XXXIII. On painting

Mr. E. Dayes

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cefs, the oxide, inftead of being abforbed, ought to flow from the furnace. This circumftance needs excite no uneafinefs; for the wind of the bellows, if well directed, will make the litharge flow along the gutter more abundantly than if there had been an abforption.

I have feen refiners in Germany, who, in conftituting their cupells of afhes, formed in the middle of it a fmall circular depreflion the diameter of which was proportioned to the quantity of the filver which they knew to be contained in the lead fubjected to the operation. By this excellent difpofition no grains of that valuable metal remain infulated from the cake; the whole runs into the central bafon, and forms a cake perfectly round. I would recommend this practice.

I am certain that the cupells here propofed, if carefully and properly conftituted, will be attended with complete fuccefs; will be free from the inconveniences of thofe of afhes, and at the fame time will be economical. I am defirous, for the benefit of metallurgy, that the method here pointed out may be put in practice: it will prove that we ought not to be too tenacious in adhering fervilely to antient ufages or to the common routine of workmen.

XXXIII. *On Painting.* By Mr. E. DAYES, Painter *.

I THINK it right again to repeat, that I have not obferved any order in the production of thefe Effays. They were written as the fubjects arofe in my mind, and the prefent paper fhould be confidered rather as an introductory addrefs than otherwife. My motive in writing the prefent effay was to endeavour to remove the prejudice of thofe who confider the arts as a ufelefs ftudy, and their produce as things merely ornamental. But who, in a ftate of civil fociety, would be content with the ufeful or neceffary? Who is he whole foul seeks not after perfection?

The motions of his fpirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no fuch man be trufted.

The fubject of the following effay had long engaged my attention; but I had dropped the idea of writing on it, in confequence of fome intelligent friends obferving it would be ufelefs, as no one could be fo ftupid as not to fee the ufe-fulnefs and influence of the arts on fociety. Experience,

* Communicated by the Author.

however,

however, has taught the contrary; and I have been further strengthened in my resolution by observing, that the French National Institute, in their public sitting of April 5, had thought the inquiry of sufficient importance to offer it as a subject for the premium of a gold medal *.

Francis-street, Bedford-square,
November 30, 1802.

EDWARD DAYES.

ESSAY VII.

On the Power and Usefulness of Drawing.

I am persuaded that to be a virtuoso (so far as befits a gentleman) is a higher step towards becoming a man of virtue and good sense, than the being what in this age we call a scholar. *Lord Shaftesbury.*

IN this essay we have two objects in view: to show the connection of drawing with painting; and to exhibit, in as clear a manner as we possibly can, its usefulness and influence on society.

But before we proceed it may be necessary to observe, that those who would question the utility of the arts, would be equally disposed to question the utility of these essays that treat about them. Of their usefulness we hope to be able to offer numberless proofs; but they rise superior to the merely useful. For that which is necessary is neither ornamented nor elegant, because necessity implies poverty, while ornament implies abundance. Hence architecture, as an art, does not apply to mere house-building.

In defence of these essays, they are serviceable by exhibiting the usefulness of truth; and so far they become an object to all those who wish to be acquainted with the subject handled, and to obtain a knowledge therein. But to those who never think or inquire, or concern themselves with matters of speculation, or who take up with speculations without examining them, or read only to confirm themselves in such as they have received, not any thing can become an object of concern, or any book be useful.

That man was not intended by nature for purposes base and ignoble, none will deny; and, if arguments were wanted, they might be drawn from that eternal inquiry after whatever is grand, dignified, or exalted; and, finally, after a state superior to our present terrestrial one. For it is not too much

* We cannot help thinking that Mr. Dayes has judged well in taking up this part of the subject. It is of great importance, and he has rendered an essential service not only to the art itself, but to its liberal professors, by removing, as his arguments effectually do, ill-grounded prejudices against its indispensable utility in civilized society; prejudices which could only originate in, and be fostered by, ignorance and stupidity.—EDITOR.

to assert, that we approach the Divinity in nothing so much as in wisdom. Hence, as the arts are connected with wisdom, as men become careless of their culture, they become equally incapable of fulfilling the duties of social beings. For knowledge is what humanizes mankind; reason inclines them to mildness, but ignorance generates prejudice, which eradicates every tender feeling.

By *drawing* is meant the exact imitation of all the forms and manners which present themselves to our sight; and in knowing how to give every thing its proper and corresponding character agreeably to the subject consists the excellence of what the artist terms *a good draftsman*.

Drawing, as far as it is connected with mere imitation, is a mechanical operation, and may be acquired by a person of very moderate talents. So may a knowledge of bodies, properties, facts, events, and fables, by reading. But the powers of invention, the *vis poetica*, which distinguishes the bard from the mere versifier or journalist, the genius from the mere imitator and copyist, must be a gift from heaven bestowed at the formation of the being. Neither this poetic energy nor the inventive powers of the artist can be taught in schools or academies; but they both may be buried in rust and inaction, if proper objects are not presented to call them into motion. So the inventive powers of genius will be futile if unaccompanied by a skill in drawing. Without this, the learning of the painter or sculptor cannot be shown to advantage: it is the *fine qua non* by which all the other accomplishments are displayed.

From what has been already stated, the dependence of painting on drawing must be obvious.

Genius has been compared to fire from flint, which can only be produced by collision: if so, success must follow where nature directs and perseverance attends. Activity is a necessary ingredient to enable us to obtain a knowledge in art; and should we find others out-step us, let us redouble our diligence, and comfort ourselves with the recollection, that a late spring produces the greatest plenty.

No one can possibly judge of his powers from mere speculation; the test must be applied before the value of the gold can be known. Nor will inactivity ever discover how far our fortitude will enable us to overcome difficulties, our patience to bear disappointment, or our industry enable us to range the wide field of art. For, were the arts of easy attainment, they would be unworthy the notice of a great mind. This should induce us to increase our exertions in proportion to our disappointments, remembering that to strive
with

with difficulties is noble, but to conquer is one of the highest points of human felicity. It is in painting as in writing; where difficulties occur, they arise from not clearly understanding the subject. Hence, to be able to represent an object justly we must understand its fabrication; for it would be in vain to think of drawing the arch of a bridge correctly without knowing how it was keyed or put together, or even a basket if we did not know how it was wove.

We shall now proceed to consider the power of drawing in a point of view merely useful.

How limited must their ideas be who consider it as “the foundation of painting” only! We know it is such: for without drawing it would be in vain to think of producing an effect; as mere colour without form must remain a crude and undistinguishable mass.

Drawing is not only an accomplishment the most elegant, agreeable, and ornamental, but, at the same time that it is the foundation of painting, is of the utmost utility to the sculptor, the civil and naval architect, the engraver, the engineer, the mathematician, and navigator. It also assists the gardener, the cabinet-maker, the weaver, &c. In short, there is scarcely a branch of civil society that is not indebted to it, from the maker of the iron rails before our house to the tea-urn on our table. To it we are indebted for representations of those elegant remains of antiquity that have contributed so much to the advancement of our knowledge of fine form. Volumes of verbal description will never convey so true an idea of a thing as the most slight sketch. Hence the source of much of our knowledge in antiquity, of which language could convey no adequate idea.

To be able on the spot to make a sketch of a fine building, beautiful prospect, or any curious production of nature or of art, is not only a very desirable and elegant accomplishment, but in the highest degree entertaining. To treasure up whatever may occur in our travels, either for future use or to illustrate conversation, to represent the deeds of the great of former ages, to preserve the features of our most valued friends, has made this art not only one of the highest embellishments of our nature, but the delight of all ages. The greatest writers have united to praise, and empires to encourage it. It has been in the highest degree morally useful; and, where it has flourished, conferred honour on the country. In fact, society could not sustain a more severe loss than in being deprived of it; as many comforts, and all those elegancies that adorn the present state of our being, must depart with it.

What

What has been the fate of those people whose lawgivers forbid the practice of one part of the elegant arts? It appears they well knew, that where art resides, wisdom will ever be of the party; and dreaded the downfall of opinions built on a false base.

Wisdom is power, and power is what preserves a nation: hence those who shut the door against knowledge are wilfully seeking their own destruction: such is precisely the present state of the Turkish empire.

Ye gods! what justice rules the ball!
Freedom and arts together fall:
Fools grant what'er ambition craves;
And men once ignorant are slaves.

POPE.

What was the fate of Crete, that was so renowned for her wisdom, valour, and laws? How did she sink under the tyranny and oppression of Rome? With their freedom departed their arts, their sciences, their valour, and their virtues. With the loss of liberty we lose all the ardour nature has furnished us with to strengthen and support the flame of genius and the ardent glow of valour: without it we become destitute of vigorous resolution, and sink below the natural virtue and dignity of our species.

Drawing may be said to possess a divine virtue in its creative power, and to be a perpetual miracle, as it preserves the images of distant objects, and the likeness of those we love.

Without risking our lives on the boisterous ocean, we may enjoy at home, in a small book, representations of the finest productions of nature and art situated in the remotest regions of the world.

The wealth of a state, and the degree of civilization of its inhabitants, are shown in the perfection of the elegant arts: no country ever flourished without them.

To speak of the power of drawing in a very limited point of view: without it we could not have maps and charts; without them we could not navigate; and without navigation we could not possess the advantages of commerce. Its application to ship-building must be obvious, as every part is made to a scale. As a mere power of imitation, it unquestionably sets man at the head of creation, no other animal having made even the attempt.

The arts have not only an influence on our manners but passions, and, taken in a national point of view, are highly useful. The pictures representing gallant actions or noble achievements rouse and stimulate to acts of heroism and

public spirit ; while those of a more elegant turn exhibit examples of graceful address, and incline the mind to acts of beneficence and virtue.

However much we may lament that historical painting is not sufficiently encouraged, yet we must dissent from those who support the old but erroneous opinion, that our love of portrait-painting arises from a national vanity. This ridiculous idea has been bandied about, both by foreigner and native, till many who take up with opinions without examining them have believed it true. We boldly assert, on the contrary, that it is national virtue that gives it birth, and a desire the most rational, that of preserving the images of those we love and delight in, constantly before our eyes. It argues great national beneficence and goodness of heart. We may in some measure judge of the disposition of the master of a house from the number of portraits he possesses : they cannot be likenesses of his enemies. Hence his choice must be founded on love, and not, as the ancients' was, on pride and vanity. The portrait-painter therefore becomes morally useful by increasing that social tie that binds society together, in keeping before our eyes the images of departed worth or existing merit. It is only those who neither love nor are beloved, that have no need of the portrait-painter.

Among the number of our own national advantages, and which some may think superior to all others, we may observe that the excellence of our artists has turned the balance of trade in our favour. For whereas we formerly imported vast quantities of prints, we now supply all Europe, and import very few. Even for the decoration of our books we were formerly obliged to apply to strangers : but Heath has added a taste to that department of art unknown to former engravers in the historical line. Among the topographical publications, those prints that accompany the "Beauties of England and Wales" must be highly interesting for taste and beauty.

In the beginning of the last century, the writers on the continent amused themselves in endeavouring to assign a cause for the dulness of us islanders in not having produced one historical painter. Our northern latitude, being involved in fogs, was among the reasons assigned : but the cause of such absurd inquiries has ceased, and the mental capacity of Britons no one will now dare to question.

The consequence of our nation and the arts appear to have advanced together. The first is evinced in our colonial possessions ; and if we go back to the time of Henry VIII., we shall easily discover the state of commerce and the comfortable situation of society compared with the present. Hollin-
shed

shed observes that chimneys were a novelty, as were pewter ornaments for the table. Straw formed the bed, and a good hard block of wood the pillow. Then was the dawn of the arts. Since which time they have been advancing, and are now, thank God! matured into a glorious mid-day, under the auspices of his present majesty.

It is impossible to speak of the arts without expressing our gratitude towards their great patron; and were his name to flourish in no other way, that of George III. will be sacred to posterity with those of Leo, Julius, and all such as have a claim on eternity, as their protectors. His majesty has done for the arts what no monarch of this nation ever did before: he has given, by his patronage, a turn to the national taste highly beneficial to the profession, which the public are bound to support by a liberal and fair encouragement. With respect to the mere act of buying, we are bound to consider his majesty in the light of a private gentleman, who regulates his expenditure according to his income: and we ought to thank God it is so.

Holbein had not taste enough to change the grotesque fashions of the court of Henry VIII. He brought about a revolution in architecture; but he introduced a mungrel style, inferior to the Gothic of that period. Zuccaro was in England in the time of Elizabeth; and during that long reign we find little improvement in architecture, dress, or in the general circle of elegancies. It was a court of intrigue and vanity. In the reign of James I. Van Somer and Cornelius Janson paved the way for Van Dyck—an epoch of taste: but this appears to have been confined to the court and a few noble collectors; and the troubles of Charles his successor prevented his giving them a more general influence. His reign stands high in the history of architecture, from having produced Inigo Jones. Under Lely taste sunk into Indian gowns and flowing perukes; till fashion became a monster in the time of Kneller, and appeared in buckram coats, square-toed shoes, and disproportioned head-dresses in the ladies. This style of dress prevailed till within these few years, when good sense and a more just taste broke through the buckram and whalebone, and produced the present easy and elegant mode of attire; which may be said to mark a point of national excellence. Reynolds contributed much to this change; his whole life was a struggle with the hydra fashion, as his works evince.

The above statement will be found not to apply only to the article of dress, but to extend to every department. Let us, for instance, from the period of Henry VIII. examine ship-

ship-building, civil architecture, our furniture, plate, &c. &c., and we shall find them to have nearly improved together, or to have fluctuated as the taste for *deffin* prevailed, till the patronage bestowed by his present majesty, by exciting a general love for the arts, improved the national taste to its present great and highly respectable state.

Before we dismiss the present essay we shall endeavour to point out some of the advantages that result from the practice of drawing, to those who do not make a profession of it. Many must be obvious from the former part of this paper. To every gentleman who travels, it is absolutely necessary; for, independently of its teaching him to see accurately, the curious and ever-restless eye of the artist comprehends more at one view than the common observer will notice in an age. The volume of nature is laid open to him; his attention is directed to the vast and minute; men and manners are not concealed from his view, and his imagination clings to perfection with ineffable delight.

It is not too much to say, that drawing opens the mind more than years devoted to the acquiring of languages, or the mere learning of words: it teaches to think. The artist is a true logician: not content with producing effects, he is ever inquiring after causes founded on a visible demonstration, to exhibit them in his works.

We must not rank it among the least of the advantages resulting from the practice of the arts, that it enures the reflecting mind to the most enticing sort of logic. The practice of reasoning upon objects in themselves agreeable tends to produce such a habit, and habit strengthens the reasoning faculties. Besides, while the mind is engaged in obtaining knowledge, we escape the insipidity and indifference connected with the tediousness of inactivity. Hope attends labour; a blessing unknown to those who live lazily on the toil of others. The sensualist imagines he enjoys the world because he eats and drinks, and runs about upon it; but to enjoy it truly, is to be sensible of its greatness and beauty.

Independently of keeping the mind employed, the arts contribute to harmonize the temper; and the power of drawing brings with it so much mental enjoyment, that youth, in order to be occupied, is not tempted to precipitate into the ruinous and destructive vices of gaming and drinking. It defends us in the meridian of life from the wild schemes of ambition, and in old age it becomes a sure shield against avarice. Shenstone observes, "Wherever there is a want of taste, we generally observe a love of money and cunning."

The influence it has on our moral conduct is, perhaps, one of the greatest recommendations for the study of the arts. No one can meditate on the order observable in nature, and not reduce his conduct to a similar standard of regularity. To have a just relish for what is elegant and proper in painting, sculpture, or architecture, must be a fine preparation for true notions relative to character and behaviour. Should such a one be overpowered by passion, or swerve from his duty, we need not fear but he will return on the first reflection, and with a redoubled resolution not to err a second time: for he cannot but observe, that the well-being of nature, as well as of the individual, depends on regularity and order; and that a disregard of the social virtues will ever be accompanied with shame and remorse. Passion is a whirlwind, that shakes the human frame, as the convulsions of an earthquake disorder that of nature.

Every Briton that travels should propose to himself pleasure and advantage, and his inquiry should enable him to add to the national stock of knowledge; for it cannot be said that he travels to enjoy the advantage of a better government, or because other nations have a greater commerce. Hence, then, it must be for arts and learning. And how is he to become acquainted with the former without a knowledge in painting, sculpture, and architecture, any more than he could with the latter, without a knowledge in the languages of the countries he may have occasion to pass through? Lord Bacon says: "Travel, in the younger sort, is a part of education; in the elder, a part of experience. He that travelleth into a country before he hath some entrance into the language, goeth to school and not to travel." The same may be said of those who travel before they have obtained a knowledge in the polite arts. How many noble works of architecture did lord Burlington bequeath to his country! They remain monuments of national taste, highly honourable to his memory. Let us be permitted to mention the honour the arts at present derive from the masterly productions of the earl of Aylesford, sir G. Beaumont, sir R. Hoare, W. Scope, esq. of Cattlecomb; captain Lewis, of the royal navy; capt. Mordaunt, and many others, whose works will ever rank among the first productions of the pencil. Lord Warwick is said to possess the true poetic spirit for composing heroic landscape. While we are recommending to gentlemen to learn to draw, it must not be understood that we wish to deprive the ladies of the pleasure and advantage that must result from their practising an art that stands, perhaps, before all others for improving

improving our taste, particularly in such things as are connected with decoration.

Though we recommend learning to draw thus generally, we must say it requires the utmost caution in the choice of a master; for, should his abilities be confined, or his taste depraved, there is great danger of the poison being conveyed to the pupil: and if, in the end, his better understanding rise superior to the evil, he will, unfortunately, have much to unlearn. Above all, if he be arrived at an age to discriminate, objects worthy attention should be set as examples of imitation; he should not be amused and his time wasted with gew-gaws and trash beneath the dignity and attention of rational beings.

Every one is acquainted with the progress of what may be termed common or school education. The masters begin teaching the letters, and then proceed to syllables, which are joined into sentences: but the ultimate end is, composing themes to call forth the power of invention, and convey a more exquisite idea of the language. Exactly so should be the progress in teaching drawing. If the knowledge to be obtained be the human figure, we begin with parts; as eyes, noses, heads, hands, &c., which is the A B C. This, of course, leads to the whole figure, which may be compared to spelling; that naturally conducts to the round, or drawing from plaster casts; then from the life; and ultimately to composition. Should landscape be the pursuit, the progress is precisely the same. We begin with parts or single objects; as trees, bridges, cottages, castles, &c. Here again is the alphabet. This we too quit to copy wholes, or a combination of objects; and in the end we apply to nature, which sets us free from our master. Then we must improve by our own activity; and, like the bee, cull the honey from every flower. As much of our success depends on the abilities of the master, the greatest care should be observed in the choice. He is but as a crutch to the lame; but we ought to make ourselves sure it is sound, and without flaw or shake; that is, as far as our judgment will permit, or the opinion of friends direct.

He who aspires to a knowledge in the fine arts can only hope to succeed by turning his attention to the sensitive part of nature, particularly by an inquiry after such objects as are naturally agreeable, or the contrary: also such as are grand or mean, proper or improper. This is the only foundation of a just and rational taste, and, like morals, may be cultivated to a high degree of refinement. The fine arts, where the feelings only are concerned, will please, from their no-

228 *Difference between Heads of Mammoth and Elephant.*

velty, in the prime of life; but the delight will cease in a more advanced period, when the fervour of the imagination goes off. On the contrary, where we are governed by just principles and a thorough knowledge, they will afford scope for fancy as well as judgment, they will grow into a favourite entertainment, and their vigour will prevail as strong in the evening as in the morning of life. This only can make the arts truly delightful. It is not a few technical phrases, picked up from professional men, which may enable one to babble like a parrot, that can at any time please or be pleasing. Science is a coy lady, and will not grant her favours without being long courted. But, should we aspire to no higher character than that of the mere critic, a small stock of information will suffice; and practice will increase confidence where there is nothing to lose. Criticism is a lady of easy access: the want of meaning she supplies with words; and the want of knowledge is recompensed with cunning. She flatters all; and those whom nature has made weak, or idleness keeps ignorant, may feed their vanity at her shrine.

XXXIV. *On the Differences which exist between the Heads of the Mammoth and Elephant.* By REMBRANDT PEALE, Esq.*

THE drawings which accompany this (see Plate V.) are intended to explain the differences between the head of the mammoth and that of the elephant. The teeth form the most striking character: those of the elephant are exclusively graminivorous, and consequently distinguished from those of the mammoth, which were intended for animal food of some kind, and not improbably shell-fish, on the supposition that the animal was amphibious†: and this may account for the peculiar form and position of the tusks. On examining the head of the elephant, it will appear that the sockets for the tusks at A are situated, with respect to the condyle of the neck at B, nearly in an angle of 45 degrees; so that the tusks, which have but little curve, are directed downwards and forwards, and may be with ease employed offensively and defensively. On the other hand, it will be observed that in the mammoth the socket A is nearly on a horizontal line with the condyle B; and therefore the tusks, which are semicircular, could never have been elevated in the air, pointing

* Communicated by the Author.

† See the former number, p. 162—169 of the present volume.
backwards,