

The Examiner.

"THIS IS TRUE LIBERTY, WHEN FREEBORN MEN—HAVING TO ADVISE THE PUBLIC, MAY SPEAK FREE."—EURIPIDES.

VOL. I.]

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THE WATER LILY.

Burthened with a cureless sorrow,
Came I to the river deep;
Weary, hopeless of the morrow,
Seeking but a place to weep;
Sparkling onwards, full of gladness,
Each sun-crested wavelet flew,
Mocking my deep-hearted sadness,
Till I sickened at the view.
Then I left the sunshine golden
For the gloomy willow-shade,
Desolate and unbeholden,
There my fainting limbs I laid.
And I saw a water lily
Resting in its trembling bed,
On the drifting waters chilly;
With its petals white outspread.
Pillowed there it lay securely,
Moving with the moving wave,
Up to heaven gazing purely,
From the river's gloomy grave.
As I looked, a burst of glory
Fell upon the snowy flower,
And the lessoned allegory
Learned I in the blessed hour:—
Thus does Faith, divine, indwelling,
Bear the soul o'er life's cold stream,
Though the gloomy billows swelling,
Evermore still darker seem.
Yet the treasure never sinketh,
Though the waves around it roll,
And the moisture that it drinketh,
Nurtures, purifies the soul.
Thus aye looking up to Heaven
Should the white and calm soul be,
Gladden in the sunshine given,
Nor from the clouds shrink fearfully.
So I turned, my weak heart strengthened,
Patiently to bear my woe;
Praying, as the sorrow lengthened,
My endurance too might grow.
And my earnest heart beseeching
Charmed away the sense of pain;
So the lily's silent teaching
Was not given to me in vain.

LONELY AGE.

The gate is swinging from the hasp,
The garden plot shrinks, less and less,
Mid weed and seed, and things that clasp
All beauty in their hideousness;
The wildness seems to grow and grow,
However late on long I strive;
There's nothing blooms! It was not so
When Ellen was alive!

The neighbours for a time were kind,
And rarely passed without a word;
But they who grieve have friends to find
And sorrow tires when often heard!
So by another path they go
Across the brook, beyond the hive,
And few come near:—it was not so
When Ellen was alive!

SONG.

The stars are climbing up the hill,
Like footseps of the night;
And, like a child, the little rill
Runs whimpering out of sight.
It is an hour when love hath birth—
When hands and hearts are given;
An hour when stars are nearer earth,
And lovers nearer heaven!

When visions of the future glow,
Despite the world's control;
And whispers musical and low
Steal softly o'er the soul!
An hour, all other moments worth,
That life hath ever given;
When heaven's own stars are nearer earth,
And lovers nearer heaven!

A gentleman who did not live very happily with his wife, on the maid telling him that she was going to give her mistress warning, as she kept scolding her from morning till night; "Happy girl!" said the master, "I wish I could give warning too."

ORIGINAL LITERATURE.

OBSERVATIONS ON PAINTING, ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND.

NO. III.

I am not surprised that you should at present consider the Imagination to have less to do with Painting than with Poetry, but I feel confident you will eventually change your opinion; a just perception and feeling of the beauties of Poetry are, however, quite requisite to the enjoyment of Painting, and indeed form the probation through which we must pass, before the higher excellencies of Painting can be perceived.

You say that Painting is of necessity less imaginative than Poetry, because the Artist must either express his Ideas of the grand and beautiful by the representation of natural objects, or must lapse into the grotesque and the absurd; while, on the other hand, the Poet can, at will, transport us out of this "Work-day world," and make us forget the proportions, and attributes of sublunary nature. I suspect you have lately been reading Shakspeare.

"The Poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from Heaven to Earth, from Earth to Heaven,
And as Imagination bodies forth
The form of things unknown, the Poet's pen
Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."

I have no wish to detract from the merits of the eye, the imagination, and the pen, described in the above superb lines, which I have read oftener than I can remember, and always with renewed enthusiasm and delight; but before we decide that the Poet is more highly favoured than the Painter, let us examine the materials of which the best of our Poetical works consist.

We will take, if you please, the Iliad of Homer, which has not often been surpassed, either in grandeur or beauty; the subject of it is the anger of Achilles.

"Achilles wrath to Greece the direful spring
Of woes unnumbered, heavenly Goddess sing,
That wrath which hurled to Pluto's gloomy reign,
The souls of mighty Chiefs untimely slain."

POPE'S HOMER.

Now it is certain that anger and its attendant evils are by no means out of the ordinary course of nature, they are, unhappily, as common as frequent recurrence can render them; but, notwithstanding this, we know and feel, that the Iliad is, as a Poem, infinitely superior to the "Jerusalem Delivered," of Tasso, which last is founded upon a subject as magnificent and imposing as any that the imagination can conceive. It is generally admitted that two of the most beautiful passages in the Iliad are the parting of Hector and Andromache in the 6th Book, and the prayer of Ajax for light, in the 17th Book; both of which are strictly according to the truth of nature, and the respective expressions and sentiments such as we might expect from conjugal affection and manly courage, while on the other hand the battle of Deities, in which the imagination of the Poet soars beyond nature and probability, is far from being considered a favorable specimen of the work; again, compare the general style of Homer, or Virgil, with the wild metaphors and unnatural usages of many of the minor Poets, and tell me whether grandeur and beauty are not better attained by simplicity and attention to the truth of nature, than by all the flights of an extravagant imagination. I might adduce many more instances, from all which I would infer that poetic grandeur and beauty arise not from neglecting or violating the general truth of nature, but from selecting all that is great, beautiful and good in nature, and leaving untouched all that is mean or absurd; if you admit this inference, as I think you must, you at the same time imply that the imagination is equally concerned in Painting as in Poetry, for what has been said of the necessity of attending to the general truth of nature in the latter, may, with equal justice be stated of the former, and consequently, the Imagination must be kept under the same degree of

control in both. There have indeed been many Painters, as well as many Poets, with no imagination to controul, but the same uninteresting character attaches to the Paintings; in the one case as to the Poetry in the other: this may lead us to take a comparative view of the manner in which the imagination is exercised in the respective works of the Painter and of the Poet.

The principal difference which we discern in the two arts, is, that while the Poet is at liberty to express his ideas at as great length as he may think proper, with no other necessary limit than the point at which he may cease to please, to instruct or to interest the reader; the Painter on the other hand is limited to the space comprehended in an angle of 90 degrees at the eye of the spectator; and must of necessity confine himself to one particular moment of time; to compensate him, however, for this restriction, the Painter, if he possess a strong imagination, governed by sound Taste and judgement, has the power of making a much more immediate and vivid impression upon the mind than can be done by Poetry; besides this, Painting being an universal language, the Artist is not fettered by any particular idioms or fashions, but on the contrary his work will approach perfection only in proportion as it is founded upon the truth of nature in general, and free from the shackles of mere local and temporary customs; the arbitrary nature of words will not allow the Poet to generalize either to the same extent or with the same effect.

In the room in which I write there is a coloured Print evincing, in my opinion, both imagination and judgement; the subject is the return of a youthful sailor to the home of his infancy; he is seated by his mother, to whom he gives the earnings of his Voyage; while, with the other hand, he presents a Handkerchief to his sister, a blooming girl on the verge of Womanhood; he has brought a Parrot for a younger sister, an interesting child of six or seven years old. The story is remarkably well told, and every detail most admirably adapted to further the general effect; a Tree casts its protecting shadow on the Cottage, and a climbing Plant bends gracefully over the Door; in the distance is the Village Church, to which we may well believe that the happy group will repair, in grateful thanks-giving to the fountain of all good for the wanderer's return; a spinning wheel reminds us of those happy pastoral days in which large manufactories were unknown; a Cat seated on the wheel looks with curious surprise at the Parrot, who in his turn appears surprised at a Jay, which his new mistress holds towards him; a cage, with open door, from which the Jay has been taken, hangs on a Tree ready for the Parrot, thus shewing by a happy thought, that the joy of the family is as unexpected as it is great; the traces of much sorrow are in the countenance of the young Mother, but all is now forgotten, and her hand rests on her Boy's shoulder in secure and affectionate delight. Softness, repose, and harmony characterize this very agreeable print, in which the Artist has been faithfully true to nature in general, without descending to an undue particularity on the details.

A Painter, to be of first rate excellence must represent an Idea rather than reality; but in forming the Idea he must take care to keep his imagination within the bounds of nature and probability; he is to avoid the servile imitation of individual objects in the details of his performance; such imitation would indeed deprive him of every claim to be considered a master in his Art; but, although he is not strictly to tread in the foot-steps of nature, he must by no means contravene or go against her; he must select her general and leading attributes; he must watch her most amiable moods; and every beauty which he may then discover must be embodied in the idea which he is to represent. It is to this exercise of the imagination and judgment combined, that we are indebted for the cartoons of Raffaele, the Land-scapes of Clauca, and the compositions of Poussin; and it is from this only that we are to hope for excellence in any department of the fine arts.