

chiefly of the ecclesiastical preferments in his disposal.—There are four bishoprics.—That of *Avignon* is reckoned worth 3000l. Sterling *per annum*.

The town of *Avignon* has no magistracy nor jurisdiction; but they are allowed to enjoy certain privileges, and have right to an annual revenue of no less than 25,000l. Sterling.—This revenue is faithfully administered by three consuls; one chosen by the Pope, one by the nobles, and one by the burgeses.—They compute that five or six thousand of this revenue is necessarily and actually expended every year in creating new, and repairing old bulwarks, to defend this town and fertile country from devastations by the two rivers *Rhone* and *Durance*.—Sometimes this expense amounts to greater sums.—From 7 to 8000l. is annually necessary and expended to support their three great hospitals.—The river *Durance* is very remarkable for its rapid violent and destructive wate through all its course.—The people have this common proverb, “That the country of Provence is afflicted by three plagues; the parliament, the mental winds, and the river *Durance*.”—They complain of vexatious delays, and excessive expense of law suits, carried on before that parliament.—The papal nobility within this territory of *Avignon* are few in number, and inconsiderable in wealth.—The land property is mostly divided into small estates.—The rich and great at *Avignon* are French nobility, generally from *Provence*, *Languedoc*, and *Dauphin*; who by their residence here are entitled to certain privileges, without affecting their rights as French subjects.—They keep up the distinctions of rank and birth to a high pitch.—They avoid intercourse or society with burgeses and other untitled people.—They even condemn the papal nobility, and in derision call them by the name of *Papists*.

\* The Parliament in France are merely courts of justice; not properly legislative assemblies, as in Britain.

“ON THE ESSENTIAL (To be continued) Poetical  
Genius,” The Bee or Literary Intelligence,  
5 (1791), 177-81.

*On the Essential Qualities of Poetical Genius.*

The Sacred and Competition Essay.

To the Editor of the Bee.

SIR,

In an age so much addicted to poetry and criticism as the present, it may not be improper to ascertain and illustrate the Essential Qualities of Poetical Composition. Are they not fully, though briefly, expressed by Horace in the two following lines?

“*Ingenium cui fit, cui mens, divior, argue or  
Magna bonarum; des nominis hujus honorem?*”

In these lines three particulars are mentioned;—*Ingenium*—*mens divior*—or *magna sanaturum*. Inventions, a fine mind, or a mind unfluently elevated, and talents of powerful expression. We shall make some observations on each of these separately.

I. *By ingenium* may be here understood invention, industry, or that great creating power of the poet which depends on imagination. It is by this talent that the poet makes a proper choice and arrangement of those circumstances in an object, which, in suggesting it he means to employ. For though we ascribe to him creative powers, it is not meant that he forms beings altogether new, or of materials that never existed till he produced them: we only mean that he works on the materials presented to him by nature; he separates and throws them into new combinations. He thus by altering, and new modelling, makes new objects; with a view to excite stronger emotions than they would otherwise occasion.

Poetic genius is distinguished by the exercise of imagination and imitation; for they are in fact the same. The poet invents, that is, he throws circumstances into new form; but that form is intended to represent, fo  
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as to make a stronger impression, something that does exist, or has existed. The great object of all imitation is Nature, either inanimated, such as woods, valleys, and rivers, or animated, as birds, beasts; but above all, the actions of mankind. It is not enough merely to describe, the poet must imitate. He is not only, for example, to display anger by describing the pale face and quivering lip; but he must, by speaking the language, display the feelings of the angry man. As he chiefly imitates human nature he must suppose himself the very character he invents. He must speak what everyone of the persons he represents would naturally speak, and seem to perform actions familiar to what the person would have done in that situation.

The pastoral poet, for instance, has to imitate the manners and customs of the country life. If any objects are introduced that are not connected with the pastoral life, they are improper. The objects from which the poet borrows his imagery must be such as are within the sphere of the shepherd's knowledge. If they suppose great improvement in the sciences, they are improper; and cannot make a part of a pastoral poem. The characters too must be such as are suited to that state; the passions described must be modified so as to be consistent with the situation of the speaker. To say the must be always gentle, is improper; because shepherds are often repented, and with justice, as being cruel and violently incensed. But it would be improper to represent them as very ambitious, or carrying their resentment to violent or bloody excess. The same thing may be illustrated in epic, dramatic, and every species of poetical composition. In all of them the poet must employ fiction; but in all of them he must adhere to probability; and while he invents he must imitate. He is to excite feelings, and this can only be done by describing particular natural objects.

II. But the poet must not only invent,—he must naturally have ingenuity and those talents which depend

comparing him with himself, so to say, and since Herace sets so high a value on sensibility, and since here he does not mention it in a formal enumeration of po-

imagination, he must feel,—he must have sensibility,—he must have the *mens divinus*. This I conceive to be the meaning of the term. The expression is general; *mens divinus*, a very divine mind, a more than usually divine mind. How comes that to signify sensibility; and is not the meaning too arbitrary? By attending to the following particulars we shall perhaps judge otherwise:

1st. What is it that excites a mind, or makes it, so to say, divine? Is it not such sensibility as flows out in exquisite feeling or fine affection? Ah, or most men, have sensibility to the circumstances that befall themselves; but the whole mind is so interceptible as to be as deeply affected with what befalls others, and with imaginary events, as other persons are with real, may be said to have fine sensibility, or the *mens divinus*.

2d. The poet, in this passage, speaks like a critic: if we rate he is not to be suspected of writing loosely. He usually distinguishes very accurately, and expresses himself very correctly. He is not to be suspected of distinctions without difference, or of using words that have no meaning, or are redundant. The difference, for example, between the *ingenium* and *et magna scientiam* is distinctly marked. Is it fair, then, to suppose that he means no more by the *mens divinus* than or the *ingenium*? By every rule of candid criticism we must suppose that he means something different; and not only so, but something essential. He is making an important enumeration: what is this second particular in his enumeration? This leads us to remark,

3dly, That the poet, in other parts of his works, where he delivers critical doctrines, dwells very particularly on sensibility. He says explicitly, in his epistle to the *Pylis*, that without this it is impossible to enter into human passions and affections, so as to imitate them, and so as to move other persons. “*Si vis me fieri, (says he,) delendum est primum tibi tibi.*” Now, the meaning of a writer is always best known by

and, to his subject. He must have the *et magna scientiam*. This quality, so essential in poetry, as it is most capable of cultivation, deserves the more to be at-

comparing him with himself, so to say, and since Horace sets so high a value on sensibility, and since he does not mention it in a formal enumeration of poetical qualities, and as in this enumeration we meet with an expression which seems general, but which may have this particular meaning, we must, in fairness, conclude that the poet is consistent, means sensibility, and apprehends that he announces it sufficiently by the epithet *insensibilis*.

That sensibility, the power of feelings, or fully conceiving the passions, affections, or actions we would delineate, is a necessary ingredient in poetical genius, needs small illustration. The passage now alluded to in Horace is sufficient.

- " Non factus est, affectu carentem, sed in factis,
- " Et quæ semper sunt animata, ad hoc, quæpura,
- " Ut placeat, ut credent, ut placeat, ut adferat,
- " Hæmunt veritas, Nihilque in fides, dolendum est
- " Preterit spiritibus, namque non inchoantia habent,
- " Tibi quoque, vel Palæus, male si mandare, loquaris,
- " Aut demeritibus, aut ridibus, Tristitia nequissimi
- " Vultum verba decem, itatum plena manantur,
- " Iudicium habent, severum terribile dicitur,
- " Fortem etiam, natura prius nos inus ad omnem,
- " Perseverant habitum, iurata, aut impellit ad iram,
- " Aut ad humanum necesse gravi delictum, et argere;
- " Post effect animi motus, intererit lingua.

III. But what signify invention and sensibility, if the thoughts and feelings of the poet are not well expressed. He must have the *et magna sententiam*. He must be capable of adequate expression, adequate to the great objects, and passions he would display. He may imagine the finest objects, he may be moved by the most exquisite affections, but he cannot please or move others, unless he makes them see as he feels, and feel as he feels. But he cannot transfuse his soul into theirs. He must use some intermediate vehicle for conveying his thoughts to those whom he would affect. Language is this vehicle. He must speak, and speak perspicuously, and accurately, and fully; he must speak and with energy, and in a manner adequate, as we

said to his subject. He must have the *et magna sententiam*. This quality, so essential in poetry, as it is most capable of cultivation, deserves the more to be attended to, and cultivated. Perhaps nature must confer imagination and sensibility; but force and elegance, at least perspicuity and correctness of expression may be attained by study. What that study, or those exercises may be which tend to the improvement of expression, is foreign from our present subject. Suffice it that we have shewn, that invention, sensibility, and expression are the essential qualities of poetical genius.

In veniam est sic, cui mens divinitus, atque os  
Magna loquatur; et, des nominis hujus hæc oratio.

CRATO.

ON TALE-BEARING.

To the Editor of the Bee,

When did you Tale-bearer, the sordid calf. SOLOMON.

SIR,

Among the useful and ingenious essays that have appeared in your Miscellany, I see none on the subject I have chosen.—I propose, therefore, Mr Editor, to point out some of the bad consequences which follow the most detestable of all vulgar vices.

Vices that terminate in immediate destruction are seldom extensively fatal, because they are carefully guarded against, and rarely practiced; but cunning, fraud, and hypocrisy, produce their effects without being adverted to.

Slander is the essence of tale-bearing; and slander attains to many shapes to mischief, that the most cautious are not always able to resist its influence; and by its concealed venom it becomes the most excruciating scourge to mankind! It disturbs the peace of families, families, and friends.

Oct. 17,

Must not he be a great coward who always attacks you behind your back, and in circumstances where it is impossible for you to stand upon the defensive?—Such a coward is the Tale-bearer.

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181. Must not he be a great coward who always attacks you behind your back, and in circumstances where it is impossible for you to stand upon the defensive?—Such a coward is that great fermentary principle which sets