Gilpin
3 ESSAYS
London 1808

CONTENTS

OF THE FOLLOWING

POEM.

Line

1 INTRODUCTION, and addreſs.

26 A cloſe attention to the various ſcenes of nature recommended; and to the ſeveral circumſtances, under which they appear.

78 A facility alſo in copying the different *parts* of nature ſhould be attained, before the young artiſt attempts a *whole.*

90 This proceſs will alſo be a kind of *teſt.* No one can make any progreſs, whoſe imagination is not fired with the ſcenes of nature.

107 On a ſuppoſition, that the artiſt is enamoured with his ſubject; and is well verſed in copying the parts of nature, he begins

to combine, and form thoſe parts into the ſubjects of landſcape. He pays his firſt attention to *deſign*, or to the bringing together of ſuch objects, as are ſuited to his ſubject; not mixing trivial objects with grand ſcenes; but preſerving the *character* of his ſubject, whatever it may be.

150 The different parts of his landſcape muſt next be ſtudiouſly arranged, and put together in a picturеſque manner. This is the work of *diſpoſition*; or, as it is ſometimes called, *compoſition*. No rules can be given for this arrangement, but the experience of a nice eye: for tho nature ſeldom preſents a compleat compoſition, yet we every where ſee in her works beautiful arrangements of parts; which we ought to ſtudy with great attention.

159 In general, a landſcape is compoſed of three parts — a foreground — a middle ground — and a diſtance.

163 Yet this is not a univerſal rule. A *balance of parts* however there ſhould always be; tho ſometimes thoſe parts may be few.

176 It is a great error in landſcape-painters, to loſe the *ſimplicity* of a whole, under the idea of giving *variety*.

182 Some *particular ſcene*, therefore, or *leading ſubject* ſhould always be choſen; to which the parts ſhould be ſubſervient.

205 In balancing a landſcape, a ſpacious foreground will admit a ſmall thread of diſtance: but the reverſe is a bad proportion. In every landſcape there *muſt* be a conſiderable foreground.

216 This theory is illuſtrated by the view of a *diſproportioned diſtance*.

243 An objection anſwered, why vaſt diſtances, tho unſupported by foregrounds, may pleaſe *in nature*, and yet offend *in repreſentation*.

266 But tho the ſeveral parts of landſcape may be *well balanced*, and adjuſted; yet ſtill without *contraſt in the parts*, there will be a great deficiency. At the ſame time this contraſt muſt be eaſy, and natural.

285 Such pictures, as are painted from fancy, are the moſt pleaſing efforts of genius. But if an untoward ſubject be given, the artiſt muſt endeavour to conceal, and vary the unaccommodating parts. The foreground he *muſt* claim as his own.

308 But if nature be the ſource of all beauty, it may be objected, that imaginary views can have little merit. — The objection has weight, if the imaginary view be not formed

Be ſwell'd to animation: Thou, to whom
Each mode of landſcape, beauteous or ſublime,
With every various colour, tint, and light,
It's nice gradations, and it's bold effects,
Are all familiar, patient hear my ſong,
That to thy taſte and ſcience nothing new
Preſents; yet humbly hopes from thee to gain
That plaudit, which, if Nature firſt approve,
Then, and then only, thou wilt deign to yield.

First to the youthful artiſt I addreſs
This leading precept: Let not inborn pride,
Preſuming on thy own inventive powers,
Miſlead thine eye from Nature. She muſt reign
Great archetype in all. Trace then with care
Her varied walks. Obſerve how ſhe upheaves
The mountain's towering brow; on it's rough ſides
How broad the ſhadow falls; what different hues
Inveſt it's glimmering ſurface. Next ſurvey
The diſtant lake; ſo ſeen, a ſhining ſpot:
But when approaching nearer, how it flings
It's ſweeping curves around the ſhooting cliffs.
Mark every ſhade it's Proteus-ſhape aſſumes
From motion and from reſt; and how the forms
Of tufted woods, and beetling rocks, and towers
Of ruined caſtles, from the ſmooth expanſe,
Shade anſwering ſhade, inverted meet the eye.
From mountains hie thee to the foreſt-ſcene.
Remark the form, the foliage of each tree,
And what it's leading feature. View the oak,

It's maſſy limbs, it's majeſty of ſhade;
The pendent birch; the beech of many a ſtem;
The lighter aſh; and all their changeful hues
In ſpring or autumn, ruſſet, green, or grey.
Next wander by the river's mazy bank.
See where it dimpling glides; or briſkly where
It's whirling eddies ſparkle round the rock;
Or where, with headlong rage, it daſhes down
Some fractured chaſm, till all it's fury ſpent,
It ſinks to ſleep, a ſilent ſtagnant pool,
Dark, tho tranſlucent, from the mantling ſhade.
Now give thy view more ample range: explore
The vaſt expanſe of ocean; ſee, when calm,
What Iris-hues of purple, green, and gold,
Play on it's glaſſy ſurface; and when vext
With ſtorms, what depth of billowy ſhade, with light
Of curling foam contraſted. View the cliffs;
The lonely beacon, and the diſtant coaſt,
In miſts arrayed, juſt heaving into ſight
Above the dim horizon; where the ſail
Appears conſpicuous in the lengthened gleam.
With ſtudious eye examine next the vaſt
Etherial concave: mark each floating cloud;
It's form, it's colour; and what maſs of ſhade
It gives the ſcene below, pregnant with change
Perpetual, from the morning's purple dawn,
Till the laſt glimmering ray of ruſſet eve.
Mark how the ſun-beam, ſteeped in morning-dew,
Beneath each jutting promontory flings
A darker ſhade; while brightened with the ray

Of ſultry noon, not yet entirely quenched,
The evening-ſhadow leſs opaquely falls.
Thus ſtored with fair ideas, call them forth
By practice, till thy ready pencil trace
Each form familiar: but attempt not thou
A *whole*, till every *part* be well conceived.
The tongue that awes a ſenate with it's force,
Once liſped in ſyllables, or e'er it poured
It's glowing periods, warm with patriot-fire.
At length matured, ſtand forth for honeſt Fame
A candidate. Some nobler theme ſelect
From Nature's choiceſt ſcenes; and ſketch that theme
With firm, but eaſy line; then if my ſong
Aſſiſt thy power, it aſks no higher meed.

Yet if, when Nature's ſovereign glories meet
Thy ſudden glance, no correſponding ſpark
Of vivid flame be kindled in thy breaſt;
If calmly thou canſt view them; know for thee
My numbers flow not: ſeek ſome fitter guide
To lead thee, where the low mechanic toils
With patient labour for his daily hire.
But if the true genius fire thee, if thy heart
Glow, palpitate with tranſport, at the ſight;
If emulation ſeize thee, to tranſfuſe
Theſe ſplendid viſions on thy vivid chart;
If the big thought ſeem more than Art can paint;
Haſte, ſnatch thy pencil, bounteous Nature yields
To thee her choiceſt ſtores; and the glad Muſe
Sits by aſſiſtant, aiming but to fan

The Promethèan flame, conſcious her rules
Can only guide, not give, the warmth divine.
Firſt learn with *objects ſuited to each ſcene*
Thy landſcape to adorn. If ſome rude view
Thy pencil culls, of lake, or mountain-range,
Where Nature walks with proud majeſtic ſtep,
Give not her robe the formal folds of art,
But bid it flow with ample dignity.
Mix not the mean and trivial: Is the *whole*
Sublime, let each accordant *part* be grand.
Yet if through dire neceſſity (for that
Alone ſhould force the deed) ſome *poliſhed* ſcene
Employ thy pallet, dreſſed by human art,
The lawn ſo level, and the bank ſo trim,
Yet ſtill *preſerve thy ſubject*. Let the oak
Be elegant of form, that mantles o'er
Thy ſhaven fore-ground. The rough foreſter
Whoſe peeled and withered boughs, and gnarled trunk,
Have ſtood the rage of many a winter's blaſt,
Might ill ſuch cultured ſcenes adorn. Not leſs
Would an old Briton, rough with martial ſcars,
And bearing ſtern defiance on his brow,
Seem fitly ſtationed at a Gallic feaſt.
Such apt ſelection of accordant forms
The muſe herſelf requires from thoſe her ſons
Epic, or Tragic, who aſpire to fame
Legitimate. On them, whoſe motly taſte
Unites the ſock, and buſkin — who produce
Kings, and buffoons in one incongruous ſcene,
She darts a frown indignant. Nor ſuppoſe

Thy humbler ſubject leſs demands the aid
Of juſt *Deſign*, than Raphael's; tho his art
Give all but motion to ſome group divine,
While thine inglorious picture woods, and ſtreams.

With equal rigour DISPOSITION claims
Thy cloſe attention. Would'ſt thou learn it's laws,
Examine Nature, when combined with art,
Or ſimple; mark how various are her forms,
Mountains enormous, rugged rocks, clear lakes,
Caſtles, and bridges, aqueducts and fanes.
Of theſe obſerve, how ſome, united pleaſe;
While others, ill-combined, diſguſt the eye.
That principle, which rules theſe various parts,
And harmonizing *all*, produces *one*,
Is *Diſpoſition*. By it's plaſtic pow'r
Thoſe rough materials, which *Deſign* ſelects,
Are nicely balanced. Thus with friendly aid
Theſe principles unite: *Deſign* preſents
The general ſubject; *Diſpoſition* culls,
And recombines, the various forms anew.

Rarely to more than three diſtinguiſhed parts
Extend thy landſcape: neareſt to the eye
Preſent thy foreground; then the midway ſpace;
E'er the blue diſtance melt in liquid air.
But tho full oft theſe parts with blending tints
Are ſoftened ſo, as wakes a frequent doubt
Where each begins, where ends; yet ſtill preſerve
A *general balance.* So when Europe's ſons

Sound the alarm of war; ſome potent hand
(Now thine again my Albion) poiſes true
The ſcale of empire; curbs each rival power;
And checks each lawleſs tyrant's wild career.
Not but there are of fewer parts who form
A pleaſing picture. Theſe a foreſt-glade
Suffices oft; behind which, juſt removed,
One tuft of foliage, WATERLO, like thine,
Gives all we wiſh of dear variety.
For even variety itſelf may pall,
If to the eye, when pauſing with delight
On one fair object, it preſents a maſs
Of many, which diſturb that eye's repoſe.
All hail Simplicity! To thy chaſte ſhrine,
Beyond all other, let the artiſt bow.
Oft have I ſeen arranged, by hands that well
Could pencil Nature's *parts*, landſcapes, that knew
No *leading ſubject:* Here a foreſt roſe;
A river there ran dimpling; and beyond,
The portion of a lake: while rocks, and towers,
And caſtles intermixed, ſpread o'er the whole
In multiform confuſion. Ancient dames
Thus oft compoſe of various ſilken ſhreds,
Some gaudy, patched, unmeaning, tawdry thing,
Where bucks and cherries, ſhips and flowers, unite
In one rich compound of abſurdity.
Chuſe then ſome *principal commanding theme*,
Be it lake, valley, winding ſtream, caſcade,
Caſtle, or ſea-port, and on *that* exhauſt
Thy powers, and make to that all elſe conform.

Who paints a landſcape, is confined by rules,
As fixed and rigid as the tragic bard,
To *unity of ſubject*. Is the ſcene
A foreſt, nothing there, ſave woods and lawns
Muſt riſe conſpicuous. Epiſodes of hills
And lakes be far removed; all that obtrudes
On the chief theme, how beautiful ſoe'er
Seen as a *part*, diſguſts us in the *whole*.
Thus in the realms of landſcape, to preſerve
Proportion juſt is *Diſpoſition*'s taſk.
And tho a glance of diſtance it allow,
Even when the foreground ſwells upon the ſight;
Yet if the diſtant ſcenery wide extend,
The foreground muſt be ample: Take free ſcope:
Art muſt have ſpace to ſtand on, like the Sage,
Who boaſted power to ſhake the ſolid globe.
This thou muſt claim; and if thy diſtance ſpread
Profuſe, muſt claim it amply: Uncombined
With foreground, diſtance loſes power to pleaſe.
Where riſing from the ſolid rock, appear
Thoſe ancient battlements, their lived a knight,
Who oft ſurveying from his caſtle wall
The wide expanſe before him; diſtance vaſt;
Interminable wilds; ſavannahs deep;
Dark woods; and village ſpires, and glittering ſtreams,
Juſt twinkling in the ſun-beam, wiſhed the view
Transferred to convaſs; and for that ſage end,
Led to the ſpot ſome docile ſon of art,
Where his own taſte unerring previous fixed
The point of ampleſt proſpect. "Take thy ſtand
"Juſt here," he cried, "and paint me *all* thou ſeeſt,
"Omit

"Omit no ſingle object." It was done;
And ſoon the live-long landſcape cloaths his hall,
And ſpreads from baſe to ceiling. *All* was there;
As to his gueſt, while dinner cooled, the knight
Full oft would prove; and with uplifted cane
Point to the diſtant ſpire, where ſlept entombed
His anceſtry; beyond, where lay the town,
Skirted with wood, that gave him place and voice
In Britain's ſenate; nor untraced the ſtream
That fed the goodly trout they ſoon ſhould taſte;
Nor every ſcattered ſeat of friend, or foe,
He calls his neighbours. Heedleſs he, meanwhile,
That what he deems the triumph of his taſte,
Is but a painted ſurvey, a mere map;
Which light and ſhade, and perſpective miſplaced,
But ſerve to ſpoil.
Yet why (methinks I hear
Some Critic ſay) do ample ſcenes, like this,
In *picture* fail to pleaſe; when every eye
Confeſſes they tranſport on *Nature's chart?*
Why, but becauſe, where *She* diſplays the ſcene,
The roving ſight can pauſe, and ſwift ſelect,
From all ſhe offers, parts, whereon to fix,
And form diſtinct perceptions; each of which
Preſents a *ſeparate picture*. Thus as bees
Condenſe within their hives the varying ſweets;
So does the eye a *lovely whole* collect
From *parts disjointed*; nay, perhaps, *deformed*.
Then deem not Art defective, which divides,
Rejects,

Rejects, or recombines: but rather ſay,
'Tis her chief excellence. There is, we know,
A charm unſpeakable in converſe free
Of lover, or of friend, when ſoul with ſoul
Mixes in ſocial intercourſe; when choice
Of phraſe, and rules of rhetoric are diſdained;
Yet ſay, adopted by the tragic bard,
If Jaffier thus with Belvidera talked,
So vague, ſo rudely; would not want of ſkill,
Selection, and arrangement, damn the ſcene?

Thy forms, tho *balanced*, ſtill perchance may want
The charm of *Contraſt*: Sing we then it's power.
'Tis Beauty's ſureſt ſource; it regulates
Shape, colour, light, and ſhade; forms every line
By *oppoſition juſt*; whate'er is *rough*
With ſkill deluſive counteracts by *ſmooth*;
Sinuous, or *concave*, by it's oppoſite;
Yet ever *covertly*: ſhould *Art appear*,
That art were *Affectation*. Then alone
We own the power of *Contraſt*, when the lines
Unite with Nature's freedom: then alone,
When from it's careleſs touch each part receives
A pleaſing form. The lake's contracted bounds
By contraſt varied, elegantly flow;
The unweildy mountain ſinks; here, to remove
Offenſive parallels, the hill depreſt
Is lifted; there the heavy beech expunged
Gives place to airy pines; if two bare knolls

Riſe to the right and left, a caſtle here,
And there a wood, diverſify their form.

Thrice happy he, who always can indulge
This pleaſing feaſt of fancy; who, replete
With rich ideas, can arrange their charms
As his own genius prompts, creating thus
A novel whole. But taſteleſs wealth oft claims
The *faithful portrait*, and will fix the ſcene
Where Nature's lines run falſely, or refuſe
To harmonize. Artiſt, if thus employed,
I pity thy miſchance. Yet there are means
Even here to hide defects. The human form
Portrayed by Reynolds, oft abounds with grace
He ſaw not in his model; which nor hurts
Reſemblance, nor fictitious ſkill betrays.
Why then, if o'er the limb uncouth he flings
The flowing veſt, may not thy honeſt art
Veil with the foliage of ſome ſpreading oak,
Unpleaſing objects, or remote, or near?
An ample licence for ſuch needful change,
The foregrounds give thee. There both mend and make.
Whoe'er oppoſes, tell them, 'tis the ſpot
Where fancy needs muſt ſport; where, if reſtrained
To cloſe reſemblance, thy beſt art expires.
What if they plead, that from thy general rule,
That reſts on Nature as the only ſource
Of beauty, thou revolt'ſt; tell them that rule
Thou hold'ſt ſtill ſacred: Nature *is* it's ſource;
Yet Nature's *parts* fail to receive alike

The fair impreſſion. View her varied range:
Each form that charms is there; yet her beſt forms
Muſt be *ſelected*. As the ſculptured charms
Of the famed Venus grew, ſo muſt thou cull
From various ſcenes ſuch parts as beſt create
One perfect whole. If Nature ne'er arrayed
Her moſt accompliſhed work with grace compleat,
Think, will ſhe waſte on deſert rocks, and dells,
What ſhe denies to Woman's charming form?
And now, if on review thy chalked *deſign*,
Brought into form by *Diſpoſition*'s aid,
Diſpleaſe not, trace thy lines with pencil free;
Add lightly too that *general maſs* of ſhade,
Which ſuits the form and faſhion of it's parts.
There are who, ſtudious of the beſt effects,
Firſt ſketch a ſlight cartoon. Such previous care
Is needful, where the Artiſt's fancy fails
Preciſely to foreſee the future whole.
This done, prepare thy pallet, mix thy tints,
And call on chaſte Simplicity again
To ſave her votary from whate'er of hue,
Diſcordant or abrupt, may flaunt, or glare.

Yet here to bring materials from the mine,
From vegetable dies, or animal,
And ſing their various properties and powers,
The muſe deſcends not. To mechanic rules,
To proſe, and practice, which can only teach
The uſe of pigments, ſhe reſigns the toil.

One truth ſhe gives, that Nature's ſimple loom
Weaves but with three diſtinct, or mingled, hues,
The veſt that cloaths Creation. Theſe are red,
Azure, and yellow. Pure and unſtained white
(If colour juſtly called) rejects her law,
And is by her rejected. Doſt thou deem
The gloſſy ſurface of yon heifer's coat
A perfect white? Or yon vaſt heaving cloud
That climbs the diſtant hill? With ceruſe bright
Attempt to catch it's tint, and thou wilt fail.
Some tinge of purple, or ſome yellowiſh brown,
Muſt firſt be blended, e'er thy toil ſucceed.
Pure white, great Nature wiſhes to expunge
From all her works; and only then admits,
When with her mantle broad of fleecy ſnow
She wraps them, to ſecure from chilling froſt;
Conſcious, mean while, that what ſhe gives to guard,
Conceals their every charm: the ſtole of night
Not more eclipſes: yet that ſable ſtole
May, by the ſkilful mixture of theſe hues,
Be ſhadowed even to dark Cimmerian gloom.
Draw then from theſe, as from three plenteous ſprings,
Thy brown, thy purple, crimſon, orange, green,
Nor load thy pallet with a uſeleſs tribe
Of pigments: when commix'd with needful white,
As ſuits thy end, theſe native three ſuffice.
But if thou doſt, ſtill cautious keep in view
That harmony which theſe alone can give.

Yet ſtill there are, who ſcorning all the rules
Of dull mechanic art, with random hand
Fling their *unblended* colours, and produce
Bolder effects by oppoſition's aid.

The ſky, whate'er it's hue, to landſcape gives
A correſponding tinge. The morning ray
Spreads it with purple light, in dew-drops ſteeped;
The evening fires it with a crimſon glow.
Blows the bleak north? It ſheds a cold, blue tint
On all it touches. Do light miſts prevail?
A ſoft grey hue o'erſpreads the general ſcene,
And makes that ſcene, like beauty viewed through gauze,
More delicately lovely. Chuſe thy ſky;
But let that ſky, whate'er the tint it takes,
O'er-rule thy pallet. Frequent have I ſeen,
In landſcapes well compoſed, aerial hues
So ill-preſerved, that whether cold or heat,
Tempeſt or calm, prevailed, was dubious all.
Not ſo thy pencil, CLAUDE, the ſeaſon marks:
Thou makeſt us pant beneath thy ſummer noon;
And ſhiver in thy cool autumnal eve.
Such are the powers of ſky; and therefore Art
Selects what beſt is ſuited to the ſcene
It means to form: to this adapts a morn,
To that an evening ray. Light miſts full oft
Give mountain-views an added dignity;
While tame impoveriſhed ſcenery claims the force
Of ſplendid lights and ſhades; nor claims in vain.

Thy ſky adjuſted, all that is *remote*
Firſt colour faintly: leaving to the laſt
Thy foreground. Eaſier 'tis, thou know'ſt, to ſpread
Thy floating foliage o'er the ſky; than mix
That ſky amid the branches. Venture ſtill
On warmer tints, as diſtances approach
Nearer the eye: Nor fear the richeſt hues,
If to thoſe hues thou giv'ſt the meet ſupport
Of ſtrong oppoſing ſhade. A canvas once
I ſaw, on which the artiſt dared to paint
A ſcene in Indoſtan; where gold, and pearl
Barbaric, flamed on many a broidered veſt
Profuſely ſplendid; yet chaſte art was there,
Oppoſing hue to hue; each ſhadow deep
So ſpread, that all with ſweet accord produced
A bright, yet modeſt whole. Thus blend thy tints,
Be they of ſcarlet, orange, green, or gold,
Harmonious, till one general glow prevail
Unbroken by abrupt and hoſtile glare.

Let ſhade predominate. It makes each light
More lucid, yet deſtroys offenſive glare.
Mark when in fleecy ſhowers of ſnow, the clouds
Seem to deſcend, and whiten o'er the land,
What unſubſtantial unity of tinge
Involves each proſpect: Viſion is abſorbed;
Or, wandering through the void, finds not a point
To reſt on. All is mockery to the eye.
Thus light diffuſed, debaſes that effect
Which ſhade improves. Behold what glorious ſcenes
Ariſe through Nature's works from ſhade. Yon lake

With all it's circumambient woods, far leſs
Would charm the eye, did not that duſky miſt
Creeping along it's eaſtern ſhores, aſcend
Thoſe towering cliffs, mix with the ruddy beam
Of opening day, juſt damp it's fires, and ſpread
O'er all the ſcene a ſweet obſcurity.
But would'ſt thou ſee the full effect of ſhade
Well maſſed, at eve mark that upheaving cloud,
Which charged with all th' artillery of Jove,
In awful darkneſs, marching from the eaſt,
Aſcends; ſee how it blots the ſky, and ſpreads,
Darker, and darker ſtill, it's duſky veil,
Till from the eaſt to weſt, the cope of heaven
It curtains cloſely round. Haply thou ſtand'ſt
Expectant of the loud convulſive burſt,
When lo! the ſun, juſt ſinking in the weſt,
Pours from th' horizon's verge a ſplendid ray,
Which tenfold grandeur to the darkneſs adds.
Far to the eaſt the radiance ſhoots, juſt tips
Thoſe tufted groves; but all it's ſplendor pours
On yonder caſtled cliff, which chiefly owes
It's glory, and ſupreme effect, to ſhade.
Thus light, inforced by ſhadow, ſpreads a ray
Still brighter. Yet forbid that light to ſhine
A glittering ſpeck; for this were to illume
Thy picture, as the convex glaſs collects,
All to one dazzling point, the ſolar rays.

Whate'er the force of *oppoſition*, ſtill
In ſoft *gradation* equal beauty lies.

When the mild luſtre glides from light to dark,
The eye well-pleaſed purſues it. Mid the herds
Of variegated hue, that graze the lawn,
Oft may the artiſt trace examples juſt
Of this ſedate effect, and oft remark
It's oppoſite. Behold yon lordly bull,
His ſable head, his lighter ſhoulders tinged
With flakes of brown; at length ſtill lighter tints
Prevailing, graduate o'er his flank and loins
In tawny orange. What, if on his front
A ſtar of white appear? The general maſs
Of colour ſpreads unbroken; and the mark
Gives his ſtern front peculiar character.
Ah! how degenerate from her well-cloathed ſire
That heifer. See her ſides with white and black
So ſtudded, ſo diſtinct, each juſtling each,
The groundwork-colour hardly can be known.

Of lights, if more than two thy landſcape boaſt,
It boaſts too much. But if two lights be there,
Give one pre-eminence: with that be ſure
Illume thy *foreground*, or thy *midway ſpace*;
But rarely ſpread it on the *diſtant ſcene*.
Yet there, if level plains, or fens appear,
And meet the ſky, a lengthened gleam of light
Diſcreetly thrown, will vary the flat ſcene.
But if that diſtance be abruptly cloſed
By mountains, caſt them into general ſhade:
Ill ſuit gay robes their hoary majeſty.
Sober be all their hues; except, perchance,

Approaching nearer in the midway ſpace,
One of the giant-brethren tower ſublime:
To him thy art may aptly give a gleam
Of radiance: 'twill befit his awful head,
Alike, when riſing through the morning-dews
In miſty dignity, the pale, wan ray,
Inveſts him; or when, beaming from the weſt,
A fiercer ſplendor opens to our view
All his terrific features, rugged cliffs,
And yawning chaſms, which vapours through the day
Had veiled; dens where the lynx or pard might dwell
In noon-tide ſafety, meditating there
His next nocturnal ravage through the land.
  Are now thy lights and ſhades adjuſted all?
Yet pauſe: perhaps the perſpective is juſt;
Perhaps each local hue is duly placed;
Perhaps the light offends not; *harmony*
May ſtill be wanting. That which forms a whole
From colour, ſhade, gradation, is not yet
Obtained. Avails it ought, in civil life,
If here and there a family unite
In bonds of peace, while diſcord rends the land,
And pale-eyed Faction, with her garment dipped
In blood, excites her guilty ſons to war?
  To aid thine eye, diſtruſtful if this end
Be fully gained, wait for the twilight hour.
When the grey owl, ſailing on lazy wing,
Her circuit takes; when lengthened ſhades diſſolve;
Then in ſome corner place thy finiſhed piece,
Free from each gariſh ray: Thine eye will there

Be undiſturbed by *parts*; there will the *whole*
Be viewed collectively; the diſtance there
Will from it's foreground pleaſingly retire,
As diſtance ought, with true decreaſing tone.
If not, if ſhade or light be out of place,
Thou ſeeſt the error, and mayeſt yet amend.

  Here ſcience ceaſes: but to cloſe the theme,
One labour ſtill, and of Herculean caſt,
Remains unſung, the art to *execute*,
And what it's happieſt mode. In this, alas!
What numbers fail; tho paths, as various, lead
To that fair end, as to thy ample walls,
Imperial London. Every artiſt takes
His own peculiar manner; ſave the hand
Coward, and cold, that dare not leave the track
It's maſter taught. Thou who wouldeſt boldly ſeize
Superior excellence, obſerve, with care,
The ſtyle of every artiſt; yet diſdain
To mimic even the beſt. Enough for thee
To gain a knowledge from what various modes
The ſame effect reſults. Artiſts there are
Who, with exactneſs painful to behold,
Labour each leaf, and each minuter moſs,
Till with enamelled ſurface all appears
Compleatly ſmooth. Others with bolder hand,
By Genius guided, mark the general form,
The leading features, which the eye of taſte,
Practiſed in Nature, readily tranſlates.
Here lies the point of excellence. A piece,

Thus finiſhed, tho perhaps the playful toil
Of three ſhort mornings, more enchants the eye,
Than what was laboured through as many moons.
Why then ſuch toil miſpent? We never mean,
With cloſe and microſcopic eye, to pore
On every ſtudied *part*. The practiſed judge
Looks chiefly on the *whole*; and if thy hand
Be guided by true ſcience, it is ſure
To guide thy pencil freely. Scorn thou then
On *parts minute* to dwell. The *character*
Of objects aim at, not the *nice detail.*

Now is the ſcene compleat: with Nature's eaſe,
Thy woods, and lawns, and rocks, and ſplendid lakes,
And diſtant hills unite; it but remains
To people theſe fair regions. Some for this
Conſult the ſacred page; and in a nook
Obſcure, preſent the Patriarch's teſt of faith,
The little altar, and the victim ſon:
Or haply, to adorn ſome vacant ſky,
Load it with forms, that fabling bard ſupplies
Who ſang of bodies changed; the headlong ſteeds,
The car upheaved of Phaeton, while he,
Raſh boy! ſpreads on the plain his pallid corſe,
His ſiſters weeping round him. Groups like theſe
Befit not landſcape: Say, does Abraham there
Ought that ſome idle peaſant might not do?
Is there expreſſion, paſſion, character,
To mark the Patriarch's fortitude and faith?
The ſcanty ſpace which perſpective allows,

Forbids. Why then degrade his dignity
By paltry miniature? Why make it thus
A mere appendage? Rather deck thy ſcene
With figures ſimply ſuited to it's ſtyle.
The *landſcape* is thy object; and to that,
Be theſe the *under parts*. Yet ſtill obſerve
Propriety in all. The ſpeckled pard,
Or tawny lion, ill would glare beneath
The Britiſh oak; and Britiſh flocks and herds
Would graze as ill on Afric's burning ſands.
If rocky, wild, and awful be thy views,
Low arts of huſbandry exclude: The ſpade,
The plough, the patient angler with his rod,
Be baniſhed thence; far other gueſts invite,
Wild as thoſe ſcenes themſelves, banditti fierce,
And gypſey-tribes, not merely to adorn,
But to impreſs that ſentiment more ſtrong,
Awaked already by the ſavage-ſcene.
Oft winding ſlowly up the foreſt glade,
The ox-team labouring, drags the future keel
Of ſome vaſt admiral: no ornament
Aſſiſts the woodland ſcene like this; while far
Removed, ſeen by a gleam among the trees,
The foreſt-herd in various groups repoſe.
Yet, if thy ſkill ſhould fail to people well
Thy landſcape, leave it deſert. Think how CLAUDE
Oft crowded ſcenes, which Nature's ſelf might own,
With forms ill-drawn, ill-choſen, ill-arranged,
Of man and beaſt, o'er loading with falſe taſte

Hiſ ſylvan glories. Seize them, Peſtilence,
And ſweep them far from our diſguſted ſight!
If o'er thy canvaſs Ocean pours his tide,
The full ſized veſſel, with it's ſwelling ſail,
Be cautious to admit; unleſs thy art
Can give it cordage, pennants, maſts, and form
Appropriate; rather with a careleſs touch
Of light, or ſhade, juſt mark the diſtant ſkiff.
Nor thou refuſe that ornamental aid,
The feathered race afford. When fluttering near
The eye, we own abſurdity reſults;
They ſeem both fixed and moving: but beheld
At proper diſtance, they will fill thy ſky
With animation. Leave them there free ſcope:
Their *diſtant motion* gives us no offence.
Far up yon river, opening to the ſea,
Juſt where the diſtant coaſt extends a curve,
A lengthened train of ſea-fowl urge their flight.
Obſerve their files! In what exact array
The dark battalion floats, diſtinctly ſeen
Before yon ſilver cliff! Now, now, they reach
That lonely beacon; now are loſt again
In yon dark cloud. How pleaſing is the ſight!
The foreſt-glade from it's wild, timorous herd,
Receives not richer ornament, than here
From birds this lonely ſea-view. Ruins too
Are graced by ſuch addition: not the force
Of ſtrong and catching lights adorn them more,
Than do the duſky tribes of rooks, and daws
Fluttering their broken battlements among.

Place but theſe feathered groups at diſtance due,
The eye, by fancy aided, ſees them move,
(Flit paſt the cliff, or circle round the tower)
Tho each, a centinel, obſerve his poſt.
Thy landſcape finiſhed, tho it meet thy own
Approving judgment, ſtill requires a teſt,
More general, more deciſive. Thine's an eye
Too partial to be truſted. Let it hang
On the rich wall, which emulation fills;
Where rival maſters court the world's applauſe.
There travelled virtuoſi, ſtalking round,
With ſtrut important, peering though the hand,
Hollowed in teleſcopic form, ſurvey
Each luckleſs piece, and uniformly damn;
Aſſuming for their own, the taſte they ſteal.
"This has not *Guido*'s air:" "That poorly apes
"*Titian*'s rich colouring:" "*Rembrant*'s forms are here,
"But not his light and ſhadow." Skilful they
In every hand, ſave Nature's. What if theſe
With *Gaſpar* or with *Claude* thy work compare,
And therefore ſcorn it; let the pedants prate
Unheeded. But if taſte, correct and pure,
Grounded on practice; or, what more avails
Than practice, obſervation juſtly formed
On Nature's beſt examples and effects,
Approve thy landſcape; if judicious Lock
See not an error he would wiſh removed,
Then boldly deem thyſelf the heir of Fame.

NOTES ON THE FOREGOING *POEM.*

Line

34 SOME perhaps may object to the word *glimmering:* but whoever has obſerved the playing lights, and colours, which often inveſt the ſummits of mountains, will not think the epithet improper.

45 *What it's leading feature*; that is the *particular character* of the tree. The different ſhape of the leaves, and the different mode of ſpreading it's branches, give every tree, a *diſtinct form*, or *character*. At a little diſtance you eaſily diſtinguiſh the oak from the aſh; and the aſh from the beech. It is this *general form*, not any *particular detail*, which the artiſt is inſtructed to get by heart. The ſame remark holds with

regard to other parts of nature. Theſe *general forms* may be called the *painter's alphabet*. By theſe he learns to read her works; and alſo to make them intelligible to others.

61 *With light of curling foam contraſted.* The progreſs of each wave is this. Beneath the frothy curl, when it riſes between the eye, and the light, the colour is pale green, which brightens from the baſe towards the ſummit. When a wave ſubſides, the ſummit falling into the baſe, extends, and raiſes it; and that part of the water which meets the ſucceeding wave, ſprings upward from the ſhock; the top forms into foam, and rolling over falls down the ſide, which has been ſhocked; preſenting if the water be much agitated, the idea of a caſcade.

77 *The evening-ſhadow leſs opaquely falls.* It is not often obſerved by landſcape-painters, tho it certainly deſerves obſervation, that the morning-ſhadows are darker than thoſe of the evening.

101 *If the big thought ſeem more than art can paint.* It is always a ſign of genius to be diſſatisfied with our own efforts; and to conceive more than we can expreſs.

151 *Deſign preſents the general ſubject, diſpoſition,* &c. Some writers on the art of painting have varied this diviſion. But it ſeems moſt proper, I think, to give the ſelection of the elements of landſcape — the aſſembling of rocks, mountains, cataracts, and other objects to *deſign:* while *diſpoſition* is properly employed in the local arrangement of them.

159 The *general* compoſition of a landſcape conſiſts of three parts — the foreground — the ſecond ground — and the diſtance. But no rule can be given for proportioning theſe parts to each other. There are ten thouſand beautiful proportions; from which the eye of taſte muſt ſelect a good one. The foreground muſt always be conſiderable — in ſome caſes, ample. It is the very baſis, and foundation of the whole. —— Nor is it a bad rule, I think, that ſome part of the foreground ſhould be the higheſt part of the picture. In rocky, and mountainous views this is eaſy, and has generally a good effect. And ſometimes even when a country is more level, a tree on the foreground, carried higher than the reſt of the landſcape, anſwers the end. At the ſame time in many ſpecies of landſcape this

rule cannot eaſily be obſerved: nor is it by any means eſſential.

169 *Waterlo, like thine.* The ſubjects of this maſter ſeldom went beyond ſome little foreſt-view. He has etched a great number of prints in this ſtile of landſcape; which for the beauty of the trees in particular, are much admired.

178 *Landſcapes, that knew no leading ſubject.* There is not a rule in landſcape-painting more neglected, or that ought more to be obſerved, than what relates to a *leading ſubject.* By the leading ſubject we mean, what *characterizes the ſcene.* We often ſee a landſcape, which comes under no denomination, Is it the ſcenery about a ruin? Is it a lake-ſcene? Is it a river-ſcene? No: but it is a jumble of all together. Some leading ſubject therefore is required in every landſcape, which forms it's character; and to which the painter

> ———————— is confined by rules,
> As fixed, and rigid as the tragic bard.

When the landſcape takes it's character from a ruin, or other object on the foreground, the *diſtance* introduced, is merely an appendage; and muſt plainly appear to be an under-part; not interfering with the ſubject

ſubject of the piece. But moſt commonly the ſcene, or leading ſubject of the picture, occupies the middle diſtance. In this caſe, the *foreground* becomes the appendage; and without any ſtriking object to attract the eye, muſt plainly ſhew, that it is intended only to introduce the leading-ſubject with more advantage.

194 Thus, in a foreſt-ſcene, the woods and lawns, are the leading ſubject. If the piece will allow it, a hill, or a lake, may be admitted in *remote diſtance:* but they muſt be introduced, only as the epiſodes in a poem, to ſet off the main ſubject. They muſt not interfere with it: but be *far removed.*

202 *And tho a glance.* It is certain, in fact, that a conſiderable foreground, with a glance of diſtance, will make a better picture, than a wide diſtance, ſet off only with a meagre foreground: and yet I doubt whether an adequate reaſon can be given; unleſs it be founded on what hath already been advanced, that we conſider the foreground as the *baſis, and foundation of the whole picture.* So that if it is not conſiderable in all circumſtances, and extenſive in ſome, there ſeems a defect.

285 *A novel whole.* The imaginary-view, formed on a judicious ſelection, and arrangement of the parts of nature, has a better chance to make a good picture, than a view taken in the whole from any natural ſcene. Not only the lines, and objects of the natural ſcene rarely admit a happy compoſition; but the *character* of it is ſeldom throughout preſerved. Whether it be *ſublime*, or *beautiful*, there is generally ſomething mixed with it of a nature unſuitable to it. All this the exhibition of fancy rectifies, when in the hands of a maſter. Nor does he claim any thing, but what the poet, and he are equally allowed. Where is the ſtory in real life, on which the poet can form either an epic, or a drama, unleſs heightened by his imagination? At the ſame time he muſt take care, that all his imaginary additions are founded in nature, or his work will diſguſt. Such alſo muſt be the painter's care. But under this reſtriction, he certainly may bring together a more *conſiſtent whole*, culled from the *various parts* of nature, than nature herſelf exhibits in *any one ſcene*.

319 *Trace thy lines with pencil free.* The maſter is diſcovered even in his chalk, or black-lead lines — ſo free, firm, and intelligent. We often admire theſe firſt, rude touches. The ſtory of the two old maſters will be remembered, who left cards of compliments to each other, on which only the ſimple outline of a figure was drawn by one, and corrected by the other; but with ſuch a ſuperior elegance in each, that the ſignature of names could not have marked them more deciſively.

323 *Firſt ſketch a ſlight cartoon.* It is the practice indeed of the generality of painters, when they have any great deſign to execute, to make a ſlight ſketch, ſometimes on paper, and ſometimes on canvas. And theſe ſketches are often greatly ſuperior to the principal picture, which has been laboured and finiſhed with the exacteſt care. King William on horſe-back at Hampton court, by ſir Godfrey Kneller, is a ſtriking example of this remark. The picture is highly finiſhed; but is a tame, and unmaſterly performance. At Houghton-hall I have ſeen the original ſketch of this picture; which I ſhould have valued, not only greatly beyond the picture itſelf, but beyond any thing I ever ſaw from the pencil of ſir Godfrey.

336 *One truth ſhe gives*, &c. From theſe three virgin colours, *red*, *blue*, and *yellow*, all the tints of nature are compoſed. Greens

of various hues, are compoſed of blue, and yellow: orange, of red, and yellow; purple and violet, of red, and blue. The tints of the rainbow ſeem to be compoſed alſo of theſe colours. They lie in order thus: violet—*red*—orange—*yellow*—green—*blue*—violet—*red*: in which aſſortment we obſerve that orange comes between *red*, and *yellow*; that is, it is compoſed of thoſe colours melting into each other, Green is in the ſame way compoſed of *yellow* and *blue*; and violet, or purple of *blue*, and *red*.—Nay even browns of all kinds may, in a degree, be effected by a mixture of theſe original colours: ſo may grey; and even a kind of black, tho not a perfect one.——As all pigments however are deficient, and cannot approach the rainbow colours, which are the pureſt we know, the painter muſt often, even in his ſplendid tints, call in different reds, blues, and yellows. Thus as vermillion, tho an excellent red on many occaſions, cannot give a roſy, crimſon hue, he muſt often call in lake, or carmine. Nor will he find any yellow, or blue, that will anſwer every purpoſe. In the tribe of browns he will ſtill be more at a loſs; and muſt have recourſe to different earths.—In oil-painting one of the fineſt earths is known, at

at the colour-ſhops, by the name of *caſtle-earth*, or *Vandyke's-brown*; as it is ſuppoſed to have been uſed by that maſter.

341 *And is by her rejected.* Scarce any natural object, but ſnow, is purely white. The chalk-cliff is generally in a degree diſcoloured. The petals of the ſnow-drop indeed, and of ſome other flowers, are purely white; but ſeldom any of the larger parts of nature.

362 *Keep in view that harmony*, &c. Tho it will be neceſſary to uſe other colours, beſides *yellow*, *red*, and *blue*, this union ſhould however ſtill be kept in view, as the leading principle of harmony. A mixture indeed of theſe three will produce nearly the colour you want: but the more you mix your colours, the muddier you make them. It will give more clearneſs therefore, and brightneſs to your colouring, to uſe ſimple pigments, of which there are great abundance in the painter's diſpenſatory.

364 This mode of colouring is the moſt difficult to attain, as it is the moſt ſcientific. It includes a perfect knowledge of the effects of colours in all their various agreements, and oppoſitions. When attained, it is the moſt eaſy in practice. The artiſt, who blends his colours on his pallet,

depends more on his eye, than on his knowledge. He works out his effect by a more laboured proceſs; and yet he may produce a good picture in the end.

392 Nobody was better acquainted with the effects of ſky, nor ſtudied them with more attention, than the younger Vanderveldt, Not many years ago, an old Thames-waterman was alive, who remembered him well; and had often carried him out in his boat, both up and down the river, to ſtudy the appearances of the ſky. The old man uſed to ſay, they went out in all kinds of weather, fair, and foul; and Mr, Vanderveldt took with him large ſheets of blue paper, which he would mark all over with black, and white. The artiſt eaſily ſees the intention of this proceſs. Theſe expeditions Vanderveldt called, in his Dutch manner of ſpeaking, *going a ſkoying*.

407 The moſt remarkable inſtance of ingenious colouring I ever heard of, is in Guido's St. Michael. The whole picture is compoſed of blue, red, and black; by means of which colours the ideas of heaven and hell are blended together in a very extraordinary manner; and the effect exceedingly ſublime; while both harmony, and chaſteneſs are perſerved in the higheſt degree.

411 *Let ſhade predominate.* As a *general rule*, the half-tints ſhould have more extent than the lights; and the ſhadows ſhould equal both together. —— Yet why a predominancy of ſhade ſhould pleaſe the eye more than a predominancy of light, would perhaps be difficult to explain. I can eaſily conceive, that a *balance* of light and ſhade may be founded in ſome kind of reaſon; but am at a loſs to give a reaſon for a predominancy of either. The fact however is undoubted; and we muſt ſkreen our ignorance of the principle, as well as we can.

446 This rule reſpects an *affected diſplay of light.* If it be introduced as a focus, ſo as not to fall *naturally* on the ſeveral objects it touches, it diſguſts. Rembrandt, I doubt, is ſometimes chargeable with this fault. He is commonly ſuppoſed to be a maſter of this part of painting; and we often ſee very beautiful lights in his pictures, and prints: but as in many of them we ſee the reverſe, he appears to have had no fixed principle. Indeed, few parts of painting are ſo much neglected, ſo eaſily tranſgreſſed, and ſo little underſtood, as the diſtribution of light.

449 *Oppoſition*, and *gradation* are the two grand means of producing effect by light. In

the picture juſt given (l. 429. &c.) of the evening-ray, the effect is produced by *oppoſition*. Beautiful effects too of the ſame kind ariſe often from *catching lights.* ——The power of producing effect by *gradation*, is not leſs forcible. Indeed, without a degree of *gradation oppoſition* itſelf would be mute. In the picture juſt given of the evening-ray, the grand part of the effect, no doubt, ariſes from the *oppoſition* between the gloom, and the light: but in part it ariſes alſo from the *gradation* of the light, till it reach it's point. It juſt tips

> The tufted groves; but all it's ſplendor pours
> On yonder caſtled cliff. ————

452 The colours of animals often ſtrongly illuſtrate the idea of *gradation*. When they ſoften into each other, from light or dark, or from one colour into another, the mixture is very pictureſque. It is as much the reverſe, when white and black, or white, and red, are patched over the animal in blotches, without any intermediate tints. Domeſtic cattle, cows, dogs, ſwine, goats, and cats, are often diſagreeably patched . tho we ſometimes ſee them pleaſingly coloured with a graduating tint. Wild animals, in general, are more uniformly coloured, than tame. Except the zebra, and two or three of the ſpotted race, I recollect none which are not, more or leſs, tinted in this graduating manner. The tiger, the panther, and other variegated animals have their beauty: but the zebra, I think, is rather a curious, than a pictureſque animal. It's ſtreaked ſides injure it both in point of colour, and in the delineation of it's form.

472 *But rarely ſpread it on the diſtant ſcene.* In general perhaps a landſcape is beſt inlightened, when the light falls on the middle parts of the picture; and the foreground is in ſhadow. This throws a kind of natural retiring hue throughout the landſcape: and tho the *diſtance be in ſhadow*, yet that ſhadow is ſo faint, that the retiring hue is ſtill preſerved. This however is only a general rule. In hiſtory-painting the light is properly thrown upon the figures on the foreground; which are the *capital part* of the picture. In landſcape the middle grounds commonly form *the ſcene*, or the *capital part*; and the foreground is little more, than an appendage. Sometimes however it happens, that a ruin, or ſome other capital object on the foreground, makes the *principal part of the ſcene*. When that is the

caſe, it ſhould be diſtinguiſhed by light; unleſs it be ſo ſituated as to receive more diſtinction from ſhade.

487 *A fiercer ſplendor opens to our view all his terrific features.* It is very amuſing, in mountainous countries, to obſerve the appearance, which the ſame mountain often makes under different circumſtances. When it is inveſted with light miſts; or even when it is not illuminated, we ſee it's whole ſummit perhaps under one grey tint. But as it receives the ſun, eſpecially an evening-ſun, we ſee a variety of fractures, and chaſms gradually opening, of which we diſcovered not the leaſt appearance before.

493 Tho the objects may leſſen in due proportion, which is called *keeping*; tho the graduating hue of retiring objects, or the *aerial perſpective*, may be juſt; and tho the light may be diſtributed according to the rules of art; yet ſtill there may not be that general reſult of harmony, which denotes the picture *one object*: and as the eye may be miſled, when it has the *ſeveral parts* before it, the beſt way of examining it as a *perfect whole*, is to examine it in ſuch a light, as will not admit the inveſtigation of *parts*.

534 *Others*, &c. Some painters copy exactly what they ſee. In this there is more mechanical preciſion, than genius. Others take a *general*, *comprehenſive view* of their object; and marking juſt the *characteriſtic points*, lead the ſpectator, if he be a man of taſte, and genius likewiſe, into a truer knowledge of it, than the copier can do, with all his painful exactneſs.

568 *Why then degrade*, &c. If by bringing the figures forward on the foreground, you give room for *character*, and *expreſſion*, you put them out of place as *appendages*, for which they were intended.

586 *Oft ſlowly winding*, &c. The machine itſelf here deſcribed is pictureſque: and when it is ſeen in *winding motion*, or (in other words) when half of it is foreſhortened, it receives additional beauty from contraſt. In the ſame manner a cavalcade, or an army on it's march, may be conſidered as *one object*; and derive beauty from the ſame ſource. Mr. Gray has given us a very pictureſque view of this kind, in deſcribing the march of Edward I.;

> As down the ſteep of Snowdon's ſhaggy ſide
> He wound with toilſome march his long array.
> Stout Glouceſter ſtood aghaſt in ſpeechleſs trance:
> To arms! cried Mortimer; and couched his quivering lance.

Through a paſſage in the mountain we ſee the troops winding round at a great diſtance. Among thoſe nearer the eye, we diſtinguiſh the horſe and foot; and on the foreground, the action, and expreſſion of the principal commanders.

The ancients ſeem to have known very little of that ſource of the picturеſque, which ariſes from preſpective: every thing is introduced in front before the eye: and among the early painters we hardly ſee more attention paid to it. Raphael is far from making a full uſe of the knowledge of it: and I believe Julio Romano makes ſtill leſs.

I do not remember meeting any where with a more pictureſque deſcription of a line of march, than in Vaillant's travels into the interior parts of Africa. He was paſſing with a numerous caravan, along the borders of Caffraria. I firſt, ſays he, made the people of the hord, which accompanied me, ſet out with their cattle. Soon after my cattle followed cows, ſheep, and goats: with all the women of the hord, mounted on oxen with their children. My waggons, with the reſt of my people, cloſed the rear. I myſelf, mounted on horſeback, rode backwards, and forewards. This caravan

on

on it's march, exhibited often a ſingular, and amuſing ſpectacle. The turns it was obliged to make in following the windings of the woods, and rocks, continually gave it new forms. Sometimes it intirely diſappeared: then ſuddenly, at a diſtance, from the ſummit of a hill, I again diſcovered my vanguard ſlowly advancing perhaps towards a diſtant mountain: while the main body, following the track, were juſt below me.

600 This rule indeed applies to all other objects: but as the ſhip is ſo large a machine, and at the ſame time ſo complicated a one, it's *character* is leſs obvious, than that of moſt other objects. It is much better therefore, where a veſſel is neceſſary, to put in a few touches for a ſkiff; than to inſert ſome diſagreeable form for a ſhip, to which it has no reſemblance. At the ſame time, it is not at all neceſſary to make your ſhip ſo accurate, that a ſeaman could find no fault with it. It is the ſame in figures: as appendages of landſcape there is no neceſſity to have them exactly accurate; but if they have not the *general form*, and *character* of what they repreſent, the landſcape is better without them.

608 *They ſeem*, &c. *Rapid motion* alone, and that *near the eye*, is here cenſured. We ſhould be careful however not to narrow too much the circumſcribed ſphere of art. There is an art of ſeeing, as well as of painting. The eye muſt in part enter into the deception. The art of painting muſt, in ſome degree, be conſidered as an act of convention. General forms only are imitated, and much is to be ſupplied by the imagination of the ſpectator. —— It is thus in the drama. How abſurdly would the ſpectator act, if inſtead of aſſiſting the illuſion of the ſtage, he ſhould inſiſt on being deceived, without being a party in the deception?—if he refuſed to believe, that the light he ſaw, was the ſun; or the ſcene before him, the Roman capital, becauſe he knew the one was a candle-light, and the other, a painted cloth? The painter therefore muſt in *many things* ſuppoſe deception; and only avoid it, where it is too *palpably groſs* for the eye to ſuffer.

641 Guido's air, no doubt, is often very pleaſing. He is thought to have excelled in imagining the angelic character; and, as if aware of this ſuperiority, was fond of painting angels. After all, however, they, whoſe taſte is formed on the ſimplicity of the antique, think *Guido's air*, in general ſomewhat theatrical.

643 *Skilful they*, &c. The greateſt obſtruction to the progreſs of art ariſes from the prejudices of conceited judges; who, in fact, know leſs about the matter, than they who know nothing: inaſmuch as truth is leſs obvious to error, than it is to ignorance. Till they can be prevailed on to return upon their ſteps, and look for that criterion in nature, which they ſeek in the half-periſhed works of great names, the painter will be diſcouraged from purſuing knowledge in thoſe paths, where Raphael, and Titian found it.—We have the ſame idea well inforced in Hogarth's analyſis of beauty. (Introduc. p. 4.) "The reaſon why gentlemen, inquiſitive "after knowledge in pictures, have their "eyes leſs qualified to judge, than others, "is becauſe their thoughts have been con-"tinually employed in conſidering, and "retaining the various *manners*, in which "pictures are painted—the hiſtories, names, "and characters of the maſters, together "with many other little circumſtances be-"longing to the *mechanical* part of the "art; and little or no time has been given "to perfect the ideas they ought to have

"in their minds, of the objects themſelves "in nature. For having adopted their "firſt notions merely from *imitations;* and "becoming too often as bigotted to their "faults, as to their beauties, they totally "diſregard the works of nature, merely "becauſe they do not tally with what their "minds are ſo ſtrongly prepoſſeſſed with. "Were it not for this, many a reputed "capital picture, which now adorns the "cabinet of the curious, would long ago "have been committed to the flames."

644 *What if theſe compare*, &c. Bruyere obſerves, that the inferior critic judges only by *compariſon*. In one ſenſe all judgment muſt be formed by compariſon. But Bruyere, who is ſpeaking of poetry, means, that the inferior critic has no ſcale of judgment of a work of art, but by comparing it with ſome other work of the ſame kind. He judges of Virgil by a compariſon with Homer; and of Spencer by comparing him with Taſſo, By ſuch criticiſm he may indeed arrive at certain truths; but he will never form that maſterly judgment, which he might do by comparing the work before him with the great archetypes of nature, and the ſolid rules of his art.——What Bruyere ſays of the critic in poetry, is very applicable to the critic in painting. The inferior critic, who has travelled, and ſeen the works of many great maſters, ſuppoſes he has treaſured up from them the ideas of perfection; and inſtead of judging of a picture by the rules of painting, and it's agreement with nature, he judges of it by the arbitrary ideas he has conceived; and theſe too very probably much injured in the conception. From this comparative mode of criticizing, the art receives no advancement. All we gain, is, that one artiſt paints better than another.

END OF THE NOTES.