

early historians are all of them dramatic. A writer destitute of art is naturally prompted to relate facts as he saw them performed ; he introduces his personages as speaking, or conferring ; and he himself relates what was acted, and not spoken. Herodotus, who lived half a century after the Athenian Pherecydes already spoken of, is the oldest Greek prose author preserved to us. Former histories were but dry registers of facts, like that curious and valuable monument of our own ancient history, the Anglo-Saxon Annals.* Herodotus first taught to give grace to detail in prose narration, and at once with such success, that he has had, from the ablest writers in the most polished ages, the titles of father and prince of history. Thucydides followed him only a few years. The Roman histories before the time of Cicero are chronicles merely. Cato, Fabius Pictor, and Piso confined themselves to naked facts. In the *Augustæ Historiæ Scriptores*, we find nothing but a dry and insipid narrative of facts, commonly of very little moment. The perfection of historical composition which writers at last attain to after wandering through various imperfect modes, is a relation of interesting facts, connected with their motives and consequences.

ELOQUENCE was of a later date than the art of literary composition ; for till the latter was improved, there were no models for studying the former. Cicero's oration for Roscius is composed in a style diffuse and highly ornamented ; " which," says Plutarch, " was universally approved because at that time the style of Asia introduced into Rome with its luxury, was in high vogue." But Cicero in a journey to Greece, where he leisurely studied Greek authors, was taught to prune off superfluities, and to purify his style, which he did to a high degree of refinement. He introduced into his native tongue a sweetness, a grace, a majesty, that surpassed the world, and even the Romans themselves.

The Greek STAGE has been justly admired among all polite nations. " The Tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides, in particular, are by all critics held to be perfect in their kind, excellent models for imitation, but far above rivalship. If the Greek Stage was so early brought to maturity, it was a phenomenon not a little singular in the progress of arts. The Greek tragedy made a rapid progress from Thespis to Sophocles and Euripides, whose compositions are wonderful productions of genius, considering that the Greeks at that period were beginning to emerge from roughness and barbarity into a taste for literature. The compositions of Eschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, must have been highly relished among a people who had no idea of any thing more perfect." With respect to Greek Comedy, all we deem it necessary to say at present, is, that it does not appear to have surpassed the tragedy in its progress towards perfection. The Roman Theatre, from the time of Plautus to that of Terence made a rapid progress.

* CICERO informs us of the origin of Annals. To preserve the memory of events the *Pontifex Maximus*, says he, wrote what passed each year, and exposed it on the tables in his own house, where every one was at liberty to read : this they called *annales maximi* ; and hence the writers who imitated this simple method of narrating facts were called *annalists*.