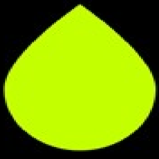

Sharp Ink

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INCLUDING THE SHIELD OF HERCULES

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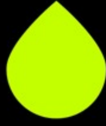

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THE REMAINS OF HESIOD THE ASCRÆAN

Hesiod

The Remains of Hesiod the Ascræan

Including the Shield of Hercules

Sharp Ink Publishing
2022
Contact: info@sharpinkbooks.com

ISBN 978-80-282-0349-8

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PREFACE.

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The remains of Hesiod are not alone interesting to the antiquary, as tracing a picture of the rude arts and manners of the ancient Greeks. His sublime philosophic allegories; his elevated views of a retributive Providence; and the romantic elegance, or daring grandeur, with which he has invested the legends of his mythology, offer more solid reasons than the accident of coeval existence for the traditional association of his name with that of Homer.

Hesiod has been translated in Latin hexameters by Nicolaus Valla, and by Bernardo Zamagna. A French translation by Jacques le Gras bears date 1586. The earliest essay on his poems by our own countrymen appears in the old racy version of “The Works and Days,” by George Chapman, the translator of Homer, published in 1618. It is so scarce that Warton in “The History of English Poetry” doubts its existence. Some specimens of a work equally curious from its rareness, and interesting as an example of our ancient poetry, are appended to this translation. Parnell has given a sprightly imitation of the Pandora, under the title of “Hesiod, or the Rise of Woman:” and Broome, the coadjutor of Pope in the Odyssey, has paraphrased the battle of the Titans and the Tartarus. [1] The translation by Thomas Cooke omits the splendid heroical fragment of “The Shield,” which I

have restored to its legitimate connexion. It was first published in 1728; reprinted in 1740; and has been inserted in the collections of Anderson and Chalmers.

This translator obtained from his contemporaries the name of “Hesiod Cooke.” He was thought a good Grecian; and translated against Pope the episode of Thersites, in the Iliad, with some success; which procured him a place in the Dunciad:

Be thine, my stationer, this magic gift,
Cooke shall be Prior, and Concanen Swift:

and a passage in “The Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot” seems pointed more directly at the affront of the Thersites:

From these the world shall judge of men and books,
Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons, and Cookes.

Satire, however, is not evidence: and neither these distichs, nor the sour notes of Pope’s obsequious commentator, are sufficient to prove, that Cooke, any more than Theobald and many others, deserved, either as an author or a man, to be ranked with dunces. A biographical account of him, with extracts from his common-place books, was communicated by Sir Joseph Mawby to the Gentleman’s Magazine: vol. 61, 62. His edition of Andrew Marvell’s works procured him the patronage of the Earl of Pembroke: he was also a writer in the Craftsman. Johnson has told (Boswell’s Tour to the Hebrides, p. 25.) that “Cooke lived twenty years on a translation of Plautus:

for which he was always taking subscriptions.” The Amphitryon was, however, actually published.

With respect to Hesiod, either Cooke’s knowledge of Greek was in reality superficial, or his indolence counteracted his abilities; for his blunders are inexcusably frequent and unaccountably gross: not in matters of mere verbal nicety, but in several important particulars: nor are these instances, which tend so perpetually to mislead the reader, compensated by the force or beauty of his style; which, notwithstanding some few unaffected and emphatical lines, is, in its general effect, tame and grovelling. These errors I had thought it necessary to point out in the notes to my first edition; as a justification of my own attempt to supply what I considered as still a desideratum in our literature. The criticisms are now rescinded; as their object has been misconstrued into a design of raising myself by depreciating my predecessor.

Some remarks of the different writers in the reviews appear to call for reply.

The Edinburgh Reviewer objects, as an instance of defective translation, to my version of αιδως ουκ’ αγαυη: which he says is improperly rendered “shame”: “whereas it rather means that diffidence and want of enterprise which unfits men from improving their fortune. In this sense it is opposed by Hesiod to θαρσος, an active and courageous spirit.”

But the Edinburgh Reviewer is certainly mistaken. If αιδως is to be taken in this limited sense, what can be the meaning of the line

Αιδως η τ’ ανδρας μεγα σινεται ηδ’ ονινησι.

Shame greatly hurts or greatly helps mankind?

the proper antithesis is the αιδως αγαθη, alluded to in a subsequent line,

Αιδω δε τ’ αναιδειη κατοπαζη.

And shamelessness expels the better shame.

The good shame, which deters men from mean actions, as the evil one depresses them from honest enterprise.

In my dissertation I had ventured to call in question the judgment of commentators in exalting their favourite author: and had doubted whether the meek forgiving temper of Hesiod towards his brother, whom he seldom honours with any better title than “fool,” was very happily chosen as a theme for admiration. On this the *old* Critical Reviewer exclaimed “as if that, and various other gentle expressions, for example *blockhead*, *goose-cap*, *dunderhead*, were not frequently terms of endearment:” and he added his suspicion that “like poor old Lear, I did not know the difference between a bitter fool and a sweet one.”

But, as the clown in Hamlet says, “’twill away from me to you.” The critic is bound to prove, 1st, that νηπις is ever used in this playful sense; which he has not attempted to do: 2dly, that it is so used with the

aggravating prefix of ΜΕΓΑ νηπιε: 3dly, that it is so used by Hesiod.

Hector’s babe on the nurse’s bosom is described as νηπιος; and Patroclus weeping is compared by Achilles to κουρη νηπιη. These words may bear the senses of “poor innocent;” and of “fond girl;” the former is tender, the latter playful; but in both places the word is usually understood in its primitive sense of “infant.” Homer says of Andromache preparing a bath for Hector,

Νηπιη! ουδ’ ενοησεν ο μιν μαλα τηλε λοετων
Χερσιν Αχιλληος δαμασεν γλαυκωπις Αθηνη:

Il. xxii.

Fond one! she knew not that the blue-eyed maid
Had quell’d him, far from the refreshing bath,
Beneath Achilles’ hand.

But this is in commiseration: or would the critic apply to Andromache the epithet of *goose-cap*? After all, who in his senses would dream of singling out a word from an author’s context, and delving in other authors for a meaning? The question is, not how it is used by other authors, but how it is used by Hesiod. Till the Critic favours us with some proofs of Hesiod’s namby-pamby tenderness towards the brother who had cheated him of his patrimony, I beg to return both the quotation and the *appellatives* upon his hands.[2]

The London Reviewer censures my choice of blank-verse as a medium for the ancient hexameter, on the ground that the closing adonic is more fully represented by the rounding rhyme of the couplet: but it may be urged, that the flowing pause and continuous period of the Homeric verse are more consonant with our blank measure. In confining the latter to dramatic poetry, as partaking of the character of the Greek Iambics, he has overlooked the visible distinction of structure in our dramatic and heroic blank verse. With respect to the particular poem, I am disposed to concede that the general details of the Theogony might be improved by rhyme: but the more interesting passages are not to be sacrificed to those which cannot interest, be they versified how they may: and as the critic seems to admit that a poem whose action passes

“Beyond the flaming bounds of time and space”

may be fitly clothed with blank numbers, by this admission he gives up the argument as it affects the Theogony.

In disapproving of my illustration of Hesiod by the Bryantian scheme of mythology, the London Reviewer refers me for a refutation of this system to Professor Richardson’s preface to his Arabic Dictionary; where certain etymological combinations and derivations are contested, which Mr. Bryant produces as authorities in support of the adoration of the Sun or of Fire. Mr. Richardson, however, premises by acknowledging “the penetration and judgement of

the author of the Analytic System in the refutation of vulgar errors, with the new and informing light in which he has placed a variety of ancient facts:” and however formidable the professor’s criticisms may be in this his peculiar province, it must be remarked that a great part of “The New System” rests on grounds independent of etymology; and is supported by a mass of curious evidence collected from the history, the rites, and monuments of ancient nations: nor can I look upon the judgment of that critic as infallible, who conceives the suspicious silence of the Persic historians sufficient to set aside the venerable testimony of Herodotus, and the proud memorials and patriotic traditions of the free people of Greece: and who resolves the invasion of Xerxes into the petty piratical inroad of a Persian Satrap. I conceive, also, with respect to the point in dispute, that the professor’s confutation of certain etymological positions is completely weakened in its intended general effect, by his scepticism as to the universality of a diluvian tradition. If we admit that the periodical overflowings of the Nile might have given rise to superstitious observances and processions in Ægypt; and even that the sudden inundations of the Euphrates and the Tigris might have caused the institution of similar memorials in Babylonia, how are we to account for Greece, and India, and America, each visited by a destructive inundation, and each perpetuating its remembrance by poetical legends or emblematical sculptures? Surely a most incredible supposition. Nor is this all; for we find an agreement not merely of a flood, but of persons preserved from

a flood; and preserved in a remarkable manner; by inclosure in a vessel, or the hollow trunk of a tree. How is it possible to solve coincidences of so minute and specific a nature[3] by casual inundations, with Mr. Richardson, or, with Dr. Gillies, by the natural proneness of the human mind to the weaknesses and terrors of superstition?

As to my choice of the Analytic System for the purpose of illustrating Hesiod, I am not convinced by the argument either of the London or the Edinburgh Reviewer, that it is a system too extensive to serve for the illustration of a single author, or that my task was necessarily confined to literal explanation of the received mythology. In this single author are concentrated the several heathen legends and heroical fables, and the whole of that popular theology which the author of the New System professed to analyse. Tzetzes, in his scholia upon Hesiod, interpreted the theogonic traditions by the phenomena of nature and the operations of the elements: Le Clerc by the hidden sense which he traced from Phœnician primitives: and to these Cooke, in his notes, added the moral apologues of Lord Bacon. In departing, therefore, from the beaten track of the school-boy's Pantheon, I have only exercised the same freedom which other commentators and translators have assumed before me.

Clifton,
October, 1815.

Footnote

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[1] A blank-verse translation of the Battle of the Titans may be found in Bryant's "Analysis:" and one of the descriptive part of "The Shield" in the "Exeter Essays." Isaac Ritson translated the Theogony; but the work has remained in MS.

[2] The untimely death of the writer unfortunately precludes me from offering my particular acknowledgments to the translator of Aristotle's Poetics, for the large and liberal praise which he has bestowed upon my work in the second number of The London Review: a journal established on the plan of a more manly system of criticism by the respectable essayist, whose translations from the Greek comedy first drew the public attention to the unjustly vilified Aristophanes.

[3] "Paintings representing the deluge of Tezpi are found among the different nations that inhabit Mexico. He saved himself conjointly with his wife, children, and several animals, on a raft. The painting represents him in the midst of the water lying in a bark. The mountain, the summit of which, crowned by a tree, rises above the waters, is the peak of Colhuacan, the Ararat of the Mexicans. The men born after the deluge were dumb: a dove, from the top of the tree distributes among them tongues. When the great Spirit ordered the waters to withdraw, Tezpi sent out a vulture. This bird did not return on account of the number of carcases, with which the earth, newly dried up, was strewn. He sent out other birds; one of which, the humming-bird, alone returned, holding in its beak a branch covered with leaves.—Ought we not to acknowledge the traces of a common origin, wherever cosmogonical ideas, and the first

traditions of nations, offer striking analogies, even in the minutest circumstances? Does not the humming-bird of Tezpi remind us of Noah’s dove; that of Deucalion, and the birds, which, according to Berosus, Xisuthrus sent out from his ark, to see whether the waters were run off, and whether he might erect altars to the tutelary deities of Chaldæa?” HUMBOLDT’S RESEARCHES, concerning the Institutions and Monuments of ancient America: translated by HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS.

DISSERTATION
ON
THE LIFE AND ÆRA
OF
HESIOD,
HIS POEMS, AND MYTHOLOGY.

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SECTION I.
ON THE LIFE OF HESIOD.

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It is remarked by Velleius Paterculus (Hist. lib. i.) that “Hesiod had avoided the negligence into which Homer fell, by attesting both his country and his parents: but that of his country he had made most reproachful mention; on account of the fine which she had imposed on him.” There are sufficient coincidences in the poems of Hesiod, now extant, to explain the grounds of this assertion of Paterculus; but the statement is loose and incorrect.

As to the mention of his country, if by country we are to suppose the place of his birth, it can only be understood by implication, and that not with certainty. Hesiod indeed relates that his father migrated from Cuma in Æolia, to Ascra, a Bœotian village at the foot of mount Helicon; but we are left to conjecture whether he himself was born at Cuma or at Ascra. His affirmation that he had never embarked in a ship but once, when he sailed across the Euripus to the Isle of Eubœa on occasion of a poetical contest, has been thought decisive of his having been born at Ascra; but the poet is speaking of his nautical experience: and even if he had originally come from Cuma, he would scarcely mention a voyage made in infancy. The observation respecting his parents tends to countenance the reading of Διου γενος; race of

Dius; instead of διον γενος, race divine; but the name of one parent only is found. The reproachful mention of his country plainly alludes to his charge of corruption against the petty kings or nobles, who exercised the magistracy of Bœotia: and by the fine is meant the judicial award of the larger share of the patrimony to his brother.

There seems a great probability that Virgil, in his fourth eclogue, had Hesiod's golden and heroic ages in view; and that he alludes to the passage of Justice leaving the earth, where he says

The virgin now returns: Saturnian times
Roll round again:

and to Hesiod himself in the verse,

The last age dawns, in verse Cumæan sung:[4]

and not, as is commonly thought, to the Sibyl of Campanian Cuma. Professor Heyne objects, that Hesiod makes no mention of the revolution of a better age: yet such an allusion is significantly conveyed in the following passage:

Oh would that Nature had denied me birth
Midst this fifth race, this iron age of earth;
That long before within the grave I lay,
Or long hereafter could behold the day!

That Virgil elsewhere calls Hesiod’s verse Ascræan is no argument against his supposing him of Cuma: there seems no reason why either epithet should not be used: for the poet was at least of Cumæan extraction. That Ascræus was Hesiod’s received surname among the ancients proves nothing as to his birth-place, nor is any thing proved as to Virgil’s opinion by his adoption of the title in compliance with common usage. Apollonius was surnamed Rhodius from his residence at Rhodes, yet his birth-place was Ægypt. After all, nothing is established, even if it could be certified that Virgil thought him of Cuma, beyond the single weight of Virgil’s individual opinion. Plutarch relates, from a more ancient and therefore a more competent authority, that of Ephorus, the Cumæan historian, that Dius was the youngest of three brothers, and emigrated through distress of debt to Ascra; where he married Pycimede, the mother of Hesiod.

If we allow the authenticity of the proem to the Theogony, Hesiod tended sheep in the vallies of Helicon; for it is not in the spirit of ancient poetry to feign this sort of circumstance; and no education could be conceived more natural for a bard who sang of husbandry. From the fiction of the Muses presenting him with a laurel-bough, we may infer also that he was not a minstrel or harper, but a rhapsodist; and sang or recited to the branch instead of the lyre. La Harpe, in his Lycée, *ou Cours de Littérature*, asserts that Hesiod was a priest of the temple of the Muses. I find the same account in Gale’s Court of the Gentiles; book iii. p. 7. vol. i. who

quotes Carion’s Chronicle of Memorable Events. For this, however, I can find no ancient authority. On referring to Pausanias, he mentions, indeed, that the statue of Hesiod was placed in the temple of the Muses on Mount Helicon: and in the Works and Days Hesiod mentions having dedicated to the Muses of Helicon the tripod which he won in the Eubœan contest; and observes

Th’ inspiring Muses to my lips have giv’n
The love of song, and strains that breathe of heaven.

From the conjunction of this passage with the account of Pausanias, has probably arisen a confused supposition that Hesiod was actually a priest of the Heliconian temple. The circumstance, although destitute of express evidence, is however probable, from his acquaintance with theogonical traditions and his tone of religious instruction.

Guietus rejects the whole passage as supposititious, which respects the voyage to Eubœa, and the contest in poetry at the funeral games of Amphidamas. Proclus supposes Plutarch to have also rejected it: because he speaks of the contest as τα εωλα πραγματα: which some interpret trite or threadbare tales: others old wives’ stories. But if the latter sense be the correct one, Plutarch may have meant to intimate his disbelief only of Hesiod and Homer having contended; not altogether of a contest in which Hesiod took part. In fact it seems reasonable to infer the authenticity of the passage from this very

tradition of Homer and Hesiod having disputed a prize in poetry.

In the pseudo-history entitled “The Contest of Homer and Hesiod,” is an inscription purporting to be that on the tripod which Hesiod won from Homer in Eubœa:

This Hesiod vow’d to Helicon’s blest nine,
Victor in Chalcis crown’d o’er Homer, bard divine.

Now that the passage in “The Works” was extant long before this piece was in existence, is susceptible of easy proof: but if we conceive with the credulity of Barnes, that the piece is a collection of scattered traditionary matter of genuine antiquity, that the passage was not constructed on the narration may be inferred from the former wanting the name of Homer. The nullity of purpose in such a forgery seems to have struck those, who in the indulgence of the same fanciful whim have substituted, as Proclus states, for the usual reading in the text of Hesiod,

Υμνω νικησαντα φερειν τριποδ’ ωτωεντα,

I bore a tripod ear’d, my prize, away:

Υμνω νικησαντ’ εν χαλκιδι θειον Ομηρον,

Victor in Chalcis crown’d o’er Homer, bard divine:

the identical verse in the pretended inscription. It is incredible that any person should take the trouble

of foisting lines into Hesiod's poem, for the barren object of inducing a belief that he had won a poetical prize from some unknown and nameless bard: unless we were to presume that the forger omitted the name through a refinement of artifice, that no suspicion may be excited by its too minute coincidence with the traditionary story: but it is a perfectly natural circumstance that the passage in Hesiod, describing a contest with some unknown bard, should have furnished the basis of a meeting between Hesiod and Homer: and the tradition is at once explained by the coincidence of this passage in "The Works," and an invocation in the "Hymn to Venus;" where Homer exclaims on the eve of one of these bardic festivals,

Oh in this contest let me bear away
The palm of song: do thou prepare my lay!

The piece entitled "The Contest of Homer and Hesiod," is entitled to no authority. It is not credible that a composition of this nature, consisting of enigmas with their solutions, and of lines of imperfect sense which are completed by the alternate verses of the answerer, should have been preserved by the oral tradition of ages like complete poems: and the foolish genealogies, whereby Homer and Hesiod are traced to Gods, Muses, and Rivers, and are made cousins, according to the favourite zeal of the Greeks for finding out a consanguinity in poets, diminish all the credit of the writer as a sober historian.

It appears probable that the whole piece was suggested by the hint of the contest in Plutarch: who quotes it in his “Banquet of Sages,” as an example of the ancient contests in poetry. He says Homer proposed this enigma:

Rehearse, O Muse! the things that ne’er have been,
Nor e’er shall in the future time be seen:

which Hesiod answered in a manner no less enigmatical:

When round Jove’s tomb the clashing cars shall roll
The trampling coursers straining for the goal

The same verses, with a few changes, are given in “The Contest;” only the question is assigned to Hesiod, and the answer to Homer; as Robinson conjectures, with perhaps too much refinement, for the secret purpose of depressing Hesiod under the mask of exalting him, by appointing Homer to the more arduous task of solving the questions proposed. With respect also to the award of Panœdes, the judge, which is thought to betray the same design by an imbecile or partial preference of the verses of Hesiod to those of Homer, the reason stated by Panœdes, that “it was just to bestow the prize on him who exhorted men to agriculture and peace, in preference to him who described only war and carnage” is equally noble and philosophical; and by no means merits to have given rise to the proverbial parody quoted by Barnes: Πανιδος ψηφος “the

judgment of Pan:” instead of Πανοιδου ψηφος, “the judgment of Panœdes.”

The piece seems to be a mere exercise of ingenuity, without any particular design of raising one poet at the expence of the other: and as it contains internal evidence of having been composed after the time of Adrian, who is mentioned by name as “that most divine Emperor,” and Plutarch flourished under Trajan, there is reason to suppose that the narrative of Periander in the “Banquet of Wise Men,” afforded the first hint of the whole contest.

To the same zeal for making Hesiod and Homer competitors we owe another inscription, quoted by Eustathius, ad Il. A. p. 5.

In Delos first did I with Homer raise
The rhapsody of bards; and new the lays:
Phœbus Apollo did our numbers sing;
Latona’s son, the golden-sworded king.

But if the passage in “The Works” be authentic, the spuriousness of this inscriptive record detects itself; as Hesiod there confines his voyages to the crossing the Euripus.

Pausanias mentions the institution of a contest at the temple in Delphos, where a hymn was to be sung in honour of Apollo: and says that Hesiod was excluded from the number of the candidates because he had not learnt to sing to the harp. He adds, that Homer came thither also; and was incapacitated from

trying his skill by the same deficiency: and, what is very strange, he gives as a reason why he could not have taken a part in the contest, even were he a harper, that he was blind.

From Plutarch, Pausanias, and the author of “The Contest,” we are enabled to cull some gossiping traditions of the latter life of Hesiod, which are scarcely worth the gleaning, except that, like the romancing Lives of Homer, they are proofs of the poet’s celebrity.

Hesiod, we are told, set out on a pilgrimage to the Delphic Oracle, for the purpose of hearing his fortune: and the old bard could scarcely get in at the gates of the temple, when the prophetess could refrain no longer: “*afflata est numine quando jam propriore Dei*:”

Blest is the man who treads this hallow’d ground,
With honours by th’ immortal Muses crown’d:
The bard whose glory beams divinely bright
Far as the morning sheds her ambient light:
But shun the shades of fam’d Nemean Jove;
Thy mortal end awaits thee in the grove.

But after all her sweet words, the priestess was but a jilting gypsey; and meant only to shuffle with the ambiguity of her trade. The old gentleman carefully turning aside from the Peloponnesian Nemea, fell into the trap of a temple of the Nemean Jupiter at Ænoe, a town of Locris. He was here entertained by one Ganyctor; together with a

Milesian, his fellow-traveller, and a youth called Troilus. During the night this Milesian violated the daughter of their host, by name Ctemene: and the grey hairs of Hesiod, who we are told was an old man twice over,[5] and whose name grew into a proverb for longevity, could not save him from being suspected of the deed by the young lady's brothers, Ctemenus and Antiphus: they without much ceremony murdered him in the fields, and "to leave no botches in the work," killed the poor boy into the bargain. The Milesian, we are to suppose, escaped under the cloud of his miraculous security, free from gashes and from question. The body of Hesiod was thrown into the sea; and a dolphin,[6] or a whole shoal of them, according to another account, conveyed it to a part of the coast, where the festival of Neptune was celebrating: and the murderers, having confessed, were drowned in the waves. Plutarch (*de solertiâ animalium*) states that the corpse of Hesiod was discovered through the sagacity of his dog.

The body of a murdered poet, however, was not to rest quiet without effecting some further extraordinary prodigies. The inhabitants of Orchomenos, in Bœotia, having consulted the oracle on occasion of a pestilence, were answered that, as their only remedy, they must seek the bones of Hesiod; and that a crow would direct them. The messengers accordingly found a crow sitting on a rock; in the cavity of which they discovered the poet's remains; transported them to their own country, and erected a tomb with this epitaph:

The fallow vales of Ascra gave him birth:
His bones are cover’d by the Mingan earth:
Supreme in Hellas Hesiod’s glories rise,
Whom men discern by wisdom’s touchstone wise.

Among the Greek Inscriptions is an epitaph on Hesiod with the name of Alcæus, which has the air of being a genuine ancient production, from its breathing the beautiful classic simplicity of the old Grecian school:

Nymphs in their founts midst Locris’ woodland gloom
Laved Hesiod’s corse and piled his grassy tomb:
The shepherds there the yellow honey shed,
And milk of goats was sprinkled o’er his head:
With voice so sweetly breathed that sage would sing,
Who sip’d pure drops from every Muse’s spring.

Some mention Ctemene, or Clymene, on whose account Hesiod is said to have been murdered, as the name of his wife: others call her Archiepe; and he is supposed to have had by her a son named Stesichorus. In “The Works” is this passage:

Then may not I, nor yet my son remain
In this our generation just in vain:

which, unless it be only a figure of speech, confirms the fact of his having a son.

Pausanias describes a brazen statue of Hesiod in the forum of the city Thespia, in Bœotia; another in

the temple of Jupiter Olympicus, at Olympia in Elis; and a third in the temple of the Muses, on Mount Helicon, in a sitting posture, with a harp resting on his knees; a circumstance which he rather formally criticises, on the ground that Hesiod recited with the laurel-branch.

A brazen statue of Hesiod stood also in the baths of Zeuxippus, which formed a part of old Byzantium, and retained the same title, an epithet of Jupiter, under the Christian Emperors of Constantinople. (See Gibbon's Roman Empire, ii. 17; Dallaway's Constantinople, p. 110.) Constantine adorned the baths with statues, and for these Christodorus wrote inscriptions. That on the statue of Hesiod is quoted by Fulvius Ursinus, from the Greek Epigrams:

Midst mountain nymphs in brass th' Ascræan stood,
Uttering the heaven-breathed song in his infuriate mood.

The collections of antiquities by Fulvius Ursinus, Gronovius, and Bellorius exhibit a gem, a busto and a basso-relievo, together with a truncated *herma*; which the ingenious artist who designed the frontispiece to this edition has united with one of the heads. The bust in the Pembroke collection differs from all these. In fact the sculptures, whether of Hesiod or Homer, are only interesting as antiquities of art; for the likenesses assigned to eminent poets by the Grecian artists were mostly imaginary:[7] and

must evidently have been so in such ancient instances as these.

Greece, at an early period, seems to have possessed a spirit of just legislation, which formed in the very bosom of polytheism a certain code of practical religion: and from the semi-barbarous age of Orpheus, down to the times of a Solon, a Plato, and a Pindar, Providence continued to raise up moral instructors of mankind, in the persons of bards, or legislators, or philosophers, who by their conceptions of a righteous governor of the universe, and their maxims of social duty and natural piety, counteracted the degrading influence of superstition on the manners of the people: and sowed the germs of that domestic and public virtue which so long upheld in power and prosperity the sister communities of Greece. The same spirit pervades the writings of Hesiod.

It is evident even in the times that have passed since the gospel light was shed abroad among the nations, that a perverted system of theology may perfectly consist with a pure practical religion: that scholastic subtleties, unscriptural traditions, and uncharitable dogmas, may constitute the creed, while the religion of primitive Christianity influences the heart. So, in estimating the character of Hesiod, we must separate those superstitions which belong to a traditionary mythology, from that system of opinions which respected the guidance of human life; the accountableness of nations and individuals to a heavenly judge; and the principles of public equity and popular justice which he derived from the

national institutions. If we examine his poems in this view of their tendency and spirit, we shall find abundant cause for admiration and respect of a man, who, born and nurtured upon the lap of heathen superstition, could shadow out the maxims of truth in such beautiful allegories, and recommend the practice of virtue in such powerful and affecting appeals to the conscience and the reason.

They, however, who can feel the infinite superiority of Christianity over every system of philosophic morals, will naturally expect that the morality of Hesiod should come short of that point of purity, which he, who reads our nature, proposed through the revealer of his will as a standard for the emulation of his creatures. But in the zeal of commenting upon an adopted author, we find that every thing equivocal has been strained to some unobjectionable sense; we are presented with Christian graces for heathen virtues; and Hesiod is not permitted to be absurd even in his superstitions; which are thought to involve some refined emblematical meaning; some lesson of ethical wisdom or of economical prudence.

The similitude of patriarch and prophet, with whom he is compared by Robinson, is not a very exaggerated comparison, in so far as respects the simplicity of an ancient husbandman, laying down rules for the general œconomy of life; or the graver functions of a philosopher, denouncing the visitations of divine justice on nations and their legislators, greedy of the gains of corruption. But the learned editor is unfortunate in selecting for his praise the

meek and placable disposition of Hesiod as completing the patriarchal character. The indignation which Hesiod felt at the injuries done him by a brother, and the venality of his judges, might reasonably excuse the bitterness of rebuke: but he should not be held up as a model of equanimity and forbearance. To this graceless brother he seldom ever addresses himself in any gentler terms than μεγα νηπιε, *greatly foolish*: and I question whether Perses, if he could rise from the dead, would confess himself very grateful for the tenderness of this reprehension.

The adverse decision in the law-suit with his brother must be confessed to be the hinge on which the alleged corruptness of his times perpetually turns: yet as he does not conceal the personal interest which he has in the question, his frankness wins our confidence; and simplicity and candour are so plainly marked in his grave and artless style, that we are insensibly led to form an exception in his favour as to the judgment of the character from the writer; to believe his praises of frugality and temperance sincere; and to coincide with Paterculus, in the opinion that he was a man of a contented and philosophical mind, “fond of the leisure and tranquillity” of rustic life.

His countrymen, as Addison expresses it, must have regarded him “as the oracle of the neighbourhood.” Plutarch adverts to his medical knowledge, in the person of Cleodemus the physician; and when we consider that he possessed sufficient astronomy for the purposes of agriculture, and that he carried his zeal for science even into