERTUE was a good antiquarian, and a worthy man, but no artist. He copied with
painful

painful exactness; in a dry, disagreeable manner, without force, or freedom. In his whole collection of heads, we can scarce pick out half a dozen, which are good,

Such an artist in mezzotinto, was FABER. He has published nothing extremely bad; and yet nothing worth collecting. *Mrs. COLLIER* is one of his best prints; and has some merit. She is leaning against a pillar; on the base of which is engraved the story of the golden apple.

HOUBRAKEN is a genius; and has given us, in his collection of English portraits, some pieces of engraving at least equal to any thing of the kind. Such are his heads of HAMBDEN, SCHOMBERG, the earl of BEDFORD, the duke of RICHMOND particularly, and some others. At the same time we must own, that he has intermixed among his works, a great number of bad prints. In his best, there is a wonderful union of softness, and freedom. A more elegant and flowing line no artist ever employed.

Our

Our countryman FRY has left behind him a few very beautiful heads in mezzotinto. They are all copied from nature; have great softness, and spirit; but want strength. Mezzotinto is not adapted to works so large, as the heads he has published.

MASTERS IN ANIMAL LIFE.

BERGHEM has a genius truly pastoral; and brings before us the most agreeable scenes of rural life. The simplicity of Arcadian manners is no where better described than in his works. We have a large collection of prints from his designs; many etched by himself, and many by other masters. Those by himself are slight, but masterly. His execution is inimitable. His cattle, which are always the distinguished part of his pieces, are well drawn, admirably characterized, and generally well grouped. Few painters excelled more in composition than BERGHEM; and yet we have more beautiful instances of it in the prints etched from him by others, than in those by himself. Among his own etchings a few small plates of sheep, and goats are exceedingly valued.

J. VISSCHER

J. VISSCHER never appears to more advantage than when he copies BERGHEM. His excellent drawing, and the freedom of his execution, give a great value to his prints; which have more the air of originals, than of copies. He is a master both in etching, and engraving. His slightest etchings, tho copies only, are the works of a master; and when he touches with a graver, he knows how to add strength and firmness, without destroying freedom and spirit. He might be said to have done all things well, if he had not failed in the distribution of light: it is more than probable, he has not attended to the effect of it, in many of the paintings which he has copied.

DANKER DANKERTS is another excellent copyist from BERGHEM. Every thing, that has been said of VISSCHER, may be said of him; and perhaps still in a stronger manner. —Like VISSCHER too he fails in the management of his lights.

HONDIUS,

HONDIUS, a native of Rotterdam, passed the greater part of his life in England. He painted animals chiefly; was free in his manner; extravagant in his colouring; incorrect in his drawing; ignorant of the effect of light; but great in expression. His prints therefore are better than his pictures. They possess his chief excellency, with fewer of his defects. They are executed in a neat stroke; but with great spirit; and afford strong instances of animal fury. His *bunted wolf* is an admirable print.

DU JARDIN understood the anatomy of domestic animals perhaps better than any other master. His drawing is correct; and yet the freedom of the master is preserved. He copied nature strictly, tho' not servilely; and has given us not only the form, but the characteristic peculiarities, of each animal. He never, indeed, like HONDIUS, animates his creation with the violence of savage fury. His genius takes a milder turn. All is quietness, and repose. His dogs, after their exercise,
are

are stretched at their ease ; and the languor of a meridian sun prevails commonly through all his pieces. His composition is beautiful ; and his execution, tho neat, is spirited.—His works, when bound together, make a volume of about fifty leaves ; among which there is scarce one bad print.

RUBENS's huntings are undoubtedly superior on the whole, to any thing of the kind we have. There is more invention in them, and a grander style of composition, than we find any where else. I class them under his name, because they are engraved by *several* masters. But all their engravings are poor. They represent the paintings they are copied from, as a shadow does the object which projects it. There is some-thing of the *shape* ; but all the *finishing* is lost. And there is no doubt, but the awkwardnesses, the patch-work, and the grotesque characters, which every where appear in these prints, are in the originals bold fore-shortnings, grand effects of light, and noble instances of expression.—But it is as difficult to copy the flights of RUBENS, as to
 translate

translate those of PINDAR. The spirit of each master evaporates in the process.

WOVERMAN'S composition is generally crowded with little ornaments. There is no simplicity in his works. He wanted a chaste judgment to correct his exuberance.—VISCHER was the first who engraved prints from this artist. He chose only a few good designs ; and executed them masterly.—MOYREAU undertook him next, and hath published a large collection. He hath finished them highly ; but with more softness than spirit. His prints however have a neat appearance, and exhibit a variety of pleasing representations ; cavalcades, marches, huntings, and encampments.

ROSA of TIVOLI etched in a very finished manner. No one out-did him in composition and execution : he is very skilful too in the management of light. His designs are all pastoral ; and yet there is often a mixture of the heroic style in his composition, which is very pleasing. His prints are scarce ; and, were they not so, would be valuable.

H

STEPHEN

STEPHEN DE LA BELLA may be mentioned among the masters in animal life; tho few of his works in this way deserve any other praise, than what arises from the elegance of the execution. In general, his animals are neither well drawn, nor justly characterized. The best of his works in animal life are some heads of camels and dromedaries.

ANTHONY TEMPESTA hath etched several plates of single horses, and of huntings. He hath given great expression to his animals; but his composition is more than ordinarily bad in these prints: nor is there in any of them the least effect of light.

J. FYR hath etched a few animals; in which we discover the drawing, and something of that strength and spirit, with which he painted. But I never saw more than two or three of his prints.

In curious collections we meet with a few of CUYP's etchings. The *pictures* of this master excel in colouring, composition, drawing, and the expression of character. His *prints* have all these excellences, except the first.

PETER DE LAER hath left us several small etchings of horses, and other animals, well characterized, and executed in a bold and masterly manner. Some of them are single figures; but when he composes, his composition is generally good, and his distribution of light seldom much amiss; often very pleasing: his drawing too is commonly good.

PETER STOOP came from Lisbon with queen CATHARINE; and was admired in England, till WYCK's superior excellence in painting eclipsed him. He hath etched a book of horses, which are much valued; as there is in general, accuracy in the drawing, nature in the characters, and spirit in the execution.

REMBRANDT's lions, which are etched in his usual style, are worthy the notice of a connoisseur.

BLOTELING's lions are highly finished; but with more neatness than spirit.

PAUL POTTER etched several plates of cows and horses in a masterly manner. His manner, indeed, is better than his drawing; which, in his sheep especially, is but very indifferent: neither does he characterize them with any accuracy.

BARLOW's etchings are numerous. His illustration of Esop is his greatest work. There is something pleasing in the composition and manner of this master, tho neither is excellent. His drawing too is very indifferent; nor does he characterize any animal justly. His birds in general are better than his beasts.

FLAMEN

FLAMEN has etched several plates of birds and fishes: the former are bad; the latter better than any thing of the kind we have.

I shall close this account with RIDINGER, who is one of the greatest masters in animal life. This artist has marked the characters of animals, especially of the more savage kind, with great expression. His works may be considered as natural history. He carries us into the forest among bears, and tygers; and, with the exactness of a naturalist, describes their forms, haunts, and manner of living.—His composition is generally beautiful; so that he commonly produces an agreeable whole. His landscape too is picturesque and romantic; and well adapted to the subjects he treats.—On the other hand, his manner is laboured, and wants freedom. His human figures are seldom drawn with taste: His horses are ill-characterized, and worse drawn; and, indeed, his drawing, in general, is but slovenly.—The prints of this master are often real history; and represent the por-

traits of particular animals, which had been taken in hunting. We have sometimes too, the story of the chase in High-Dutch, at the bottom of the print. The idea of historical truth adds a relish to the entertainment; and we survey the animal with new pleasure, which has given diversion to a German prince for nine hours together.—The productions of RIDINGER are very numerous; and the greater part of them good. His huntings in general, and different methods of catching animals, are the least picturesque of his works. But he meant them rather as didactic prints, than as pictures. Many of his fables are beautiful; particularly the 3d, the 7th, the 8th, and the 10th. I cannot forbear adding a particular encomium, on a book of the heads of wolves and foxes.—His most capital prints are two large uprights; one representing bears devouring a deer; the other, wild-boars reposing in a forest,

MASTERS IN LANDSCAPE.

SADLER'S landscapes have some merit in composition: they are picturesque and romantic; but the manner is dry and disagreeable; the light ill-distributed; the distances ill-kept; and the figures bad.—There were three engravers of this name; but none of them eminent. JOHN engraved a set of plates for the bible; and many other small prints in the historical way: in which we sometimes find a graceful figure, and tolerable drawing; but, on the whole, no great merit. EGIDIUS was the engraver of landscapes; and is the person here criticised. RALPH chiefly copied the designs of BASSAN; and engraved in the dry disagreeable manner of his brother.

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REMBRANDT'S landscapes have very little to recommend them, besides their effect; which is often surprising. One of the most admired of them goes under the name of *The three trees*.

GASPER POUSSIN etched a few landscapes in a very loose, but masterly manner. It is a pity we have not more of his works.

ABRAHAM BLOEMART understood the beauty of composition, as well in landscape, as in history. But his prints have little force, through the want of a proper distribution of light. Neither is there much freedom in the execution.

HOLLAR was born at Prague; and brought into England by that great patron of arts, the earl of ARUNDEL, in CHARLES I's time. He was an artist of great merit, and in various ways: but I place him here, as his principal
works

works are views of particular places; which he copied with great truth, as he found them. If we are satisfied with *exact representation*, we have it no where better, than in HOLLAR's works. But we are not to expect pictures. His *large views* are generally bad: I might indeed say, all his *large works*. His shipping, his Ephesian matron, his Virgil, and his Juvenal, are among the worst. Many of these prints he wrought, and probably wrought hastily, for booksellers. His smaller works are often good. Among these are many views of castles, which he took on the Rhine, and the Danube; and many views also in England. His distances are generally pleasing. In his foregrounds, which he probably took exactly as he found them, he fails most. Among his other views is a very beautiful one of London bridge, and the parts adjacent, taken somewhere near Somerset-house. HOLLAR has given us also several plates in animal life, which are good; particularly two or three small plates of domestic fowls, wild ducks, woodcocks, and other game. Among his prints of game, there is particularly one very highly finished, in which a hare is represented hanging with a basket of birds.

His

His shells, muffs, and butterflies, are admirable. His loose etchings too are far from wanting spirit; and his imitations are excellent, particularly those after count GAUDE, CALLOT, and BARLOW. He has admirably expressed the manner of those masters—of CALLOT especially, whose *Beggars* have all the spirit of the originals, in a reduced size.—In general, however, HOLLAR is most admired as an antiquarian. We consider his works as a repository of curiosities; and records of antiquated dresses, abolished ceremonies, and edifices now in ruins. And yet many of his antiquities are elegantly touched. The Gothic ornaments of his cathedrals are often masterly. The sword of EDWARD VI. the cup of ANDREA MONTEGNA, and the vases from HOLBEIN, are all beautiful.—I have dwelt the longer on this artist, as he is in general much esteemed; and as I had an opportunity of examining two of the noblest collections of his works, I believe, in England—one in the King's library, collected, as I have heard, by king WILLIAM; the other in the library of the late duchess dowager of PORTLAND. And yet tho' these collections are so very numerous (each, as I remember,

con-

contained in two large volumes in folio) neither of them is compleat. There were some prints in each, which were not in the other.— Notwithstanding HOLLAR was so very indefatigable, and was patronized by many people of rank, he was so very poor, that he died with an execution in his house.

STEPHEN DE LA BELLA's landscapes have little to recommend them, besides their neatness, and keeping. His composition is seldom good; and the foliage of his trees resembles bits of sponge. I speak chiefly of his larger works; for which his manner is not calculated. His neatness qualifies him better for miniature.

BOLSWERT's landscapes after REUBENS are executed in a grand style. Such a painter, and such an engraver, could not fail of producing something great. There is little variety in them: nor any of the more minute beauties arising from contrast, catching lights, and such little elegances; but every thing is simple, and great. The print, which goes
by

by the name of *The waggon*, is particularly, and deservedly admired. Of these prints we generally meet with good impressions; as the plates are engraved with great strength.

NEULANT hath etched a small book of the ruins of Rome; in which there is great simplicity, and some skill in composition, and the distribution of light: but the execution is harsh and disagreeable.

We have a few landscapes by an earl of *Sunderland*, in an elegant, loose manner. One of them, in which a Spaniard is standing on the foreground, is marked G. & J. *sculpsunt*: another J. G.

WATERLO is a name beyond any other in landscape. His subjects are perfectly rural. Simplicity is their characteristic. We find no great variety in them, nor stretch of fancy. He selects a few humble objects. A coppice, a corner of a forest, a winding road, or a straggling village is generally the extent of his view:

view: nor does he always introduce an off-skip. His composition is generally good, so far as it goes, and his light often well distributed; but his chief merit lies in execution; in which he is a consummate master. Every object that he touches, has the character of nature: but he particularly excels in the foliage of trees.—It is a difficult matter to meet with the larger works at least, of this master in perfection; the original plates are all retouched, and greatly injured.

SWANEVELT painted landscape at Rome; where he obtained the name of *the hermit*; from his solitary walks among the ruins of TIVOLI, and FRESCATI; among the rocky vallies of the Sabine; and the beautiful wooded lakes of the Latin hills. He etched in the manner of WATERLO; but with less freedom. His trees, in particular, will bear no comparison with those of that master. But if he fell short of WATERLO in the freedom of execution, he went greatly beyond him in the dignity of design. WATERLO saw nature with a Dutchman's eye. If we except two or three of his pieces, he never went
beyond

beyond the plain simplicity of a Flemish landscape. SWANEVELT's ideas were of a nobler cast. SWANEVELT had trodden classic ground ; and had warmed his imagination with the grandeur and variety of Italian views, every where ornamented with the splendid ruins of Roman architecture : but his favourite subjects seem to have been the mountain-forests, where a magnificent disposition of ground, and rock is embellished with the noblest growth of forest-trees. His composition is often good ; and his lights judiciously spread. In his execution, we plainly discover two manners : whether a number of his plates have been retouched by some judicious hand ; or whether he himself altered his manner in the different periods of his life.

JAMES ROUSSEAU, the disciple of SWANEVELT, was a French protestant ; and fled into England from the persecution of LEWIS XIV. Here he was patronized by the duke of MONTAGUE ; whose palace, now the *British Museum*, he contributed to adorn with his paintings ; some of which are good. The few etchings he hath left are beautiful. He understood

derstood composition, and the distribution of light; and there is a fine taste in his landscapes; if we except perhaps only that his horizon is often taken too high. Neither can his perspective, at all times, bear a critical examination; and what is worse, it is often pedantically introduced. His figures are good in themselves, and generally well placed.—His manner is rather dry and formal.—ROUSSEAU, it may be added, was an excellent man. Having escaped the rage of persecution himself, he made it his study to lessen the sufferings of his distressed brethren; by distributing among them great part of the produce of his genius. Such an anecdote, in the life of a painter, should not be omitted, even in so short a review as this.

We now and then meet with an etching by RUYSDALE; but I never saw any, that was not exceedingly slight.

J. LUTMA hath etched a few small landscapes in a masterly manner; which discover
some

some skill in composition, and the management of light.

ISRAEL SYLVESTRE has given us a great variety of small views (some indeed of a larger size) of ruins, churches, bridges and castles, in France and Italy. They are exceedingly neat, and touched with great spirit. This master can give beauty even to the outlines of a modern building; and what is more, he gives it without injuring the truth: insomuch that I have seen a gentleman just come from his travels, pick out many of SYLVESTRE'S views, one by one, (tho he had never seen them before) merely from his acquaintance with the buildings. To the praise of this master it may be farther added, that in general he forms his view into an agreeable whole; and if his light is not always well distributed, there are so many beauties in his execution, that the eye cannot find fault. His works are very numerous, and few of them are bad. In trees he excels least.

The

The etchings of CLAUDE LORRAIN are below his character. His execution is bad; and there is a dirtiness in it, which displeases: his trees are heavy; his lights seldom well-massed; and his distances only sometimes observed.—The truth is, CLAUDE'S talents lay upon his pallet; and he could do little without it.—His *Via sacra* is one of his best prints. The trees and ruins on the left, are beautifully touched; and the whole (tho rather formal) would have been pleasing, if the foreground had been in shadow.—After all, it is probable, I may not have seen some of his best prints. I have heard a sea-port much praised for the effect of a setting sun; and another print, in which a large group of trees fill the centre, with water, and cattle on the foreground; and a distance, on each side of the trees. But I do not recollect seeing either of these prints.

PERELLE has great merit. His fancy is fruitful; and supplies him with a richness, and variety in his views, which nature seldom exhibits.

hibits. It is indeed too exuberant; for he often confounds the eye with too great a luxuriance. His manner is his own; and it is difficult to say, whether it excels most in richness, strength, elegance, or freedom. His trees are particularly beautiful; the foliage is loose, and the ramification easy. And yet it must be confessed, that PERELLE is rather a mannerist, than a copier of nature. His views are all ideal; his trees are of one family; and his light, tho generally well distributed, is sometimes affected: it is introduced as a spot; and is not properly melted into the neighbouring shade by a middle tint. Catching lights, used sparingly, are beautiful: PERELLE affects them.—These remarks are made principally on the works of *old* PERELLE: For there were three engravers of this name; the grandfather, the father, and the son. They all engraved in the same style; but the juniors, instead of improving the family taste, degenerated. The grandfather is the best, and the grandson the worst.

VANDER CABEL seems to have been a careless artist; and discovers great slovenliness

in many of his works : but in those which he has studied, and carefully executed, there is great beauty. His manner is loose and masterly. It wants effect ; but abounds in freedom. His trees are often particularly well managed ; and his small pieces, in general, are the best of his works.

In WEIROTTER we see great neatness, and high finishing ; but often at the expence of spirit and effect. He seems to have understood best the management of trees ; to which he always gives a beautiful looseness.—There is great effect in a small moon-light by this master : the whole is in dark shade, except three figures on the foreground.

OVERBECK etched a book of Roman ruins : which are in general good. They are pretty large, and highly finished. His manner is free, his light often well distributed, and his composition agreeable.

GENOEL's landscapes are rather free sketches, than finished prints. In that light they are beautiful. No effect is aimed at: but the free manner in which they are touched, is pleasing; and the composition is in general good, tho often crowded.

BOTH's taste in landscape is elegant. His ideas are grand; his composition beautiful; and his execution rich and masterly in a high degree. His light is not always well distributed. His figures are excellent. We regret that we have not more of his works; for they are certainly, on the whole, among the best landscapes we have.

MARCO RICCI's works, which are numerous, have little merit. His human figures indeed are good, and his trees tolerable; but he produces no effect, his manner is disgusting, his cattle ill-drawn, and his distances ill-*pre-*ferred.

LE VEAU'S landscapes are highly finished: they are engraved with great softness, elegance, and spirit. The keeping of this master is particularly well observed. His subjects too are well chosen; and his prints indeed, in general, make beautiful furniture.

ZUINGG engraves in a manner very like LE VEAU; but not quite so elegantly.

ZEEMAN was a Dutch painter; and excelled in sea-coasts, beaches, and distant land; which he commonly adorned with skiffs, and fishing-boats. His prints are copies from his pictures. His execution is neat, and his distances well kept: but he knows nothing of the distribution of light. His figures too are good, and his skiffs admirable. In his *sea-pieces* he introduces larger vessels; but his prints in this style are commonly awkward, and disagreeable.

VANDIEST left behind him a few rough sketches, which are executed with great freedom.

GOUPY very happily caught the manner of SALVATOR ; and in some things excelled him. There is a richness in his execution, and a spirit in his trees, which SALVATOR wants. But his figures are bad. Very gross instances, not only of indelicacy of outline, but even of bad drawing, may be found in his print of PORSENNA, and in that of DIANA. Landscape is his fort ; and his best prints are those which go under the titles of the *Latrones*, the *Augurs*, *Tobit*, *Hagar*, and its companion.

PIRANESI has given us a larger collection of Roman antiquities, than any other master ; and has added to his ruins a great variety of modern buildings. The critics say, he has trusted too much to his eye ; and that his proportions and perspective are often faulty. He seems to be a rapid genius ; and we are told,

told, the drawings, which he takes on the spot, are as slight and rough as possible: the rest he makes out by memory and invention. From so rapid, and voluminous an artist, indeed we cannot expect much correctness: his works complete, sell at least for fifty pounds.—But the great excellence of this artist lies in execution; of which he is a consummate master. His stroke is firm, free, and bold, in the greatest degree; and his manner admirably calculated to produce a grand, and rich effect. But the effects he produces are rarely seen, except in single objects. A defaced capital, a ruined wall, or broken fluting, he touches with great softness, and spirit. He expresses even the stains of weather-beaten marble: and those of his prints, in which he has an opportunity of displaying expression in this way, are generally the best. His stroke has much the appearance of etching; but I have been informed that it is chiefly engraved, and that he makes great use of the dry needle.—His faults are many. His horizon is often taken too high; his views are frequently ill-chosen; his objects crowded; his forms ill-shaped. Of the distribution of light he has little knowledge. Now and then we meet with an effect of it;

which makes us only lament, that in such masterly performances it is found so seldom. His figures are bad: they are ill-drawn, and the drapery hangs in tatters. It is the more unhappy, as his prints are populous. His trees are in a paltry style; and his skies hard, and frittered.

Our celebrated countryman HOGARTH cannot properly be omitted in a catalogue of engravers; and yet he ranks in none of the foregoing classes. With this apology I shall introduce him here.

The works of this master abound in true humour; and satire, which is generally well directed: they are admirable moral lessons, and afford a fund of entertainment suited to every taste: a circumstance, which shews them to be just copies of nature. We may consider them too as valuable repositories of the manners, customs, and dresses of the present age. What amusement would a collection of this kind afford, drawn from every period of the history of Britain?—How far the works of HOGARTH will bear a *critical examination*, may be the subject of a little more enquiry.

In

In *design* HOGARTH was seldom at a loss. His invention was fertile; and his judgment accurate. An improper incident is rarely introduced; a proper one rarely omitted. No one could tell a story better; or make it, in all its circumstances, more intelligible. His genius, however, it must be owned, was suited only to *low*, or *familiar* subjects. It never soared above *common* life: to subjects naturally sublime; or which from antiquity, or other accidents borrowed dignity, he could not rise.

In *composition* we see little in him to admire. In many of his prints, the deficiency is so great, as plainly to imply a want of all principle; which makes us ready to believe, that when we do meet with a beautiful group, it is the effect of chance. In one of his minor works, the *idle prentice*, we seldom see a crowd more beautifully managed, than in the last print. If the sheriff's officers had not been placed in a line, and had been brought a little lower in the picture, so as to have formed a pyramid with the cart, the composition had been unexceptionable; and yet the first print of this work is so striking an instance of disagreeable composition, that it is amazing, how an artist, who had any idea of beautiful forms,

forms, could suffer so unmasterly a performance to leave his hands.

Of the *distribution of light* HOGARTH had as little knowledge as of *composition*. In some of his pieces we see a good effect; as in the *execution* just mentioned: in which, if the figures at the right and left corners, had been *kept down* a little, the light would have been beautifully distributed on the foreground, and a fine secondary light spread over part of the crowd: but at the same time there is so obvious a deficiency in point of effect, in most of his prints, that it is very evident he had no principles.

Neither was HOGARTH a master of *drawing*. Of the muscles and anatomy of the head and hands he had perfect knowledge; but his trunks are often badly moulded, and his limbs ill set on. I tax him with plain bad drawing; I speak not of the niceties of anatomy, and elegance of out-line: of these indeed he knew nothing; nor were they of use in that mode of design which he cultivated: and yet his figures, on the whole, are inspired with so much life, and meaning; that the eye is kept in good humour, in spite of it's inclination to find fault.

The

The author of the *Analysis of Beauty*, it might be supposed, would have given us more instances of *grace*, than we find in the works of HOGARTH; which shews strongly that theory and practice are not always united. Many opportunities his subjects naturally afford of introducing graceful attitudes; and yet we have very few examples of them. With instances of *picturesque grace* his works abound.

Of his *expression*, in which the force of his genius lay, we cannot speak in terms too high. In every mode of it he was truly excellent. The passions he thoroughly understood; and all the effects which they produce in every part of the human frame: he had the happy art also of conveying his ideas with the same precision, with which he conceived them.— He was excellent too in expressing any humorous oddity, which we often see stamped upon the human face. All his heads are cast in the very mould of nature. Hence that endless variety, which is displayed through his works: and hence it is, that the difference arises between *his* heads, and the affected caricaturas of *those* masters, who have sometimes amused themselves with patching together an assemblage of features from their own ideas.

Such

Such are SPANIOLET's; which, tho admirably executed, appear plainly to have no archetypes in nature. HOGARTH's, on the other hand, are collections of natural curiosities. The *Oxford-beads*, the *physician's-arms*, and some of his other pieces, are expressly of this humorous kind. They are truly comic; tho ill-natured effusions of mirth: more entertaining than SPANIOLET's, as they are pure nature; but less innocent, as they contain ill-directed ridicule.—But the species of expression, in which this master perhaps most excels, is that happy art of catching those peculiarities of air, and gesture, which the ridiculous part of every profession contract; and which, for that reason, become characteristic of the whole. His counsellors, his undertakers, his lawyers, his usurers, are all conspicuous at sight. In a word, almost every profession may see in his works, that particular species of affectation, which they should most endeavour to avoid.

The execution of this master is well suited to his subjects, and manner of treating them. He etches with great spirit; and never gives one unnecessary stroke. For myself, I greatly more value the works of his own needle, than
those

those high-finished prints, on which he employed other engravers. For as the production of an effect is not his talent; and as this is the chief excellence of high-finishing; his own rough manner is certainly preferable; in which we have most of the force, and spirit of his expression. The *manner* in none of his works pleases me so well, as in a small print of a corner of a play-house. There is more spirit in a work of this kind, struck off at once, warm from the imagination, than in all the cold correctness of an elaborate engraving. If all his works had been executed in this style, with a few improvements in the composition, and the management of light, they would certainly have been even a more valuable collection of prints than they are. The *Rake's Progress*, and some of his other works, are both etched and engraved by himself: they are well done; but it is plain he meant them as furniture. As works designed for a critic's eye, they would have been better without the engraving; except a *few* touches in a *very few* places. The want of effect too would have been less conspicuous, which in his highest-finished prints is disagreeably striking.

CHAP.

C H A P. IV.

Remarks on particular Prints.

HAVING thus examined the characters of several masters, I shall now make a few remarks on some particular prints, by way of illustrating the observations that have been made. The first print I shall criticize, is

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS, BY BLOMAERT.

With regard to design, this print has great merit. The point of time is very judiciously chosen. It is a point between the first command, *Lazarus come forth*; and the second, *Loose him, and let him go*. The astonishment of the two sisters is now over. The predominant passion is gratitude; which is discovering itself in praise. One of the attendants is telling
the

the stupified man, "That is your sister." Himself, collecting his scattered ideas, directs his gratitude to Christ. Jesus directs it to heaven. So far the design is good. But what are those idle figures on the right hand, and on the left? some of them seem no way concerned in the action. Two of the principal are introduced as grave-diggers; but even in that capacity they were unwanted; for *the place*, we are told, *was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.* When a painter is employed on a barren subject, he must make up his groups as he is able; but there is no barrenness here: the artist might, with propriety, have introduced, in the room of the grave-diggers, some of the Pharisaical party maligning the action. Such, we are told, were on the spot; and, as they are figures of consequence in the story, they ought not to have been shoved back, as they are, among the appendages of the piece.

The *composition* is almost faultless. The principal group is finely disposed. It opens in a beautiful manner, and discovers every part. It is equally beautiful, when considered in combination with the figures on the left hand.

The *light* is but ill-distributed, tho the figures are disposed to receive the most beautiful effect

effect of it. The whole is one glare. It had been better, if all the figures on the elevated ground, on the right, had been in strong shadow. The extended arm, the head and shoulder of the grave-digger, might have received catching lights. A little more light might have been thrown on the principal figure; and a little less on the figure kneeling. The remaining figures, on the left, should have been *kept down*. Thus the light would have centered strongly on the capital group, and would have faded gradually away.

The single figures are in general good. The principal one indeed is not so capital as might be wished. The character is not quite pleasing; the right arm is awkwardly introduced, if not ill-drawn; and the whole disagreeably incumbered with drapery.—Lazarus is very fine: the drawing, the expression, and grace of the figure are all good.—The figure kneeling contrasts with the group.—The grave-diggers are both admirable. It is a pity, they should be incumbrances only.

The *drawing* is in general good: yet there seems to be something amiss in the pectoral muscles of the grave-digger on the right. The hands too of almost all the figures are con-

strained and awkward. Few of them are in natural action.

The *manner*, which is mere engraving, without any etching, is strong, distinct, and expressive.

THE DEATH OF POLYCRATES; BY
SALVATOR ROSA.

The *story* is well told: every part is fully engaged in the subject, and properly subordinate to it.

The *disposition* is agreeable. The contrivance of the groups, falling one into another, is pleasing: and yet the form would have been more beautiful, if a ladder with a figure upon it, a piece of loose drapery, a standard, or some other object, had been placed on the left side of the cross, to have filled up that formal vacancy, in the shape of a right-angle, and to have made the pyramid more complete. The groups themselves are simple and elegant. The three figures on horse-back indeed are bad. A line of heads is always unpleasing.

There is little idea of *keeping*. The whole is too much one surface; which might have been prevented by more force on the foreground, and a flighter sky.

The *light* is distributed without any judgment. It might perhaps have been improved, if the group of the soldier resting on his shield, had been in shadow; with a few catching lights. This shadow, passing through the label, might have extended over great part of the foreground above it; by which we should have had a body of shadow to balance the light of the centre-group. The lower figures of the equestrian-group might have received a middle tint, with a few strong touches; the upper figures might have caught the light, to detach them from the ground.—There are some lights too in the sky, which would be better removed.

With regard to the figures taken separately, they are almost unexceptionably good. We seldom indeed see so many good figures in any collection of such a number. The young soldier leaning over his shield; the other figures of that group; the soldier pointing, in the middle of the picture; and the figure behind him spreading his hands, are all in the highest degree elegant, and graceful. The distant figures too are beautiful. The expression, in the whole body of the spectators, is striking. Some are more, and some less affected; but every

every one in a degree.—All the figures, however, are not faultless. POLYCRATES hangs ungracefully on his cross: his body is composed of parallel lines, and right angles. His face is strongly marked with agony: but his legs are disproportioned to his body.—The three lower figures of the equestrian-group have little beauty.—One of the equestrian figures also, that nearest the cross, is formal and displeasing: and as to a horse, SALVATOR seems to have had very little idea of the proportion and anatomy of that animal.—Indeed the *whole* of this corner of the print is bad; and I know not whether the composition would not be improved by the removal of it.

The scenery is beautiful. The rock broken, and covered with shrubs at the top; and afterwards spreading into one grand, and simple shade, is in itself a pleasing object; and affords an excellent back-ground to the figures.

The *execution* of this print is equal to that of any of SALVATOR'S works.

THE TRIUMPH OF SILENUS; BY PETER
TESTA.

P. TESTA seems, in this elegant and masterly performance, as far as his sublime ideas can be comprehended, to have intended a satire on the indulgence of inordinate desires.

The *design* is perfect. Silenus representing drunkenness, is introduced in the middle of the piece, holding an ivy-crown, and supported by his train, in all the pomp of unwieldy majesty. Before him dance a band of bacchanalian rioters; some of them, as described by the poets,

— inter pocula læti,
Molibus in pratis, *unctas saliere per utres.*

Intemperance, Debauchery, and unnatural Lusts complete the immoral festival. In the offskip rises the temple of Priapus; and hard-by a mountain, dedicated to lewdness, nymphs and satyrs.—In the heavens are represented the
Moon

Moon and *Stars* pushing back the *Sun*. This group is introduced in various attitudes of surprise, and fear. The Moon is hiding her face; and one of her companions, extinguishing a torch—all implying, that such revels, as are here described, dreaded the approach of day.

The *disposition* has less merit; yet is not unpleasing. The group, on the left, and the *several parts* of it, are happily disposed. The group of dancers, on the other side, is crowded, and ill-shaped. The disposition might, perhaps, have had a better effect, if an elegant canopy had been held over *SILENUS*; which would have been no improper appendage; and, by forming the apex of a pyramid over the principal figure, would have given more variety and beauty to the whole.

The *light*, with regard to *particular figures*, is just, and beautiful. But such a light, at best, gives us only the idea of a picture examined by a candle. Every figure, as you hold the candle to it, appears well lighted; but instead of an *effect* of light, you have only a succession of *spots*. Indeed the light is not only ill, but absurdly distributed. The upper part is enlightened by one sun, and the lower part by another; the direction of the light
 K 4 being

being different in each.—Should we endeavour to amend it, it might be better perhaps to leave out the Sun; and to represent him, by his symbols, as *approaching* only. The sky-figures would of course receive catching lights, and might be left nearly as they are. The figure of *Rain* under the *Moon* should be in shadow. The bear too, and the lion's head should be *kept down*. Thus there would be nothing glaring in the celestial figures. SILENUS, and his train, might be enlightened by a strong torch-light, carried by the dancing figures. The light would then fall nearly as it does, on the principal group. The other figures should be *brought down* to a middle tint. This kind of light would naturally produce a gloom in the background, which would have a good effect.

With regard to the figures taken separately, they are conceived with such classical purity, and simplicity of taste; so elegant in the drawing, and so graceful in every attitude; that if I were obliged to fix upon any print, as an example of all the beauties which single figures are capable of receiving, I should almost be tempted to give the preference to this.

The

The most striking instances of fine *drawing* are seen in the principal figure ; in the legs of the figure that supports him ; and in those of the figure dancing with the pipes ; in the man and woman behind the centaur ; in the figure in the clouds, with his right hand over his knee ; and particularly in that bold fore-shortened figure on the right of the Sun.

Instances of *expression* we have in the unwieldiness of SILENUS. He appears so dead a weight, so totally unelastic, that every part of him, which is not supported, sinks with its own gravity. The sensibility too with which his bloated body, like a quagmire, feels every touch, is strongly expressed in his countenance. The figure, which supports him, expresses strongly the labour of the action. The dancing figures are all well characterized. The pushing figures also in the sky are marked with great expression ; and above all the threatening figure, represented in the act of drawing a bow.

With regard to *grace*, every figure, at least every capital one, is agreeable ; if we except only that figure, which lies kicking its legs upon the ground. But we have the strongest instances of grace in the figure dancing with
the

the pipes ; in the man and woman behind the centaur, (who, it is not improbable, might be designed for BACCHUS and ARIADNE ;) and in the boy lying on the ground.

With regard to *execution*, we rarely see an instance of it in greater perfection. Every head, every muscle, and every extremity is touched with infinite spirit. The very appendages are fine ; and the stone-pines, which adorn the background, are marked with such taste and precision, as if landscape had been this artist's only study.

SMITH'S PORTRAIT OF THE DUKE OF
SCHOMBERG; FROM KNELLER.

KNELLER, even when he laid himself out to excel, was often but a tawdry painter. His equestrian portrait of king WILLIAM, at Hampton-court, is a very unmasterly performance: the composition is bad; the colouring gaudy; the whole is void of effect, and there is scarce a good figure in the piece.—The composition before us is more pleasing, tho' the effect is little better. An equestrian figure, at best, is an awkward subject. The legs of a horse are great encumbrances in grouping. VANDYKE, indeed, has managed king CHARLES the first, on horse-back, with great judgment: and RUBENS too, at Hampton-court, has made a noble picture of the duke of ALVA; tho' his horse is ill drawn.—In the print before us the figure sits with grace and dignity; but the horse is no Bucephalus: his character is only that of a managed
pad.

pad. The bush, growing by the duke's truncheon, is a trifling circumstance; and helps to break, into more parts, a composition already too much broken.—The *execution* is throughout excellent; and tho' the parts are rather too small for mezzotinto, yet SMITH has given them all their force.

PETHER'S MEZZOTINTO OF REMBRANDT'S
JEWISH RABBI.

The character is that of a stern, haughty man, big with the idea of his own importance. The *rabbi* is probably fictitious; but the *character* was certainly taken from nature. There is great dignity in it; which in a work of REMBRANDT'S is the more extraordinary.—The full expression of it is given us in the print. The unelastic heaviness of age, which is so well described in the original, is as well preserved in the copy. The three equidistant lights on the head, on the ornament, and on the hands, are disagreeable: in the print they could not be removed; but it might have been judicious to have *kept down* the two latter a little more.—With regard to the execution, every part is scraped with the utmost softness, and delicacy. The muscles are round and plump; and the insertions of them, which in an old face are very apparent, are well expressed.

pressed. Such a variety of middle tints, and melting lights, were difficult to manage; and yet they are managed with great tenderness. The looseness of the beard is masterly. The hands are exactly those of a fat old man. The stern eyes are full of life; and the nose and mouth are admirably touched. The separation of the lips in some parts, and the adhesion of them in others, are characteristic strokes; and happily preserved. The folds and lightness of the turban are very elegant. The robe, about the shoulder, is unintelligible, and ill managed: but this was the painter's fault.—In a word, when we examine this very beautiful mezzotinto, we must acknowledge, that no engraving can equal it in softness, and delicacy.

HONDIUS'S HUNTED WOLF.

The composition, in this little print, is good; and yet there is too much similitude, in the direction of the bodies of the several animals. The group also is too much broken, and wants solidity. The horizon is taken too high; unless the dimensions of the print had been higher. The rising ground, above the wolf's head, had been offskip enough: and yet the rock, which rises higher, is so beautifully touched; that it would be a pity to remove it.—The *light* is distributed without any judgment. It might have been improved, if all the interstices among the legs, and heads of the animals, had been *kept down*; and the shadow made very strong under the fawn, and the wounded dog. This would have given a bold relief to the figures; and might, without any other alteration, have produced a good effect.—The *drawing* is not faultless. The legs and body of the wounded dog are inaccurate: nor does the attacking dog stand

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stand firm upon his right leg.—With regard to *expression*, HONDIUS has exerted his full force. The expression, both of the wounded dog, and of the wolf, is admirable: but the expression of the attacking dog is a most bold and masterly copy from nature. His attitude shews every nerve convulsed; and his head is a masterpiece of animal fury.—We should add, that the slaughtered animal is so ill characterized, that we scarce know what it is.—The *execution* is equal to the expression. It is neat, and highly finished; but discovers in every touch the spirit of a master.

THE FIFTH PLATE OF DU JARDIN'S
ANIMALS.

The *design*, tho humble, is beautiful. The two dogs reposing at noon, after the labour of the morning, the implements of fowling, the fictitious hedge, and the loop-holes through it, all correspond; and agreeably tell the little history of the day.—The *composition* also is good: tho it might have been better, if another dog, or something equivalent, had been introduced in the vacancy at the left corner. This would have given the group of dogs a better form. The nets, and fowling-pieces are judiciously added; and make an agreeable shape with the dogs. The hedge also adds another pyramidal form; which would have been more pleasing if the left corner of the reeds had been a little higher.—The *light* is well distributed; only there is too much of it. The farther dog might have been *taken down*
L a little;

a little; and the hinder parts of the nearer.
—The *drawing* and *expression* are pure nature; and the *execution* elegant and masterly.

WATERLOO'S TOBIAS.

The landscape I mean, is an upright near twelve inches, by ten. On the near ground stands an oak, which forms a diagonal through the print. The second distance is composed of a rising ground, connected with a rock, which is covered with shrubs. The oak, and the shrubs make a vista, through which appears an extensive view into the country. The figures, which consist of an angel, Tobias, and a dog, are descending a hill, which forms the second distance. The print, with this description, cannot be mistaken.—The *composition* is very pleasing. The trees, on the foreground, spreading over the top of the print, and sloping to a point at the bottom, give the beautiful form of an inverted pyramid; which, in trees especially, has often a fine effect. To this form the inclined plane, on which the figures stand, and which is beautifully broken, is a good contrast. The rock approaches to a

perpendicular, and the distance to an horizontal line. All together make such a combination of beautiful and contrasting lines, that the whole is very pleasing. If I should find fault with any thing, it is the regularity of the rocks. There is no variety in parallels; and it had been very easy to have broken them.—The *keeping* is well preserved. The second and third distances are both judiciously managed. The *light* is well disposed. To prevent heaviness, it is introduced upon the tree, both at the top and at the bottom; but it is properly *kept down*. A mass of shade succeeds over the second distance; and the water. The light breaks, in a blaze, on the bottom of the rock, and masses the *whole*. The trees, shrubs, and upper part of the rock are happily thrown into a middle tint. Perhaps the effect of the distant country might have been better, if the light had been *kept down*; leaving only one easy catching light upon the town, and the rising ground on which it stands.—The *execution* is exceedingly beautiful. No artist had a happier manner of expressing trees than WATTELLO; and the tree before us is one of his capital works. The shape of it we have already criticized. The bole and ramification

are

are as beautiful as the shape. The foliage is a masterpiece. Such a union of strength, and lightness is rarely found. The extremities are touched with great tenderness; the strong masses of light are relieved with shadows equally strong; and yet ease, and softness are preserved. The foreground is highly enriched; and indeed the whole print, and every part of it, is full of art, and full of nature.

THE DELUGE AT COEVERDEN, BY ROMAN
LE HOOGHE.

This is an historical landscape, a style very different from that of the last. WATERLO had nothing in view, but to form an agreeable picture. The figures, which he introduced, unconnected with his subject, serve only to embellish it. But LE HOOGHE was confined within narrower lines. He had a *country* to describe, and a *story* to tell. The *country* is the environs of Coeverden, a Dutch town, with a view of an immense bank, thrown up against the sea. The *story*, is the ruin of that bank; which was broken through in three places, by the violence of a storm. The subject was great and difficult; and yet the artist has acquitted himself in a masterly manner. The town of Coeverden fills the distant view. The country is spread with a deluge; the sky with a tempest; and the breaches in the bank appear in all their horror.—The *composition*,

tion, in the distant and middle parts, is as pleasing as such an extensive subject can be. An elevated horizon, which is always displeasing, was necessary here to give a distinct view of the whole.—The *light* too is thrown over the distant parts in good masses.—The *expression* of the figures, of the horses especially, is very strong: those, which the driver is turning, to avoid the horrid chasm before him, are impressed with the wildest character of terror: and, indeed, the whole scene of distress, and the horrible confusion in every part of it, are admirably described.—The *execution* is good, tho not equal to that of many of LE HOOGHE'S works. It may be added, that the shape of the print is bad. A little more length would have enlarged the idea; and the town would have stood better, not quite in the middle.—But what is most faulty, is the disproportion, and littleness of the foreground on the right. The spirit, which the artist had maintained through the whole description, seems here to flag. Whereas *here* he should have closed the whole with some noble confusion; which would have set off the distant parts, and struck the spectator with the strongest images of horror. Instead of this,

we are presented with a few pigs, and calves
floundering in the water. The thought seems
borrowed from OVID. In the midst of a
world in ruins, *Nat lupus inter oves.*

HOGARTH'S RAKE'S PROGRESS.

The first print of this capital work is an excellent representation of a young heir, taking possession of a miser's effects. The passion of avarice, which hoards every thing, without distinction, what is and what is not valuable, is admirably described.—The *composition*, tho not excellent, is not unpleasing. The principal group, consisting of the young gentleman, the taylor, the appraiser, the papers, and chest, is well shaped: but the eye is hurt by the disagreeable regularity of three heads nearly in a line, and at equal distances.—The *light* is not ill disposed. It falls on the principal figures: but the effect might have been improved. If the extreme parts of the mass (the white apron on one side, and the memorandum-book on the other) had been in shade, the *repose* had been less injured. The detached parts of a group should rarely catch a strong body of light.—We have no striking

striking instances of *expression* in this print. The principal figure is unmeaning. The only one, which displays the true *vis comica* of HOGARTH, is the appraiser fingering the gold. We enter at once into his character.—The young woman might have furnished the artist with an opportunity of presenting a graceful figure; which would have been more pleasing. The figure he *has* introduced, is by no means an object of allurements.—The *perspective* is accurate; but affected. So many windows, and open doors, may shew the author's learning; but they break the background, and injure the simplicity of it.

The second print introduces our hero into all the dissipation of modish life. We became first acquainted with him, when a boy of eighteen. He is now of age; has entirely thrown off the clownish school-boy; and assumes the man of fashion. Instead of the country taylor, who took measure of him for his father's mourning, he is now attended by French-barbers, French-tailors, poets, milliners, jockies, bullies, and the whole retinue of a fine gentleman.—The *expression*, in this
print,

print, is wonderfully great. The dauntless front of the bully; the keen eye, and elasticity of the fencing-master; and the simpering importance of the dancing-master are admirably expressed. The last is perhaps rather a little *outré*. The architect is a strong copy from nature.—The *composition* seems to be entirely subservient to the expression. It appears, as if HOGARTH had sketched, in his memorandum-book, all the characters which he has here introduced; but was at a loss how to group them: and chose rather to introduce them in detached figures, as he had sketched them, than to lose any part of the expression by combining them.—The *light* is ill distributed. It is spread indiscriminately over the print; and destroys the *whole*.—We have no instance of *grace* in any of the figures. The principal figure is very deficient. There is no contrast in the limbs; which is always attended with a degree of ungracefulness.—The *execution* is good. It is elaborate, but free.—The satire on operas, tho it may be well directed, is forced and unnatural.

The

The third plate carries us still deeper into the history. We meet our hero engaged in one of his evening amusements. This print, on the whole, is no very extraordinary effort of genius.—The *design* is good; and may be a very exact description of the humours of a brothel.—The *composition* too is not amiss. But we have few of those masterly strokes which distinguish the works of HOGARTH. The whole is plain history. The lady setting the world on fire, is the best thought: and there is some humour in furnishing the room with a set of Cæsars; and not placing them in order.—The *light* is ill managed. By a few alterations, which are obvious, particularly by throwing the lady dressing, into the shade, the disposition of it might have been tolerable. But still we should have had an absurdity to answer, whence comes it? Here is light in abundance; but no visible source.—*Expression* we have very little through the whole print. That of the principal figure is the best. The ladies have all the air of their profession; but no variety of character. HOGARTH'S women are, in general, very inferior

inferior to his men. For which reason I prefer the *rake's progress* to the *barlot's*. The female face indeed has seldom strength of feature enough to admit the strong markings of expression.

Very disagreeable accidents often befall gentlemen of pleasure. An event of this kind is recorded in the fourth print; which is now before us. Our hero going, in full dress, to pay his compliments at court, on St. David's day, was accosted in the rude manner which is here represented.—The *composition* is good. The form of the group, made up of the figures in action, the chair, and the lamp-lighter, is pleasing. Only, here we have an opportunity of remarking, that a group is disgusting when the extremities of it are heavy. A group in some respect should resemble a tree. The heavier part of the foliage (the *cup*, as the landscape-painter calls it) is always near the middle: the outside branches, which are relieved by the sky, are light and airy. An inattention to this rule has given a heaviness to the group before us. The two bailiffs, the woman, and the chairman, are all huddled together

together in that part of the group which should have been the lightest; while the middle part, where the hand holds the door, wants strength and consistence. It may be added too, that the four heads, in the form of a diamond, make an unpleasing shape. All regular figures should studiously be avoided.—The *light* had been well distributed, if the bailiff holding the arrest, and the chairman, had been a little lighter, and the woman darker. The glare of the white apron is disagreeable.—We have, in this print, some beautiful instances of *expression*. The surprize and terror of the poor gentleman is apparent in every limb, as far as is consistent with the fear of discomposing his dress. The insolence of power in one of the bailiffs, and the unfeeling heart, which can jest with misery, in the other, are strongly marked. The self-importance too of the honest Cambrian is not ill portrayed; who is chiefly introduced to settle the chronology of the story.—In point of *grace*, we have nothing striking. HOGARTH might have introduced a degree of it in the female figure; at least he might have contrived to vary the heavy and unpleasing form of her drapery.—The *perspective* is good, and makes
an

an agreeable shape.—I cannot leave this print without remarking the *falling band-box*. Such representations of quick motion are absurd; and every moment, the absurdity grows stronger. Objects of this kind are beyond the power of representation.

Difficulties crowd so fast upon our hero, that at the age of twenty-five, which he seems to have attained in the fifth plate, we find him driven to the necessity of marrying a woman, whom he detests, for her fortune. The *composition* here is very good; and yet we have a disagreeable regularity in the climax of the three figures, the maid, the bride, and the bridegroom.—The *light* is not ill distributed. The principal figure too is *graceful*; and there is strong *expression* in the seeming tranquillity of his features. He hides his contempt of the object before him as well as he can; and yet he cannot do it. She too has as much meaning as can appear through the deformity of her features. The clergyman's face we are well acquainted with, and also his wig; tho we cannot pretend to say, where we have seen either. The clerk too is an admirable fellow.

—The

—The *perspective* is well understood; but the church is too small; and the wooden post, which seems to have no use, divides the picture disagreeably.—The creed lost, the commandments broken, and the poor's-box obstructed by a cobweb, are all excellent strokes of humour.

The fortune, which our adventurer has just received, enables him to make one push more at the gaming table. He is exhibited, in the sixth print, venting curses on his folly for having lost his last stake.—This is on the whole, perhaps, the best print of the set. The horrid scene it describes, was never more inimicably drawn. The *composition* is artful, and natural. If the shape of the whole be not quite pleasing, the figures are so well grouped, and with so much ease and variety, that you cannot take offence.—In point of light, it is more culpable. There is not shade enough among the figures to balance the glare. If the neck-cloth, and weepers of the gentleman in mourning had been removed, and his hands thrown into shade, even that alone would have improved the effect.—The *expression*, in
almost

almost every figure, is admirable; and the whole is a strong representation of the human mind in a storm. Three stages of that species of madness, which attends gaming, are here described. On the first shock, all is inward dismay. The ruined gamester is represented leaning against a wall, with his arms across, lost in an agony of horror. Perhaps never passion was described with so much force. In a short time this horrible gloom bursts into a storm of fury: he tears in pieces what comes next him; and kneeling down, invokes curses upon himself. He next attacks others; every one in his turn whom he imagines to have been instrumental in his ruin.—The eager joy of the winning gamesters, the attention of the usurer, the vehemence of the watchman, and the profound revery of the highwayman, are all admirably marked. There is great coolness too expressed in the little we see of the fat gentleman at the end of the table. The figure opposing the mad-man is bad: it has a drunken appearance; and drunkenness is not the vice of a gaming table.—The principal figure is *ill drawn*. The *perspective* is formal; and the *execution* but indifferent: in heightening his expression HOGARTH has lost his spirit.

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The seventh plate, which gives us the view of a jail, has very little in it. Many of the circumstances, which may well be supposed to increase the misery of a confined debtor, are well contrived; but the fruitful genius of HOGARTH, I should think, might have treated the subject in a more copious manner. The episode of the fainting woman might have given way to many circumstances more proper to the occasion. This is the same woman, whom the rake discards in the first print; by whom he is rescued in the fourth; who is present at his marriage; who follows him into jail; and, lastly, to Bedlam. The thought is rather unnatural, and the moral certainly culpable.—The *composition* is bad. The group of the woman fainting, is a round heavy mass: and the other group is ill shaped. The *light* could not be worse managed; and, as the groups are contrived, could hardly be improved.—In the principal figure there is great *expression*; and the fainting scene is well described.—A scheme to pay off the national debt, by a man who cannot pay his own; and the attempt of a silly rake, to retrieve his affairs

fairs by a work of genius, are admirable strokes of humour.

The eighth plate brings the fortunes of our hero to a conclusion. It is a very expressive representation of the most horrid scene which human nature can exhibit.—The *composition* is not bad. The group, in which the lunatic is chained, is well managed; and if it had been carried a little further towards the middle of the picture, and the two women (who seem very oddly introduced) had been removed, both the composition, and the distribution of light had been good.—The *drawing* of the principal figure is a more accurate piece of anatomy than we commonly find in the works of this master. The *expression* of the figure is rather unmeaning; and very inferior to the strong characters of all the other lunatics. The fertile genius of the artist has introduced as many of the causes of madness, as he could well have collected; but there is some tautology. There are two religionists, and two astronomers. Yet there is variety in each; and strong *expression* in all the characters. The self-satisfaction, and conviction, of him who

has discovered the longitude; the mock majesty of the monarch; the moody melancholy of the lover; and the superstitious horror of the popish devotée, are all admirable.—The *perspective* is simple and proper.

I should add, that these remarks are made upon the first edition of this work. When the plates were much worn, they were altered in many parts. They have gained by the alterations, in point of *design*; but have lost in point of *expression*.

C H A P. V.

CAUTIONS IN COLLECTING PRINTS.

THE collector of prints may be first cautioned against indulging a desire of becoming possessed of *all* the works of any master. There are no masters whose works in the *gross* deserve notice. No man is equal to himself in all his compositions. I have known a collector of REMBRANDT ready to give any price for two or three prints which he wanted to complete his collection; tho it had been to REMBRANDT'S credit, if those prints had been suppressed. There is no doubt, but if one third of the works of this master should be tried by the rules of just criticism, they would appear of little value. The great prince *Eugene*, it is said, was a collector of this kind; and piqued himself upon having in his possession,

all the works of all the masters. His collection was bulky, and cost fourscore thousand pounds; but when sifted, could not, at that time of day, be worth so many hundreds.

The collector of prints may secondly be cautioned against a superstitious veneration for names. A true judge leaves the *master* out of the question, and examines only the *work*. But, with a little genius, nothing sways like a name. It carries a wonderful force; covers glaring faults, and creates imaginary beauties. That species of criticism is certainly just, which examines the different manners of different masters, with a view to discover in how many ways a good effect may be produced, and which produces the best. But to be curious in finding out a master, in order *there* to rest the judgment, is a kind of criticism very paltry, and illiberal. It is judging of the work by the master, instead of judging of the master by the work. Hence it is, that such vile prints as the *Woman in the cauldron*, and *Mount Parnassus*, obtain credit among connoisseurs. If you ask wherein their beauty consists? you are informed, they are engraved by MARK ANTONIO:
and

and if that do not satisfy you, you are further assured, they are after RAPHAEL. This absurd taste raised an honest indignation in that ingenious artist PICART: who having shewn the world, by his excellent imitations, how ridiculous it is to pay a blind veneration to *names*; tells us, that he had compared some of the engravings of the ancient masters with the original pictures; and found them very bad copies. He speaks of the stiffness, which in general runs through them——of the hair of children, which resembles pot-hooks—and of the ignorance of those engravers in anatomy, drawing, and the distribution of light.

Nearly allied to this folly, is that of making the public taste our standard. It is a most uncertain criterion. Fashion prevails in every thing. While it is confined to dress, or the idle ceremonies of a visit, the affair is trivial: but when fashion becomes a dictator in arts, the matter is more serious. Yet so it is; we seldom permit ourselves to judge of beauty by the rules of art: but follow the catch-word of fashion; and applaud, and censure from the voice of others. Hence it happens, that some-

times the works of one master, and sometimes of another, have the prevailing run. REMBRANDT has long been the fashionable master. Little distinction is made: if the prints are REMBRANDT's, they must be good. In two or three years more, perhaps, the date of REMBRANDT will be over: you may buy his works at easy rates; and the public will have acquired some other favourite. For the truth of these observations, I might appeal to the dealers in old prints; all of whom know the uncertain value of the commodity they vend. Hence it is, that such noble productions, as the works of P. TESTA, are in such little esteem, that the whole collection of this master, tho' it consists of near twenty capital prints, beside many small ones, may be bought for less than is sometimes given for a single print of REMBRANDT. The true connoisseur leaves the voice of fashion entirely out of the question: he has a better standard of beauty—the merit of each master, which he will find frequently at variance with common opinion.

A fourth caution, which may be of use in collecting prints, is, not to rate their value by
their

their *scarceness*. Scarceness will make a *valuable* print *more* valuable: but to make scarcity the standard of a print's value, is to mistake an accident for merit. This folly is founded in vanity; and arises from a desire of possessing what nobody else can possess. The want of *real* merit is made up by *imaginary*; and the object is intended to be *kept*, nor *looked at*. Yet, absurd as this false taste is, nothing is more common; and a trifling genius may be found, who will give ten guineas for HOLLAR's shells, which, valued according to their merit (and much merit they certainly have) are not worth more than twice as many shillings.—Instances in abundance might be collected of the prevalence of this folly. LE CLERC, in his print of *Alexander's triumph*, had given a profile of that prince. The print was shewn to the duke of Orleans; who was pleased with it on the whole, but justly enough objected to the side-face. The obsequious artist erased it, and engraved a full one. A few impressions had been taken from the plate in its first state; which fell among the curious for ten times the price of the impressions taken after the face was altered.—CALLOT, once pleased with a little plate of his own etching, made a hole

in

in it; through which he drew a ribbon, and wore it at his button. The impressions after the hole was made, are very scarce, and amazingly valuable.—In a print of the holy family, from VANDYKE, St. John was represented laying his hand upon the virgin's shoulder. Before the print was published, the artist shewed it among his critical friends, some of whom thought the action of St. John too familiar. The painter was convinced, and removed the hand. But he was mistaken, when he thought he added value to his print by the alteration. The few impressions, which got abroad, with the hand upon the shoulder, would buy up all the rest, three times over, in any auction in London.—Many of REMBRANDT's prints receive infinite value from little accidental alterations of this kind. A few impressions were taken from one plate, before a dog was introduced; from another, before a white-horse tail was turned into a black one; from a third, before a sign-post was inserted at an ale-house door: and all the scarce prints from these plates, tho' altered for the better, are the prints of value: the rest are common and cheap.—I shall conclude these instances with a story of a late celebrated collector of pictures.

pictures. He was shewing his collection with great satisfaction ; and after expatiating on many noble works by GUIDO, MARRATTI, and other masters, he turned suddenly to the gentleman, whom he attended, and, “ Now, Sir, said he, I’ll shew you a real curiosity : there is a WOVERMAN without a horse in it.”—The circumstance, it is true, was uncommon ; but was unluckily that very circumstance, which made the picture of little value.

Let the collector of prints be cautioned, fifthly, to beware of buying copies for originals. Most of the works of the capital masters have been copied ; and many of them so well, that if a person be not versed in prints, he may easily be deceived. Were the copies really as good as the originals, the name would signify nothing : but, like translations, they necessarily fall short of the spirit of the original ; and contract a stiffness from the fear of erring. When seen apart, they look well ; but when compared with the originals, the difference easily appears. Thus CALLOT’S *beggars* have been so well copied, that the difference between the originals and the copies would not immediately
strike

strike you ; but when you compare them, it is obvious. There is a plain want of freedom ; the characters are less strongly marked ; and the extremities are less accurately touched. —It is a difficult matter to give rules to assist in distinguishing the copy from the original. In most cases the engraver's name, or his mark (which should be well known) will be a sufficient direction. These the copyist is seldom hardy enough to forge. But in anonymous prints it is matter of more difficulty. All that can be done, is to attend carefully to the *freedom* of the *manner*, in the *extremities* especially, in which the copyist is more liable to fail. When you are pretty well acquainted with the *manner* of a master, you cannot well be deceived. When you are not, your best way is to be directed by those who are.

The last caution I shall give to the collector of prints, is, to take care he purchase not bad impressions.—There are three things which make an impression bad.—The first is, it's being *ill taken off*. Some prints seem to have received the force of the roller at intervals. The impression is double ; and gives that
glim-

glimmering appearance, which illudes the eye. —A second thing, which makes an impression bad, is *a worn plate*. There is great difference between the first and the last impression of the same plate. The *effect* is wholly lost in a faint impression; and you have nothing left but a vapid design without spirit, and without force. In mezzotinto especially a strong impression is desirable. For the spirit of a mezzotinto quickly evaporates; without which it is the most insipid of all prints. In engraving and etching there will be always here and there a dark touch, which long preserves an appearance of spirit: but mezzotinto is a flat surface; and when it begins to wear, it wears *all over*. Very many of the works of all the great masters, which are commonly hawked about at auctions, or sold in shops, are in this wretched state. It is difficult to meet with a good impression. The SALVATORS, REMBRANDTS, and WATERLOS, which we meet with now, except here and there, in some choice collection, are seldom better than mere reverses. You see the form of the print; but the elegant, and masterly touches are gone; backgrounds and foregrounds are jumbled together by the confusion of all distance; and you have rather
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the shadow of a print left, than the print itself. —The last thing which makes a bad impression, is *retouching a worn plate*. Sometimes this is performed by the master himself; and then the spirit of the impression may be still preserved. But most commonly the retouching part is done by some bungler, into whose hands the plate has fallen; and then it is very bad. In a *worn plate*, at least what you have is good: you have the remains of something excellent; and if you are versed in the works of the master, your imagination may be agreeably exercised in making out what is lost. But when the plate has gone through the hands of a bungler, who has worked it over with his harsh scratches, the idea of the master is lost; and you have nothing left, but strong, unmeaning lines on a faint ground; which is a most disagreeable contrast. Such prints, and many such there are, though offered us under the name of REMBRANDT, or WATERLO, are of little value. Those masters would not have owned such works.—Yet, as we are often obliged to take up with such impressions, as we can get; it is better to chuse a *faint impression*, than a *retouched one*.

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