THE

POETIC.

CHAPTER I.

LET us speak concerning poetry itself, and the species of it, what power each of the species possesses, and how fables must be composed, so as to render poetry such as it ought to be; farther still, let us show from how many and what kind of parts poetry consists; and in a similar manner with respect to such other things as pertain to this method, beginning for this purpose conformably to nature, first from such things as are first.

The epopee, therefore, and tragic poetry, and besides these comedy, and dithyrambic poetry, and the greatest part of the art pertaining to the flute and the lyre, all these are entirely imitations. They differ, however, from each other in three things; for they differ either by imitating through instruments generically different, or by imitating different things, or by imitating in a different, and not after the same manner. For as certain persons assimilating, imitate many things by colours and figures, some indeed through art, but others through custom, and others through voice; thus also in the above mentioned

Digitized by Google

arts, all of them indeed produce imitation in rythm[1], words and harmony, and in these, either separately assumed, or mingled together. Thus for instance, the arts pertaining to the flute and the lyre, alone employ harmony and rythm, and this will also be the case with whatever other arts there may be which possess a power of this kind; such as the art of playing on pipes formed from reeds. But the arts pertaining to dancing imitate by rythm, without harmony; for dancers through figured rythms, imitate manners, and passions, and actions. The epopee, however, alone imitates by mere words, viz. metres, and by these either mingling them with each other, or employing one certain genus of metres, which method has been adopted [from ancient to the present times.] For [without this imitation,] we should have no common name, by which we could denominate the Mimes of Sophron and Xenarchus, and the dialogues of Socrates; or those whose imitation consists in trimetres, or elegies, or certain other things of this kind; except that men conjoining with measure the verb *to make*, call some of these elegiac-*poets*, but others epic-*poets*, not as poets according to imitation, but denominating them in common according to measure. For they are accustomed thus to denominate them, if they write any thing medical or musical in measure, [i. e. in verse.] There is, however, nothing common to Homer and Empedocles except the measure; on which account, it is just indeed to call the former a poet; but the latter, a physiologist rather than a poet. In a similar manner though some one mingling all the measures, should produce imitation, as Chæremon does, who wrote the Centaur, which is a rhapsody mingled from all the measures, yet he must not on this account be called a poet. And thus much concerning these particulars. There are, however some kinds of poetry which employ all the before mentioned [instruments of imitation;] viz. rythm, melody and measure, such as dithyrambic poetry and the Nomi, and also tragedy and comedy. But these differ, because some of them use all these at once, but others

[1] *Rythm* is defined by Plato in his Laws to be, *orderly motion either of the body, or the voice.*

partially.

Digitized by Google

partially. I speak, therefore, of these differences of the arts in which imitation is produced.

CHAPTER II.

Since, however, imitators imitate those who do something, and it is necessary that these should either be worthy or depraved persons; (for manners are nearly always consequent to these alone, since all men differ in their manners by vice and virtue)—this being the case, it is necessary, in the same manner as painters, either to imitate those who are better than men of the present age, or those who are worse, or such as exist at present. For among painters, Polygnotus indeed, painted men more beautiful than they are [at present,] but Pauson, painted them less beautiful, and Dionysius painted them so as to resemble men of our times. It is evident, however, that each of the before mentioned imitations, has these differences; and imitation is different, by imitating different things after this manner. For there may be dissimilitudes of this kind in dancing, in playing on the flute, and in playing on the lyre; and also in orations and mere measure. Thus Homer imitates better men than such as exist at present, but Cleophon men similar to those that now exist, and Hegemon the Thasian who first made parodies, and Nicocharis who wrote the Deliad, imitate men worse than those of the present age. In a similar manner in dithyrambics and the Nomi[a], [there may be an imitation of better and worse men,] as Ti-

[a] Lyric poems, such as those of Pindar, and in short, hymns in praise of Bacchus, are called *dithyrambics*. The *Nomi* were poems originally composed in honour of Apollo, and derived their name from being sung by shepherds among the *pastures*.

Digitized by Google

motheus and Philoxenus, have imitated the Persians and the Cyclops. By this very same difference also, tragedy is separated from comedy. For the intention of comedy indeed is to imitate worse, but of tragedy, better men than such as exist at present.

CHAPTER III.

There is also a third difference of these, and this consists in the manner in which each of them may be imitated. For by the same [instruments,] the same things may be imitated, the poet sometimes speaking in his own person, and sometimes in that of another, as Homer does; or speaking as the same person without any mutation; or imitating every thing as acting and energizing. But imitation consists in these three differences, as we said in the beginning; viz. it differs either because it imitates by different instruments, or because it imitates different things, or imitates in a different manner. Hence, Sophocles will partly be the same imitator as Homer, for both of them imitate celebrated characters; and partly the same as Aristophanes; for both of them imitate persons engaged in acting and performing; whence also it is said that certain persons call them *dramatists*, because they imitate those who are engaged in *doing* something. On this account the Dorians vindicate to themselves the invention of tragedy and comedy; of comedy indeed the Megarensians, as well those who are natives of Greece, as being invented by them at the time when their government was a democracy, as those who migrated to Sicily. For the poet Epicharmus derived his origin from thence, who was much prior to Chonnides and Magnes. But some of those Dorians who inhabit

Digitized by Google

inhabit Peloponnesus claim the invention of tragedy, making names, an indication of this. For it is said that they call their villages *komai*, but the Athenians *demoi*; as if comedians were not so denominated from *komazein*, or *the celebration of festivals*, but from wandering through villages, in consequence of being ignominiously expelled from cities. The verb *poiein* also, or *to make* is by the Dorians denominated *δρᾶν*, *dran*, but by the Athenians *prattein*. And thus much concerning the differences of imitation, as to their number and quality.

CHAPTER IV.

Two causes, however, and these physical, appear in short, to have produced poetry. For imitation is congenial to men from childhood. And in this they differ from other animals, that they are most imitative, and acquire the first disciplines through imitation; and that all men delight in imitations. But an indication of this is that which happens in the works [of artists.] For we are delighted on surveying very accurate images, the realities of which are painful to the view; such as the forms of very savage animals, and dead bodies. The cause, however, of this is that learning is not only most delightful to philosophers, but in a similar manner to other persons, though they partake of it but in a small degree. For on this account, men are delighted on surveying images, because it happens that by this survey they learn and are able to infer what each particular is; as, that *this* is an image of *that*; since, unless we happen to have seen the realities, we are not pleased with the imitation of them, but the delight we experience arises either from the elaboration of the artist, or the colour of the resemblance,

Digitized by Google

resemblance, or some other cause of the like kind. But imitation, harmony and rythm being natural to us, (for it is evident that measures or metres are parts of rythms) those who are especially adapted to these things, making a gradual progress from the beginning, produced poetry from extemporaneous efforts. Poetry, however, was divided according to appropriate manners. For men of a more venerable character, imitated beautiful actions, and the fortunes of those by whom they were performed; but more ignoble men, imitated the actions of depraved characters, first composing vituperative verses, in the same manner as the other composed hymns and encomiums. Prior, therefore, to Homer, we cannot mention any poem of this kind; though it is probable that there were many such. But if we begin from Homer, we may adduce examples of each kind of poems; such for instance as his Margites [1], and some others, in which as adapted to reprehension the measure is Iambic. Hence, also, vituperative verse is now called Iambic, because in this metre, [those ancient poets after Homer] defamed each other. Of ancient poets likewise, some composed heroic poems, and others Iambic verses. But as Homer was the greatest of poets on serious subjects; and this not only because he imitated well, but also because he made dramatic imitations; thus too he first demonstrated the figures of comedy, not dramatically exhibiting reprehension but the ridiculous. For as in the Iliad and Odyssey to tragedy, so is the Margites to comedy. Of those poets, however, who were appropriately impelled to each kind of poetry, some, instead of writing Iambics, became comic poets, but others instead of writing epic poems, became the authors of tragedies, because these forms are greater and more honourable than those. To consider, therefore, whether tragedy is now perfect in its species or not, as well with reference to itself, as to theatres, is the business of another treatise. Both tragedy and comedy, therefore, were at first exhibited in extemporaneous verse. And tragedy, indeed, originated from those who sung dithyrambic

[1] This was a satirical poem, the name of which is derived from μαργος or μαργος, *foolish, ignorant.*

verses;

Digitized by Google

verses; but comedy, from those who sung Phallic verses [1], which even now in many cities are legally established. Thus comedy became gradually increased, till it arrived at its present condition. And tragedy having experienced many mutations, rested from any further change, in consequence of having arrived at the perfection of its nature. Eschylus also, first brought the number of players from one to two. He likewise diminished the parts of the chorus, and made one of the players act the first part of the Tragedy. But Sophocles introduced three players into the scene, and added scenic decoration. Farther still, tragedy having acquired magnitude from small fables, and ridiculous diction, in consequence of having received a change from satyric composition, it was late before it acquired a venerable character. The metre also of tragedy, from tetrameter became Iambic. For at first tetrameter was used in tragedy, because poetry was then satyrical, and more adapted to the dance. But dialogue being adopted, nature herself discovered an appropriate metre; for the Iambic measure is of all others most adapted to conversation. And as an indication of this, we most frequently speak in Iambics in familiar discourse with each other; but we seldom speak in hexameters, and then only when we exceed the limits of that harmony which is adapted to conversation. Again, tragedy is said to have been [at length] adorned, with a multitude of episodes, and other particulars. Let, therefore, thus much suffice concerning these things; for it would perhaps be a greater labour to discuss every particular.

[1] These were verses in honour of the rural deities.

CHAP.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

Comedy, however, is as we have said, an imitation indeed of more depraved characters, yet it does not imitate them according to every vice, [but according to those defects alone which excite laughter;] since the ridiculous is a portion of turpitude. For *the ridiculous is a certain error, and turpitude unattended with pain, and not of a destructive nature.* Thus for instance, a ridiculous face, is something deformed, and distorted without pain. The transitions, therefore, of tragedy, and the causes through which they are produced, are not unknown; but we are ignorant of the changes that comedy has experienced, because it was not at first an object of serious attention. For it was late before the magistrate [who presided over the games,] gave the chorus to comedians, but prior to that period, the choruses were voluntary. Comedy, however, at length having obtained a certain form, those who are said to be the authors of it are commemorated. But it is unknown who it was that introduced masks, or prologues, or a multitude of players, and such like particulars. Epicharmus, however, and Phormis, began to compose fables; which, therefore, [as both of them were Sicilians] originated from Sicily. But among the Athenians Crates, rejecting the Iambic form of comedy, first began universally to compose speeches and fables. The epopee, therefore, is an attendant on tragedy, as far as pertains to measured diction alone, since through this it is an imitation of worthy persons and actions. But it differs from tragedy in this, that it has a simple metre, and is a narration. It also differs from it in length. For tragedy is especially bounded by one

Digitized by Google

one period of the sun, [i. e. by one natural day,] or admits but a small variation from this period; but the epopee is not defined within a certain time, and in this it differs from tragedy; though at first tragedy no less than epic poetry, was not confined to any portion of time. With respect to the parts, however, of the epopee and tragedy, some are the same in both, but others are peculiar to tragedy. Hence he who knows what is a good or bad tragedy, knows also what kind of epic poetry is good or bad. For those things which the epopee possesses are also present with tragedy; but the epopee has not every thing which tragedy contains.

CHAPTER VI.

Concerning hexameter imitative poetry, therefore, and comedy, we shall speak hereafter. Let us now, however, speak concerning tragedy, assuming the definition of its essence as deduced from what has been already said. *Tragedy, therefore, is an imitation of a worthy or illustrious, and perfect action, possessing magnitude, delivered in pleasing language, using separately the several species of imitation in its parts, and not through narration but through pity and fear effecting a purification from such like passions*[1]. But I say it is *an imitation delivered in pleasing language,*

[1] When Aristotle says *that tragedy through pity and fear effects a purification from such like passions*, his meaning is, that it purifies from those perturbations, which happen in the fable, and which for the most part are the cause of the peripetia, and of the unhappy event of the fable. Thus for instance, Sophocles through pity and terror excited by the character of Ajax, intends a purification from anger and impiety towards the gods, because through this anger and impiety, those

Digitized by Google

language, viz. in language possessing rythm, harmony, and melody. And, it *uses separately the several species of imitation*, because some parts of the tragedy are alone perfected through metres, and again others through melody. Because, however, tragedians produce imitation by acting, in the first place the ornament of the sight [i. e. the scenic apparatus,] will be a certain part of tragedy, and in the next place the melopoeia [which comprehends rythm, harmony, and melody,] and the diction. For in these imitation is produced. But I call diction indeed,

those misfortunes happened to Ajax; and thus in other instances. For it must by no means be said that the meaning of Aristotle is, that tragedy through terror and pity purifies the spectators from terror and pity; since he says in the 2d book of his Ethics, "that he who is accustomed to timid things becomes timid, and to anger becomes angry, because habit is produced from energies." Hence, we are so far from being able through the medium of terror and pity in tragedy, to remove terror and pity from the spectators, that by accustoming them to objects of commiseration and terror, we shall in a greater degree subject them to these passions. Indeed, if tragedy intended through pity to purify from pity, and through fear to purify from fear, it would follow that the same passion of the soul would be contrary to itself; for contraries are cured by contraries. Hence, fear would be contrary to itself, and pity would be contrary to pity. Hence, also energies would be contrary to their proper habits, or rather the same energies and habits would be contrary to each other, which is repugnant to reason and experience. For we see that energies and habits are increased and established from similar energies.

By no means, therefore, does Aristotle oppose Plato, in ascribing this purifying effect to tragedy. For when Plato expels tragic poets from his Republic, it is because they are not serviceable to youth who are to be educated philosophically. For a purification from all the passions is effected by philosophic discipline; but tragedy only purifies from some of the passions, by the assistance of others, viz. by terror and pity; since it is so far from purifying the spectators from terror and pity, that it increases them. To which we may add, that philosophic discipline is not attended with the mythological imitation of ancient tragedy, which though it harmonizes with divine natures, and leads those who possess a naturally good disposition to the contemplation of them, yet it is not useful to legislators for the purposes of virtue and education, nor for the proper tuition of youth. For the good which such fables contain is not disciplinative, but mystic, nor does it regard a juvenile, but an aged habit of soul. For Socrates in the Republic justly observes, "the young person is not able to judge what is allegory, and what is not; but whatever opinions he receives at such an age, are with difficulty washed away, and are generally immoveable."

None of the English translators and commentators On the Poetic of Aristotle, that I have seen appear to have had the least glimpse of this meaning of the passage, though I trust it is sufficiently obvious that it is the genuine meaning of Aristotle.

the

Digitized by Google

the composition of the metres; and melopoeia, that the whole power of which is apparent. Since, however, tragedy is an imitation of action, and action is effected by certain agents, who must necessarily be persons of a certain description both as to their manners and their mind (for through these we say that actions derive their quality) hence there are naturally two causes of actions, dianoia[1] and manners, and through these actions all men obtain or are frustrated of the object of their wishes. But a fable indeed, is an imitation of action; for I mean by a *fable* here, the composition of things. By *manners* I mean those things according to which we say that agents are persons of a certain description; and by dianoia that through which those who speak demonstrate any thing, or unfold their meaning. It is necessary, therefore, that the parts of every tragedy should be six, from which the tragedy derives its quality. But these are, fable and manners, diction and dianoia, sight and melopoeia. Of these parts, however, two pertain to the instruments by which tragedy imitates; one, to the manner in which it imitates; and three to the things which it imitates. And besides these, there are no other. Not a few tragic poets, therefore, as I may say, use all these species [i. e. parts] in composing tragedies. For every tragedy has a scenic apparatus, manners and a fable and melody, and in a similar manner dianoia. But the greatest of these is the combination of the incidents. For tragedy is an imitation not of men, but of actions, of life, and of felicity and infelicity. For felicity consists in action, and the end [of tragedy,] is a certain action, and not a quality. Men, however, are persons of a certain character or quality, according to their manners; but according to their actions, they are happy, or the contrary. The end of tragedy, therefore, does not consist in imitating manners, but actions, and hence it embraces manners on account of actions; so that things and fable are the end of tragedy. The end, however, is the greatest of all things; for without

[1] *Dianoia* διανοια in a general way, may be defined to be διεξοδικη του λογου ενεργεια i. e. *the discursive energy of reason.* But accurately speaking, it is *that power of soul which reasons scientifically, deriving the principles of its reasoning from intellect.* This latter definition, however, pertains to it, so far as it is not influenced in its reasonings by imagination and false opinions.

Digitized by Google

action, tragedy cannot exist; but it may exist without manners. For most modern tragedies are without manners; and in short, many poets are such as among painters Zeuxis is when compared with Polygnotus. For Polygnotus indeed, painted the manners of good men; but the pictures of Zeuxis are without manners. Farther still, if any one places in a continued series ethical assertions, and dictions and conceptions well framed, he will not produce that which is the work of tragedy; but that will be in a much greater degree a tragedy, which uses these as things subordinate, and which contains a fable and combination of incidents. To which may be added, that the greatest parts of the fable by which the soul is allured are the peripetiæ, [or changes of fortune] and recognitions. Again, it is likewise an indication of this, that those who attempt to write tragedies, acquire the power of expressing a thing in tragic diction, and representing manners accurately, before they possess the ability of composing the fable, as was nearly the case with all the first poets. The fable, therefore, is the principle, and as it were the soul of tragedy; but manners rank in the second place. For tragedy resembles the art of painting; since the most beautiful pigments laid on the canvas [promiscuously] would be less pleasing to the view, than an image painted with a white colour alone, [i. e. than a picture in which there is nothing but light and shade.] Tragedy also is an imitation of action, and on this account is especially an imitation of agents. But dianoia ranks in the third place. And this is *the ability of unfolding what is inherent in the subject, and is adapted to it,* which ability is the peculiar power of politics and rhetoric. For ancient poets represent those whom they introduce as speaking politically; but poets of the present day represent them as speaking rhetorically. Manners, however, are a thing of such a kind as to render manifest what the deliberate choice is, in those things in which it is not apparent whether the speaker is influenced by choice or aversion. Hence some speeches are without manners. But *dianoia*[1] *is that through which it is shown that a certain*

[1] *Dianoia*, therefore, cannot be as I have seen it translated, *sentiment*. For can any thing be more obvious than that the power through which it is shown that a thing is or is not, and which universally

Digitized by Google

a certain thing is, or is not, or which universally enunciates something. And the fourth part of tragedy is diction. But I say, as was before observed that *diction is an interpretation through the denomination of a thing, and which also has the same power in verse and prose.* The melopoeia, however, ranks in the fifth place, which is the greatest of condiments. But the sight [i. e. the scenic apparatus,] possesses indeed an alluring power, yet it is most inartificial, and is in the smallest degree appropriate to poetry. For the power of tragedy remains, even when unaccompanied with scenic apparatus and players. And farther still, the art of constructing the scenic apparatus possesses greater authority than the art of the poet.

CHAPTER VII.

These things being defined let us in the next place show what the combination of the incidents ought to be, since this is the first and greatest part of tragedy. But let it be granted to us, that tragedy is the imitation of a perfect and whole action, and which possesses a certain magnitude; for there may be a whole which has no [appropriate] magnitude. A whole, however, is that which has a beginning, middle and end. And the beginning is that which necessarily is not itself posterior to another thing; but another thing is naturally adapted to be posterior to it. On the contrary the end is that, which is itself naturally adapted to be posterior to another thing, either from neces-

universally enunciates something, must be *discursive*, agreeably to the definition we have before given of *dianoia*? But how is this to be effected by sentiment?

sity,

Digitized by Google

sity, or for the most part; but after this there is nothing else. But the middle is that which is itself posterior to another thing, and posterior to which there is something else. Hence, it is necessary that those who compose fables properly, should neither begin them casually, nor end them casually, but should employ the above-mentioned ideas [of beginning, middle and end.] Farther still, that which is beautiful, whether it be an animal, or any thing else which is a composite from certain parts, ought not only to have this arrangement of beginning, middle and end, but a magnitude also which is not casual. For the beautiful consists in magnitude and order. Hence, neither can any very small animal be beautiful; for the survey of it is confused, since it is effected in nearly an insensible time. Nor can a very large animal be beautiful; for it cannot be surveyed at once, but its subsistence as one and a whole eludes the view of the spectators; such as if for instance, it should be an animal of ten thousand stadia in length. Hence, as in bodies and in animals it is necessary there should be magnitude, but such as can easily be seen; thus also in fables, it is necessary, indeed, there should be length, but this such as can easily be remembered. The definition, however, of the length [of the fable] with reference to contests and the senses, [i. e. with reference to external circumstances,] cannot fall under the precepts of art. For if it were requisite to perform a hundred tragedies [in one day,] as is said to have been the case more than once, the performance ought to be regulated by a clepsydra [or hour-glass.] But the definition of the length of the fable according to the nature of the thing, is this, that the fable is always more beautiful the greater it is, if at the same time it is perspicuous. Simply defining the thing, however, we may say, that every fable has an appropriate magnitude, when the time of its duration is such as to render it probable, that the transition from prosperous to adverse, or from adverse to prosperous fortune which it relates, has taken place, the necessary or probable order of things being preserved, through which one thing follows from, and after another.

CHAP.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII.

The fable, however, is one, not as some fancy, if one person is the subject of it; for many things and which are generically infinite happen [to one and the same man;] from a certain number of which no one thing results. Thus, also, there are many actions of one man, from which no one action is produced; on which account all those poets appear to have erred who have written the Heracleid, and Theseid, and such like poems. For they fancied that because Hercules was one person, it was fit that the fable should be one. Homer, however, as he excelled in other things, appears likewise to have seen this acutely, whether from art, or from nature. For in composing the Odyssey, he has not related every thing which happened to Ulysses; such as the being wounded in Parnassus, and pretending to be insane, when the Greeks were collected into one army against the Trojans; one of which taking place, it was not necessary or probable that the other should happen; but he composed that poem from what relates to one action, such as we say the Odyssey is; and he has composed the Iliad in a similar manner. It is requisite, therefore, as in other imitative arts, one imitation is the imitation of one thing, thus, also, [in tragedy,] the fable should be the imitation of one action, since it is an imitation of action, and of the whole of this, and that the parts of the transactions should be so arranged, that any one of them being transposed, or taken away, the whole would become different and changed. For that which when present or not present produces nothing perspicuous, is not a part of the fable.

CHAP.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX.

It is however evident from what has been said, that it is not the province of a poet to relate things which have been transacted, but to describe them such as they would have been had they been transacted, and to narrate things which are possible according to probability, or which would necessarily have happened. For an historian and a poet do not differ from each other, because the former writes in prose and the latter in verse; for the history of Herodotus might be written in verse, and yet it would be no less a history with metre, than without. But they differ in this, that the one speaks of things which have been transacted, and the other of such as might have happened. Hence, poetry is more philosophic, and more deserving of serious attention than history. For poetry speaks more of universals, but history of particulars. *Universal*, however, consists indeed in relating or performing certain things which happen to a man of a certain description, either probably or necessarily, and to which the attention of poetry is directed in giving names to men: but *particular* consists in narrating what Alcibiades did, or what he suffered. In comedy, therefore, this is now become manifest. For comic poets having composed a fable through things of a probable nature, they thus give names to the persons they introduce in the fable, and do not like Iambic poets, write poems about particular persons. But in tragedy the ancient names are retained. The cause, however, of this is that the possible is credible. Things, therefore, which have not yet been done, we do not yet believe to be possible; but it is evident that things which have been

Digitized by Google

been done are possible; for they would not have been done, if it was impossible that they should. Not, indeed, but that in some tragedies there is one or two of known names, and the rest are feigned; but in others there is no known name; as for instance, in the tragedy of Agatho called *the Flower*. For in this tragedy, the things and the names are alike feigned, and yet it no less delights [than if they were not feigned.] Hence, ancient fables which are the subjects of tragedy, must not be entirely adhered to. For it is ridiculous to make this the object of investigation, because such fables are known but to a few, though at the same time they delight all men. From these things, therefore, it is evident that a poet ought rather to be the author of fables than of metres, because he is principally a poet from imitation. But he imitates actions. Hence, though it should happen that he relates [as probable] things which have taken place, he is no less a poet. For nothing hinders but that some actions which they might performed, are such as it is both probable and possible have been have happened, and by the narration of such he is a poet.

Of simple fables, however, and actions the episodic are the worst. But I call the fable episodic, in which it is neither probable, nor necessary that the episodes follow each other. Such fables, however, are composed by bad poets, indeed, on their own account; but by good poets, on account of the players. For introducing contests [among the players] and extending the fable beyond what it will admit, they are frequently compelled to distort the connected order of things. Tragedy, however, is not only an imitation of a perfect action, but also of actions which are terrible, and the objects of commiseration. But actions principally become such, and in a greater degree, when they happen contrary to opinion, on account of each other. For thus, they will be more admirable, than if they happened from chance and fortune; since, also, of things which are from fortune, those appear to be most admirable, which seem to be as it were adapted to take place. Thus the statue of Mityus [in Argos] by falling, slew him who was the

Digitized by Google

cause of the death of Mityus, as he was surveying it. For such events as these, seem not to take place casually. Hence, it is necessary that fables of this kind should be more beautiful.

CHAPTER X.

Of fables, however, some are simple, and others complex; for the actions of which fables are the imitations, are immediately things of this kind. But I call the action simple from which taking place, as it has been defined, with continuity and unity, there is a transition without peripetia, or recognition. And I call the action complex, from which there is a transition, together with recognition, or peripetia, or both. It is necessary, however, that these should be effected, from the composition itself of the fable, so that from prior transactions it may happen that the same things take place either necessarily, or probably. For it makes a great difference whether these things are effected on account of these, or after these.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI.

But peripetia, indeed, is a mutation, as we have before observed, of actions into a contrary condition; and this, as we say, according to the probable, or the necessary. Thus in the Oedipus [Tyrannus of Sophocles,] the messenger who comes with an intention of delighting Oedipus, and liberating him from his fear respecting his mother, when he makes himself known, produces a contrary effect. Thus too, in the tragedy called Lynceus, he indeed is introduced as one who is to die, and Danaüs follows with an intention of killing him; but it happens from the transactions of the tragedy, that Lynceus is saved, and Danaüs is slain. And recognition is as the name signifies, a mutation from ignorance to knowledge, or into the friendship or hatred of those who are in prosperous or adverse fortune. The recognition, however, is most beautiful, when at the same time there are peripetiæ, as in the Oedipus [Tyrannus of Sophocles.] There are, therefore, also other recognitions. For sometimes it happens, as we have before observed, that there are recognitions of things inanimate, and casual. And if some one has performed, or has not performed a thing, there is a recognition of it; but the recognition which especially pertains to the fable and the action, is that which we have mentioned. For a recognition and peripetia of this kind, excite either pity or fear; and tragedy is supposed by us to be an imitation of actions which produce fear and commiseration. Again, it will happen that infelicity and felicity will be in such like recognitions; since recognition is a recognition of certain persons. Farther still, of recognitions, some are of one

Digitized by Google

person only with reference to another, when it is evident who the other person is, but sometimes it is necessary to recognize both persons. Thus Iphigenia was recognized by Orestes, through the sending an epistle; but another recognition was requisite to his being known by Iphigenia.

CHAPTER XII.

Two parts of the fable, therefore, viz. peripetia and recognition, are conversant with these things; but the third part is pathos [or corporeal suffering.] And of these we have already discussed peripetia and recognition. Pathos, however, is an action destructive, or lamentable; such as death when it is obvious, grievous pains, wounds, and such like particulars. But we have before spoken of the parts of tragedy which it is requisite to use as species. The parts of tragedy, however, according to quantity, and into which it is separately divided are as follow: prologue, episode, exode, and chorus. And of the parts pertaining to the chorus, one is the *parodos*, but the other is the *stasimon*. These [five] parts, therefore, are common to all tragedies; but the peculiar parts are those which are derived from the scene, and the commi. And the prologue, indeed, is the whole part of the tragedy, prior to the entrance of the chorus. The episode is the whole part of the tragedy, which is between all the melody of the chorus. The exode, is the whole part of the tragedy, after which there is no further melody of the chorus. And of the chorus itself, the parodos, indeed, is the first singing of the whole chorus; but the stasimon is the melody of the chorus, without trochee and anapœst. And the commus, is the common

Digitized by Google

common lamentation of the chorus and the scene. We have, therefore, before shown what the parts of tragedy are which must necessarily be used; but the parts of it according to quantity, and into which it is separately divided, are these.

CHAPTER XIII.

In the next place we must show, as consequent to what has been said, to what the attention ought to be directed of those who compose fables, and whence the work of tragedy is derived. Since, therefore, it is necessary that the composition of the most beautiful tragedy, should not be simple, but complex, and that it should be imitative of things of a dreadful and commiserable nature (for this is the peculiarity of such an imitation)—in the first place it is evident, that it is not proper worthy men should be represented as changed from prosperity to adversity, for this is neither a subject of terror nor commiseration, but is impious. Nor must depraved characters be represented as changed from adverse to prosperous fortune; for this is the most foreign from tragedy of all things, since it possesses nothing which is proper; for it is neither philanthropic, nor commiserable, nor dreadful. Nor again must a very depraved man be represented as having fallen from prosperity into adversity. For such a composition will indeed possess the philanthropic, but will neither excite pity or fear. For the one is conversant with a character which does not deserve to be unfortunate; but the other, with a character similar [to most of the spectators.] And pity, indeed, is excited for one who does not deserve to be unfortunate; but fear, for one who resembles [the multitude;] so that the event

Digitized by Google

event will neither appear to be commiserable, nor terrible. It remains, therefore, that the man who exists between these must be represented. But a character of this kind is one, who neither excells in virtue and justice, nor is changed through vice and depravity, into misfortune, from being a man of great renown and prosperity, but has experienced this mutation through a certain [human] erroneous conduct; such as Oedipus and Thyestes, and other illustrious men of this kind. Hence, it is necessary that a fable which is well composed, should be rather simple than twofold, (though some say it should be the latter,) and that the persons which are the subjects of it should not be changed into prosperity from adversity, but on the contrary into adversity from prosperity, not through depravity, but through some great error, and that they should be such persons as we have mentioned, or better rather than worse than these. But the truth of this is indicated by that which has taken place. For ancient poets adopted any casual fables; but now the most beautiful tragedies are composed about a few families; as for instance, about Alcmæon, Oedipus, Orestes, Meleager, Thyestes and Telephus, and such other persons as happen either to have suffered, or perpetrated things of a dreadful nature. The tragedy, therefore, which is most beautiful according to art, has this composition. Hence, Euripides is erroneously blamed by those, who accuse him of having done this in his tragedies, and for making many of them terminate in misfortune. For this method as we have said, is right; of which this is the greatest indication, that in the scenes, and contests of the players, simple fables which terminate unhappily, appear to be most tragical, if they are properly acted. And Euripides, though he does not manage other things well, yet appears to be the most tragic of poets. The fable, however, ranks in the second place, though by some it is said to be the first composition, which is of a twofold nature, such as the Odyssey, and which terminates in a contrary fortune, both in the better and worse characters [which it exhibits.] It appears, however, to rank in the first place, through the imbecility of the spectators. For the poets [by whom it is composed] accommodate themselves to the spectators, and compose fables conformable

Digitized by Google

formable to their wishes. This pleasure, however, is not [properly] derived from tragedy, but is rather adapted to comedy. For these, though the persons in the fable are most hostile to each other, as Orestes and Aegisthus, yet in the end they depart friends, and one of them does not die through the other.

CHAPTER XIV.

Terror and pity, therefore, may be produced from the sight. But they may also be excited from the condition itself of the things, [i. e. from the combination of the incidents,] which is a more excellent way, and the province of a better poet. For it is necessary that the fable should be so composed without any scenic representation, that he who hears the things which are transacted, may be seized with horror, and feel pity, from the events; and in this manner he who hears the fable of Oedipus is affected. But to effect this through scenic representation is more inartificial, and requires great expence. Those, however, who produce not the terrible, but the monstrous alone through scenic representation, have nothing in common with tragedy. For it is not proper to seek for every kind of pleasure from tragedy, but for that which is appropriate. Since, however, it is necessary that the poet should procure pleasure from pity and fear through imitation, it is evident that this must be effected [in the representation of things of a terrible and commiserable nature.] We must explain, therefore, what kind of events appear to be dreadful or lamentable. But it is necessary that actions of this kind should either be those of friends towards each other, or of enemies, or of neither. If, therefore, an enemy kills an

Digitized by Google

an enemy, he does not exhibit any thing which is an object of pity, neither while he kills him, nor when he is about to kill him, except the evil which he who is slain suffers. And this will be the case, when one of those who are neither friends nor enemies kills the other. But when these things happen in friendships, as when a brother kills a brother, or a son his father, or a mother her son, or a son his mother, or intends to do it, or does any thing else of the like kind, it is not only a lamentable circumstance on account of the evil which is suffered, but also because it is inflicted by one by whom it ought not to be inflicted. Fables, therefore, which have been received [from the ancients] are not to be dissolved [i. e. destroyed.] I mean for instance, such as the fable of Clytemnestra slain by Orestes, and of Eriphile slain by Alcmæon. But it is necessary that the poet should invent the fable, and use in a becoming manner those fables which are delivered [to him by tradition.] What, however, we mean by using fables in a becoming manner, we will explain more clearly, For the action may take place in such a way as the ancients have represented it, viz. accompanied with knowledge; as Euripides represents Medea killing her children. An action may also be done, by those who are ignorant of its dreadful nature, and who afterwards recognize the friendship [which they have violated,] as in the Oedipus of Sophocles. This, therefore, is external to the drama. But it may also be introduced into the tragedy itself; as in the Alcmæon of Astydamas, or Telegonus [the son of Ulysses by Circe,] in the Ulysses Wounded. Farther still, besides these there is a third mode, when some one is about to perpetrate through ignorance an atrocious deed, but recognizes that it is so before he does it. And besides these, there is no other mode. For it is necessary to act, or not; and knowingly, or not knowingly. But of these, to intend to perpetrate the deed knowingly, and not to perpetrate it, is the worst; for it is wicked and not tragical; because it is void of pathos. Hence, no poet introduces a character of this kind except rarely; as in the Antigone [of Sophocles,] in which Hæmon [endeavours to kill his father] Creon, [but does not effect his purpose.] For the action here ranks in the second place. But it is better to perpetrate

Digitized by Google

perpetrate the deed ignorantly, and having perpetrated to recognize [the enormity of it;] for then it is not attended with wickedness, and the recognition excites horror. The last mode, however, is the best; I mean, as in the Cresphontes [of Euripides,] in which Merope is about to kill her son, but does not in consequence of recognizing that he was her son. Thus too, in the Iphigenia in Tauris [of Euripides,] in which the sister is going to kill the brother, [but recognizes him;] and in the tragedy called Helle, the son is about to slay his mother, but is prevented by recognizing her. Hence, as we have formerly observed, tragedies are not conversant with many families; for poets were enabled to discover a thing of this kind in fables, not from art, but from fortune. They were compelled, therefore, to direct their attention to those families, in which calamities of this kind happened.

And thus we have spoken sufficiently concerning the composition of things, [i. e. the combination of the incidents] and have shown what kind of fables ought to be employed.

CHAPTER XV.

With respect to manners, however, there are four things to which the attention ought to be directed; one, indeed, and the first, that the manners may be such as are worthy. But the tragedy will indeed possess manners, if, as we have said, the words or the action render any deliberate intention apparent; containing depraved manners, if the deliberate intention is depraved; but worthy manners, if the deliberate intention is good. But manners are to be found in each genus; for both a woman and a man servant may be good; though perhaps of

Digitized by Google

these, the one [i. e. the woman] is more imperfectly good [than the man,] and the other is [generally speaking] wholly bad. In the second place, the manners must be adapted to the persons. For there are manners which are characterized by fortitude, but it is not adapted to a woman to be either brave or terrible. In the third place, the manners must be similar. For this, as we have before observed, differs from making the manners to be worthy and adapted. In the fourth place, they must be uniform; for if he is anomalous, who exhibits the imitation, and expresses such like manners, at the same time it is necessary that he should be uniformly unequal. The example, however, of depraved manners is indeed, not necessary; such for instance as that of Menelaus in the Orestes [of Euripides;] but an example of unbecoming and unappropriate manners is, the lamentation of Ulysses in the tragedy of Scylla, and the speech of Menalippe [in Euripides;] and the example of anomalous manners, in the Iphigenia in Aulis [of Euripides]. For Iphigenia supplicating does not at all resemble the Iphigenia in the latter part of the tragedy. It is requisite, however, in the manners, as well as in the combination of the incidents, always to investigate, either the necessary, or the probable; so that such a person should say or do such things, either necessarily, or probably; and that it be necessary or probable, that this thing should be done after that. It is evident, therefore, that the solutions of fables ought to happen from the fable itself, and not as in the Medea of Euripides from the machinery, and in the tragedy called the Iliad, from the particulars respecting the return of the Greeks to their country. But machinery must be employed in things which are external to the drama, which either happened before, and which it is not possible for men to know, or which happened afterwards, and require to be previously proclaimed and announced. For we ascribe to the gods the power of seeing all things, but we do not admit the introduction of any thing absurd in the fable; since if is introduced, care must be taken that it is external to the tragedy; as in the Oedipus of Sophocles. Since, however, tragedy is an imitation of better things, it is necessary that we should imitate good painters. For these in giving an appropriate

Digitized by Google

appropriate form to the image, preserve the similitude and increase the beauty. Thus also, it is requisite that the poet in imitating the wrathful and the indolent, and those who are similarly affected in their manners, should form an example of equity, or asperity; such as Agatho and Homer have represented Achilles. These things indeed, it is necessary to observe; and besides these, we should pay attention to such particulars as are consequent from necessity to the scenic representation. For in these, errors are frequently committed. But concerning these things, we have elsewhere sufficiently spoken.

CHAPTER XVI.

What recognition, however, is, we have before shown. But with respect to the species of recognition, the first indeed is the most inartificial, is that which most poets use through ignorance, and is effected through indications. But of these, some are congenial, such as the lance with which the earth-born race [at Thebes,] were marked, or the stars on the bodies of the sons of Thyestes in the tragedy of Carcinus. Other indications, however, are adventitious. And of these, some are in the body, as scars; but others are external, such as necklaces; and such as the indication through a small boat, in the tragedy of Tyro. These signs also may be used, in a better or worse manner. Thus Ulysses through his scar, is in one way known by his nurse, and in another by the swineherds. For the recognitions which are for the sake of credibility, are more inartificial, and all of them are of this kind; but those which are from peripetia, such as were made [by Euryclea]

Digitized by Google

in washing the feet of Ulysses, are better. And those recognitions rank in the second place, which are made by the poet, on which account they are not inartificial. Thus Orestes in the Iphigenia [in Tauris of Euripides,] recognizes his sister, and is recognized by her. For she indeed recognizes her brother through a letter, but he recognizes her through indications. Orestes, therefore, says what the poet pleases, but not what the fable requires; on which account it is near to the above mentioned error; since other things might have been equally well said. Thus too in the Tereus of Sophocles, the voice of the shuttle produced a recognition[1]. But the third mode of recognition is through memory, from the sensible perception of something, as in the Cyprii of Dicæogenes; for on seeing the picture a certain person weeps. And in the narration at the court of Alcinous; for Ulysses on hearing the lyrist [singing the fortunes of the Greeks at Troy,] and recollecting [the story] weeps; whence also he is recognized [by Alcinous]. The fourth mode of recognition is derived from syllogism, as in the Coephori [of Eschylus]—a similar person is arrived—there is no similar person but Orestes,—Orestes, therefore, is arrived. Thus too in the Iphigenia of Polyides the sophist. For it was probable that Orestes would syllogistically conclude, that because his sister had been immolated, it would likewise happen to him to be sacrificed. Thus also in the Tydeus of Theodectes, [a certain person coming for the purpose of finding his son, says] "I came to discover my son, and I shall be put to death." Another example also is in the Phinidæ. For the women on seeing the place syllogistically inferred what their fate would be, viz. that they should perish in this place; for they were exposed in it from their infancy. There is also a certain recognition which is produced from the paralogism of the theatre; [i. e. of the spectator] as in the Ulysses Pseudangelus. For the one person says, he should know the bow, which he had not seen; but the other, as

[1] i. e. Perhaps, the sound made by the shuttle as Philomela was weaving, occasioned her to be recognized.

if

Digitized by Google

if he must be known through this, on this account paralogizes [1]. The best recognition, however, of all, is that which arises from the things themselves, astonishment being excited through probable circumstances; as in the Oedipus of Sophocles and the tragedy of Iphigenia; (for it is probable that she would be willing to send letters) since such things alone are without fictitious signs and necklaces. But the recognitions which rank in the second place, are those which are derived from syllogism.

CHAPTER XVII.

It is necessary, however, that the poet should compose fables, and elaborate his diction, so as that he may especially place the thing before the eyes of the spectator. For thus the poet perceiving most acutely, as if present with the transactions themselves, will discover what is becoming, and whatever is repugnant will in the smallest degree be concealed from his view. An indication of this is the fault

[1] Perhaps the fable of this tragedy was composed as follows: Penelope conceiving that Ulysses still lived, was unwilling to marry any one of the suitors; but a false messenger respecting the death of Ulysses is introduced to Anticlea the mother of Ulysses by the suitors. This false messenger pretends that he had formerly attended Ulysses at the Trojan war, and affirms that Ulysses is dead. To prove, likewise, that what he says is true, he adds, that he could distinguish the bow of Ulysses from ten thousand other bows. A great quantity of bows are then placed before him, among which is the bow of Ulysses, which he knows through a sign perhaps which had been taught him by the suitors. In consequence of this, Anticlea thus paralogizes: This man knew the bow; he could not have known it unless he had been with Ulysses; this person, therefore, has attended Ulysses, and is a true messenger of his death. Then becoming desperate through grief she destroys herself.

with

Digitized by Google

with which Carcinus is reproached. For Amphiaraus departs from the temple, which is concealed from the spectator who does not perceive it. But this is wanting in the representation, and the spectators are on this account indignant. For the poet as much as possible should co-operate with the scenery; since those are naturally most adapted to persuade who are themselves under the influence of passion. Hence, also, he agitates others who is himself agitated, and he excites others to anger who is himself most truly enraged. Hence, poetry is the province either of one who is naturally ingenious, or of one who is insane. For of these characters, the one is easily fashioned, but the other is prone to ecstasy. It is likewise necessary that the poet should universally exhibit the fables composed by others, and those which he composes himself, and afterwards introduce and insert episodes. But I say that he should in this manner direct his attention to what is universal. Thus for instance in the Iphigenia [in Tauris of Euripides,] a certain virgin being led to the altar that she might be sacrificed, and vanishing from the view of those who were to sacrifice her, and being brought to another country in which it was a law to sacrifice strangers to a certain goddess, she is made the priestess of these rites. Some time after, it happened that the brother of the priestess came to this place; but on what account? Because some god had ordered him for a certain reason which does not pertain to the universal [composition of the tragedy,] to come thither, but why he did so is foreign to the fable. The brother, therefore, coming, and being made captive, is recognized by his sister, when he is going to be sacrificed; whether as Euripides says [by an epistle,] or as Polyides feigns, speaking according to probability, because he said, it was not only requisite that the sister but that he also should be sacrificed:—and hence safety arises. Afte these things the poet having given names to the persons should insert the episodes; and he must be careful that the episodes are appropriate. Thus the insanity through which Orestes was taken captive, and his being saved through expiation, are appropriate. In dramas, therefore, the episodes are short, but by these the epopee is lengthened. For the fable of the Odyssey is short, viz. the fable of a certain person wandering

Digitized by Google

ing for many years by himself, and with Neptune for his foe. And besides this, his domestic affairs being so circumstanced, that his wealth is consumed by suitors, and stratagems are formed against the life of his son. But at length, driven by a tempest, he lands on his own coast, and recognizing certain persons, he attacks the suitors, and is himself saved, but destroys his enemies. This, therefore, is the peculiarity of the fable, but the rest is episode.

CHAPTER XVIII.

In every tragedy, however, there is a bond [or plot] and a solution of it. And external circumstances indeed, and some of those that are internal, frequently form the bond; but the rest form the solution. I call, however, the bond, the whole of that which extends from the beginning to the part which is last, from which there is a transition to good fortune; but I denominate the solution that part which extends from the beginning of the mutation to the end. Thus in the Lynceus of Theodectes, the past transactions, and the capture of the son, are the bond; but the part which extends from the charge of murder to the end, is the solution. But of tragedy, there are four species; for so many parts of it have also been enumerated. And one species indeed is complex, of which the whole is peripetia and recognition. But another species is pathetic; such as the tragedies of Ajax and Ixion. A third species is ethical; such as the Phthiotides and the Peleus. But the fourth species is such as the Phorcides [of Eschylus] and the Prometheus, and the tragedies which represent what passes in Hades. It is especially necessary, therefore, that the poet should endeavour to have

Digitized by Google

have all these species; or at least that he should have the greatest and most of them, especially since men of the present age calumniate the poets. For as there have been good poets in each part of tragedy, men of the present times require one poet to excell in all the parts. But it is just to call tragedy different and the same, though not perhaps with any reference to the fable. Those tragedies, however, ought rather to be called the same, of which there is the same plot and solution. But many poets connect the fable well, and solve it badly. It is necessary, however, always to labour to effect both these, and not to make tragedy an epic system. But I call that tragedy an epic system, which consists of many fables; as if some one should compose a tragedy from the whole fable of the Iliad. For in the Iliad, on account of its length, the parts receive an appropriate magnitude. But in dramas, the effect produced would be entirely contrary to expectation. The truth of this is indicated by such as have represented [in one tragedy] the whole destruction of Troy, and not some part of it, as the Niobe or Medea of Euripides, and who have not acted like Eschylus; for these have either failed of their purpose, or have contended badly; since Agatho also failed in this alone. But in peripetiæ, and in simple actions, such poets have admirably effected their purpose. For this is tragical and philanthropic. This, however, takes place, when a wise but a depraved man, such as Sisyphus, is deceived; and a brave but an unjust man is vanquished. But this is probable, as Agatho says. For it is probable that many things may take place contrary to probability. It is necessary likewise to conceive the chorus to be one of the players and a part of the whole, and that it co-operates with the players, not as in Euripides, but as in Sophocles. But with other Tragedians, the part assigned to the chorus does not more belong to that fable, than to any other tragedy; on which account the chorus sing embolima [or songs inserted in the fable,] of which Agatho was the inventor. What difference, however, does it make, to sing embolima, or to adapt the diction of one drama to another, or the whole episode?

CHAP.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIX.

We have, therefore, now discussed the other parts of tragedy. And it remains that we should speak concerning diction and dianoia [i. e. the discussive energy of reason]. The particulars, therefore, respecting dianoia are unfolded in the treatise On Rhetoric. For the discussion of it is more the province of that treatise. But those things pertain to dianoia, which it is requisite to procure by a reasoning process. And the parts of these are, to demonstrate, to solve, and to excite the passions; such as pity, or fear, or anger, and the like, and besides these, to amplify and extenuate. It is evident, however, that in things, also, it is requisite to derive what is useful from the same forms, when it is necessary to procure objects of pity, or things of a dreadful, or great, or probable nature. Except that there is this difference, that things in tragedy ought to be rendered apparent without teaching, but in an oration they are to be procured by the orator, and produced through the oration. For what employment would there be for the orator, if the things should appear of themselves pleasing, and not through the oration? But of things pertaining to diction, there is one species of theory respecting the forms of it, which it is the province of the player to know, and of him who is a master artist in a thing of this kind. Thus, for instance, it is requisite he should know, what a mandate is, what a prayer, narration, threats, interrogation and answer are, and whatever else there may be of this kind. For from the knowledge or ignorance of these, the poetic art incurs no blame of any moment. For who would think that Homer

Digitized by Google

errs in what he is reproved for by Protagoras? viz. That while he fancies he prays, he commands, when he says,

The wrath of Peleus' son, O goddess, *sing*.

For, says he, to order a thing to be done, or not to be done, is a mandate. Hence, this must be omitted as a theorem pertaining to another art, and not to poetry.

CHAPTER XX.

Of all diction, however, the following are the parts; viz. element, [or letter] syllable, conjunction, noun, verb, article, case, and sentence. Element, therefore, indeed, is an indivisible vocal sound; yet not every such sound, but that from which an intelligible vocal sound is adapted to be produced. For there are indivisible vocal sounds of brutes, no one of which I call an element of diction. But the parts of this indivisible sound are, vowel, semivowel, and mute. And a vowel, indeed, is that which has an audible sound, without the concurrence of another sound; such as *a* and *o*. But a semivowel is that which has an audible sound, with the concurrence of another sound; as *s* and *r*. And a mute is that which even with the concurrence of the tongue, has of itself, indeed, no sound, but becomes audible in conjunction with things which have a certain sound; as *g* and *d*. But these differ by the forms of the mouth, by places[1], by density and

[1] i. e. The different organs of speech, from which letters are denominated nasal, dental, labial, &c.

tenuity

Digitized by Google

tenuity of aspiration, by length and shortness; and farther still, they differ by acuteness and gravity, and by a medium between both these; the theory respecting each of which pertains to the metrical art. But a syllable is a sound void of signification, composed from a mute, and an element which has sound, [i. e. from a vowel, or semivowel]. For *g r* without *a* is a syllable[1], and also with *a*, as *g r a*, The speculation, however, of the differences of these, pertains also to the metrical art. But a conjunction is a sound void of signification, which neither impedes nor produces one significant sound adapted to be composed from many sounds, and which may be placed either at the beginning or the end of the period, unless something requires that it should be placed by itself at the beginning; such as μεν, ητοι, δη. Or it is a sound non-significant, composed from more sounds than one, but naturally adapted to produce one significant sound. An article is a sound void of signification, which shows the beginning or end, or distinction of a word[2]; as το φημι, and το περι, and others of the like kind. Or it is a sound void of signification, which neither impedes nor produces one significant sound naturally adapted to be composed from many sounds, both in the extremes and in the middle. But a noun is a composite sound, significant without time, of which no part is of itself significant. For in double [or composite] nouns, we do not use the parts as of themselves significant. Thus in the word θεοδωρος, *Theodorus*, [though *theos* signifies God and *doron* a gift,] yet *doron* signifies nothing. A verb is a composite sound, significant with time, of which no part is of itself significant, in the same manner also as in nouns. For *man* or *white* does not signify in conjunction with time; but *he walks*, or *he did walk*, signify, the former indeed the present, and the latter the past time. But case pertains to noun or verb. And one case, indeed, [in nouns] signifies that something is said *of* this thing, or is attributed *to*

[1] *G r* is an instance of a syllable composed of a mute and a semivowel; and *g r a* of a syllable composed of a mute, a vowel, and a semivowel.

[2] This description is most obscure, but the sense seems to be, that an article is a sound which of itself does not signify any thing definite, but merely serves to indicate a significant sound, before or after which it is placed, or which it distinguishes from other words.

Digitized by Google

this thing, and the like; but another is that which pertains to one thing or many things; as *men*, or *man*. And another case pertains to action, such as what relates to interrogation or demand. For did *he walk?* Or *walk* is a case of a verb according to these species. And a sentence is a composite significant sound, of which certain parts of themselves signify something; for not every sentence is composed from nouns and verbs; (since the definition of man [a rational mortal animal,] is a sentence without a verb) but there may be a sentence without verbs. A sentence, however, will always have some part significant; as in the sentence *Cleon walks*, the word Cleon is significant. But a sentence is one in a twofold respect; for it is either that which signifies one thing, or that which becomes one from many conjunctions. Thus the Iliad, indeed, is one by conjunction; but the definition of man is one, because it signifies one thing.

CHAPTER XXI.

With respect to the species of a noun, one is simple; and I call the simple noun that which is not composed from things significant; but another is twofold. And this either consists of that which is significant, and that which is without signification, or of words which are significant. A noun also may be triple and quadruple, as is the case with many of the nouns of the Megaliotæ; such as *Hermocaïcoxanthus*[1]. But every noun is either proper or foreign, or metaphorical, or orna-

[1] This is a noun composed from the names of the three rivers Hermus, Caicus, and Xanthus.

mental,

Digitized by Google

mental, or invented for the purpose, or protracted, or contracted, or changed. But I call that a proper name, which is used by every one; and that a foreign name which is used by other nations. Hence, it is evident that the same noun may be both foreign and proper, though not to the same people. For the word Σιγυνον[1], is proper to the Cyprians, but foreign to us. But a metaphor is the transposition of a noun to a signification different from its original import, either from the genus to the species, or from the species to the genus; or from species to species, or according to the analogous. I call, however, a transposition from genus to species, such as,

"There station'd is my ship[2]."

For to be moored is something pertaining to the being stationed. But a transposition from species to genus is such as,

——"Ten thousand valiant deeds
Ulysses has achiev'd[3]."——

For ten thousand is a great number, and is now used instead of many. And a transposition from species to species is such as,

"The brazen falchion drew away his life."

And,

"Cut by the ruthless sword."

For here *to draw away*, is used instead of *to cut*; and *to cut* is used instead of *to draw away*; since both imply the taking something away. But I call a transposition according to the analogous, when the relation of the second term to the first, is similar to that of the fourth to the

[1] A dart made entirely of steel.
[2] Odyss. lib. 1.
[3] Iliad. lib. 2.

third;

Digitized by Google

third; for then the fourth is used instead of the second, or the second instead of the fourth. And sometimes that to which a thing is related is added instead of the thing itself. I say, for instance, a cup has a similar relation to Bacchus, that a shield has to Mars. Hence, a shield may be called the cup of Mars, and a cup the shield of Bacchus. Again, evening has a similar relation to day, that old age has to life. It may therefore be said that evening is the old age of day, and that old age is the evening of life; or as Empedocles calls it, "The setting of life." In some instances, also, where there is no analogous name, this method may be no less similarly employed. Thus, to scatter grain is to sow; but there is no name for the scattering of light from the sun, and yet this has a similar relation to the sun that sowing has to grain. Hence, it is said,

"———Sowing his god-created flame."

This mode of metaphor may likewise be used differently, when calling a thing by a foreign name, something belonging to it is denied of it; as if a shield should be called the cup, not of Mars, but without wine. But a noun invented for the purpose, is that in short which not being adopted by certain persons, is introduced by the poet himself. For it appears that there are certain nouns of this kind; as substituting ϱϱυται[1] instead of κϱατα for *horns*, and calling a *priest* αϱητηϱ, instead of ιϱευς. And a noun is protracted or contracted, partly by using a vowel longer than the proper one, or by inserting a syllable; and partly by taking something away, either from the word itself, or the inserted syllable. A protracted noun, indeed, is such as ποληος for πολεος, and πηληϊαδεω for πηλειδου; and such as κϱι, and δω[2], are contracted nouns; and,

——— μια γινεται αμφοτεϱων οψ[3].
——— The sight of both is one.

[1] ϱϱυται is derived from ϱϱη, which, according to Hesychius, signifies *buds*, or *scions*.
[2] For κϱιθη, δωμα.
[3] For οψις.

And

Digitized by Google

And a noun is changed when part of it is left, and part is invented by the poet; as,

Δεξιτερον κατα μαζον.

"In the right breast[1]."

Instead of δεξιον. Farther still, of nouns some are masculine, others feminine, and others between, [or neuter]. And the masculine, indeed, are such as end in ν and ρ, and such as are composed from mutes; but these are two, ψ and ξ. The feminine nouns are such as are composed from vowels, and always end in long vowels; as, for instance, in η and ω, or in long α. Hence, it happens that the number of terminations for masculine and feminine are equal; for the terminations of ψ and ξ are the same. No noun, however, ends in a mute, or in a short vowel; and only three nouns end in ι, viz. μελι, κομμι, and πεπερι. But five end in υ; viz. πηχυ, ραπυ, γαρυ, δορυ, and ἀσ̃υ. And the neuter nouns end in these, and in ν and σ[2].

[1] Iliad, lib. 5.

[2] The whole of this doctrine pertains rather to grammar than to philosophy or poetry, and is very mutilated and imperfect. Hence, the critics suspect that the text is greatly corrupted. But, as my design in translating the works of Aristotle, was to unfold his philosophy to the English reader, I shall leave to the *critical vermin* of the present day, the disquisition of *this* and every other *comparative trifle* that may occur.

CHAP.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXII.

The virtue of diction, however, consists in being perspicuous, and not abject. The diction, therefore, is most perspicuous, which is composed from proper nouns, but then it will be abject. But an example of this is the poetry of Cleophon and Sthenelus. It will, however, be venerable, and remote from the vulgar idiom by the use of unusual words. But I call unusual words, such words as are foreign, the metaphorical, the lengthened, and every word except the proper [name of a thing]. If, however, language wholly consisted of such words as these, it would be either an enigma, or a barbarism. If, therefore, it were composed from metaphors, it would be an enigma; but if from foreign words, a barbarism. For the idea [i. e. the definition] of an enigma is this, the conjoining things impossible with the inherent properties of a thing. From the composition, therefore, of [proper] names, it is not possible to effect this, but it may be effected by a metaphor; as "I saw a man conglutinating brass to a man with fire;" and others of the like kind. But from the composition of foreign words a barbarism is produced. Hence language should be moderately mingled with these. Foreign, therefore, metaphorical, and ornamented words, and the other species that have been mentioned, cause the diction neither to be vulgar nor abject; but proper words cause it to be perspicuous. The protracting, however, contracting, and changing of names, contribute in no small degree to the perspicuity of the diction. For the use of words in a way different from their proper and usual signification, causes the diction to be not vulgar; but the adoption of

Digitized by Google

of words in their accustomed meaning, renders it perspicuous. Hence those do not blame rightly, who reprobate this mode of speech, and like the ancient Euclid ridicule the poet, for the facility with which verse might be composed, if the quantity of syllables might be lengthened at pleasure, making iambics even in common discourse; as

Ητι Χαριν ειδον Μαραθωντα Βαδιζοντα.

And,

Ουκ αν γεναμενος της εκεινου εξ ελλεβορου.

It is evident, therefore, that the use of this mode of diction is ridiculous. But measure is common to all the parts of diction. For the same effect would be produced by the improper and ridiculous use of metaphors, foreign words, and other forms of diction. But we may see what splendor the appropriate use of them gives to epic poetry, by putting the words in metre. And he who transfers proper names into foreign words, into metaphors, and the other forms, will see that what we have said is true. Thus, for instance, Aeschylus and Euripides made the same iambic verse, but by only changing one word, from its proper and usual to a foreign signification, the one verse appears beautiful, and the other mean. For Aeschylus indeed, in his Philoctetes, writes,

A cancerous ulcer feeds upon my foot.

But Euripides instead of εσθιει, *feeds*, uses the word θοινασαι. And, [in the verse of Homer, Odyss. 9]

Νυν δε μ' εων ολιγος τε και ουτιδανος και ακλεης,

by inserting proper [and common] words, it will be,

Νυν δε μ' εων μικρος τε και ασθενικος και αειδης [1].

[1] In this verse Polyphemus complains that he was deprived of sight by Ulysses, a *little, weak, vile* man. But Homer instead of using the word μικρος, *little*, uses ολιγος, which signifies *few*. Instead of ασθενικος, *puny*, he uses ουτιδανος, which signifies *a man of no account*; and ακλεης, *powerless*, instead of αειδης, *obscure*.

Digitized by Google

And,

Διφρον αεικελιον καταθεις, ολιγην τε τραπεζαν.
Διφρον μοχθηρον καταθεις, μικραν τε τραπεζαν [1].

And,

Ηϊονες βοωσιν. [Iliad. 17.]
Ηιονες ηραζουσιν.

i. e. If instead of saying the shores *rebellow*, we should say the shores *resounded*. Again, Ariphrades ridicules the tragic poets for employing modes of diction, which no one would use in common conversation; such as δωματων απο, and not απο δωματων, i. e. *home from*, and not *from home*; σεθεν [for σου;] νιν [for αυτον;] and Αχιλλεως περι, and not περι Αχιλλεως, i. e. *Achilles about*, and not *about Achilles*; and other expressions of the like kind. For all such forms of language, because they are not in common use, remove vulgarity from the diction. But of this he was ignorant. It is, however, a great thing to use each of the above-mentioned modes in a becoming manner; and also compound and foreign words. But the greatest thing is to employ metaphors properly. For this alone cannot be acquired from another, but is an indication of an excellent genius; since to employ metaphors well, is to survey similitude. But of words, the double indeed [or compound,] are especially adapted to dithyrambic verse; the foreign to heroic, and metaphors to iambic verse. And in heroic verse indeed, all the above-mentioned words are useful; but for iambics, because they especially imitate common discourse, those words are adapted which may be used in conversation. And words of this description are, the proper, the metaphorical, and the ornamental. And thus much may suffice concerning tragedy, and the imitation in acting.

[1] In this verse, which is from the 21st book of the Odyssey, Homer, for the purpose of signifying an *ignoble seat*, calls it by a foreign word, αεικελιον, and not by the usual word, μοχθηρον; and he calls the *table*, not μικραν, *small*, but ολιγην, *few*.

CHAP.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIII.

Concerning the poetry, however, which is narrative and imitative in metre, it is evident that it ought to have dramatic fables, in the same manner as tragedy, and should be conversant with one whole and perfect action, which has a beginning, middle, and end, in order that like one whole animal it may produce its appropriate pleasure; and that it may not be like the custom of history, in which it is not necessary that a manifestation should be made of one action, but of one time, viz. of such things has happened in that time, respecting one, or more persons, the relation of each of which to each other is just as it may happen. For as the sea-fight at Salamis, and the battle with the Carthaginians in Sicily, though they happened at the same time, contributed nothing to the same end; thus also in successive times, one thing may sometimes be connected with another, from which no one end is produced. Nearly, however, most poets do this. Hence, as we have before observed, in this respect also Homer will appear to be divine, when compared with other poets, because he did not attempt to sing of the whole of the Trojan war, though it had a beginning and an end. For if he had it would have been very great, and not sufficiently conspicuous; or if it had been of a moderate size, it would have been intricate through the variety of incidents. But now having selected one part of the war, he has made use of many episodes from the other parts; such as the catalogue of the ships, and other episodes, with which he has adorned his poem. Other poets, however, have composed a fable about one man, and one time, and one action,

Digitized by Google

consisting of many parts; as the authors of the Cypriacs, and the lesser Iliad. With respect to the Iliad and Odyssey, therefore, one or two tragedies only could be made from each. But many might be made from the Cypriacs; and from the lesser Iliad more than eight; such as the Judgment of the Arms, Philoctetes, Neoptolemus, Eurypylus, the Ptochia, [or Ulysses in the character of a beggar,] the Lacænæ, the Destruction of Troy, the Return of the Greeks, Sinon, and the Troades.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Again, it is requisite that the epopee should have the same species as tragedy. For it is necessary that it should be either simple, or complex, or ethical, or pathetic. The parts also are the same except the music and the scenery. For it requires peripetia, recognition, and passion; and besides these, the reasoning and the diction should be well-formed; all which were first used by Homer, and are used by him sufficiently. For in each of his poems he has introduced all these; the Iliad indeed containing the simple and pathetic; but the Odyssey the complex; for through the whole of it there is recognition and the ethical. And besides these things, he excelled all poets in diction and reasoning. The epopee, however, differs from tragedy in the length of the composition, and in the metre. But the proper boundary of its length we have before described; for it should be such that the beginning and the end may be seen at one view. This, however, will be effected if the compositions are shorter than those of the ancient poets, and brought to the same length with the multitude of tragedies that are performed at one time. But it is the peculiarity of the epopee to possess

Digitized by Google

possess abundantly the power of increasing in magnitude; for tragedy is not capable of imitating many actions that are performed at the same time, but that part only which is represented in the scene, and acted by the players. In the epopee, however, in consequence of being a narration, many events may be introduced which have happened at the same time, which are so connected as to contribute to the same end, and from which the bulk of the poem is encreased. Hence, this contributes to its magnificence, transports the hearer to different places, and adorns the poem with dissimilar episodes. For similitude of events rapidly produces satiety, and causes the failure of tragedies. But heroic metre [i. e. hexameter verse,] is found by experience to be adapted to the epopee. For if any one should attempt narrative imitation in any other metre, or in many metres mingled together, the unfitness of it would be apparent. For heroic metre is of all others the most stable and ample. Hence it especially receives foreign words and metaphors. For narrative imitation excells all others. But iambics and tetrameters are of a motive nature; the one being adapted to dancing, but the other to acting. It would, however, be still more absurd, to mingle them together, as Chæremon did. Hence, no one has composed a long poem in any other measure than the heroic, but as we have said, nature herself teaches us that hexameter verse is adapted to the epopee. Homer, indeed, deserves to be praised for many other things, and also because he is the only poet who was not ignorant what he ought to do himself. For it is requisite that the poet should speak in his own person as little as possible; for so far as he speaks in his own person he is not an imitator. Other poets, therefore, take an active part through the whole poem, and they only imitate a few things, and seldom. But Homer, after a short preface, immediately introduces a man or a woman, or something else that has manners; for there is nothing in his poem unattended with manners. It is necessary, therefore, in tragedies to produce the wonderful; but that which is contrary to reason is better fitted to be received in the epopee. Hence, the wonderful is excited in the highest degree from the agent not being seen. In the next place, the particulars respecting the pursuit of Hector,

Digitized by Google

Hector, would appear ridiculous [when placed before the eyes] in the scene; the Greeks indeed standing still, and not pursuing, and Achilles making signs to them not to engage. But in the epopee this is concealed. The wonderful, however, is pleasing; of which this is an indication, that all men when they wish to gratify their hearers, add something to what they relate. Homer also in the highest degree taught others how to speak falsely [i. e. to make false narrations] in a proper manner. But this is a paralogism. For men fancy that when the consequent follows from the antecedent, the consequent may be converted, and that the antecedent will follow from the consequent. This, however, is false. For the antecedent may be false; but this being otherwise, the consequent will necessarily follow. For through knowing the consequent to be true, our soul paralogizes, and concludes that the antecedent also is true[1]. Again, things which are impossible but probable, are to be preferred to such as are possible but improbable. Fables also should not be composed from irrational parts, but as much as possible indeed, they should have nothing irrational in them: If, however, this is impossible, care should be taken that the irrational circumstance does not pertain to the fable, as in the case of Oedipus not knowing how Laius died. For it must not be brought into the drama, like the narration of the Pythian games in the Electra, or him who in the tragedy of the Mysians, comes from Tegea to Mysia without speaking. It is ridiculous, therefore, to say, that otherwise the fable would be destroyed; for such fables should not at first be composed. But if they are composed, and it appears more reasonable that they should be, the absurdity also must be admitted; since the irrational circumstances in the Odyssey, such as Ulysses being left on the shore of Ithaca by the Phœacians, would evidently have been intolerable, if they had been fabricated by a bad poet. But now the poet conceals the absurdity, and renders it

[1] The moderns, from being ignorant of this very important truth, have committed the greatest errors in the mathematical sciences: for they have not been aware how possible it is to deduce *true conclusions* from *false principles*. See my Elements of the True Arithmetic of Infinites.

pleasing

Digitized by Google

pleasing by the addition of other delightful circumstances. The diction, likewise, should be laboured in the sluggish parts of the poem, and which are neither ethical nor ratiocinative. For a very splendid diction conceals the manners and the reasoning.

CHAPTER XXV.

With respect to the objections of critics, and the solutions of those objections, the number and quality of their species will become apparent from surveying them as follows. Since the poet is an imitator, in the same manner as a painter, or any other person who makes likenesses, it is necessary that he should always imitate one of three things. For he must either imitate things such as they were or are, or such as they are said and appear to be, or such as they ought to be. But these must be enunciated either by [common] diction, or by foreign words and metaphors. For there are many properties of diction; and we concede these to the poets. Besides this, there is not the same rectitude of politics and poetry, nor of any other art and poetry. But of poetry itself, the error is twofold; the one indeed essential, the other accidental. For the error is essential, when it attempts to imitate that which is beyond its power; but accidental, when it attempts to imitate improperly; as if, for instance, a horse should be described as moving both its right legs together. Or an error in each of the arts is accidentally committed in poetry, as in medicine, or any other art, when it fabricates things that are impossible. These, therefore, whatever they may be, are not the essential errors of poetry. Hence, the objections of critics must be dissolved from

Digitized by Google

from surveying these particulars. For in the first place, indeed, the poet errs, if what he fabricates is impossible according to the art itself; but it will be right if the end of poetry is obtained by it. For we have before shown what the end is. Thus, for instance, the end of poetry will be attained, if the poet thus renders what he fabricates, or any other part of the poem, more capable of producing astonishment. An example of this is the pursuit of Hector. If, however, this end can be obtained in a greater, or even a less degree, and that according to the art pertaining to these things, then the fault will not be entitled to excuse. For it is requisite if possible to be entirely without error. Farther still, it should be considered whether the error ranks among things pertaining to the poetic art, or to some other art. For it is a less fault not to know that a hind has no horns, than to make a bad imitation of a hind. Besides this, also, if the poet is blamed for not imitating things as they truly are, the solution is, that he imitates them as they ought to be. Thus Sophocles said, that he described men such as they ought to be, but Euripides such as they were. Hence, such must be the solution to this objection. If, however, it should be objected, that the poet neither represents things such as they are, nor such as they ought to be, he may say that he represents them conformably to the general opinion, as, for instance, in things pertaining to the gods. For perhaps it is neither better thus to speak, nor true, but it is just as it may happen, as Xenophanes observes, "In these things there is nothing certain." Perhaps, however, it may be said, that it is not better, indeed, thus to speak, but that the thing did at that time thus subsist; as in this instance concerning the arms [of the soldiers of Diomed:]

> "A wood of spears stood by, that fix'd upright,
> Shot from their flashing points a quivering light." Il. 10.

For such was the order in which they were then placed, as it is now with the Illyrians. With respect, however, to the enquiry whether a thing is said or done by any one well or ill, we must not only direct our

Digitized by Google

our attention to the thing itself which is done or said, and see whether it is good or bad, but we must also consider the person by whom it is done or said, viz. concerning whom, or when, or to whom, or on what account, he speaks or acts; as whether it is for the sake of a greater good, or in order to avoid a greater evil. But it is requisite to dissolve some objections by directing the attention to diction; as, for instance, to foreign words [in Homer;]

" On mules the infection first began." Il. 1.

For perhaps ουρηας does not signify *mules*, but *guards*. And in what he says of Dolon,

——" his form was bad." Il. 10.

It may be said that ειδος κακος, does not signify a body without symmetry, but a deformed face. For the Cretans call a man with a good face ευειδης. And,

" Mix purer wine." Il. 9

For ζωροτερον may not mean wine undiluted with water, such as those who are addicted to intoxication delight in, but wine poured out rapidly. But a thing is said metaphorically, as,

" The other gods and men——
Slept all the night." Il. 2.

For *all* is metaphorically used for *many*; since all is a certain great multitude. And,

Alone unbath'd —— Il. 18.

is said of Orion metaphorically. For that which is most known, is called *alone* or *sole*[1]. Objections also may be solved from accent, as Hippias the Thasian solved the following passages:

[1] Viz. It is called so comparatively with reference to what is less known. And it is most known of this constellation, that it does not appear to set in the ocean.

Digitized by Google

And,

δίδομεν δὲ οἱ [ἔυχος ἀρέσθαι [2]]

—— το μεν ε καταπυθεται ομβρω [3].

——" Of some stately oak the last remains,
Or hardy fir, unperish'd by the rains." POPE, IL. 23.

Objections likewise may be solved by the division of the sentence, [or interpunction;] as in the following instance from Empedocles,

Αιψα δε θνητ' εφυοντο, τα πριν μαθον αθανατ' ειναι,
Ζωρα τε πριν κεκριτο [4].——

Or by ambiguous expressions, as [in Iliad. 10.]

——— παρωχηκεν δε πλεων νυξ,
[των δυο μοιρεων, τριτατη δ' ετι μοιρα λελειπται [5].]

" Night of two parts the greater share had wan'd,
But of her empire still a third remain'd."

For the word greater is ambiguous. Or objections may be solved from the custom of diction; as when it is said that wine is κεκραμενον, *mixed;* whence the poet,

——" Greaves of new-wrought tin." IL. 21.

[2] This line is not extant, and what is supplied is from the conjecture of some learned men. It alludes to the order given by Jupiter to the dream in Il. 2. to deceive Agamemnon. Here, if δίδομεν is read with an accent in the antepenult, it will signify *damus*, and will imply that Jupiter promises Agamemnon glory from the battle; but if it is read with an accent in the penult, so as to be the infinitive Ionic, it will signify *dare*. It will therefore imply that Jupiter orders the dream to *give the hope* of victory to Agamemnon.

[3] If this is read with the circumflex on the ου, it will signify that the oak became putrid by the rain, which is absurd; but if it is read with an acute accent and spiritus lenis, it will signify *not*, and will imply, that the oak was not rotted by the rain.

[4] The sense here depends on the punctuation. For if the comma is put after ζωρα in the second line, instead of πριν, the sense will be, " Immediately those things were made mortal which before had learnt to be immortal, and pure which before were mixed." But if the comma is put after πριν instead of ζωρα, the sense will be, " that those things which before were pure, were mixed.

[5] In the original this line in the brackets is wanting, but there can be no doubt of it having been inserted by Aristotle, because without it there is no ambiguity. But the ambiguity is occasioned by the word πλεων, which may either signify *more than*, or *the greater part of*.

And

Digitized by Google

And those that work on iron are called braziers. Whence Ganymede is said

——"To pour out wine for Jove;" Il. 20.

though the gods do not drink wine. But this may be considered as metaphorically said. It is necessary, however, when a word appears to signify something of a contrary nature, to consider how many significations it may have in the passage before us; as,

"Five plates of various metal, various mould,
Compos'd the shield, of brass each outward fold,
Of tin each inward, and the middle gold;—
There stuck the lance:—— Pope, Il. 20.

For here the word *stuck* implies that the lance was impeded by the golden plate. Many objections, however, may be solved by paying attention to the many contrary opinions which the poet might follow. For the opinion of the multitude is frequently contrary to that of the poet[1]. Or as Glauco says, "some men presuppose irrationally, and reason from their own decision: and in consequence of being led by appearances, reprobate whatever is contrary to their opinion." This was the case with respect to Icarius [the father of Penelope]. For the multitude fancy that he was a Laconian. On this supposition, therefore, it is absurd that Telemachus should not meet him, on his arrival at Lacedæmon. Perhaps, however, the truth is as the Cephalenians say, viz. that Ulysses married among them, and that Icadius, and not Icarius [was his father in law]. It is probable, therefore, that this objection is erroneous. In short, it is necessary to refer the impossible either to the poetry, or to that which is better, or to opinion. For so far as pertains to poetry, probable impossibility is more eligible, than the improbable and possible. For the poet may imitate things not as they are, but as it is better for them to be, just as Zeuxis painted [Helen more beautiful than she was]. For it is necessary that the

[1] From the obscurity of the original, I have been obliged to paraphrase this passage.

Digitized by Google

pattern in imitation should be transcendent The objection, also, that something is irrational may be solved by saying, that sometimes it is not irrational; for it is probable that what is improbable may have happened. But with respect to the solution of subcontraries, these are to be considered in the same manner as *elenchi*[1] in arguments, if the same thing [is affirmed or denied,] and with respect to the same thing, and after the same manner, and whether it is the same person [who affirms and denies]. It must, likewise, be considered whether he speaks from his own opinion, or adopts the opinion of some wise man. The reprehension [of poets] will however be right, through which it is shown that they have without any necessity devised something irrational or depraved. Thus irrationality is devised [without any necessity] by Euripides in his Egeus, and impiety, in the character of Menelaus, in his Orestes. These reprehensions, therefore, may be derived from five species. For they are either made because impossibilities are introduced, or absurdities, or what is hurtful, or subcontraries, or as errors committed against the rectitude of art. But the solutions may be surveyed from the above-mentioned number; for they are twelve.

CHAPTER XXVI.

It may however be asked, whether epic or tragic imitation is the more excellent. For if that imitation is the better which is less troublesome to the spectator, and such an imitation pertains to better

[1] Elenchi are defined by Aristotle in his treatise on Sophistical Elenchi, to be *syllogisms of contradiction.*

spectators,

Digitized by Google

spectators, that which imitates every thing is evidently attended with molestation. For such imitation supposes that the spectators will not perceive what is acted without the addition of much movement; just as bad players on the flute turn themselves round, when it is requisite to imitate a discus [in its circumvolution;] or when they sing of Scylla [drawing ships,] draw to themselves the coryphœus, or leader of the band, [in order to imitate this drawing]. Tragedy, therefore, resembles this imitation. For players of the first eminence express a few things by gesture and motion; but players of the second rank express nearly every thing by these. Hence, Myniscus called Callipides an ape, in consequence of carrying his imitation to a great excess. And there was also an opinion of this kind concerning Pindar [the player]. But as players of the first are to players of the second eminence, so is the whole art of tragedy to the epopee. They say, therefore, that the epopee is calculated for equitable and worthy persons, on which account it does not require scenery; but that tragedy is calculated for the vulgar. Hence, tragic imitation which is troublesome to the spectator, will evidently be inferior to epic imitation.

In the first place, however, this accusation does not pertain to the poet, but the actor; since it is possible in reciting epic poetry to pay too much attention to action, as Sosistratus did, and likewise in singing, as Mnastheus of Opus did. In the next place, neither is all motion to be despised, since neither is all kinds of dancing, but only that which is bad; and hence Callipedes was blamed, as others now are for not imitating free women. Farther still, tragedy, in the same manner as the epopee, may attain its end without motion [and gesture;] for by reading, it is manifest what kind of a thing it is. If, therefore, it is in other respects better, it is not necessary that it should be accompanied with motion and gesture. In the next place tragedy has every thing which the epopee possesses. For it may use metre, and it has also music and scenery, as no small parts, through which the pleasure it produces is most apparent. To which may be added, that it possesses perspicuity, both when it is read, and

Digitized by Google

and when it is acted. The end too of its imitation is confined in less extended limits. For being crouded into a narrower compass, it becomes more pleasing than if it were extended through a long period of time. Thus, for instance, if the Oedipus of Sophocles were put into as many verses as the Iliad, [it would be less pleasing]. Again, the imitation of the epopee of whatever kind it may be, has less unity [than tragic imitation;] of which this is an indication, that from any kind of epic imitation many tragedies may be produced. Hence, if he who writes an epic poem should choose a fable perfectly one, the poem would necessarily either appear short, as if curtailed, or if it should be accompanied with length of metre, it would seem to be languid. But if he should compose one fable from many fables, I mean, if the poem should consist of many actions, it would not possess unity. Thus, the Iliad and Odyssey contain many such parts, which of themselves possess magnitude, though these poems are composed as much as possible, in the most excellent manner, and are most eminently the imitation of one action. If, therefore, tragedy excells in all these particulars, and besides this, in the work of art, (for neither tragic nor epic imitation, ought to produce a casual pleasure, but that which we have mentioned) it is evident that it will be more excellent than the epopee, in consequence of attaining its end in a greater degree. And thus much concerning tragedy, and the epopee, as to themselves, their species, and their parts, their number and their difference, what the causes are of their being good or bad, and also concerning the objections which may be made to them, and the solutions of the objections

Digitized by Google