

and warriors by necessity, the clarion and the spirit-stirring trumpet necessarily entered, yet those tones, touched

“ to the sound
Of instrumental harmony, that breathed
Heroic ardour to advent'rous deeds,

rather than inspired a blind enthusiasm or savage ferocity ;—such it appears to us, are the elements of amusement, which a judicious mind would have selected for the hours of Greek relaxation ; and such was the form in which Greek tragedy, as conceived by its first great father and creator, if we are not mistaken in our judgment, did actually invest itself.

Throwing itself into a remote antiquity, it drew from thence a race of men,—kings, warriors, sages, prophets,—whom the Greek imagination had long been accustomed to consider as beings invested with higher powers of body and mind than themselves ; and invested them, by artificial means, with a corresponding loftiness of stature, a voice *non humana sonans* : it exhibited them under the power, but not under the weaknesses of human passion : it threw around them sometimes, indeed, the embellishments of a valour so captivating and brilliant, that modern chivalry in its fairest form might have found its cradle therein, but more often and with greater propriety, solemn strains, which, like the Doric flutes of Milton,

‘ instead of rage,
Deliberate valour breathed, firm and unmoved.’

But above all, it was careful that in beings thus regarded with awe, and whose language and feelings were intended to keep up the highest moral tone in the public mind, no unguarded word or movement, no familiar household term or action should occur to break the spell, or tempt the spectators' minds to leap the eternal barriers which were meant to stand between themselves and those creatures of another and a nobler day. Their movements were grandeur ; their repose was dignity : how gracefully and consistently observed is evident from that style of Greek statuary (unquestionably deduced from that noble spectacle of the stage) on which the world has ever since been content to gaze, hopeless of competition even at the hands of a Canova, a Chantrey, or a Westmacott,—and to that statuary the mind of the reader must ever recur, if he wishes to have on his mind the best and most faithful impression of the Greek tragic stage.

But—

‘ From time's first records the diviner's voice
Gives the sad heart a sense of misery.’—ÆSCH. Agamem.

Though these beings might escape the weaknesses, common analogies told the spectator that they could not be exempt from the miseries and ills to which man is born, as surely and as inevitably ‘ as the sparks fly upwards.’ Hence the exhibitions of fallen greatness among the Greek dramatists, and the affecting spectacle of old and princely houses ‘ fallen from their high estate.