

The Bible alone excepted, no book has been more severely or unfairly assailed by modern criticism than Homer. In addition to cavils already alluded to, it may be sufficient here to mention that objections have been started to some portions of the Homeric Ballads, as representing what is revolting to human nature or inconsistent with the dignity of the Epic Muse; and on this ground we are asked to condemn the tears of the great Achilles, the caprice of Agamemnon, the laundressing of queenly Nausicaa, the carpentry of King Ulysses, and Paris, the full inventory of 'Thersites' deformities and his coarse invectives, as well as all details of murder, outrage, and agony. If such are to be considered faults, in what light should we regard the greater faults and incongruities of Milton, and especially of Shakespeare, incomparably the greatest of all poets? In this respect however, the great masters of poetry have been followed by the most amiable of painters—Raphael—who did not shrink from painting on his imperishable canvas, cripples, beggars, and demoniacs, alongside of forms of transcendant gracefulness and unearthly beauty. Salvator Rosa, too, we know, absolutely revelled in painting martyrdoms and savage solitudes infested by banditti.* No such idle conception, of what was revolting to human nature, led the great sculptors to deem it unworthy their chisels to immortalise, in marble, the savage figure of a Satyr and the agonies of a Niobe, a Laocoön, or a Dying Gladiator.

* The *smooth* landscape is not the work of a great artist. The excellency of such an artist is to imitate the texture of all surfaces which the world around him presents; and if he paints, as an artist ought to paint—the bold, rough rock, the shaggy goat, the broken foreground, the horse in its natural rough state, with its mane and tail uncut, will be all faithfully rendered.—See *Flower, on Painting*.