

lingered with a loving fondness, that while it compromised the consistency of his political creed, did honour to the best sympathies of his heart. The unmistakeable beauties of this the King of Epic poets are easy to recognise, and, in their highest degree, they are peculiar to himself. His supremacy is well maintained by the perfect artlessness of his narrative, in which he never seeks to show his powers, but rather allows them to develop themselves as they are called for by the exigencies of the scene. This artless and quiet style of Homer always rises into sublimity and energy as the interest deepens and the scenes become more impassioned—when his hexameters quiver with emotion, and the forms of his heroes seem to dilate and to move before us—amidst the ringing of bronze and the shouts of battle. In scenes of pathos Homer has no superior, and but one equal,—the Bard of Avon. In the parting of Hector and Andromache, and the story of the Orphan, he pours forth the most exquisite pathos, and the most touching tenderness, proving that every passion and every feeling of the human heart was within the reach of his master mind. Here, however, we must glance at, if we cannot expatiate upon, his concrete forms of speech—his energetic formulas—his emphatic and solemn repetitions, and especially his life-like pictures of living agents, which have touched the sympathies and commanded the interest of all ages and all countries, to an extent immeasurably beyond the influence of any other poet.

The Epic of Virgil, in its sweetest strains, is but the echo of the blind old bard, whose songs, like the songs of a bird, singing for very exuberance of joy, overflow with a gladness, an animation, and a freshness that cannot be found in the artificial and polished hexameters of the Mantuan Poet.