

THE LITERARY GARLAND.

Vol. I.

MAY, 1843.

No. 5.

MURILLO.

BY T. D. I.

"Who paused to look again,
Saw more than marks the crowd of vulgar men—
The power of thought, the magic of the mind."

"What taste, what execution these Italians have! See you this exquisite landscape? are not the lights and shades truly beautiful? those Alpine, snow-capped heights; and that lovely village, blossoming in beauty at their base! Ah, it is a gem, indeed! Velasquez can show us nothing like this, proud of him as we are."

"That is just like you, Sebastiano; always making unfavourable comparisons between us and our soft neighbours of Italy. Velasquez, I admit, can show us nothing like this picture of still life you admire so much; but it is because his strong expression, his freedom of pencil, forbid the delicate touches which make the beauty of this landscape; but compare his figures with those in most of these paintings—take, for instance his 'Brothers of Joseph,' (you have seen it, I know)—and contrast them in your mind's eye with this bandit group. Why these are but shadows of men—the outline of the figure, and the common features of humanity, but disproportioned and wanting vitality—they are but painted semblances; while those of Velasquez are starting from the canvas, seemingly full of robust life. Give me Velasquez, the painter of nature."

"Ah, but see the variety of this Pedro de Mayo! this vase of flowers—that fruit—that lovely St. Cecilia; no wonder she draws those angel faces down to listen and to look at her—that group of children, with their roguish eyes, almost talking of the mischief they are bent on; and yet his name is one almost unknown. If these are the works of an artist, whose fame has never yet been wasted to us, what think you must be the productions of a Raphael, a Caracci, or a Correggio? and even you must acknowledge that Velasquez owes much of his fame to the study of the Italian artists. Had he not caught

the striking beauties of Caravaggio's style, he would never have excelled as he now does."

"I know he acknowledges his obligations to that master as his model; but, believe me, wherever Velasquez had been placed, he would have created for himself a school, and I doubt not his own genius would have led him to the bold and striking style of Caravaggio; and had he never gone to Italy, he would have been an originator rather than an imitator."

"Well, well, De Silva, we shall not agree as to the merits of our favourites, so let us enjoy and criticise, without comparing. See you, my beautiful ideal of a picture there, has a worshipper ardent enough, if one may judge from his manner, to satisfy even the cravings of genius for admiration."

De Silva turned, and saw a youth gazing upon the landscape which had so pleased his companion. He was tall and slight; his long black hair fell in masses about a face full of genius and expression; his dark grey eyes were absolutely luminous with the intensity of the gaze he riveted on the painting; he seemed unconscious of all about him; and at times would clasp his hands towards the picture, as if longing to press it to his heart. The two young Spanish nobles passed round the room which contained the collection—a rare one indeed to be seen in Spain, for seldom had the works of the Italian artists found their way across the blue Mediterranean. And here were not only those of Pedro de Mayo, but many others of exquisite beauty, which his taste had led him to purchase. Throughout the day the room was crowded with visitants, led thither more by the excitement of seeing something new, in the dull city of Seville, than by a true taste for the beautiful art. They came and went, the sitting throng, and each new group found an object of