

LECTURE V.



LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

WHEN I last had the honour of addressing you, I endeavoured to mark the progress in Germany, of that Art which enables us to transfer to paper and spread through the known world, all that is essential in the Arts of Imitation and Design. I gave to Germany that priority to which on the whole she appears to possess a sort of dubious title—considering this point as of very inferior importance, when compared with the real advancement of Engraving, and the proportionate advantages it is calculated to confer on Society. I return to the names, the time, and the highly favoured country, of Finiguerra, Baldini, and Boticelli.

The elegant and philosophical historian of the illustrious family of Medici has remarked, with a pleasure which he must enjoy in the highest perfection, the fortunate coincidence between the discovery of printing with the letter-press, and the re-appearance of the classic Poets and Historians. That pleasure is pre-eminently his: It may be yours to notice the no less fortunate concurrence between the inventions of Copper-plate engraving and printing; the resurrection of ancient Sculpture; and the general resuscitation of Art, which about the same time improved the condition of Italy; and has since gratified the Taste, enlightened the Understanding, and contributed more than any other cause to maintain the intellectual superiority, of Europe over the rest of the world.

The present state of things is the consequence of the former: and if it be natural to inquire the source of the evil that we suffer, it should be delightful to trace the origin of the good that we enjoy. "The successive advances of Science, (says Dr. John-

son) the vicissitudes of Learning and Ignorance, which are the light and darkness of thinking beings ; the extinction and revival of Arts, and the revolutions of the intellectual world, are the most generally useful parts of history : **THOSE WHO HAVE STATES TO GOVERN, HAVE UNDERSTANDINGS TO CULTIVATE."**

Of those who *had* to cultivate understandings, the fifteenth century beheld in the family of Medici, the gratifying, but rare, spectacle of magistrates who were duly sensible of the importance of this part of their trust : and it may be esteemed no trifling advantage to the Art of Engraving and its early Italian professors, that it arose at Florence, under the auspicious patronage of a man whose zeal and whose taste for Art, were equally exemplary—" a merchant who governed the Republic without arms ; whose credit was ennobled into Fame, and whose riches were dedicated to the service of mankind."*

* Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Chap. 66.

You are probably aware that the disinterestedness of the views of Lorenzo de' Medici has sometimes been disputed, as well as the grandeur of his Taste. While Cosmo has enjoyed—*perhaps* deservedly, the praise of superior liberality and discernment, Lorenzo is accused of having misemployed Michael Angelo, and neglected Leonardo da Vinci: but who could have patronised Michael Angelo?—During the lapse of three centuries, even the most aspiring have voluntarily yielded to him the loftiest station in the most exalted sphere of Art, and the warm admiration of the first Judges, by proclaiming his superiority, has sanctioned his Fame. Adequately to have patronised so great an artist, would have required a mind as vast as his own, possessed of commensurate means of encouragement: and where shall they be found?—The candid will pause at least, ere they blame for not having done more, a Nobleman who has done so much for Art as Lorenzo the Magnificent.

The disappointment of Lorenzo in his

attempts to restore the practice of Mosaic painting, was amply compensated by the spontaneous appearance of an Art, "which (in the words of his accomplished biographer) has given to the works of the Painter, that permanency, which even the durability of Mosaic might not perhaps have supplied."*—We may add to this praise of its permanency, that *portability*, and that *publicity*, which it was impossible that Mosaic should ever supply.

That a Florentine goldsmith, should in the year 1460, have discovered a mode of producing on paper, impressions from engravings on metal, is by no means irreconcilable with the previous existence of printing in Germany. Nothing, however, of Finiguerra's engraving or printing remains to testify this fact, unless a print in the Cracherodean collection marked T. F. F. which has by some persons been supposed to stand for *Thomaso Finiguerra fecit*, might

* Roscoe's life of Lorenzo de' Medici. Vol. 2. p. 224. Edit. 1795.

be believed to be his performance: but Mr. Cracherode has, by a note in the margin, with more probability in my opinion, attributed this print, notwithstanding these initials, to Andrea Mantegna.

An edition of the *Inferno* of Dante, printed at Florence in the year 1481, has long been supposed to contain the earliest Italian engravings, excepting the *maps* to an edition of Ptolemy,* of which the date is ascertained, and to have been the first book ever embellished with copper-plate prints in which human figures, or other natural objects, were attempted to be represented. This is, however, a mistake. The extensive and well chosen bibliographical collection of Earl Spencer, contains a more perfect book, printed also at Florence, (by Niccolo Lorenzo della Magna) but in the year 1477—which is four years anterior to the Dante. Its title is *Monte Santo di Dio*; its author Antonio

* Printed at Rome in 1478.

Bettini bishop of Fuligno; and of the three Engravings it contains, one is much larger than the embellishments of Dante,

The prints which accompany both these books, are the joint performance of Baldini and Boticelli, and none of them discover much skill either in the design or execution. The same artists have also engraven a set of the prophets, single figures, and a much larger plate than had yet appeared in Italy, of which the subject is the last Judgment, and where the damned are represented in separate places of torment which resemble ovens, each inscribed with a particular Vice. But it must be added, that these Engravings—indeed, all the works of Baldini and Boticelli, are Gothic, vulgar, and inferior to those of their northern contemporaries: tending strongly to confirm an observation I had occasion to lay before you in my last Discourse, namely, that before they had the opportunity of studying from ancient Sculpture, the Italian artists were far from being superior to those of Germany.

A few wretched Greeks, impelled by the disasters of the Eastern empire, are said to have sought and found refuge in Italy, and to have brought with them the poor remains of the Arts of Design, at a time when (as Mr. Richardson has observed) "it was as much beyond the ability of any European to delineate a human figure, a tree, or any other natural object, as it is now to make a voyage to the moon."* Some of these miserable performances remain to this day, and attest the *suffering*, though not the Country, of their authors: and from this low and depraved condition, Baldini and Boticelli, succeeding to Cimabue, Giotto, Filippo Lippi, and Masaccio, assisted to work out the redemption of Art.

* Perhaps Mr. Richardson has here gone *rather* too far. I have shewn in my second Discourse, that Art was not at this time utterly extinct in Europe, but that the engraving of metal seals and dies for money, preserved its latent embers through the darkest periods. The Greeks seem only to have re-introduced the use of *colours*, which they mingled in their pictures with gilding.

All the works of these early Engravers that have fallen under my observation, are dirtily printed, as if the method of clearing off the superfluous ink from the plates was but imperfectly known. Their outlines are hard, their shadows produced by crossings done with the graver in various directions but without Art ; and in some instances the same composition, by representing more than one point of time, distracts the attention of the spectator.

Antonio Pollajuoli, who was also of Florence, may with more propriety be called an Artist. From the antique Sculpture, which was now beginning to re-appear, he seems to have learned attention to the *Anatomy* of his figures: to which most important requisite of historical art, Pollajuoli has the distinguished honour of having been the first to attract critical attention. He has shewn his predilection for this study, by representing the conspirators naked in the medal which he cut to commemorate the assassination of Juliano, and the attack

on Lorenzo de' Medici; and also in a much larger Engraving than had hitherto been executed, of which the subject is a battle, and wherein he has represented all the combatants naked. There is an impression of this very scarce Print, in the Cracherodean collection, printed on reddish paper: each figure is nearly eleven inches in height; the heads have some faint dawning of expression, and the shadows are produced without crossings, by diagonal lines apparently done to imitate the hatchings of a pen, and in the same direction in which it is customary to write: but the outlines and shadows are dry and hard, and the forms vulgar and heavy. It is only by comparing Pollajuoli with his contemporaries and predecessors, that we learn to respect his performances; and it has even been said of his most celebrated work, (the martyrdom of St. Sebastian) that it "exhibits only a group of half naked and vulgar wretches, discharging their arrows at a miserable fellow-creature, who by changing places with one of his murderers, might with equal propriety

become a murderer himself :” *—so little attention was paid, even in Italy, at this early period, to character and expression.

Andrea Mantegna, by his more intimate knowledge of the antique, and his superior use of that knowledge, improved the drawing, without materially altering the style of engraving, of Pollajuoli. Indeed, as the local energies and practical perfections of Painting, were at this time so imperfectly developed, it was much more natural, and in the same degree more wise, for engraving to imitate pen and ink drawings, than to imitate pictures: and the best of Mantegna's prints derive a peculiarity of character and of value, from this circumstance. By intermingling the appearance of the finer strokes of the pen as it is worked upward, in his shadows, he softened and mellowed the stronger lines, so that the whole became a more appropriate vehicle of the *obscurity* he had in view; and the exact similarity of his style of engraving,

* Roscoe's life of Lorenzo de' Medici, vol. 2. p. 190.

to his own mode of drawing, with which I have the satisfaction of enabling you to compare it,* sufficiently shews that to imitate *pen and ink Drawings* was the boundary of his aim.

Art now began to shed its genial influence and its kindling lustre on the plains of Italy, and from the ruins of ages arose those master-pieces of Sculpture, which had been the gradual result of ages of study. The Tiber, the Arno, and the Po, smiled to reflect those forms of celestial purity, which had once graced the shores of the Archipelago, and the banks of the Ilyssus: and the palace and gardens of Lorenzo the Magnificent, aspired to emulate those Athenian groves of immortal memory, where Art and Philosophy went hand in hand with the Muses and the Graces.

“ The example of Lorenzo extended itself

* A pen and ink drawing by Mantegna, which is mentioned in the subsequent pages of this Discourse, was exhibited in the Lecture-room.

in concentric circles." Favoured by such advantages, and fostered by the illustrious patronage of the Marquis of Mantua, Andrea Mantegna raised himself from the humble occupation of a shepherd, to the honour of Knighthood; to that of being the instructor of Correggio; and to the first rank among the Italian artists of his time.

His Engravings are not few: but, considering the early period at which they were performed, are much more extraordinary than numerous. The two labours of Hercules in the Cracherodean collection, of which one has the initials of Finiguerra, and the other no mark at all, ought, I should conceive, to be reckoned among the earliest works of Mantegna. Like those of Pollajuoli, they are printed on reddish paper: and are in Engraving, what Lamerzhan towers, and some other of our earliest brick buildings, are in English Architecture; whose authors had seen and endeavoured to avail themselves of the beauties of Greek and Roman edifices, without departing from their earlier Gothic edu-

cation. His Bacchanalian procession has still some considerable remains of Gothic grossness; but he has here shewn his talent in composition; and the fore-shortenings that occur are far better expressed than we have hitherto seen. The composition of his battle of Sea-gods and Tritons, is wildly grand; with such a mixture of the grotesque,* as may seem not improperly to belong to a subject which we should esteem out of Nature, or beyond the limits of the material world. The combatants in this battle are the offspring of his own fertile and vigorous fancy, generated by the sculpture of antiquity: Beside the Tritons and Sea-monsters, here are the general forms of horses and men, but, like the fauns and sylvan deities of the Greeks, their natures partake of the element in which they exist—at least, the spectator is led to perceive that this intention existed in the mind of the Artist, and that (in the words of Ariel's song) they have

* By the *Grot*-esque, I do not mean the ludicrous, but the mixed style of those ancient works discovered in the Italian Grottoes, from whence the term is derived.

undergone “ a sea change, into something rich and strange.” Instead of hair, sea-weed decorates the human heads; and the fins and scales of marine animals help to constitute the horses and Tritons. Their weapons too are congenial with themselves: they fight with fish and fish-bones, and the scull of some unknown inhabitant of the deep serves as a shield.

The heads of the horses, as well as those of the Sea-gods, are animated by no inconsiderable portion of the ideal grandeur of the Antique: the anatomical markings—the constant object of Mantegna’s attention, are also successfully studied from the same inestimable source of information: and in the early impressions, such as may be seen in that valuable collection of the late Mr. Cracherode,* to which I have had frequent occa-

* The Rev. Clayton Cracherode, the donor to the Public of this extensive collection, was the son of Lieutenant-Colonel Cracherode, who commanded the land forces under Lord Anson, in his celebrated expedition. He was educated at Westminster school, and afterward became a stu-

sion to refer, the *chiaroscuro* has more breadth, as well as depth, than seems to belong to the Italian art of this early period, and is conducted through the whole with masterly address.*

dent of Christ Church, Oxford. He took the degree of M. A. and acquired some Church preferment, which he conscientiously relinquished on becoming possessed of a large fortune by inheritance; but continued a student of Christ Church, and a trustee of the British Museum to the time of his death. That he was handsome in person, may be seen, in the only portrait (by Edridge) for which he ever sat, which is in the possession of Lord Spencer; and the epithet of "mild Cracherode," by which the author of the Pursuits of Literature has distinguished him, will inform Posterity that he was amiable in his manners. It was his pleasure to seek, and his ambition to possess, the most curious Books, Prints, Drawings, Coins, &c. that were any where to be found: and if the traders in Art and Literature, succeeded in attracting any portion of that attention which is due to merit toward margin-measuring and rarity, it is enough that their success with Mr. Cracherode is noticed in the Pursuits of Literature. To the pointed Satire or the mild reproof of that Author, it is not necessary to add.

* Mr. Strutt, and I believe the foreign writers also, who have mentioned this work of Andrea Mantegna, have spoken of it as being *two* prints; but it is clear by putting the two together that Mantegna intended them as *one*, which from some motive of convenience (probably the largeness of its dimensions) he has engraven on two plates.

A more slow and sedate magnificence moves his triumphal procession of Julius Cæsar. The wild imagination which revels in his recesses of the ocean, and his Bacchanalian processions, is nearly excluded from hence: it but serves, in the flaming of the Candelabra, to gleam through "the spoils of Nations, and the pomp of Wars;" or faintly discovers itself in other subordinate accessories as the fringed ornament of stately grandeur.*

In his Dance of females, he has shewn so much of the graceful simplicity and general air of Greek sculpture, as to give rise to a belief that it has been copied from an antique basso-relievo: but till such a basso-relievo is shewn, it would be unfair in us to resign so much of the merit of Andrea Mantegna, as this composition may claim. These three Engravings, abundantly demonstrate the wide range of his technical

* This Procession is engraven on nine plates. The original of the whole may be seen in the Royal collection at Kensington Palace.

and inventive powers ; and shew with what success he could combine, or separately exhibit, Elegance, Wildness, and Grandeur, as occasion admitted or required.

Some critics have thought that Mantegna's admiration of the Antique was too predominant in his works ; that it too frequently *engrossed* his powers ; and hurried him too entirely away from that contemplation of Nature, which I believe, must always be one of the parents of originality in Art. Yet, if this enthusiasm be a fault, it is a fault proceeding so necessarily, and so immediately, from the localities of time and place, and the redundance of his merits, that it is as secure of pardon from the candid, as those merits are of praise.

There is a very singular allegorical print attributed to Andrea Mantegna, and generally to be found in the collections of his works ; but of which the *Engraving* should, in my opinion, be ascribed to some inferior hand ; and perhaps to that of the goldsmith, Finiguerra. That the *Design* is his, I have

no doubt. The general superior style of handling and drawing ; the antique airs of the heads ; (particularly those of Truth, Calumny, Insidiousness, and Mistrust) and the respectable testimonies I shall presently adduce ; are the proofs upon which this assertion may be confidently grounded : and the difference in the style of hatching the shadows, between this engraving and those which are certainly by the hand of Mantegna, combined with its palpable inferiority to the original Drawing, amounts in my mind to the most perfect conviction that Andrea Mantegna is not the engraver of this print.

The *Drawing* is an attempt to revive a lost picture of Apelles, which, but that its memory has been perpetuated by Lucian, had long since been lost in oblivion. I have thought an account both of its subject and its history worth your attention ; and the more so as both have relation to eminent Artists : I take the former from a MS record on the back of the Drawing, which I believe is the hand writing of the late

celebrated collector, Mr. Barnard. "Lucian describes an allegorical Picture painted by Apelles, of which his own misfortunes were the subject. He was falsely accused by Antiphilus, a contemporary artist who envied his abilities, of having entered into a conspiracy against King Ptolemy. [Happy had it been for mankind, had Ptolemy been the only king, and Apelles the only painter, who had been thus abused.] The monarch enraged, was very near putting Apelles to death; but that one of the real conspirators compassionating him, undeceived the King: who, repenting of his credulity, gave Apelles an hundred talents, and his accuser to be his slave.—Andrea Mantegna made this Drawing from the description of Lucian. The King, distinguished by his crowned head and extraordinary ears, is sitting on the left; the two figures near him are Mistrust and Ignorance: the first figure facing him, is Envy, conducting Calumny, who has a burning torch in her right hand, and under whom Mantegna has written *Calumnia di Apelles*: She drags accused Innocence by the hair: Deceit

follows, dressing her up; and insidious Villainy urging her on: lastly, Truth and Penitence close the procession."

It seems often to have been the fortune of this very curious Drawing, to have belonged to some distinguished Artist. It was once in the possession of Rembrandt, who has left a copy of it by his own hand: It has since belonged to Richardson, the painter; and to Arthur Pond; and is now, as well as Rembrandt's copy, the property of the President of the Royal Academy.*

The next Engraver of decided talent that Italy produced was Marc Antonio Raimondi, of Bologna; whose name marks a memorable æra in the History of Engraving.

The progress and separation of the arts of embellishment have been similar to those of necessity and accommodation. In the

* Mr. West was President, at the time this Discourse was delivered.

early and rude ages of Society, every man was obliged occasionally to exercise, with the imperfect skill he might possess, every kind of manual labour or employ to which his wants had given birth: He was by turns Carpenter, Potter, Basketmaker, and Husbandman.—So in the early state of the Fine Arts, the Professor, as occasion required, was Painter, Engraver, Chaser, and in some instances Statuary, Architect, and Poet also: for these arts are all, either analogically or really; either mediately or immediately; dependent on the same first principles.

But a more wise, because more useful œconomy of distribution, is gradually elaborated, by the ardour of Genius and Enterprise, from social experience. It has by degrees been perceived that Arts, though analogically or really inseparable in theory, may, with advantage to Society, be divided in practice: and that, even when thus separated, every art claims the full vigour and expansion of every mind devoted to its pursuit.

In less than fifty years from the discovery of Copper-plate printing,—the resurrection of the Antique; the liberal patronage of the Medici; and the transcendent merits of the Roman and Florentine artists; disclosed more extensive views of practical attainment, and new provinces of Art. Hence, when the general good of Society called for subdivision, the sister Arts, whose object is that general good, found pleasure in obedience: and when the admiration of Europe was excited by the divine works of Raphael, so often and so deservedly the subjects of the highest praise, the good sense of Marc Antonio perceived at once the expedience and propriety of devoting himself and his art to their *Translation*.

Of *Drawing* (or the delineation of Form) which is the prime element of early Italian Engraving, words alone can impart but slender knowledge. To all that words could teach, I have listened with you upon a late occasion; and obtained both pleasure and

improvement:* but it is worthy of your notice, that excepting this cardinal requisite, which, as I have already explained, was a sort of geographical or local advantage, the Italian engravers of this period were less qualified for the task of translating (at least for that of translating what may be termed the eloquence of Painting) than their Northern contemporaries. That distribution of shade and of actual and reflex light, which, uniting and concentrating attention, constitutes effect; and that art of expressing the various textures of substances, which may be called the descriptive part of the translation of picture; were both exercised with far more considerable skill, (as you have seen) by the German, Dutch, and Flemish, than by the Italian engravers.—Yet was the talent of Marc Antonio so well adapted to translate, or engrave after, those masters who did *not* unite their pictures by any pervading system of Light and Shade, nor add the fascinations

* Mr. Opie's Lecture on Drawing, had preceded the delivery of this, a few evenings.

of harmonious colouring, that many critics have doubted, and some have even denied, that Raphael has since been so faithfully rendered as by him: for though modern engravers have far excelled him in other respects, none perhaps have equalled, and certainly none have exceeded, the truth, purity, and spontaneous grace of his Outline; which is so perfectly that of Raphael, that it has been affirmed (though without sufficient evidence) that Raphael himself corrected them on the copper. But his singular print of St. George and the Dragon, (which is one of his youthful performances, and either after his first master, Raibolini, or from his own design) will serve to shew how much Marc Antonio improved in this respect, by contemplating the works, and attending to the instructions, of Raphael.

Travelling to Venice for improvement, Marc Antonio saw there with admiration, and copied with tolerable fidelity, Albert Durer's prints from the life of the Virgin. The copies (as is generally, if not necessarily the case with copies) are inferior to the

originals; yet, the sale of these obtained him considerable profit; though in the opinion of some, this profit was enjoyed at the expense of a proportionate deduction from his moral reputation. It is upon record, that Durer felt this conduct on the part of Marc Antonio, as an injury; and travelled from Nuremberg to Venice to seek redress: and it is also on record that the redress he obtained, had reference only to his future fame. Either Albert Durer was too noble minded to require pecuniary recompense from so poor and so ingenious a man as Marc Antonio; or it may be the Senate of Venice wanted the power, or perhaps the discernment, to award it; or (in charity to Marc Antonio we may add) perhaps the case did not appear to the senate to require it: for they simply forbade Marc Antonio any more to imitate the monogram of Albert Durer.

When Marc Antonio quitted Venice he went to Rome, where the mutual merits and mutual interests of Raphael and himself, soon introduced them to each other's

friendship, and here he remained engraving after the works of that great Painter, I believe with the exception of a few plates, of which the subjects are objectionable, from the designs of Julio Romano, and one after Bandinelli, till the year 1527; when the city of Rome was taken and plundered by the Spaniards, and Marc Antonio lost in the pillage, all the wealth he had accumulated by his profession. After this event, he is supposed to have retired to his native city of Bologna: but this is not certain: nor of his death is there any more recorded, than a vague report that he was assassinated by a Roman nobleman, in revenge for engraving, contrary to his engagement, a second plate from Raphael's slaughter of the Innocents.

This subject he certainly did engrave twice: the account of his death, is so far corroborated: and both the Engravings are here for your inspection. They are distinguished from each other by a few trifling variations, but which are objects of much note among the connoisseurs, and chiefly

by a small pointed tice, called by the Italians *la Felchetta*, which appears in the second, and does not appear in the first plate: the second is generally thought to be the best; but I think is only partially so; and that certain passages are better rendered in the first: among which we may reckon the principal naked figure, who has just drawn his sword; the terrified mother in the middle of the picture; and her, who at its right hand extremity, is resisting the murderer. Yet, in exhibiting these Prints, and requesting you to remark the merits of Marc Antonio, I cannot but anticipate that the pathos of Raphael will seize and detain your sympathies: Whilst contemplating “the palpitating Graces, the helpless Innocence, and the defenceless Beauty” of the mothers and children, I have little hope that the translator will obtain your attention, though he merits your approbation. Where the interest of the subject and the powers of the Painter, are so peculiar and extraordinary as in this instance, the Engraver, like the fair sex, must practise many excellent qualities in silence, and unseen

but by the discerning few; like them he must listen to the advice of the dying Pericles;* and like them he must cheerfully prefer the consciousness of deserving well, to the vanity of obtaining praise.

The style of Marc Antonio possesses not the exteriors of oratory, but he pronounces every sentence so distinctly; with a confidence so modest; and an emphasis so true to Raphael and to Nature; that those who attend, are convinced without being persuaded. To speak without a metaphor, there is something in his manner of employing his graver,—something dry, unambitious, unattractive to the sense; which, by all sound critics, has been thought to deserve praise without desiring it, and peculiarly appropriate to the works of a painter, who not merely does not require, but will not admit, “the aid of foreign ornament.”

* I cannot recollect where I have read, that Pericles, on his death-bed, recommended to the women who were standing near him, to conduct themselves so as not to attract observation, nor become the subject of conversation one way or other.

The Dead Christ of Raphael, where the excess of his mother's sorrow is softened, but not subdued, by her divine resignation, he also repeated with variations; of which the principal are, that in the second, the Virgin Mary appears much younger than in the first, and her right arm divested of drapery, from which circumstance, it is known among collectors by the appellation of "the Virgin with the naked arm." The second plate is more delicately engraved, but is feeble, when compared with the masterly vigour he has shewn in the first. The nudities are here drawn with Marc Antonio's, inspired by Raphael's, usual superiority; but the drapery and ground, are softened and enriched beyond the ordinary powers of Marc Antonio's graver, and are so much in the improved style of his pupil George Penz, as may incline us to suspect that these parts have been engraved by his hand. A distinguished artist and critic—one of the few who are able to appreciate and declare the merits of Raphael, has said that his expression is decided by character;

and that he adapted form to character, in a mode, and with a truth, that leaves all attempts at emendation hopeless. Whether Raphael authorised or allowed Marc Antonio to substitute the younger Virgin, who seems more like the sister, for the elder, who *is* the mother of Christ, does not appear: there are no dates on the Cracherode impressions from which I remark, but from the above citation we may infer, that the elder Madonna is the real figure of Raphael; and that the second plate is what it is fashionable to call a free translation; done after the author's death.

In "the Virgin of the palm," Marc Antonio discovers, if possible, a still more exquisite feeling, and of course produces a more perfect translation, of Raphael. Christ is bestowing his benediction with the sublimity of inspiration; and St. John receiving it with dignified and divine, though infantile, submission. The subordination of parts is just: the whole is perfectly graceful; and

the head of the Virgin Mary, the most graceful part of that whole.*

Marc Antonio's powers as an Engraver appear not to have declined from their acme, in his martyrdom of St. Laurence after Bandinelli. He not merely copied, but his long acquaintance with the works of Raphael enabled him, and his gratitude to Bandinelli who had obtained his release from prison disposed him, to improve the drawing of his original. The print is defective, yet not more so than many other of his works, in *chiaroscuro*: but expression of the textures of substances, and the existence of reflex light, are here feebly acknowledged; the folds of the draperies are ample; the drawing of the naked excellent; and the characters of the heads far better than would seem to belong to the reputation of Bandinelli.

* I see reason to conjecture, that in this plate also he has been assisted by Penz.

I have thought it unnecessary to comment on many of this master's productions, because, in respect to Marc Antonio's, or the Engraver's, part, they are so nearly alike, that four score of his prints could scarcely afford a more satisfactory exhibition of his talent than the four now submitted to your notice. I have only briefly to re-state, that though he may seem deficient in reflex light and harmony of *chiaroscuro*; totally ignorant of the principles of rendering local colour in the abstract; and nearly so of those of expressing the various textures of substances; these are in him no more than light errors, that

“ —like straws upon the surface flow;

“ Those who would search for pearls must dive below.”

He certainly possessed considerable manual skill in the management of his graver, which was the sole instrument of *his* art; and in his knowledge of *drawing* went far beyond all his competitors.—Raphael was Marc Antonio's object; and the blandishments, the splendour, and the variety, which would have been indis-

pensably necessary to the translation of Correggio or Titian, were not called for here. In estimating his merits, Picart* should therefore have remembered—or rather, should have known, that the talent he so eminently possessed was precisely the talent that was necessary to the accomplishment of his purpose;—at least he should have recollected, that among the poets and sages of antiquity, the possession of even but a single worthy quality or endowment in a

* Picart says of Marc Antonio and his scholars, that “the outlines of their figures when they worked from the designs of Raphael, are hard, equal lines; the engraving part is neat, but meagre,” &c.—and Strutt observes with great truth of Picart, that it would have been better if he had never entered the field against the early Engravers, “or at least if he had ceased hostilities when he laid down his pen. But not contented with abusing their works, his vanity prompted him, in an evil hour, to take up the point and the graver, to convince the world how much it had been imposed upon. For this purpose he imitated the Etchings and Engravings of various masters, and called the work, “*The Innocent Impostors.*” But they sufficiently prove his want of abilities to execute the work in such a manner as to deceive an experienced judge.”—Himself was probably the only person imposed upon by the *innocent* Impostors.

transcendent degree, was sufficient to constitute, in their opinions—a demi-god!

We have still to travel over a fertile, interesting, and extensive, portion of the art of Engraving: But, as I have to regret that my professional engagements scarcely allow me to hope that I shall be able to appear before you again in the course of the present season, I shall beg leave to close this discourse with a few remarks on the uses of modern Engraving; and on certain mistakes which, I am sorry to observe, prevail respecting those uses.

In the brief sketch of its history previous to the discovery of printing, I trust that some faint idea has been conveyed of the extensive benefits which the ancient modes of engraving have conferred on mankind: and it may easily be inferred that, had paper and its uses been known, the wisdom of Greece and Rome would have enlisted the modern art of Engraving in the service of Virtue.—We have only at present to inquire (and perhaps I ought to apologise for not attending to this

question before) what is the use of that art of Engraving, of which Printing is the proper termination? The answer will be short:—

It disseminates every valuable discovery in mechanical, chemical, agricultural, architectural, and astronomical, Science: It renders the scenery of remote countries, the distinguished features of our own, or the more delightful ideal scenery of highly gifted imaginations, familiar to every class of the community: By multiplying the vivid beams of embodied Intellect, which emanate from the mind of the poetic Painter, it becomes the radiance of his glory, and the organ of public instruction: It diffuses the fame, with the portraits, of the patriotic and illustrious: It consecrates and embalms the memory of the brave.

As a source of commercial benefit to the country, and of encouragement to the higher efforts of painting; and of the mutual increase of advantages these arts and that commerce might be made to confer on each other; I must forbear to speak at pre-

sent, though I have much to say : because the relaxed tone of the public taste, with respect to this art, and indeed with respect to art in general, seems more pressingly to require of me the unpleasant duty of exhibiting some small quantity of *mental bark and steel*.

There is a line often quoted by the venal advocates of those venal artists who are ever ready to degrade the dignity of their professions, by adapting what little talent they may possess to the momentary whims of wealthy ignorance, "that those who live to please, *must please to live*:"—which is so employed as to inculcate the ideas, that to amuse and to flatter those who are willing to pay for it;—to offer incense to those exalted beings who are content to be blinded by its smoke; are the proper aims and purposes of Art.—As these parasitical artists, (if Artists they may be called) are but so many reptiles crawling upon the flowery brink of deserved and certain oblivion, we might be content to leave them to their Lethean fate: but it must not be dissembled

that the public taste is but too strongly tinctured with this mistaken opinion: and though I cannot suppose that my humble efforts will add conviction to the excellent precepts on this subject, which have been so eloquently, yet, so fruitlessly delivered in the Lecture-rooms of the Royal Academy, I may still indulge the hope that what has there been urged in vain, or to little purpose, will here be listened to—if not with approbation, at least with complacency.

Art is Philosophy in her most fascinating* guise; teaching by examples—"Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness;"—but, she is the nurse of Independence, and the sister of Wisdom.—The true end and purpose of every art that is worthy of the appellation, is to Instruct; and Pleasure is the means she employs:—not that petty pleasure which proceeds from frivolity and prettiness; but that much grander emotion which is felt at the heart, and has the nearest affi-

* So fascinating that we have been induced to forget it *was* Philosophy.

nity with social happiness.—Pleasure, from the cradle to the grave, is the most effectual means of instruction, and should never have been separated from Virtue: to separate Pleasure from Virtue, was to sever the imagination from the judgment, and set at variance what ought to be united:—it was a barbarous separation of the head from the heart, dictated by those barbarous superstitions that in dark ages pervert Nature to enslave mankind; and mistakenly obeyed or repeated by those miscalled Philosophers, who have conspired to murder the mental part of man, in order to make a shew of its anatomy. It has been the constant bane of true taste, and intellectual culture.

To substitute the vain and tinsel glitter of individual personal ostentation, for the sterling gold of public utility;—what is it, but to melt all worthy sentiment and manly resolution, on the lap of Luxury, while we neglect the noble purposes of patriotic virtue and real refinement?—While many of the villas that surround

this great metropolis, and even many of the mansions of the metropolis itself, are covered with tasteless profusion and tawdry wonders, is it not true that the naval pillar still sleeps in its native quarry; and that the call of patriots, and princes, and the heroic strains of the harmonic and poetic* muses, have echoed in vain?—Is it not equally true that the walls of the Royal Academy annually blush at the absence of poetry and history, though the empire may boast the first painters in the world?—Nor is it less true, nor marks it less our general want of that Attic discernment, by which certain individuals are distinguished, that the print-shops are filled with vague trumpery smearings, contemptible caricatures, and nonsensical transparencies.

If such must be called pleasure, and such the pursuits of Art,—it is pleasure so diluted that true taste must nauseate the

* Does the same regretted absence of grandeur of taste extend to the art of Music—indispensable as it seems to be to modern ears, and modern education?—Or why is not Dr. Busby's Naval Oratorio repeated?

draught. It is Art so prostituted—that we cannot repress our wishes, at least, for its speedy reformation, nor our endeavours to shew—

“ How little they bested
“ Or fill the fixed mind with all their toys.”*

Though truth, and the interests of the good, which are inseparable from truth, oblige us to state these facts, we may still be proud to recollect, that of tasteful and benevolent minds, formed under the benignant influ-

* I regret much that I have never seen till now (October 30, 1806) Mr. Valentine Green's Letter to Sir Joshua Reynolds, printed for Cadell, in 1782. Had I seen that Letter sooner I might have quoted it with advantage. I beg to refer the reader on the points before us to pp. 17, 18, &c. and in general to the whole pamphlet. In p. 22, Mr. Green, combating the supposed necessary connexion of Art with effeminacy and luxury, says “ the only danger the Arts can present is, that we have already encountered, in their having been called in to idle and vain purposes, and made subservient to trivial pleasures and ostentatious parade, in which neither sentiment, or dignity, or national virtue, were appealed to.” Since the delivery of this Lecture, it has been insinuated by the dealers in this meretricious trumpery, that I then said more on the subject than the occasion called for; but the reader will recollect that, notwithstanding the admonitions of Mr. Green, deli-