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Critical Observations

ON

SHAKESPEARE.

BOOK I.

SECT. I.

'**T**IS a common observation, and therefore perhaps not altogether untrue, that critics generally set out with these two maxims; the one, that the author must always dictate what is *best*; the other, that the critic is to determine what that *best* is. There is an assertion not very unlike this, that Dr. Bentley has made in his late edition of Milton: " ' I have
" such

1. See his first note on Milton's Paradise lost. However to do the Dr. justice, there are some errors which he has undoubtedly mended, of which two are most remarkable. B. VII, 321. *The smelling gourd*, which should be *swelling*. and *ψ. 451. fowl living*, which ought to have been printed, *soul living*. In most of the other places, if he cannot find errors, he will make them. But methinks an author should

B

bear

“ such an esteem for our poet, that which of the
 “ two words is the better, *that I say* was dictated

bear his share, as well as the transcriber: and though the context is a sacred thing, and ought not to be disturbed, yet in a note a better reading may be proposed. In B. IX y. 670. there is the following beautiful description.

*As when of old some orator renown
 In Athens or free Rome, where eloquence
 Flourish'd, since mute, to some great cause address'd,
 Stood in himself collected, while each part,
 Motion, each act won audience, ere the tongue.*

In descriptions particularly the words ought to be neither embarrassed, nor ambiguous. But here, is *motion* the accusative or nominative case? If the accusative; how far fetch'd is the meaning, *each part won motion*? If the nominative; Milton should have given it, *each part, each motion, each act*: or rather thus, in a great measure according to Dr. Bentley's reading,

*Stood in himself collected whole, while each
 Motion, each act won audience, ere the tongue.*

Collected whole: *In seipso totus teres, atque rotundus.* Hor. L. II. f. 7. A person must have no feeling of poetry not to allow this the *better* reading; but allowing this, no rules of criticism will suffer him to alter, what the transcriber, or printer has not first altered. In Shakespeare the editors have proposed many *better* readings, which they should have mention'd only in their notes; and they would thus have deserved that praise for their ingenuity, which they seem to forfeit, by going out of their province to correct the author, when they should only have corrected the faulty copy.

“ by

“ by Milton.” And from a similar cast of reasoning, in his preface to Horace, he says, ² that those emendations of his are for the most part more certain, which are made from conjectures, than those from ancient copies, and manuscripts.

’Twas never my intention to call in question the skill, and abilities of one, whose reputation in learning is so deservedly established: but there was a good piece of ³ advice, (which I cannot so easily pass over, because of universal use to critics,) offered him, when first he made his design known of publishing his Horace; which was, to admit into the context all those better readings, for which he had the authority of ancient manuscripts; but as to meer conjectural corrections, to place them in his notes. His reply to this advice was, as might be expected, “ No, for then who will regard ’em?”

Our great critic was too well guarded by his learning, to have his own reply turned as a sarcasm against himself; which might so justly

2. *Plura igitur in Horatianis his curis ex conjectura exhibemus, quam ex codicum subsidio; et, nisi me omnia fallunt, plerumque certiora.*

3. Of this particular circumstance I was informed by the late learned Mr. Wals of Aynoe. I will add here a rule of Graevius, in his preface to Cicero’s offices: *A prisca libris non recedendum, nisi aut librarii, aut scoli peccatum sit tam testatum, ut ab omnibus, qui non caligant in sole, videri possit.*

be turned against many dealers in the critical craft, who with little, or no stock in trade, set up for correctors, and successors of Aristarchus. There is one part of their cunning, that I cannot help here mentioning, which is, their intruding their own guesses, and reveries into the context, which first meeting the reader's eye, naturally prepossess his judgment: mean while the author's words are either removed entirely out of the way, or permitted a place in some remote note, loaden with † misrepresentations and abuse, according to the great

4. Dr. Bentley's foul play in this respect is most notorious; who, in order to make way for his emendations, will often drop the only, and true construction: the reader is mistaken if he thinks this done through ignorance. I will instance in a correction of a passage of Virgil, Aen. IV, 256. which, among many other corrections, I chiefly make choice of, because some have been deceiv'd into an opinion of its superior excellency: and I will give it in his own words, from a note on Horace, Lib. I. od. 34.

*Hic primum paribus nitens Cyllenius alis
 Constitit: hinc toto praeceps se corpore ad undas
 Misit, avi similis, quae circum litora, circum
 Pisciferos scopulos humilis volat aequora juxta.
 Haud aliter terras inter caelumque volabat;
 Litus arenosum Libyae ventosque secabat,
 Materno veniens ab avo Cyllenia proles.*

“ ubi quam multa merito vituperanda sint vides. *Volat, et*
 “ *mox volabat*: deinde in continuatis versibus ingraturum
 “ auribus

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great goodness of the most gracious critic ; who
with

“ auribus ὁμοιοτέλειον, *volabat, secabat* : ad quod evitandum
“ vetustissimi aliquot codices apud Pierium mutato ordine
“ sic versus collocant,

*Haud aliter terras inter caelumque volabat
Materno veniens ab avo Cyllenia proles,
Litus arenosum et Libyae ventosque secabat.*

“ Sed nihil omnino proficiunt, aut locum adjuvant : adhuc
“ enim relinquitur vitium omnium deterrimum, *secabat littus*
“ *ventosque*. Quid enim est *littus secare*, nisi littus arare
“ et effodere ? Quid autem hoc ad Mercurium volantem ?
“ Nullus dubito quin sic scripserit princeps poetarum :

*Haud aliter, terras inter caelumque, legebat
Litus arenosum Libyae, ventosque secabat
Materno veniens ab avo Cyllenia proles.*

The first fault he finds is with *volabat* coming so quick
after *volat*. But this repetition is so far from a fault, that
it has a peculiar beauty here ; for 'tis in the application of
the simile ; so Milton IV, 189.

Or as a thief, &c.

In at the window climbs, or oer the tiles :

So clomb this first grand thief into God's fold ;

So since into his Church lew'd hirelings climb.

More instances might be added from Homer, and Milton,
and Virgil. The next fault is the rime *volabat, secabat* :
If there was any stop after *volabat* and *secabat*, some
answer or apology should be made. But there is actually
no more jingle in those verses of Virgil, than in these of
Milton,

with his dagger of lath on his own stage, like the old

II, 220. *This horror will grow mild, this darkness light ;
Besides what hope the never-ending flight.*

VI, 34. *Far worse to bear
Than violence : for this was all thy care.*

VI, 79. *By sacred unction, thy deserved right.
Go then, thou mightiest in thy father's might.*

For if the reader will turn to the places cited, he will find, that all this jingling sound of like endings is avoided by the verses running one into the other : and I have cited them here in this unfair manner, as a parallel instance of Dr. Bentley's misrepresentation : for the Dr. knew well enough, if he had given you the poet's verses, (as in his trials to correct them he must himself have turn'd, and varied the pointing several ways) in the following manner,

*Haud aliter, terras inter coelumque, volabat
Litus arenosum Libyae, ventosque secabat
Materno veniens ab avo Cyllenia proles.*

i. e. *fled to the coast of Libya* ; he could not have made way for his own correction : or if he had told you, that nothing was more common than for the best authors, to apply the verb *properly* to one substantive, and *improperly* often to the other : (see the schol. on Sophocl. Eleſt. *ŷ.* 437. Edit. Steph. p. 101. and Homer Il. *ŷ.* 327.) he could not have abus'd that phrase, *littus et ventos secabat*, which he misrepresenting cites, *littus secabat ventosque*. So that whether you keep the old pointing, or change it, the Dr. cannot get one jot forward towards an emendation : not tho' you allowed him, which I somewhat question, the propriety of *legebat littus*, apply'd to Mercury flying directly from
mount

old ^s Vice, or modern Harlequin, belabours the poor Devil of his own raising.

Who

mount Atlas to the coast of Libya. This whole passage of Virgil, Milton has finely imitated in his 5th book. *ψ.* 265. &c. where the Dr. is at his old work, hacking and hewing. Were I to give an instance of Bentley's critical skill, I should not forget that place in the *Plutus* of Aristophanes, *ψ.* 1010. which puzzled the Grecian critics, being an old inveterate evil, just glossed over, 'till Bentley probed it to the bottom, and recovered it's pristine beauty. No one did better than the Dr. when he met with a corrupt place; but the mischief was, he would be meddling with sound places. The emendation is printed in a letter to Kuster, inserted at the end of his edition of Aristophanes: to which I rather refer the reader, than lengthen this note, too long already.

5. THE VICE was a droll character in our old plays, accounted with a long coat, a cap with a pair of ass's ears, and a dagger of lath. Shakespeare alludes to his buffoon appearance in *Twelfth-Night*, Act. IV.

In a trice, like to the old Vice;

*Who with dagger of lath, in his rage, and his wrath
Cries, ah, ha! to the Devil.*

In the second part of *K. Henry IV.* Act. III. Falstaff compares Shallow to VICE's dagger of lath. In *Hamlet* Act III. Hamlet calls his uncle, *A VICE of Kings: i. e.* a ridiculous representation of majesty. These passages the editors have very rightly expounded. I will now mention some others, which seem to have escaped their notice, the allusions being not quite so obvious.

THE INIQUITY was often the VICE in our old Moralities; and is introduced in Ben Johnson's play call'd *the*

Who is there but will allow greater liberty for altering authors, who wrote before the invention of printing, than since? Blunders upon blunders of

Devil's an ass: and likewise mention'd in his Epigr. CXV.

Being no vitious person, but the Vice

About the town.

Acts old Iniquity, and in the fit

Of miming, gets th' opinion of a wit.

But a passage cited from his play will make the following observations more plain. Act. I. Pug asks the Devil
“ to lend him a *Vice*,

“ Satan. What *Vice*?

“ What kind wouldst thou have it of?

“ Pug. Why, any *Fraud*,

“ Or *Covetousness*, or *Lady Vanity*,

“ Or old *Iniquity*: I'll call him hither.

“ Enter *Iniquity*, the *Vice*.

“ Ini. What is he calls upon me, and would seem to lack
“ a *Vice*?

“ Ere his words be half spoken, I am with him in a trice.”

And in his *Staple of News* Act. II. “ *Mirth*. How like
“ you the *Vice* i' the play? *Expectation*. Which is he?
“ *Mirth*. Three or four, old *Covetousness*, the fordid *Peniboy*,
“ the *Money-bawd*, who is a flesh-bawd too they say.
“ *Tattle*. But here is never a *Fiend* to carry him away.
“ Besides, he has never a wooden-dagger! I'd not give a
“ ruff for a *VICE*, that has not a wooden-dagger to snap
“ at every body he meets. *Mirth*. That was the old
“ way, *Gossip*, when *Iniquity* came in like hokos pokos,
“ in

of transcribers—interpolations—glosses—omissions—various readings—and what not? But to try these experiments, without great caution, on
Milton

“in a juglers jerkin, &c.” Some places of Shakespeare will from hence appear more easy: as in the 1st part of Henry IV. Act II. where Hal, humourously characterizing Falstaff, calls him, *That reverend VICE, that grey INIQUITY, that father ruffian, that VANITY in years*, in allusion to this buffoon character. In K. Richard III. Act III.

*Thus like the formal Vice, Iniquity,
I moralize two meanings in one word.*

INIQUITY is the formal Vice. Some correct the passage,

*Thus, like the formal wise Antiquity,
I moralize two meanings in one word.*

Which correction is out of all rule of criticism. In Hamlet Act I. there is an allusion, still more distant, to THE VICE; which will not be obvious at first, and therefore is to be introduced with a short explanation. This buffoon character was used to make fun with the Devil; and he had several trite expressions, as, *I'll be with you in a trice: Ab, ha, boy, are you there, &c.* And this was great entertainment to the audience, to see their old enemy so belabour'd in effigy. In K. Henry V. Act IV. a boy characterizing Pistol says, *Bardolph and Nim had ten times more valour, than this roaring Devil i' th' old play; every one may pare his nails with a wooden dagger.* Now Hamlet, having been instructed by his father's ghost, is resolv'd to break the subject of the discourse to none but Horatio; and to all others his intention is to appear as a sort of madman:
when

Milton or Shakespeare, tho' it may be sport to you, as the pelted frogs cried out in the fable, yet,

when therefore the oath of secrecy is given to the centinels, and the Ghost unseen calls out *swear*; Hamlet speaks to it as THE VICE does to the Devil. *Ah, ha boy, sayst thou so? Art thou there, truppenny?* Hamlet had a mind that the centinels should imagine this was a shape that the Devil had put on; and in Act III. he is somewhat of this opinion himself,

*The Spirit that I have seen
May be the Devil.*

This manner of speech therefore to the Devil was what all the audience were well acquainted with; and it takes off in some measure from the horror of the scene. Perhaps too the poet was willing to inculcate, that good humour is the best weapon to deal with the Devil. *True penny* is either by way of irony, or literally from the Greek *τεύπανον*, *veterator*. Which word the Scholiast on Aristophanes, Clouds γ. 447. explains, *τεύπαν, ὁ περιέτριμμένος ἐν τοῖς περάγμασι, ὃν ἡμεῖς ΤΡΥΠΑΝΟΝ καλοῦμεν*. Several have tried to find a derivation of THE VICE; if I should not hit on the right, I shall only err with others. THE VICE is either a quality personalized as *ΒΙΗ* and *ΚΑΡΤΟΣ* in Hesiod and Aeschylus, *SIN* and *DEATH* in Milton; and indeed VICE itself is a person. B. XI, 517.

And took HIS image whom they serv'd, a brutish VICE.

his image, i. e. a brutish Vice's image: the *Vice* Gluttony; not without some allusion to the VICE of the old plays. Or VICE may be in the abstract, as in Martial,

yet, Gentlemen, 'tis death and destruction to the little tast remaining among us.

Non Vitiosus homo es, Zoile, sed VITIUM.

But rather, I think, 'tis an abbreviation of *Vice-Devil*, as Vice-roy, Vice-doge &c. and therefore properly called THE VICE. He makes very free with his master, like most other Vice-roys, or prime-ministers. So that he is the Devil's *Vice*, and prime minister; and 'tis this, that makes him so sawcy.

The other old droll characters, are the Fool, and the Clown, which we have in Shakespeare's plays. The Romans in their Atellan interludes, and Mimes, had their buffoons, called *Maccus*, *Μᾶκος*, from whence the English word, MOCKER; and *Sannio*, from whence the Italian *Zanni*, and ZANY. See Cicer. de Orat. L. 2. c. 61. and *Bucco*, ὁ φουίγναθος, *quod buccas inflaret ad risum movendum*: from whence is derived a BUFFOON.

SECT. II.

I HAVE often wonder'd with what kind of reasoning any one could be so far imposed on, as to imagine that Shakespeare had no learning; when it must at the same time be acknowledged, that without learning, he cannot be red with any degree of understanding, or tast. At this time of day he will hardly be allowed that 'inspiration, which

1 Cicero pro Arch. Poet. *A summis hominibus eruditissimisque accepimus — Poetam naturâ ipsâ valere — et quasi divina*

which his brother bards formerly claim'd, and which claim, if the pretensions were any ways answerable, was generally granted them. However we are well assured from the histories of his times, that he was early initiated into the sacred company of the Muses, and tho' he might have small avocations, yet he soon returned again with greater eagerness to his beloved studies. Hence he was possessed of sufficient helps, either from abroad, or at home, to midwife into the world his great and beautiful conceptions, and to give them birth, and being. That a contrary opinion has ever prevailed, is owing partly to ² Ben Johnson's jealousy, and partly to the pride and pertness of dunces, who, under the umbrage of such a name as Shakespeare's, would gladly shelter their own idleness and ignorance.

divino quodam spiritu inflari. De Nat. Deor. II. 66. *Nemo igitur vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu divino unquam fuit.* In Plato's *Io*, there is a great deal to the same purpose concerning this poetic rapture and enthusiasm; where a certain poet is mention'd, who having made a number of very bad verses, wrote one poem which he himself said was *εὐρημά τι Μεσσην*: the poem happened to be a very extraordinary one; and the people took the poet's word, thinking it impossible, without inspiration, that so bad a poet should write such fine verses.

² *And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek.*

'Tis true Johnson says very handsome things of him presently after: for people will allow others any qualities, but those which they highly value themselves for.

He

He was bred in a learned age, when even the court ladies learnt Greek, and the Queen of England among scholars had the reputation of being a scholar. Whether her successor had equal learning and sense, is not material to be at

3. See what Ascham writes of Lady Jane Grey, (who lived some time before Shakespeare) in his Scholemaster p. 37. Edit. Lond. 1743. and afterwards p. 67. of Queen Elizabeth. "It is your shame (I speak to you all, you young gentlemen of England) that one maid should go beyond you all in excellency of learning, and knowledge of divers tongues. Point forth six of the best given gentlemen of this court, and all they together shew not so much good will, spend not so much time, bestow not so many hours daily, orderly and constantly, for the increase of learning and knowledge, as doth the Queen's majesty her self. Yea I believe that beside her perfect readiness in Latin, Italian, French and Spanish, she readeth here now at Windfor more Greek every day, than some prebendary of this church doth read Latin in a whole week." Sir H. Savil in his latin speech at Oxford thus compliments her; *Illa commemorabo, quæ vulgè minus nota, non minus certe mirabilia ad laudem: te, cum tot literis legendis, tot dictandis, tot manu tua scribendis sufficias *** te magnam diei partem in gravissimorum autorum scriptis legendis, audiendisque ponere: neminem nisi sua lingua tecum loqui; te cum nemine nisi ipsorum, aut omnium communibus Latina, Graecaque. Omitto plebeios philosophos, quos raro in manus sumis. Quoties divinum Platonem animadverti tuis interpretationibus diviniorem effectum! quoties Aristotelis obscuritates principis philosophorum, à principe foeminarum evolutas atque explicatas!*

present enquir'd into ; but thus far is certain, that letters, even then, stood in some rank of praise. Happy for us, that our poet, and Johnson, came into life so early ; that they lived not in an age, when not only their art, but every thing else that had wit, and elegance, began to be despised: 'till the minds of the people came to be disposed for all that hypocrisy, nonsense, and superstitious fanaticism, which soon after like a deluge overwhelmed this nation. 'Twere to be wished, that with our restored king, some of that taste of literature had been restored, which we enjoyed in the days of Queen Elizabeth. But when we brought home our frenchified king, we did then, and have even to this day continued to bring from France our models, not only of letters, but (O shame to free born Englishmen !) of morals and manners. Hence every thing, unless of French extraction, appears aukward and antiquated. Our poets write to the humour of the age ; and when their own little stock is spent, they set themselves to work on new-modelling ⁴Shakespeare's plays,

⁴ Sir William Davenant, and Dryden, began this just after the restoration. They were succeeded by Shadwell, Rymer, the Duke of Buckingham, and others. The D. of B. made choice of Julius Caesar: which puts me in mind of a painter I knew, who told his customer, he had a picture of Claudio of Lorain, " and Sir (says he) " when I have touched up *the sky* a little, 'twill make a most " excellent piece."

and adapting them to the taste of their audience; by stripping off their antique and proper tragic dress, and by introducing in these mock-tragedies, not only gallantry to women, but an endeavour to raise a serious distress from the disappointment of lovers; not considering that the passion of love, which one would think they should understand something of, is a^s comic passion.

5 Love is a passion, in which the great and the little, the earthly and the heavenly, (to speak a little mysteriously) is so blended and mixed together, as to make it the fittest subject in the world for ridicule. *Totus verò iste, qui vulgo appellatur Amor, (nec hercule invenio, quo nomine alio possit appellari) tantae levitatis est, ut nihil videam, quod putem conferendum.* ** *O praeclaram emendationem vitae, Poeticam! quae Amorem, flagiti et levitatis auctorem, in concilio deorum conlocandum putet: DE COMOEDIA loquor: quae, si haec flagitia non probarem, nulla esset omnino.* Cicero Tuscul. disp. iv, 32. Romeo and Juliet is a story of real distress; so is that, in Otway's Venice preserv'd, between Jaffier and his wife. In Shakespeare you have nothing of what we call gallantry; nothing of that whining love introduced, (as in Addison's Cato, in the Siege of Damascus by Hughes, and in Rymer's Edgar, a play stolen, or murdered from Shakespeare) which, one would think, by the dignity of the stories, ought to have been excluded. But Dryden, in his epilogue to the second part of the conquest of Granada, speaks out.

If LOVE and HONOUR now are higher rais'd,

'Tis not the poet, but the AGE is prais'd.

* * *

Our LADIES and our men now speak more wit

In conversation, than THOSE POETS writ.

meaning Shakespeare and Johnson. Very gallant truly, Mr. Bays!

In

In short they make up a poet of shreds and patches ; so that the ancient robe of our tragedian, by this miserable darning, and threadbare patchwork, resembles the long motley coat of the Fool, in our old plays, introduced to raise the laughter of the spectators. And I am afraid, if the matter was minutely examined into, we should find, that many passages, in some late editions of our poet, have been altered, or added, or lopped off, entirely thro' modern, and French refinement.

S E C T. III.

THE misfortune seems to be, that scarcely any one pays a regard to what Shakespeare *does* write, but they are always guessing at what he *should* write ; nor in any other light is he look'd on, than as a poor mechanic ; a fellow, 'tis true, of genius, who says, now and then, very good things, but wild and uncultivated ; and as one by no means proper company for lords, and ladies, maids of honour, and court-pages, 'till some poet or other, who knows the world better, takes him in hand, and introduces him in this modern dress to *good company*.

Whatever be the opinion of the vulgar, whether the great vulgar or the small, is of no great concern-

concernment; but indeed it was a matter of some surprize to read the following account in a noble writer of a better tast: "Our old dramatick poet may witness for our good ear and manly relish [*notwithstanding his natural rudeness, his unpolish'd stile, his antiquated phrase and wit, his want of method and coherence, and his deficiency in almost all the graces and ornaments of this kind of writing;*] yet by the justness of his moral, the aptness of many of his descriptions, and the plain and natural turn of several of his characters; he pleases his audience, and often gains their ear, without a single bribe from luxury or vice." Those lines, that I have placed between two hooks, ought certainly to have been omitted, as they carry with them reflections false in every particular. Or shall we play the critic, and suppose them some marginal observation, not written by the learned Antony Ashley Cooper; and from hence by the blundering transcriber foisted into the context?

'Twas thro' such wrong notions of refinement, that² bishop Burnet was led into no less mistakes

1. Characteristicks. vol. I. Advice to an author. p. 275.

2. Burnet's history of his own times. vol. I. p. 163.

Mr Richardson tells us, that Sir William Davenant procured Milton's pardon. See his remarks, p. LXXXIX.

mistakes concerning Milton. “ He was not
 “ excepted out of the act of indemnity ; and
 “ afterwards he came out of his concealment,
 “ and lived many years, much visited by all
 “ strangers, and much admired by all at home
 “ for the poems he writ, tho’ he was then blind,
 “ chiefly that of Paradise lost, in which there is
 “ a nobleness both of contrivance and execution,
 “ that [*tho he affected to write in blank verse with-*
 “ *out rhyme, and made many new and rough words*]
 “ yet it was esteemed the beautifullest and per-
 “ fectest poem that ever was writ, at least in our
 “ language.” This censure falls equally on
 Shakespeare ; for he too wrote *in blank verse with-*
out rhyme, and made many new and rough words.
 But let Milton speak for himself and his admired
 Shakespeare, for doubtless he means him, in his
 apology prefixed to the Paradise lost. “ The
 “ measure is English heroic verse without rime,
 “ as that of Homer in Greek and Virgil in
 “ Latin ; rime being no necessary adjunct or
 “ true

Perhaps bishop Burnet took his censure from Dryden’s
 dedication before the translation of Juvenal ; where he says,
 that Milton “ runs into a flat of thought sometimes for
 “ a hundred lines together : that he was transported too
 “ far in the use of obsolete words : and that he can by
 “ no means approve of his choice of blank verse.” Dry-
 den might be willing the world should think this true, in order
 that his own wares might go off the better. The folly is

“ true ornament of poem or good verse, in long
 “ works especially, but the invention of a bar-
 “ barous age, to set off wretched matter and
 “ lame metre; grac’d indeed since by the use
 “ of some famous modern poets, carried away
 “ by custom, but much to their own vexation,
 “ hindrance, and constraint to express many
 “ things otherwise, and for the most part worse
 “ than else they would have express’d them. Not
 “ without cause therefore some both Italian and

to be caught. But Burnet was not particular in his opi-
 nion, ’twas the reigning taste of the age: to comply with
 which, Dryden turned the Paradise lost into rime, calling
 it, The State of Innocence, and Fall of Man. For which
 he received the complements of his poetical brothers:
 hear one of them.

*For Milton did the wealthy mine disclose
 And RUDELY cast what you cou’d well dispose.
 He ROUGHLY drew, on an OLD FASHION’D ground
 A Chaos, for no perfect world was found,
 Till thro’ the heap, your mighty genius shin’d,
 He was the golden ore which you refin’d.
 He first beheld the beauteous rustic maid,
 And to a place of strength the prize convey’d;
 You took her thence: To court this virgin brought,
 Dress’d her with gems, new-weav’d her HARD-SPUN thought,
 And softest language, sweetest manners taught.*

There spoke the courtiers and poets of Charles’s reign;
 this was their taste: and exactly so did they serve, and
 judge of Shakespeare.

“ Spanish poets of prime note have rejected
 “ rime both in longer and shorter works, as
 “ have also long since OUR BEST ENGLISH
 “ TRAGEDIES, as a thing of itself, to all ju-
 “ dicious ears, trivial and of no true musical
 “ delight; which consists only in apt numbers,
 “ fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously
 “ drawn out from one verse into another, not
 “ in the jingling sound of like endings, a fault
 “ avoided by the learned ancients both in poetry
 “ and all good oratory. This neglect then of
 “ rime so little is to be taken for a defect, though
 “ it may seem so perhaps to vulgar readers,
 “ that it rather is to be esteem’d an example set,
 “ the first in English, of ancient liberty, reco-
 “ vered

3. Ὁμοιοτέλευτα. See Quintil. l. IX. c. 3. To the
 same purpose Mr. Ascham, in his Scholemaster, p. 194.
 “ They wish’d, as Virgil and Horace were not wedded to
 “ follow the faults of former fathers, (a shrewd marriage
 “ in greater matters) but by right imitation of the perfect
 “ Grecians, had brought poetry to perfectness also in the
 “ Latin tongue; that we Englishmen likewise would ac-
 “ knowledge and understand rightfully our rude beggarly
 “ riming, brought first into Italy by Goths and Huns, when
 “ all good verses, and all good learning too were destroyed
 “ by them; and after carried into France and Germany,
 “ and at last received into England by men of excellent
 “ wit indeed, but of small learning, and less judgment in
 “ that behalf. But now when men know the difference,
 “ and have the examples both of the best and of the worst;
 “ surely

“vered, to heroic poem from the troublesome
 “and modern bondage of riming.” With re-
 spect to the latter part of the censure, *of making
 many new and rough words* ⁴, it may be very justly
 observed,

“surely to follow rather the Goths in riming, than the
 “Greeks in true versifying, were even to eat acorns with
 “swine, when we may freely eat wheat bread among
 “men.” These chiming terminations were so industriously
 avoided by Virgil, that in his whole poem 'tis difficult to
 find one: for in Aen. IX, 634.

*Carva tempora ferro
 Trajicit. I, verbis virtutem illude superbis.*

This play on the words is properly enough put in the
 mouth of young Ascanius. But these verses have no jingle
 at all:

*Hic labor extremus, longar' haec meta viarum.
 Cornua velatar' obvertimus antennarum.*

Indeed Homer has, here and there, these simlar sounds
 and cadences.

Il. ε. 865. *Καίμαίῳ ἐξ ἀνέμοιο δυσαίῳ ὀρνυμένωο.*

Il. δ. 392. *Ἰλλω ἐπ' ἰχθυόεντι, καὶ Ἐρμῷ δινήεντι.*

But the scarcity of them in so long a poem plainly shews,
 that Homer thought they added no kind of beauty to his
 verses. The same letters repeated fall not under this
 censure; as,

Et premere, et laxas sciret dare jussus habenas.

4. See what Horace writes to this purpose of coining
 new words and of making current the old in his art of
 poetry,

observed, that this liberty, managed with discretion and learning, adds a peculiar dignity to the diction: for things are often despised for no

poetry, *ψ.* 406, &c. &c. And Aristotle in his rhetoric III, 2. says, that changing our common idiom for foreign and borrowed terms, often gives grace and dignity to a language: τὸ ἐξαλλάξαι ποιεῖ φαίνεσθαι σεμνοτέρων ὥσπερ γὰρ πρὸς τὰς ξένους οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρὸς τὰς πολίτας τὸ αὐτὸ πάσχομεν καὶ πρὸς τὴν λέξιν: and in his poetics, Κεφ. κβ. Λέξεως δὲ ἀρετὴ * * * σεμνὴ δὲ καὶ ἐξαλλάττουσα τὸ ἰδιωτικόν, ἢ τοῖς ξενικοῖς κεκηρμένῃ. The words καὶ and ἢ should change places, and the passage is thus to be read; σεμνὴ δὲ, ἢ ἐξαλλάττουσα τὸ ἰδιωτικόν, καὶ τοῖς ξενικοῖς κεκηρμένῃ. *That expression has grace and dignity, which differs from the common idiom, and uses borrowed terms.* I will here add a specimen of Milton's words (however new they may seem, or rough) illustrated with some of Shakespeare's, and they will be found to have all the grace and dignity, which the above-mention'd critics require.

Adamantine chains, I, 48. Aeschyl. Prometh. *ψ.* 6. Ἀδαμανθίνων δεσμῶν.

Amber stream, III, 359. and in Parad. Reg. III, 288.

Callim. hym. in Cer. *ψ.* 29. Ἀλέκλεινον ὕδωρ.

Ambrosial odors, I, 245. Spenc. B. 2. c. 3. *ψ.* 22. *The which ambrosial odours from them threaw.* Virg. Aen. I, 403. Hom. II. *α.* 529. Ἀμβροσίας χαῖται. Milt. V, 56. *His dewy locks distill'd Ambrosia.* *Ambrosial Night*, V, 642. Hom. II. *ε.* 57. Ἀμβροσίην διὰ νύκτα.

Affessor of his throne, VI, 679. Irenaeus l. i. c. 14.

Ω πάρεδρε Θεῶ, O Dei affessor. Nonnus in his paraphr. of St. John, in the beginning, Ἀτίεμονι σύνθερον ἔδρη. Sophocles

no other reason than being common. Nor are rough words to be avoided, if the subject be harsh and rough. The musicians and painters can inform

Sophocles in Oed. col. p. 316. Edit. Steph. speaks of *Justice*, as *The assessor of Jove*: Δίκη ξύνεδρε Ζηνός. So Arrian in Exped. Alex. IV, 9. οἱ πάσαι σοφοὶ ἄνδρες τὴν Δίκην πάρεδρον τῷ Διὶ ἐποίησαν. Pindar calls Rhadamanthus, *Saturn's assessor*, and Callimachus the poets, *Apollo's assessors*.

A bevy of fair women, XI, 582. The sportsman's phrase, speaking of quails. Spencer uses it very frequent, B. 2. c. 8. f. 34. and B. 4. c. 10. f. 4. and B. 5. c. 9. f. 31. And Shakefp. in Hen. VIII. Act. 1.

*None here he hopes
In all this noble bevy, has brought with her
One care abroad.*

Arms on armor clashing bray'd horrible discord, VI, 209. à gr. βράχειν, clamare. Hom. II. μ'. 396. βράχε τεύχεα, sonitum dedere arma. II. φ'. 387. βράχε δ' εὐρεῖα χθῶν. remugit verò lata tellus. Shakefp. in K. John Act III. *Braying trumpets*. In Hamlet Act I. *The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out The triumph of his pledge*. Spencer, B. 4. c. 4. f. 48. *Then scurrying trumpets loudly 'gan to bray*.

Sings darkling, III, 39. Sidney's Arcad. p. 684. edit. quart. *He came darkling into his chamber*. Shakefp. in Midf. Act. II. *O wilt thou darkling leave me?* In K. Lear, Act I. *we were left darkling*. In Ant. and Cleop. Act IV. *darkling stand The varying shore of the world*.

Dulcet Symphonies, I, 712. Shakefp. in Taming of a shrew. *To make a dulcet and a heavenly sound*. à Lat. dulcis. Ital. dolce, dolciato.

form us, what effect discords have in music, and shades in pictures. Even in prospects (Nature's landskips) how beautifully do rough rocks

Or HEARST thou rather pure ethereal stream, III, 7. Hor. f. II. 6. 20.

Matutine pater, seu JANE libentius AUDIS.

Ye birds That singing up to heaven-gate ascend, V, 198. Shakesp. in Cymb. Act I. *Hark, the lark at heaven's gate sings.*

Horrent arms, II, 513. Virg. Aen. I. *Horrentia Martis Arma virumque cano.* and Aen. X, 178. *horrentibus hastis.* Met. from the bristles of animals standing erect. So B. VI, ψ . 82. *Bristled with upright beams of rigid spears.* And Virg. XII. *Strictisque seges mucronibus horret ferrea,* i. e. an iron crop bristles with unsheathed swords. This metaphor Milton has lengthened out into a similitude, B. IV. ψ . 979, &c.

Hyacinthin locks, IV, 301. Hom. od. ζ' .

Κάδδε κἀρήθη.

Ὅλας ἦκε κόμας ὑακινθίνω ἀνθει ὁμοίως.

When Vapours fir'd IMPRESS THE AIR, IV, 558. Shakesp. in Macbeth, Act V.

As easy may'st thou the intrenchant AIR

With thy keen sword IMPRESS.

In K. Rich. II. Act. III. He uses the subst. *impress*: from the Ital. *impresa*; *ab imprimendo*. i. e. a device with a motto; an achievement.

From my own windows torn my household coat;
Raz'd out my IMPRESS.

rocks and ragged hills set off the more cultivated scenes? But however you find fault, in the name of

Not with INDENTED *wave Prone on the ground, as since,*
IX, 496. Shakesp. in *As you like it*, Act. IV. speaking of a snake,

And with indented glides did slip away.

Liquid fire, I, 229. Shakesp. in *Othell.* Act. V. has the same expression; so has Virg. *Ecl.* VI, 33. *Et liquidi simul ignis.* *Liquid air*, VII, 264. Spencer, B. I. c. 1. f. 45. Virgil. *Georg.* I, 404. *Liquid light*, VII, 362. and *Lucret.* V, 282.

The pure marble air, III, 564. Shakesp. in *Othello*, Act III. *Now by yond marble heav'n.* In *Timon*, Act IV. *The marbled mansion all above.* à *Graec.* μαρμαίρειν, *resplendere*, μαρμαίρειν, *marmor.* Hom. II. ξ'. 275. ἀλα μαρμαίρειν: which the scholiast interprets, λευκήν. Hence Virg. *Aen.* VI, 729. *Aequor marmoreum.* Shining, resplendent like marble. Horat. I, 19.

Urit me Glycerae nitor

Splendentis Pario marmore purius.

Minims of nature, VII, 482. Proverb. XXX, 24. *Quatuor ista sunt minima terrae*, according to the Vulgate. Spencer, B. 6. c. 10. f. 28.

To make one minime of thy poor handmayd.

There is an order of Monks, who took the name of *Minims* thro' affected humility. Shakesp. in *Midsom.* Act III. *Lysander to Hermia,*

Get you gone, you dwarf,

You minimus.

Mr. Theobald reads, *you minim you.*

Miscreated, II, 683. Spencer, B. 1. c. 2. f. 3. *that miscreated fair.* B. 2. c. 7. f. 42. *his miscreated mold.* Shakesp. *Hen.* V. Act I.

of the Muses keep your hands from the context ;
be cautious how you pluck up what you may think
excrefcencies,

*Or nicely charge your understanding soul
With open titles miscreate.*

O FOR *that warning VOICE*, IV, 1. Shakesp. in *Romeo*
and *Juliet*. Act II.

O FOR *a falkner's VOICE*,
To lure this tassel gentle back again.

Prolog. to *K. Henry V.* O FOR *a muse of fire &c.*

In arms they stood Of golden PANOPLY, VI, 527. *In celestial*
PANOPLY all armed, VI, 760. In allusion to St.
Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, VI, 11. ἐνδύσασθε τὴν
ΠΑΝΟΠΙΑΙΑΝ τοῦ θεοῦ. i. e. Armor covering the whole
soldier : what the Latins called *Armatura gravis*.
Herodian, L. 2. ἀναλαβόντες ἕν τὰς ΠΑΝΟΠΙΑΙΑΣ καὶ
φραζάντες αὐτοὺς οἱ στρατιῶται κ. τ. λ.

Now *let us PLAY*, *As meet is, after such delicious fare*, IX,
1027. The whole passage seems an imitation of Hom.
II. γ'. 441. II. ξ'. 514. The word *play*, is used in
the same sense as the Latins use *Ludere*, and the Greeks
Παίζειν.

Fis anus, et tamen

Vis formosa videri

LUDISQUE et bibis impudens. Hor. IV. 13.

LUSISTI satis, edisti satis, atque bibisti. L. 2. 2. 214.

Turba Menandreae fuerat nec Thaidos olim

Tanta, in quâ populus LUSIT Erichthonius. Propertius.

Natives and sons of heav'n, POSSESS'D before By none,
V. 790. i. e. Slaves to none. So the Athenians called
the slaves, κτήματα, *possessions, things possessed* : The
master, ὁ κειλημένον. See Aristoph. *Plut.* γ. 4.

The

excrefcencies, left with these you tear in pieces
the poet himself.

Jam parce sepulto,

Parce pias scelerare manus.

The morn — begins Her rosy PROGRESS smiling, XI. 175.

Shakefp. in K. Henry IV. A& III.

The heavenly-harnes'd team

Begins his golden PROGRESS in the east.

Sceptred King, II, 43. Hom. II. á. 279. Σκηπτέρχος

βασιλεύς.

Thou my SHADE Inseperable, must with me along, X, 249.

Hor. L. 2. 8. speaking of those who attended Maecenas
as unbidden guefts.

Quos Maecenas adduxerat UMBRAS.

And L. 1. Ep. 5. *Locus est et pluribus UMBRIS.*

'Tis a pretty allusion of constant attendants in the sun-
shine of fortune, and who cannot then be easily shaken
off.

SHAVES with level wing the deep, II, 634. Virgil. V, 217.

RADIT iter liquidum celeres neque commovet alas.

Now morn her rosie steps in th' eastern clime

Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl, V, 1.

In Aristot. poet. Κεφ. κα. Σπείρων θεοκτίσαν φλόγα.

Lucretius, *Et lumine conferit arva.* Virgil, *Et jam*

prima novo spargebat lumine terras.

The violence of Ramiel, VI, 371. Virgil, XI, 376. *Violentia*

Turni. i. e. the violent Turnus himself.

S E C T. IV.

IT seems no wonder, that the masculine and nervous Shakespeare, and Milton, should so little please our effeminate taste. And the more I consider our studies and amusements, the greater is the wonder they should ever please at all. The childish fancy and love of false ornaments follow us thro' life; nothing being so displeasing to us, as nature and simplicity. This admiration of false ornaments is visibly seen even in our relish of books. After such examples, can we still admire, that rattle of the Muses, a jingling sound of like endings tag'd to every line? Whilst we have still preserved some noble remains of antiquity, and are not entirely void of true genius's among our own nation, what taste must it shew, to fly for amusements to the crude productions of an enslaved nation? Yet this is our reigning taste: from hence our lawgivers are taught to form their lives and conduct, with a thorough contempt of ancient learning, and all those, whose inclinations lead them thro' such untrodden paths.

But this perhaps will not appear so surprising, when 'tis considered, that the more liberal sciences and humane letters, are not the natural growth of these Gothic and northern regions.

We

We are little better than sons and successors of the Goths, ever and anon in danger of relapsing into our original barbarity. And how far the corruption of even our ' public diversions may contribute

1. Because these may be abused, some, contrary to all rules of logic, have argued therefore they should entirely be abolish'd; as if, because my little finger pain'd me, I should have my whole arm cut off. Prynne, with the whole tribe of puritans, reason'd after this manner. What then shall we think of St. Paul, who cites the plays of the Athenian stage in his gravest epistles? He has a whole line from the Thais of Menander in his first epistle to the Corinthians, XV, 33.

Φθείβεσιν ἤθη χρηστὸν ὁμιλίαι κακὰι.

'Tis well known the Jews had many dramatic pieces among them, (tho' not perhaps design'd for the stage) taken from stories out of their own chronicles; such seems the book of Job. To me it appears almost evident, that St. Jude alludes to a kind of dramatic poem; [*yet Michael the archangel when contending with the Devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke thee. ψ. 7.*] where Michael and the Devil were introduced disputing about the burial of Moses. The story might be taken from some old Rabbinical comment upon the last chapter in Deuteronomy, and the subject might be, *The death of Moses*. But not play-books only, but all books of elegance have these, worse than Goths and Vandals, attacked: and these indeed must be first destroyed, before their own barbarity can take place. How contrary a character was that of the Apostle Paul? How politely does he address the Athenians with

citations

contribute to the corruption of our manners, may be an inquiry not unworthy the civil magistrate :

citations from their own Poets? How learnedly does he characterize the Cretans, with humour quoting a verse from a prophet, as he there calls the religious poet Epimenides?

Κρήτες αὐτὸ ψεύσασαι, κακὰ θνητὰ, γαστέρες ἀργαί.

[not ἀργαί.] Nor should the elegant address of the Apostle to the Corinthian women be passed over. 1 Cor. XI. 10. Διὰ τῆτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς, ΔΙΑ ΤΟΥΣ ΑΓΓΕΛΟΥΣ. There were books in vogue among them (a sort of romances) that told them tales of angels falling in love with women. This is alluded to by Josephus in his antiquities, L. I. c. IV. "Ἄγγελοι θεῶ γυναιξὶ συμμιγνύσας ὄφρως ἰγένησαν παῖδας, from a mistaken text in Gen. c. vi. 4. which Milton has rightly explained Par. Lost, XI. 621. &c. And hinted at the other opinion. V, 446.

If ever, then,

*Then had the Sons of God excuse t' have been
Enamour'd at that sight.*

Some of the Rabbins say Eve was so beautiful, that the prince of angels fell in love with her, which occasioned his fall. Now these stories were believed by the women in the Apostle's time; he puts them in mind therefore of these received opinions, and condescends to reason on their own hypothesis: for the angels sake then veil your faces, &c. From a like hypothesis the Apostle, Ephes. ii. 2. calls Satan *a prince of the air*. But above all will be seen the learned elegance of Paul, when he came to Mars's court

strate : lawgivers of old did not deem it beneath their care and caution. You may see what a stress is laid

court at Athens ; for even then, tho' their fortune was changed, the Athenians were renowned for arts and sciences : Ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, κατὰ πάντα ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους ὑμᾶς θεωρῶ. *Ye men of Athens, I see that in all things you are very religious.* There is great art in the Apostle's using a word of a middle signification : δεισιδαιμονεστέρους. This the Athenians took as a complement ; and for this zeal in religion they were praised by their orators and poets. Then mentioning the inscription he saw on an altar, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD, [see Pausan. in Eliacis, Lucian in Philop. Philostrat. de vitâ Apoll. VI, 2.] he takes occasion to speak to them of God ; and he speaks to them in such a manner, that they imagined one of their own philosophers discoursing to them. Οὐκ ἐν χειροποιήτοις ναοῖς κατοικεῖ. *God dwells not in temples made by the hands of men.* This was what Zeno had often said, whose opinion is just hinted at in Laertius VII, 33. and in Plutarch's treatise concerning the contradictions of the Stoics. So the Stoic in Lucan IX.

*Estne Dei sedes nisi terra, et pontus, et aer,
Et caelum, et virtus ?*

[i. e. *nisi τὸ Πᾶν, et sapientis animus*] and Hierocles, p. 24. edit. Needh. Ψυχῆς καθαρᾶς τόπον οικιότατον ἐπὶ γῆς θεὸς οὐ ἔχει. Milton I, 17.

*And chiefly thou, O Spirit ! that dost prefer,
Before all temples, th' upright heart and pure.*

See 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. 1 Cor. vi. 19. 2 Cor. vi. 16. — The apostle goes on, Εποίνσέ τε ἐξ ἑνὸς αἵματος πᾶν ἔθνος. This common relationship between mankind was a constant topic
of

laid on musical entertainments alone, in Plato's republic. Nor did the statesman Cicero, in his laws, think Plato's an idle notion. ² *Quamobrem ille quidem sapientissimus Graeciae vir, longeque doctissimus, valde hanc labem veretur: negat enim mutari posse musicas leges sine immutatione legum publicarum. Ego autem nec tam valde id timendum, nec plane contemnendum puto.* Matters of these
con-

of the academy and porch. Hence the Emperor Marcus Anton. XII, 26. ὅση ἢ συγγένεια ἀνθρώπων πρὸς πᾶν τὰ ἀνθρώπειον γένος· ἢ γὰρ αἱμαλίας κ' σπερμαλίας, ἀλλὰ νῦν κοινωία. [where ἢ is for ἐ μόνον] Even Lucretius could say,

*Denique caelesti sumus omnes semine oriundi;
Omnibus ille idem pater est.*

The apostle however does not cite the philosophers, but even a poet to witness this truth, Aratus. So far they listened and acquiesced. But when he began to introduce his grand doctrine, of one, not only being sent into the world to teach mankind the will of God, but of this divine person's being raised from the dead: this ἀνάστασις they could not bear; their old poet Aeschylus had told them,

Ἄπαξ θανάσιον ἔτις ἔς' ἀνάστασις. Eumen. 651.

The hubbub began, and the Apostle was obliged *abruptly* to break off his discourse. — 'Tis a subject deserving consideration, how blind zeal and superstition on one hand, and open profligacy and contempt of religion on the other, tend equally alike to lead us the same road to ignorance.

2. Cicero de Leg. II, 15. Plato's words are, εἶδ' ἄρα ΚΑΙΝΟΝ [lego, ΚΟΙΝΟΝ] μεσικῆς μελαβάλλειν εὐλαβητίον, ὡς
ἐν

concernments are now left to the management of our women of fashion: and even our poets, whose end is *profit* and *delight*, are exceeding cautious how they incur the censure of these fair umpires and critics. Hence what we call honor, love, and gallantry, make up the chief parts of modern tragedies; and our Wicherlys and Congreves, well knowing their audience, took the surest way to please them.

A corruption of taste easily makes way for a corruption of morals and manners; and these once depraved soon fit us for the grossest servitude both of body and mind. They who can read history somewhat beyond the common chronologer's and antiquarian's observation; and can trace the progress of national manners, are very sensible of the reciprocal dependence and mutual connexion between civil liberty and polite literature. However half-seeing critics may extol

ἐν ὅλῳ κινδυνεύουσι. Οὐδαμῶ γὰρ κινῆσαι μουσικῆς τρόποι ἀνευ πολιτικῶν νόμων τῶν μεγίστων, ὡς φησὶ τε Δάμων, καὶ ἐγὼ πείθομαι. De Repub. L. IV. p. 424. Edit. Steph. To the same purpose the philologist Dio, Orat. 33. p. 411. Παρὰ δὲ τοῖς Ἕλλησι πρότερον δεινὸν ἰδόκει τὸ μελακινεῖν τὴν μουσικὴν, καὶ καλεῖσθαι πάσις τῶν ῥυθμῶν εισαγωγῶν ἕτερον, καὶ τὰ μέλη ποικιλώτερα ποιῆσαι, ὡς διαφθειρομένης τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις. Οὕτω σφόδρα τὰ ἄτα ἐφύλαττον, καὶ τηλικαύτην ἠγῶντο δύναμιν τὴν ἀκοὴν ἔχειν, ὥστε δηλίνοι τὴν διάνοιαν, καὶ ἀδικεῖσθαι τὰ τῆς σωφροσύνης, εἰ παρὰ μικρὸν ἐνδῶν τὸ τῆς ἀρμονίας.

D

the

the golden age of Augustus, yet all that blaze of wit was kindled during the struggle for liberty: 'twas then indeed they had leisure to exert their faculties, when their country had a little respite from civil commotions. But this was the last effort of expiring politeness and literature. Barbarism, with gigantic strides, began to advance; and to check its progress there was but one effectual way; and that was, to alter the whole constitution of affairs. Thus they went on from bad to worse, 'till the finishing stroke was given by St. Gregory the Great, who in a pious fury set fire to the ³ Palatine library. In the eastern empire, by the influence of the ⁴ Greek fathers of the church, all reading of the Attic writers was not only discouraged,

3. *Sapientissimus ille Gregorius — non modo malibesi jus sit ab aula recedere, sed ut traditur à majoribus incendio dedit probatæ lectionis*

Scripta, Palatinus quæcunque tenebat Apollo. Joannes Saresberienfis de nugis curial. l. 2. c. 26. Fertur tamen beatus Gregorius bibliothecam combussisse gentilem, quo divinæ paginæ gratior esset locus, et major autoritas, et diligentia studiosior. Idem l. 8. c. 19.

4. *Audiebam etiam puer ex Demetrio Chalcondyla Graecarum rerum peritissimo, sacerdotes Graecos tanta floruisse auctoritate apud Caesares Byzantinos, ut integra (illoꝝ gratia) complura de veteribus Graecis poemata combusserint, inprimisque ea ubi amores, turpes lusus et nequitiae amantium continebantur, atque ita Menandri, Dipbili, Apollodori, Philemonis, Alexis fabellas*

couraged, but the originals were burnt and destroyed. If any survived this religious massacre, 'twas partly owing to some particular attachment to a favourite author, and partly to meer accidental causes. About the same time the northern nations dismantled the empire, and at length left it an easy prey to the Turk.

If we turn our eyes to our own country, we cannot go farther than the invasion of Julius Caesar, without being immersed in legends and romances. But even in that late period of arts and sciences, our British barbarity was so very notorious, that our ⁵ inhospitality to strangers, our poverty and meanness, and our ignorance of every

fabellas, et Sapphus, Erinnae, Anacreontis, Minermimi, [Mimnermi] Bionis, Alcmanis, Alcaei carmina intercidisse, tum pro his substituta Nazianzeni nostri poemata; quae, etfi excitant animos nostrorum hominum ad flagrantiore religionis cultum, non tamen verborum Atticorum proprietatem et Graecae linguae elegantiam edocent. Turpiter quidem sacerdotes isti in veteres Graecos malevoli fuerunt, sed integritatis, probitatis et religionis maximum dedere testimonium. Petrus Alcyonius de Exil. p. 29. edit. Basil.

5. Horace, Lib. III. Ode 4. *Visam Britannos hospitibus feros.* See Caesar's description of Britain (if 'tis Caesar's, and not inserted by a later hand) de bello Gallic. V, 12. &c. Cicero ad Attic. Epist. IV, 16. *Illud jam cognitum est, neque argenti scrupulum esse ullum in illa insula, neque ullam spem praedae, nisi ex mancipiis.* If Caesar did not thoroughly conquer us, the reason was, because we were not worth

every polite art, made us as contemptible to the Romans, as the lowest of the Indian clans can possibly at this day appear to us. And even when we were beaten into a better behaviour, and taught by our conquerors a little more civility, yet we always relish'd the Gothic, more than the Roman manners. Our reading, if we could read at all, was such as the ⁶ Monks were pleas'd to allow us, either pious tales of their own forging, or lying histories of adventurous knight-errants. Our heroes were of a piece with our learning, formed from the Gothic and Moorish models.

A pleasant picture of our ancient chivalry may be seen in Shakespeare's *K. Richard II.* where Bolingbroke, son to John of Gaunt, appeals the duke of Norfolk, on an accusation of high treason. He would have been thought a most irreligious person, who should have dared to question the immediate interposition of hea-

conquering. He had other designs than spending his time in such a miserable country; which Rome soon began to be sensible of.

6. "In our forefathers time, when papistry, as a standing pool, covered and overflowed all England, few books were read in our tongue, saving certain books of chivalry, as they said for pastime and pleasure; which, as some say, were made in monasteries by idle Monks or wanton Canons." *Ascham's Scholemaster*, p. 86.

ven in defending the right cause. The judge therefore allowing the appeal, the accused person threw down his gage, whether glove or gauntlet, which was taken up formally by the accuser; and both were taken into safe custody till battle was to decide the truth. The champions arms being ceremoniously blessed, each took an oath, that he used no charmed weapons. ⁷ Macbeth, according to the law of arms, tells Macduff,

*I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
To one of woman born.*

To this Posthumus alludes in Cymbeline, Act V.

*I, in my own woe charm'd
Could not find death.*

The action began with giving one another the lye in the most reproachful terms,

*Then, Bolingbroke, as low as to thy heart,
Thro' the false passage of thy throat, thou lye'st!*

The vanquished were always deem'd guilty, and deserving their punishment. In the second part of K. Henry VI. there is exactly such a duel fought, as, ⁸ in Don Quixote, the squire of the knight of the wood proposes between himself

7. Macbeth, Act V.

8. Don Quixote, vol. 2. chap. 14.

and Sancho. For the plebeians, not being allowed the use of the sword or lance, fought with wooden staves, at the end of which they tied a bag filled with sand and pebbles. When poor Peter is killed with this weapon by his master, K. Henry makes this reflection,

*Go take hence that traitor from our fight,
For by his death we do perceive his guilt.*

When our judges now a days ask the accused person, how he will be tryed; they would hardly I believe allow his appealing to his sword or his sandbag to prove his innocency.

Our Gothic chivalry Shakespeare has likewise touched on, in his K. Henry VIII. Hall and Holingshed, whom our poet has followed, tells us, that in the year 1520 a king of arms from France came to the English court, with a solemn proclamation, declaring, that in June ensuing, the two kings, Henry and Francis, with fourteen aids, would in a camp, between Ardres and Guifnes, answer all comers that were gentlemen, at tilt, tourney and barriers. The like proclamation was made by Clarencieux in the French court: and these defiances were sent likewise into Germany, Spain and Italy. Knights and squires accordingly assembled, *All clinquant, all in gold*, as our poet has it: And the two kings, especially our sturdy Henry, performed wonders
equal

equal to any knight-errant in fairy land. The ladies were not only spectators of these knightly jousts, and fierce encounters, but often the chief occasion of them: for to vindicate their unspotted honors and beauty, what warrior would refuse to enter the lists? The witty earl of Surry, in Henry the eighth's reign, like another Don Quixote, travelled to Florence, and there, in honor of a fair Florentine, challenged all nations at single combat in defence of his Dulcinea's beauty. The more witty and wise Sir Philip Sydney,

'Tclad in mightie arms and sylver shield,

in honor of his royal mistress, shew'd his knight-errant chivalry before the French nobles, who came here on an embassy about the marriage of Elizabeth with the duke of Anjou.

Would it not be unjust to ridicule our forefathers, for their awkward manners, and at the same time have no other test of ridicule but mode or fashion? For we, of a modern date, may possibly appear, in many respects, equally ridiculous to a critical and philosophical inquirer, who takes no other criterion and standard to

9. Spencer in his Fairy Queen, of Prince Arthur. This Arthur represents his patron, Sir Philip Sydney. And every one of his knight-errants represented some hero in the court of Elizabeth.

judge from, than truth and nature. We want natural and rightly improved manners: for these our poets must go abroad; and from the Attic and Roman flowers collect their honey; and they should give a new fashion and dress, not contradicting however probability and fame, to whatever is meerly of a British and barbarous growth, agreeable to their imagination and creative fancy. Shakespear never writes so below himself, as when he keeps closest to our most authentic chronicles, and fights over the battles between the houses of York and Lancafter. Not that he is to blame for following fame in known characters, but in the ill^o choice of his subject; for

10. Αὐτῆς δὲ τῆς ποιητικῆς διτλὴ ἡ ἀμαρτία. Ἡ μὲν γὰρ καθ' αὐτὴν, ἢ δὲ καλὰ συμβεβηκός. Ἡ μὲν γὰρ προείλετο μιμήσασθαι ἀδυναμίαν αὐτῆς, ἢ ἀμαρτία. Ἡ δὲ τὸ προεῖλεσθαι μὴ ὀρθῶς, καλὰ συμβεβηκός. After ἡ ἀμαρτία, by the transcriber's negligence, καθ' αὐτὴν is omitted. The passage I would thus read, Αὐτῆς δὲ τῆς ποιητικῆς διτλὴ ἡ ἀμαρτία· ἢ μὲν καθ' αὐτὴν, ἢ δὲ καλὰ συμβεβηκός. Εἰ μὲν γὰρ προείλετο μιμήσασθαι, κατ' ἀδυναμίαν αὐτῆς, ἢ ἀμαρτία καθ' αὐτὴν· ἢ δὲ τὸ προεῖλεσθαι μὴ ὀρθῶς, καλὰ συμβεβηκός. Aristot. περὶ ποιητ. κ.φ. κς. In poetry there are two defects, the one arises from itself, [*per se,*] the other is accidental: [*per accidens:*] for if it chuses subjects for imitation, out of its power and reach, the fault is from itself; [*per se,*] but when it chuses ignorantly, the fault is accidental [*per accidens.*] To illustrate from Shakespear. The ἀμαρτία καθ' αὐτὴν, is the historical transactions of York and Lancafter: the making

for he should have rejected what was incapable of embellishment. But in those stories where his imagination has greater scope, and where he can "lye without being contradicted, there he reigns without a rival.

making choice of such a story as the *Winter's Tale*, &c. The ἀμαρτία κατὰ συμβεβηκός, is where Shakespeare, not heeding geography, calls Delphi an isle, in the *Winter's Tale*, Act III. Not knowing physic says *pleuriste*, instead of *plethory*, in *Hamlet*, Act IV. With others of the like nature.

11. Homer knew the whole art of *lying*, and has taught other poets the way. Δεδίδαχε δὲ μάλιστα Ὀμηρὸς καὶ τὸς ἄλλους ψευδῆ λέγειν ὡς δεῖ. Aristot. περὶ ποιητ. κ.φ. κδ. Horace has given this an elegant turn in his art of poetry, ψ. 151.

*Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,
Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet inum.*

S E C T. V.

BUT perhaps our poet's art will appear to greater advantage, if we enter into a detail, and a minuter examination of his plays. There are many who, never having read one word of Aristotle, gravely cite his rules, and talk of the unities of time and place, at the very mentioning Shakespeare's name; they don't seem ever to have given themselves the trouble of considering, whether or no his story does not hang
I together,