

trated. The ancient style of emblem illustration often extended to the first letters of chapters, title-pages, colophons, head and tail pieces, etc., of the most quaint and grotesque ideas that could possibly be conceived. Heraldry may also be considered as an almost complete system of emblems, or, as has been happily expressed, "the picture history of families, of tribes, of nations, of princes, and of emperors."

It is not, however, my intention either to dwell upon the many emblem writers, or to discuss at length the merits of their emblematical designs, but to recommend and to refer those inclined to inquire into this very interesting branch of literature to the two able works lately published by Mr. C. Green, of Knutsford, Cheshire, entitled "Whitney's Choice of Emblems" and "Shakespeare and the Emblem Writers," both superbly and extensively illustrated by photography, reproducing many very rare and curious designs of olden time. These two works cannot fail to stimulate the reader to further inquiries into this eccentric field of illustrative literature, by which they will become familiar with the works of Sambucus, Brandus, Bocchius, Alciatus, Jovius, Whitney, and many others. My object, however, in the present short essay is to show that these emblem writers were by no means the originators of this mode of illustration; in fact, that emblematical designs were practised ages previous to the era of printing or wood-cutting. The following remarks will show that both the Greeks and Romans used emblematical designs extensively on both coins and medals, many of which were so chaste and beautiful in design and execution, as to demand our unqualified admiration at the present time. It is however, just possible that the art, as I may term it, of using emblems might have even an earlier origin than either Greek or Roman; and that these latter might have been the mere copyists of what was in use long before their period. In the absence of such information, we cannot do better than commence with the Greeks, who were masters in design and no