

in the great gallery than in those which are lighted from the courts of the Louvre. This difference, which is of such great consequence to paintings, is very striking.

The gallery of the colonnade is terminated by a magnificent stair-case, which leads to the Salon of Sculpture. This part of the exhibition is very interesting this year, not so much for the number of the productions, as for their importance.

As I have already said, I cannot presume to give an opinion of things which I have only seen with a glance. But if I consult the public voice, which, however, I am far from considering as the *vox dei*, particularly with respect to the fine arts, the exhibition has not answered the public expectation, nor come up to the hope, which might be justly entertained from the number of celebrated painters now flourishing in France. There are but few productions of the great living masters. On the other hand, there is an abundance of paintings in the style which the French call *tailleur de guerre*; domestic scenes, *promenades en calèche*, popular caricatures, fairs, &c. and a handsome proportion of portraits of ladies and gentlemen, whom nobody knows, nor ever heard of. One particular circumstance has occurred at this exhibition, which has formed a subject of conversation all over Paris. Horace Vernet, one of the most popular painters of the day, presented no less than 52 pictures for the exhibition. The jury that was appointed to examine all the pieces that were presented, rejected two of this artist's, as calculated to excite revolutionary ideas that had better be forgotten. Piqued at this, Vernet withdrew every one of his pictures, and, it is said, means to exhibit them in his own house.

A new tragedy had just been brought out at the *Second Theatre Français*, entitled *Attila*, a subject which the great Corneille, as the French call him, picked upon in his latter years, but in which he completely failed. If some strokes of a vigorous pencil in the painting of a great character, a boldness of expression occasionally happy, a sort of poetical exaltation not always in unison with good taste, but seducing and attractive, and certainly preferable to the languid purity and droming exactness of Iliad, without colour or energy; if, in short, a great number of

fine verses and brilliant epic passages were sufficient to form a good tragedy, the triumph of Mr. Bis, the author of *Attila*, would be complete, and the French theatre would be enriched with another masterpiece. But if a tragic composition, to rise above indolence, must have a probable action, the progress of which, skilfully combined, presents an interest always increasing; a principal character, well supported, who, in his transports, and even in his crimes, never excites contempt; nor even that horrible pity inspired by madness; a character, the effect of which is rendered more prominent by unaffected contrasts, then, indeed, we must declare that Mr. Bis has remained far from the point where the palm awaits the victor. His production is very imperfect, but he has shown a talent which gives well-founded hopes for the future; and the more so, as it has quite an original colour, and seems perfectly free from the servitude of imitation.

I must confine myself to a very rapid analysis of this new *Attila*. This formidable chief of the Huns has marched from victory to victory; from the front of the Great Wall of China, to the banks of the Marne, near Paris; flight, levastation, and death, have everywhere marked his passage; empires have fallen before him, towns have disappeared, whole nations have been effaced from the surface of the earth, and the contemptible princes who tetter on the thrones of Rome and Byzantium, have only preserved the appearance of sovereignty at the expense of their treasures and their honour. The heirs of Augustus are the tributaries of a Scythian.

Attila has made an invasion into Gaul, and has sworn to destroy Lutetia and the infant empire of the Franks. It is in his camp, in this very tent, that the action of the piece is placed. Everything seems to favour the project of the *Second Théâtre Français*, the throne of Lucretia with his brother Messidorus, and, ambitious sifting in his breast all the sentiments of nature and patriotism, he goes over to Attila, as his ally and protector, or rather his master.

Queen Edvige and Genevieve, who is considered by the inhabitants of the banks of the Seine as an oracle inspired by heaven, have fallen by chance

into the hands of Attila. The author rejects the frank expressions, the soft makes him both suppositions and exaggerations, and kind language of Messidorus, who, irritated at length by Genevieve, He makes her indeed a little *à la Corneille*; but notwithstanding all his romanticisms, he is consistently troubled internally by the predictions of Genevieve, who has foretold his flight and his death. A troop of traitors deliver up Messidorus to Attila, who, in return, orders them all to be put to death. The Roman ambassador turns a plan to assassinate him; this conspiracy is discovered, and Attila himself dismisses the criminal from his camp, telling him he shall punish him when he has conquered Byzantium. In short, the four first acts are almost entirely filled with boasting bravado, high-flown declamations, and contradictory movements of atrocity and clemency, the whole embellished with forced *travestis* on the valour and glory of the Franks, and on liberty; for the most theories, and most pompous amplifications on that topic, are actually placed in the mouths of Attila and Messidorus. These passages, you may be sure, throw certain specifications into statistics and calculations of details.

Attila, however, we come to a beautiful scene, the only one in the piece really pathetic and true.

Attila, in supporting the pretensions of Messidorus, only designs to destroy the Franks by their own hands. The two brothers are brought together in a scene well conducted, in which the ambitious and furious Messidorus

rejects the frank expressions, the soft exaggerations, and kind language of Messidorus, who, irritated at length by Genevieve, He makes her indeed a little *à la Corneille*; but notwithstanding all his romanticisms, he is consistently troubled internally by the predictions of Genevieve, who has foretold his flight and his death. A troop of traitors deliver up Messidorus to Attila, who, in return, orders them all to be put to death. The Roman ambassador turns a plan to assassinate him; this conspiracy is discovered, and Attila himself dismisses the criminal from his camp, telling him he shall punish him when he has conquered Byzantium. In short, the four first acts are almost entirely filled with boasting bravado, high-flown declamations, and contradictory movements of atrocity and clemency, the whole embellished with forced *travestis* on the valour and glory of the Franks, and on liberty; for the most theories, and most pompous amplifications on that topic, are actually placed in the mouths of Attila and Messidorus. These passages, you may be sure, throw certain specifications into statistics and calculations of details.

One thing was wanting to the success of this new play. An author may write a tragedy, but he cannot make an actress, and not one of the female performers at the Odéon could come up to our idea of Genevieve. Mademoiselle Georges, though a great actress, had certainly nothing of the innocence, the simplicity, the serene physiognomy of the virgin abstractions of Melpomene, the patroness of Paris.

A LETTER ON THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF TASTE, AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE DIFFERENT CLASSES OF LITERARY PRODUCTIONS.

MR. CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

As there are many different means by which feeling is awakened by literature and art; and as the person who reads or contemplates is often contented with strong sensations, without discerning at all as to their quality, or their grade in relation to taste, I shall address to you some remarks on this subject; and shall endeavour to shew, that it is worth while to reflect there, heterogeneous sensations to some extent; and that certain principles of classification, as to the qualities and grades of feeling, have an existence in *verba voluta*.

Vol. XI.

finding multitudes of sensations in different departments of literature, readers, occupied with the feeling of the moment, may hurry along, without taking pains to remember other sensations, or to connect one sort of mental excitement with another.

We speak from "page" to "page" The truth is, N. B. no point in this sort.

But all tastes and views of feeling are not equally good; and it is sweet while to amusements, and give some sort of definition of the different degrees of taste; although it may not always be easy to give an instance of a literary

work, belonging entirely to this or that class, and confined entirely to one sort of interest.

If literature were sunk to the lowest possible state in which it could exist, it would reject, (from its means of interesting the mind,) first, all abstract truth; and then all imagination or conception except of things and scenes which are obviously before the eyes of mankind, and daily forced upon their attention; and then it would renounce all sense of the difference between beauty and deformity, and would content itself with representing only what is pleasant or painful to the individual. Having made all these renunciations, it would still have retaining the common passions of human nature, and the hopes and fears which necessarily accompany personal existence. These, in a literary work, the reader may be made intensely to feel, by a sympathy with fictitious actions; but without almost any intellectual discrimination of feeling as to better or worse. I could even suppose the lowest kind of feeling or interest to be produced by a painting, not as a work of art, but as a means of exciting sympathy; for example, a representation of a shipwreck, where men were using various expedients to save their lives. The characteristic of this Stage of Taste, is, that its interest is only in the personal sensation of the moment, and in that which brings pleasure or pain to the individual, but has no relation to any thing general, or to permanent and abstract truth. This is the case with all the common and unglorified passions. There can scarcely be any literary work which will not, in some parts, rise above these; but it is of importance to discriminate what is peculiarly appropriate to this lowest stage of feeling. The novel of Caleb Williams, for instance, has a great power of interesting the reader, for the most part, but scarcely rises beyond the personal sensations of the moment, and that darkness as to taste which is in the passions of individuals.

The class of feelings which belongs to the lowest stage, may be called "natural," but they do not expand or revolve themselves into the affecting recognition of common humanity. The attention of the reader is fastened down to the concerns of individuals. Nature has sometimes been defined, and called

to his own qualities, tried according to any intelligible standard.

To the same level may be referred some of the latest tastes, which have appeared in modern times, as to what is the most desirable state and composition of society. These tastes have

inclined a great proportion of mankind to wish to contemplate societies of such a composition, as the uniform grey or Arab colours of the coats of Quakers, who, though they are good sort of people, I think, have more likeness to hired servants, than to prodigal sons. This is by way of concluding a levelling taste with order. Externally this inclination assumes the hypocritical form of respect, for all that is most immediately useful in human nature. In reality, it is a wish to raise the price of the homely and vulgar stuff of human nature, and place it in a condition of undisturbed self-conceit, incapable of improvement in taste. But supposing that, in one generation, by the preponderance of vulgar envy, the drab-colour were established in society, it would not be easy to persuade the next generation to remain contented with it, as the most beautiful of all things.

Such are the tastes and inclinations which belong to the lowest stage of feeling. But here it is proper to observe, that in all fictitious narratives, (to whatever stage of taste they may belong,) a sympathy with the personal feelings and fortunes of some particular character must be created, for the purpose of engaging the reader's attention, and carrying him on, and this must be the stock, whatever other things may be grafted upon it. Therefore, although a strong personal interest, awakened by a fictitious narrative, is not a feeling of any high grade, yet it does, on that account, make the work referable to this or that stage of taste.

Having said thus much, Mr North, on the first stage of feeling, I shall now inquire what is the next. To the second stage, I think, may be referred all recognitions of a common humanity, extending through different individuals, and shewn in the natural affections of mankind. Although not lofty, this is at least deeply moving, and resolves the self-interested passions of individuals into something

universal and unlimited, in a sort of widely-diffused enthusiasm, or in the internal recognition of kindred beings.

This is what some of the German writers have called "holy nature"; and dramatists, among them, exploring the same vein, have shewn that they were capable of producing a great deal of sensation, in all the theatres of Europe. Kotzebue was one of the lowest. He makes his tenderness of as damp and watery a sort, as possible, and confines himself to the most common and unmingled elements, which may be found in any mind, whatever. In the dramas of the inferior German writers, there is often a transference of the scene into remote countries; and the persons on the stage, whether Asiatics, Europeans, or Hottentots, brought together, are made to join in sobbings of tenderness, undisturbed by any unseasonable discriminations of taste, that would lessen the breadth of the sensation. Schiller, in his *Robbers*, is not in a much higher vein, but dwells in the passions of individuals, and endows them with the yet universal nature of German sentiment, which, I think, must be good, in so far as it conduces to the recognition of general humanity. But the fellow-feeling of a common nature, or of impulses widely shared, cannot justly be held up as the ultimate aim of poetical sentiment; since, if it were so, we should as such, it would swallow up all distinctions of better or worse, or beauty and deformity. The aim of tragedy or poetry-writing, is not like the figure of the kneeling African, on the medal struck in reference to the abolition of slavery, saying, "Am I not a man and a brother?" If one of the characters in Kotzebue's plays were making the same appeal, the reply might be, "You are a man and a brother by common origin, but you are not a person with whom we would think it any honour to sympathize from taste, however much we may desire your welfare." Among the English poets, Cowper, from humanity and humility, and from wishing to exercise the office of a Methodist preacher in verse, sought for this sense of universal kindred, and rejoiced in the participation of common affections. He has the following passage on the subject:—

"These well, well off, sage, evasive, profound,
 Presently broken, and aquiline his nose,
 As ever with most depending brows,
 'There well, could you permit the world to live
 As this world please. What's the world to you?
 'There. I was born of woman, and drew milk
 As sweet as charity from human breasts,
 I sleep, awake, I laugh and weep,
 And exercise all functions of a man.
 How then should I and any man that lives
 Be strangers to each other? Place my veil,
 Take of the crimson stream mending there,
 And subside it well; supply thy glass,
 Sooner it had prove how if it be not blood
 Congealed with white snow; and, if it be,
 What edge of ardency canst thou suppose
 Keen enough, wise and skillful as thou art,
 To cut the line of brotherhood, by which
 One companion maker bound me to the kind?"

But it is here evident that Cowper on the stage. The later poets of England have sought for it more in general impulses diffused through a multitude. This cannot be more strikingly exemplified than by Lord Byron's verses on the English troops before the battle of Waterloo. It is in the enthusiasm of strong emotions widely shared. The German dramatists sought for nature in the situations of a few individuals brought up.

"And then and there was hurrying to and fro,
 And gathering fast, and trembling of distress,
 And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
 Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness;
 And there were sudden partings, such as press
 The lip from out young hearts, and choking sighs,
 Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess
 If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
 Since upon nights so sweet such awful noise could rise!"

"And there was mourning in hot haste; the steel,
 The maddening sword, and the clattering car
 Were pouring forward with impetuous speed,
 And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
 And the deep thunders, peal on peal after,
 And near, the peal of the shouting drum
 Rushed up the soldier and the morning star;
 While hanging'd the alizans, with German dunn,
 Or whispering, with white lips—"The foe! they come! they come!"

"And wild and high the 'Carsten's gathering' rose—
 The war-mare of Lookel, which Albyn's hills
 Have heard; and heard too have her Skorn deer
 How in the noon of night that plumed thrills,
 Savage and shrill; but with the breath which fills
 Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountainers
 With the fierce native daring, which hushes
 The stirring memory of a thousand years.
 And Ewen, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears!"

"And Arcturians waves above them her green leaves,
 Derry with Nature's leaf-olives, as they pass,
 Greeting, if might than mine, as they pass,
 Over the shimmering bay. Alas!
 Ere evening to be trodden like the grass,
 While now beneath them; but above shall grow
 In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
 Of living vapour, rolling on the foam,
 And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low."

These verses, so much admired and so popular, are a good example of emotions which are the means of recognizing that community of elements, which exists in multitudes. Passing beyond the interests of individuals, these emotions extend into the knowledge of something absolute and unlimited, which is called "Nature," but which is not high or low in relation to sentiment, but only general. And literary works which make use of such means for shedding the mind, may be referred to the Second Stage of taste. The words of

many of the German writers are referable to this class; and it is probable that in Europe they have been of much use, in preparing the way for other things, by encouraging literary men to the expression of feelings, which resolve themselves into the unlimited and impersonal—although it were no more than common nature, melting into water and tearful sentiment, or in those works which are meant to produce terror, the gods of vague and floating darkness, forming themselves in shadowy obscurity. The greatest depths of natural feeling are often accompanied with a sense of transitoriness and delusion, in which particularly being appears lost, and solved in an indubitable universal. Like the *Mays* of the Indians, Sir William Jones gives a translation of one of their poems, in which the *Gymnosophist* expresses the desire to be weaned from the uncertainties of a transitory existence, and to fix his thoughts on the permanent and real. The poem is entitled the "Maid of Babylon," and this among others the following stanza:—

"As a drop of water moves tremulous on the lily-leaf, thus is human life inextricably slippery; the company of the virtuous is here but for a moment; that is our ship in passing the ocean of the world.
 "Day and night, evening and morning, winter and spring, depart and return; time sports, life passes on, yet the wind of expectation continues unrestrained.
 "To dwell under the mansion of the high Gods, at the foot of a tree; to have the ground for a couch, and a hide for a garment; to renounce all earthly enjoyments—whom doth not such devotion fill with delight?"

"Place not thy affections too strongly on foe or friend—on a son or a kinsman, in war or in peace. Be thou step-winded towards all, if thou desirest speedily to attain to the nature of Vishnu."
 "Eight original mountains and seven seas, Himala, Indra, the Sun, and Indra—not thou, not I, but this or that people; 'wherefore, then, should anxiety be raised in our minds?'
 "In thee, in me, in every other being, is Vishnu; foolishly art thou offended with me, not bearing my speech; see every soul in thy own soul; in all places lay aside a notion of diversity."
 Such is the pathetic address of the *Gymnosophist*, endeavoring to fix his attention on the eight original mountains and seven seas. "This deep natural sense of transitoriness and uncertainty, is capable of being turned either to sadness or levity. In modern times, it has sometimes taken the form of an inclination for asceticism in renouncing all matters of opinion; for when scepticism is perfect and absolute, it is like a resolution of all particular thoughts into the indefinite. But also, the same deep feeling of uncertainty has sometimes been shown in the vague horrors of a German romance, where the principal events take place in a mysterious twilight, or while assumed showers are driven by the wind through the recesses of some unexplored forest. In such productions, change, doubt, and indefinite sadness, are always the chief elements, and they belong to the second stage of feeling.
 I shall now proceed to speak of the

Third Stage of feeling. To it may be referred the mixture of human passions and affections with the sentiment of the beautiful, and with the knowledge of the permanent and abstract idea. From this mixture arises internal taste, and discrimination as to the higher and lower grades of feeling. But still the mixture implies the presence of human affections, which are more or less changed, for example, in the sentiment, justice, or generosity, or repentance, or the love of the beautiful. To this intermediate region belong the finest struggles of sentiment in tragedies or fictitious narrative; since, from the mixture of the different elements, it is both interesting to the passions of the reader, and gratifying to his taste, or his internal discrimination as to the quality of feeling, which he must exercise in sympathizing with the transition of struggling affections from their natural intensity, into abstract beauty. This, therefore, is the Third Stage, and remains somewhat of the elements of the two inferior. But it is unnecessary to say any thing farther, to render the difference between them perceptible.

I think the exercise of imagination belongs most properly to the Third Stage of feeling. Imagination is not merely a power for conceiving new situations to interest the passions; for, in all the bolder and more sudden flights of imagination, there is a temporary feeling of the reality of general ideas, as existing abstractedly from particular objects. These glimpses are only for a moment, but they are divine. It is this which connects imagination with elevation of sentiment. Relatively to this Voltaire was a remarkable instance. In him, imagination appeared as a power not always recognizing the beautiful, but exerting activity, to find astonishing contrasts to visible realities. He was like a strong and far-travelled bird appearing on the earth, from some distant region; and the astonishment which he excited, was itself a satire on the narrow conceptions of mankind. His flights were rather those of strength and activity, than of rising qualities of taste. But almost any rapid exercise of imagination is connected with the feeling of the abstract. The rapid comparison of possible forms can seldom fail to produce some astonishing, and some trainings of taste, beyond the narrow sphere of selfish passion, and also beyond that of natural affections. Therefore, I have no hesitation in saying, that imagination (which is a means of invention in all the stages of taste), belongs most properly, in point of feeling, to the Third Stage, which is the mixture of human affections with the sentiment of the beautiful. In all cases, imagination is an active recognition of the varieties of possible form. In its finest exercises, a profound sentiment of the beautiful makes these appear tinged with qualified hues, having almost the language of passive affection. Activity, however, is most appropriate to imagination. These expressions may appear vague and mystical, but it can scarcely be otherwise in treating of such a subject.

That which characterizes the Third Stage of taste, therefore, is not the absence of human affections, but the internal discrimination of the qualities of feeling in relation to the abstract beautiful. Since satire discriminates as to quality, it must belong to this stage. It sometimes appears to make one half of human nature ironically sympathize with what is bad, while the other half is made to condemn, and to feel opposition of taste, and so to discriminate. But satire, without the exercise of taste, is mere buffoonery, or abuse.

The Fourth and last Stage of feeling is to be found in the fine arts, and in the contemplation of abstract relations, such as they are in themselves, without reference to human affections. This kind of feeling applies to form, style, possible order, relative colour, harmony, extension, and the like. These things cannot be so well expressed by literature, which gives only words to suggest conceptions; to the reader, who may conceive imperfectly; but the fine arts exemplify abstract relations, and make them cognizable to the senses. The two first or inferior stages of taste have no relation to abstract form, but the third is not below the level of the fine arts, for it is the mixture of human affections with the sentiment of the beautiful. In music, it is well expressed by the mixture of the discord, and imperfect concord, of human affections, with harmony. In painting, it may be seen in the expressions of the countenance, and in the various mixtures of light with darkness. The Third and Fourth Stages of Taste are closely al-

that it may often require to consider just; and the difference between them, is the absence of human passions and affections in the last.

Having thus gone through the different stages of taste, and established the grade of each, upon principles which must appear clear and undeniable to every person capable of reflecting upon the subject, I appeal to you, Mr. North, whether I have not stated things well worthy of consideration, in an age when there are so many different excitements to bewilder the mind.

THE DEVIL AMONG THE ARTISTS; OR, DAVID DEADWONIGHT AGAINST ROUND-BODIES.*

When an earthquake occurs in Calabria, Sicily, Portugal, or any part of the habitable globe, exclaiming in convulsions and eruptions of nature, it leaves behind it such decided and unequivocal proofs of its reality, as to silence the cavils of the most sceptical. Towers, temples, palaces, and houses, streets, squares, and cities, go down like a child's card-play, thing, and perishing human creatures are burned or buried. But when an earthquake occurs in Scotland, say at Inverness or Comrie, it is so faint and voice-begone, that its existence seems extremely problematical. Hence there arise two parties—the earth-quakers and the anti-earth-quakers. The one pull a long face, speak in hollow murmurs, take you solemnly by the fourth button of your waistcoat, cast their eyes up to the ceiling, and stir your soul with the dreadful narrative. Shock after shock, they maintain, to the number maybe of the devil's dozen, struck old mother earth till she trembled as with cholera; the heavens were as black, they asseverate, as the crown of their hat; the heat was like an oven, and the whole concert most frightful in deed, and dismal alike to men, women, children, and cattle.

In corroboration of such terrific descriptions of nature, and to shew that the solid earth must have quaked from its foundation, my comes the cool from its kitchen, solemnly sweating by her sole and flounder, that the very spit shook, and every pan clattered. The boiler is ready to take his Bible-cath, that he heard bottles breaking in the bunnies; and ascertain their grade in relation to taste. I do not pretend to detract from the merits of any particular line or walk of literary composition, or unjustly to depreciate the mental gratifications which may be derived from it. I only seek to discriminate the kinds, and to make their respective qualities clearly perceptible. As a person in learning to dance, goes through all the positions, so the mind goes (improving in agility and refinement) through all the regions of taste. I am, yours, &c. H.

* Report of the Society of the Cognoscenti for the encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland. 8vo. 2s.