List of Illustrations for the Lecture.

Portrait of Hogarth with his Dog.

The Southwark Fair.

The Distrest Poet.

The Enraged Musician.

The Guildhall of London.

The Two Apprentices at their Looms.

Industrious Apprentice at Church.

Idle Apprentice Gambling in the Churchyard.

Industrious Apprentice in his Master's Confidence.

Idle Apprentice sent to Sea.

Industrious Apprentice Married to his Master's Daughter.

Idle Apprentice and his Associates.

Idle Apprentice charged with Murder.

Idle Apprentice going to place of Execution.

Industrious Apprentice made Lord Mayor.

THE

MOSES OF MICHAEL ANGELO:

A STUDY

OF

ART HISTORY AND LEGEND.

BY

W. WATKISS LLOYD.

LONDON:
WILLIAMS AND NORGATE,
14, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN,
AND 20, SOUTH FREDERICK STREET, EDINBURGH.

1863.

"S. Pietro in vincoli. Here sits the Moses of M. Angelo, frowning with the terrific eyebrows of Olympian Jove. Homer and Phidias indeed placed their gods on a golden throne, but Moses is cribbed into a niche like a prebendary in his stall. Much wit has been levelled of late at his flowing beard and his flaming horns. One critic compares his head to a goat's, another his dress to a galley-slave's; but the true sublime resists all ridicule, the offended Law-giver frowns on undepressed, and awes you with inherent authority."—*Forsyth's Remarks on Antiquity, Arts, and Letters during an Excursion in Italy.*

"Qualunque oggetto si vegga nelle belle arti, si ha da conoscer subito che cosa fa, chi è, che significa, che vuole, che ci dice di bello e d'importanza. Io ritratto non dico nulla perchè nulla di rimarchevole ho mai fatto. Perchè dunque tanti ritratti? E quel Mosè Buonarrotesco, che ha fatte mirabilia, che cosa fa colà?"—*Milizia, Dell'Arte di vedere, p.* 76.

ON THE STATUE OF MOSES,

OF MICHAEL ANGELO.

VARIED as were the artistic accomplishments of Michael Angelo, he always professed himself to be chiefly and specifically a sculptor. Accordingly in his grand pictorial decoration of the Sistine ceiling, the Sibyls and Prophets from which it gains so greatly in dignity, are in effect sculpturesque. The Statue of Moses is the only figure among his executed marble works which pertains to the same type; but this not only ranks beside them but must even be placed above them all in its mystic embodiment of sublimity,—of an ideal of mortal energy when wrought up to an enthusiasm of self-exertion and self-control, giving title and supremacy that are the equivalents of inspiration.

After so many centuries have done homage to the glory of the sculptor, it may seem late in the day to come forward with a vindication of his merits in any of his works, or an exposition of his artistic intentions and scope in the very chiefest of them all. Let us hear more, and I fear that it will not be found so.

The basis of my remarks shall be a recently published photograph of the figure, of large size. It is one of the most remarkable productions of this new art, and puts those who have not had the advantage of contemplating the original, in a position to appreciate its effects even better than many who have had to trust for their impression of the statue to its appearance when the chances of light have not fallen with that happiest effect which is but a rare accident for sculpture in a fixed position even in a long bright Italian day.

On comparing then such a comparatively satisfactory representation of the monument with the illustrations and criticisms of artists and connoisseurs who have usually been artists, from the contemporaries of Michael Angelo to our own, I was surprised to find how many have failed in catching any definite expression, how many have imputed the most alien and impossible, and that while at least there are some that honestly allow themselves to be carried away by their unsophisticated impressions, and to be fairly overawed by the majestic prophet, they still know not why, and ask not wherefore. These are the more honourable cases, but still happiness at a suspension of false criticism must not cheat us into admission that really analytical and accurate criticism is not a mental need and cordial benefit. That we shall not come upon it in every case where we might most naturally expect it, becomes as clear as it is extraordinary when we find that Vasari and Condivi, the pupils, correspondents, and associates of Michael Angelo, do not even

report faithfully the attitude and gestures of the figure, fail entirely to indicate its specific pre-occupation and expression, still less have the slightest glimpse of the peculiarity of the forms of its idealized humanity, their origin, suggestion, and significance.

Michael Angelo was yet living when his biography by Condivi was published, and that he did not correct its misrepresentations of his sculpture absolves him from any concern in many other mistakes that are contained in the book, along with so much respecting his manners and career that we have to be grateful for.

Three of the statues of the tomb of Pope Julius, as it was finally executed, says Condivi, were from the hand of the master, and he proceeds: "Of these the Statue of Moses, leader and captain of the Hebrews, is very wonderful; he is sitting in an attitude expressive of thought and wisdom, holding under his right arm the tables of the law, and with his left supporting his chin as one wearied and full of care, and from between the fingers of his left hand escape certain long rolls (or fillets) of his beard, with an effect very gratifying to the eye. The face is full of liveliness and vigour, and suitable to inspire love and fear together, which may well have been the true case. He has two horns on his head, agreeably to the usual description, not far from the top of the forehead. He is cloaked and shod, with arms naked, and in every other respect according to the antique. The work is marvellous and replete with art, and es-

pecially in this respect, that below the beautiful drapery which clothes it, the entire figure is discernible, the clothing in no respect, interfering with the contemplation of its beauty,—a point which was constantly observed by Michael Angelo in all his draped figures, whether of sculpture or painting. The statue is double the size of life."

This disorderly description is oddly inconsistent not only with the statue but with itself, and the writer appears to confuse the proper impression which he retains of the Moses with that of the Sistine Jeremiah. Neither the right hand nor the left of the Moses is near his chin; he does not hold his tablets under his arm; it is his right hand, not his left, that touches the beard; he is not cloaked, but uncloaked; and there is as little of weary anxiety in his face as might be expected in an expression characterized by the acme of vivacity and force.

Condivi's work lay beside Vasari as he wrote, and this will account for the coincidence of errors respecting the gesture of the statue. "He sits," he says, "in most solemn attitude, and rests one arm on the tablets, which he holds with his hand, and with the other hand he holds his beard;" whereas it is the same hand, the right, that alone touches both tablets and beard, and yet cannot be properly said to be holding either. Vasari however avoids inconsistency in his praises of the expression, though it is but to fall into vagueness and commonplace and bathos. He celebrates the beauty of the face as having a certain air of the true saint and most terrible prince, so

that the spectator seems fain to beg him to veil his countenance, such is its splendour and brightness, and so well is represented in the marble the divineness which God conferred on the countenance of the original. Praises well-merited, though oddly introduced, of the drapery, arms, hands, technical execution, and last of all the sandals, make out the claim for Moses now "to be called more than ever the the friend of God, inasmuch as God has willed by the hands of Michael Angelo to recompose his body so long before all others, and prepare it for the resurrection."

The sum of this praise is to evince a technical artist's appreciation of supreme mastery of technical difficulties, and a certain amount of sensibility to the majestic and awful without any care or capacity for nice discrimination, either in feeling or analysis. We may also probably accept it as an echo with an echo's indistinctness, of more intelligent enthusiasm among those better critics who have representatives in all ages, who understand, admire, and enjoy within a circle of society, but are not always called upon or careful ever to communicate their impressions beyond it, and still less to record them.

A later Italian writer of great general merit on the History and Theory of Art, has stated very tersely the conditions of expression which a work of Art should suggest and satisfy (Milizia, 'Arte di vedere,' p. 76), and he has thought fit, less happily, to cite this very statue as an instance of shortcoming in these respects. For the sake of all that is good and evil in his paragraph, I have quoted it at the head of my paper.

He has still harsher terms, and still more unluckily wrong to apply to the artist and his work, which may be referred to presently when we have leisure to be idle.

It is enough to make one think the statue had really moved with life, to find how variously its action is reported. Let us now hear the rhetoric of the President Dupaty, Letter 70 from Rome.

"The imagination of Michael Angelo was truly Roman; its views were always above the common standard, as it is impossible for a giant not to stride. It conceived at once in the three great arts,—the Basilica of St. Peter, the Picture of the Last Judgment, and the Statue of Moses.

"Moses appears seated, holding the *tables of the law under one arm*, while *the other is rested*, with an air of majesty, *on the breast*,—the breast indeed of a prophet.

"How sublime is his look!

"That august brow seems but a transparent veil, which scarcely covers an immense mind.

"How are we astonished at the waving amplitude of his beard, which descends, or rather flows, down to his waist! but the first glance beholds nothing but Moses.

"That beard is not in nature,—I admit it; but it exists in the ideal perfection of beauty.

"The mouth is full of expression; thought is there waiting for utterance.

"Homer, Bossuet, Michael Angelo, seem to have possessed successively the same imagination. Is it extinct?"

The utterance of Richard Duppa reaches thus far:—"The statue of Moses in S. Pietro in Vincoli, is a complete example of those comprehensive powers which in different degrees are found to pervade all his works. In the countenance is a dignified strength of expression, and the air and attitude of the figure are in unison with the same grandeur of character; and although it has many defects, if compared with the highest examples of antiquity, yet regarding it as a certain grand majestic character of nature, there is nothing modern of equal merit for elevation, for unity of idea, and the most consummate knowledge of the figure" (p. 269).

And again:—

"Barry has truly observed, when speaking of his statue of Moses, that though that figure may be considered as rather extravagant, yet it contains such proofs of knowledge and capacity as will ever make his name sacred among artists" (p. 274).

The pen stops and refuses to pursue extracting further so unrewardingly; a simple reference must suffice to whatever remarks on our subject may occur in Harford's biography of the sculptor, and to the enunciations, which, whatever else we may think of them, do not lack boldness, of his Quarterly reviewer.

With the statue or its not inadequate representation in the photograph referred to, we are in a position to decide for ourselves what is the true attitude, the true action, and what the special expression of the statue of the great Leader and Prophet of the Hebrews—of the Hebrews whose outlawed and abused

descendants continued to flock every Sabbath-day when Vasari was writing, men and women together, and in flights like starlings, and surrounded the basis in wonder and veneration.

Moses, then, is seated, and his cloak so thrown across his knee shows that it is not at the moment that he has taken this position, though there is movement in the left limbs, which indicate that at a moment his position has been disturbed. But he is not rising, or preparing to rise; the bust is fully upright, not thrown forward for the alteration of balance preparatory to such a movement; the prophet is looking towards the left, and the movement of the left leg and foot is the sympathetic change which accompanies the turn of the head, and the still slighter turn of the axis of the shoulders and the trunk.

The gravity of the subject, and the characteristic massing of the contours, forbade the definition of the degree and direction of movement by the ordinary aids of slighter hints,—the floating hair or flying drapery. The utmost signs of this nature admissible, and struck with a firmness yet delicacy of intonation that are beyond all rivalry and praise, are the slight tightening of the drapery over the right shoulder, expressed in the vertical crease, the loosened fold about the waist on the left side, and the doubled drapery about to release itself by slipping down over the lowered left knee.

The more pronounced indication is by an invention as original as it is effective. We have seen that Condivi and Vasari both speak of Moses as with one hand holding his beard,—as having got hold of his beard. Such a description is altogether erroneous; the fillets of the beard are detained by the right hand, but they are not held, not grasped, enclosed or taken hold of. They are even detained but momentarily,—momentarily engaged, they are on the point of being free for disengagement. The prophet could not, even in a gesture of excitement, have passed his hand athwart his body to draw his beard so aside; in such case, the position of the fingers, of which only the index is above the beard, would have been quite different, and the movement moreover would have released the tables of the law, which are only supported in their position by the pressure of his right hand, and safe, at least at present, must have fallen during such a movement, unless clutched by a gesture so awkward, that to imagine it is profanation.

But why waste words when all is so clear, so expressive? the head of Moses is to be conceived as having been turned a moment ago full over his right hand, which retained, as it does still, the tables of the divinely-given law. The pressure on the palm naturally opens the fingers about or among the pendent curls, and a sudden movement of the head to the other side leaves the flowing fillets for the moment detained, supplying in their curve a visible wake, as natural, but far more distinct, than would have been given by the mere sway with which the mighty mass could alone have responded.

The sudden movement, then, is one, to a certain extent, of interruption and surprise,—surprise which is apt to degenerate into the most undignified of all

emotions. Here the sculptor succeeds in suggesting less surprise itself than just cause and natural occasion for surprise, for the movement of attention is that of promptitude, not of a start; and the steadfast right leg and foot, and tranquil arm, attemper the excitement of the general frame to a tone of soundest self-possession. The lift of the left arm and elbow, it will be seen, is in sympathy with the movement of the leg of the same side, and expresses alertness, not astonishment, and least of all alarm. The fingers are not contracted, nor does the thumb take the excessive separation from the fore-finger,—the movements appropriate to more unsettled sense. The position, however, if not pressure of the hand, conveys, with what good reason we shall presently see, a feeling of the agitation expressed so frequently in the typical Hebraism, of bowels yearning for kindred in their tribulation or their perverseness.

What, then, of the expression of the face? Anger is in the fold of the contracting brow, anger and somewhat of contemptuous indignation and discontent in the joint expression of frowning brow and pouted lip and chin projected. The firmly balanced head and steadfast eyes convey the idea of fixed attention; and I know not if the very position and direction of the horns do not help the impression which may have still other expressive confirmations.

To my appreciation there is something in the aspect of Moses that speaks of eager listening; the poise of the head it is, I think, consenting with the position of the exposed and conspicuous ear.

I do not entertain the least doubt that we are to

conceive the statue as representing Moses at the moment when, having received the tables of the Law inscribed by Jehovah,—a divine code for the people as His special worshippers,—he hears from the camp below the mountain the mixed murmurs of unholy revelry, and interprets the confusion in its true sense, the symptom of anarchical outbreak and apostasy. Wonderfully commingled in the expression of this countenance, with surprised and angry indignation, is a feeling of pain, of sympathetic or compassionate grief. Who shall follow the fibres and the contractions in which such shadowings are inflected and declared? Something plays about a peculiar bend upwards of the eyebrow,—something in the tension of the muscles upon the cheek-bone, and most of all, I think, in that which swells intermediately above the moustache, and is slightly convulsed above the ala of the nostril.

Moses sits the embodiment of a ruler thwarted by a perverse generation at the moment of justly sanguine hope in patriotic plan. He sees the crime, is disappointed and wounded by mingled treason and fickleness; but seeing the crime, has the penetration to see also its causes, its consequences no less, and to discern the certain but the smarting remedy which he will not fail to have the resolution to apply—mercilessly.

This view has not been adopted without weighing certain objections which are tolerably obvious, but which I do not scruple to set aside, as I think the sculptor himself did, wisely, deliberately, and well.

A chief objection is the sitting position of Moses, which scarcely accords with the occasion when, according to Exodus xxxii. 17–19, he first heard the uproar of the revelling camp. There we read that it was first in colloquy with the Lord at the summit of the mount that he heard from Him that the people had fallen away so shamefully as to provoke the direst retribution. Self-sacrificingly he deprecates the offer of being himself made a patriarch of a nation to supersede the extirpated sinners; and having obtained remission, he turns and descends from the mount with the "tables of the testimony in his hand." "And when Joshua—his companion on the descent—heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear. And it came to pass as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount."

Here Moses has been already forewarned when he hears the ill-omened tumult, and it is as he is descending, scarcely as he is seated with other pre-occupation, that the outcries strike upon his ear. Such are the difficulties,—the sufficient reply, I take to be, that the combination of the occasion of forewarning of the apostasy by God, with the moment of hearing the unholy uproar,—the occasion of alarm, had

immense artistic advantages, and would shock no one who, satisfied with the embodiment of the whole spirit and sentiment of the incident, would not be fastidious as to textual adherence, which would have ruined all. *Pictoribus atque poetis*,—sculptors have still superior claim to the privilege of self-consistent deviation from the literal, and might properly set the example that painters at least were not slack to follow.

The Moses of Parmegiano is at odds with the text as seriously as that of Michael Angelo. His celebrated picture exhibits Moses seated on an eminence, —we must assume the peak of Sinai,—and there dashing down the sacred tables, which, according to Exodus, he only wilfully broke after his descent, and at the very foot of the mountain. Whether Parmegiano adopted this version of the incident deliberately and originally, or whether he followed what he considered to be the lead of Michael Angelo, comes to much the same in result. We have either the parallel instance of Parmegiano to show that Michael Angelo might naturally have adopted this view of the incident on artistic consideration, or in the other case we have the painter's testimony for what it is worth, that in his belief so he did.

This design then either parallels the interpretation and intention of Michael Angelo, or directly testifies to it. Literature furnishes an illustration of the same kind, and to the full as exact and as remarkable. Josephus aimed at interesting an audience to whose sense, never made callous by custom, many of the in-

cidents on and about Mount Sinai would not bear to be presented in the blank terms of his national record. His plan precluded resort to allegorical interpretation, but not to slur over particulars that he found intractable, and among these was the breaking of the tables, and all that we are now interested in. Even for what he does relate, he, with awkward shamefacedness, remits his reader to his own judgment of the true nature of the story. He tells the tale as it is told him on the faith of Scriptures which he cannot be expected to hold otherwise than sacred. With Philo of Alexandria, however, his contemporary, the case is different. Allegorical interpretation is his home and his delight; he flinches at no difficulty, and delights in fluently expounding what to the schools of philosophy was a startling, indeed ludicrous incongruity, as palpably typical of all their most cherished doctrines and principles, and even revealing a refinement far beyond their own.

Here, however, we are concerned with Philo's narrative chiefly as literary precedent for the process more indispensable for the sculptor, of closeness of incident and effective epitomization. In his 'Life of Moses' we find that it is in mid colloquy with God, and before all warning preparation, that the hubbub of revelling apostasy strikes the ear of the prophet.

"But when the prolonged outcries of the camp full of crowded assemblages, diffused themselves over a vast space, so that the resonance reached to the very summit of the mountain, it struck the ear of Moses, and he was in a difficulty from conflicting attraction

towards God and towards man; neither enduring to break off his intercourse with God in special and single colloquy, nor, on the other hand, to disregard the people lapsed into wretched excesses in consequence of suspension of control. For he recognized the murmur,—such was his faculty of making out from indistinct inarticulate sounds the peculiarities of passions of the mind that to others would be confused or obscure,—he recognized the noise as that of a tumultuous debauch, with all its incidents of intemperance and riot. Thus pulled and distracted this way and that, he was at a loss which course to take; but while he debated with himself he had this revelation: 'Depart quickly; go down hence, for the people,' etc. etc."—*Philo Jud. p.* 524, *C. Vit. Mos. iii.*

Startled, then, so far as is compatible with dignity; alarmed, so far as consists with self-reliance; contemptuously indignant, so far as consists with persistent interest in the so-easily overbalanced tribes, and wounded, above all, by the disheartening fickleness of their falling away,—such is the marvellous interchange and resolution of the grandest feelings of the greatest mind in most exalted and most trying crisis, that was conceived and was for ever fixed in marble in this masterpiece of Michael Angelo.

Lord Byron, in his 'Prophecy of Dante,' canto iv., is not happy in his conception of the moment of the sculptor:—

> ...her into the marble chaos driven
> His chisel bid the Hebrew, at whose word
> Israel left Egypt, stop the waves in stone.

To his note on these lines, however, I owe my knowledge of an Italian sonnet of G. B. Zappi, which makes ample amends. Zappi, one of the founders of the Arcadian Academy, was born 1667, died 1719.

Chi è costui, che in dura pietra scolto
Siede gigante; e le più illustre e conte
Opre dell' arte avvanza, e ha vive e pronte
Le labbia sì, che le parole ascolto?
Quest' è Mosè, ben me 'l diceva il folto
Onor del mento, e 'l doppio raggio in fronte,
Quest' è Mosè, quando scendea del monte
E gran parte del Nume avea nel volto.
Tal era allor, che le sonanti e vaste
Acque ei sospese a se d' intorno, e tale
Quando il mar chiuse, e ne fè tomba altrui.
E, voi sue turbe un rio vitello alzaste?
Alzata aveste imago a questa equale!
Ch' era men fallo l' adorar costui.

I pause to observe how frequent in the old religions is the transfer of an attribute between the God and his minister, sometimes so far extended that tradition seems to have interchanged their very personalities. The presence of the Lord can only be supported by Moses when the glory of his face is intercepted, and when he himself returns among his people they can only endure the gleam of his countenance when tempered with a veil; to the face of Zoroaster, with like ground of appropriateness, was ascribed like radiance.—*Dio Chrysos. Orat.* xxxvi. *p.* 93, *ed. Reiske.*

For Moses, when we meet with such a text as the following, we seem indeed to be on the verge of a substitution:—"Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? ... And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God."—Exod. iv. 14.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a God to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet."—Exod. vii. 1.

The invitation to deify the Lawgiver was caught up elsewhere, as we shall see.

It is the office of the poet and the poetic artist, whose functions are paramount to those of the historian, not so much to wait attendance on the exactness that may be elicited critically, or to combine into a chain of consequentiality every scrupulous characteristic that can be authenticated, as to frame a conception of which the main motive is truly authentic, while the norm and tests of its consistency lie wholly within itself. Labouring after and fairly within sight of such an heroic ideal, the poet strikes away an incident that is intractable, be it of disparagement or apology, with as free a hand as the sculptor strikes off fragments of encumbering block as he makes his way to the beauty and majesty that it seems to him are waiting imprisoned and impatient within.

Somewhat in this spirit, and claiming full advantage of all its apologies, does Clemens Alexandrinus wind up his eulogies on Moses. "The philosophers at least proclaim the wise man alone to be King,

Lawgiver, Leader of armies, the Just, the Holy, the Devout; and if we find all these characters applicable to Moses, as has appeared from the Scriptures themselves, then with full and certain conviction may we announce Moses to be in verity and essentially the Wise Man."—*Clem. Alex. Strom.* i. 26, 168 (*vol.* ii. *p.* 111).

The value of the moment, as chosen and conceived by Michael Angelo, depends not alone on the properly sculpturesque motive it supplies, but on that motive being in harmony with, and essentially expressing, the grand characteristic of the life of the chieftain lawgiver, which from this point of view we must accept as written down: were History and not Art mainly in question here, it would be appropriate to take other securities against inventions, errors, and partialities which mythoplastic power has wrought into an ideal, of very marked and consistent grandeur. Conflict in a spirit of self-negation with a backsliding and ungrateful people, is set forth as the mark of all stages of his life. Thanks to his brethren, his interposition in their favour against an individual oppressor drives him young into exile to to Midian; if murmurs could have discouraged him, murmurs greeted the first consequences of his interference between his race and the Egyptian rulers. Murmurs, murmurs, murmurs are the chorus of his efforts through the disciplining desert; it is by his patriotic persistency notwithstanding, that he becomes the type of every Hebrew prophet afterwards; all of them succeeding as to a heritage, to be vituperated always, and at last to be denied and stoned, or crucified.

It is poor benevolence, poor patriotism that relaxes, and does not rather brace itself on experience of ingratitude. Ill is he fitted for a governor, who, when baulked by waywardness, perversity, and ill conditions, throws up his hands, or has no better utterance than discontented exclamations. Susceptible to every vibration of affection, feeling, passion, the mighty Hebrew lawgiver and sage is before us, self-collected in resolution and power to cope with the obstructions that confront him; and for the rest, relying that what work he leaves undone perforce, is destined to be completed in after ages in his spirit. He renounces, in predicting this conclusion, all claim to be above an equal and successor, but still not without noble self-assertion, when he declares, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up like unto me, him shall ye serve."

Admitting that the expressive intention of the sculptor is so far discovered, still we may ask, what was his restriction to a sitting posture for the figure? Treated as it is, we must admit it to be indispensable, quite without reference to the original composition it was planned to form part in. To our associations it is in harmony with the sojourn of forty days and forty nights in the mountain, when the Prophet-lawgiver, absorbed in the counsels communicated to him, tasted neither food nor drink, and when Jehovah habitually "spake with Moses face to face, as a man speaketh with his friend." We behold the ideal of the Law-

giver, with the spirit of whose actual habits and existence, or else at least with the traits of whose invented and accepted character, it is consistent that it should come to be believed that he had prayed to see, and had truly been allowed to see, his Maker. This is that Moses of whom it came to be told, that in this retirement he had said to the Lord, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock; and while my glory passeth by, I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen."—Exodus xxxiii. 18. As the majestic figure sits, we seem, if we look rightly, to supply as distinctly the presence of the Lord on its right hand, as to the left we advert to the rumour and the roaring orgies of an unloosed people.

I have found some connoisseurs again affected as by an incongruity by the contrast between the close clothing and heavy drapery of the lower figure, and the spare tunic of the body and the arms absolutely bare, and I will not conceal that in the warmth of conversation I have even heard the complaint, that there is suggestion of "butcherly equipment." Acquainted as we are with Michael Angelo's predilection for the

treatment of the nude, I am not disposed to think that he admitted what was open to even a suspicion of superfluous clothing without true artistic, which might also be at the same time symbolic propriety.

The folded drapery is the prophet's cloak, which, when thrown across his shoulders, would complete a consistent costume; thrown off as it is, it introduces to my feelings no more incongruity than is in harmony with not merely the agitation of the moment, but with the engrossment proper to the foregone occupation, of which its condition becomes a type and sign. The powerful frame and mighty arms rise displayed and free above the swathed and mantled knees, expressive of the awakening of active and administrative energy in momentary revulsion from the tranquillity, not to say torpor, of contemplative recess. The sharpness of this gradation does but introduce another, by which expression culminates in the defined and specific thoughts and feelings made manifest in head and in face. I will even venture to say that the majesty of the beard, as supporting yet subordinated to the features, would have lost its keeping unless harmonized by an analogous contrast between the effect and expression of the divisions of the figure as nude or semi-nude and heavily draped.

The narrative in Exodus of the descent of Moses to the camp, moves on through the account of his humiliation of the people first, and then of his sharp correction, without consciousness of necessity to explain their submission, as though he awed them at once by merely appearing, and handled them with

unlimited mastery by the right and sovereignty of his nature. Moses is recorded as the meekest of men; but in what sense and with what compatibilities this is to be accepted, when duty or when conviction are held to lie before him, is discernible in the expression of the statue, and finds its best comment in the sequel of the story.

"And as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, he saw the calf and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.

"And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." The historian, whoever he was and whatever his inspiration, does not more readily sacrifice the dignity of his nation to Moses than he does that of Aaron, who speaks here the very voice of a cowed and treacherous priest, making his own peace by adulation and by answering the invitation to justify severity, insinuating evil nature and imputing contemptuousness in allusions to the absent chief, now returned in power and anger. "Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said,

Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord, because every man hath been against his son, and against his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day."—Exodus xxxii. 29.

The Book of Exodus, like other portions of the Pentateuch, is made up of various lines and duplications of traditions, in an arrangement not of one projection, and apparently defying attempts at reduction of the crossing lines, the disarranged and ill-united articulations. The perusal of it, if I may not call it study, where study is defied, has constantly left me with the impression that one author at least of one of the versions now confounded in an inconsistent story, held that the original tables of the testimony were depositories of the elements of purest monotheism, of justest morals, and a briefer code of simple worship. He seems to have represented that by the apostasy to calf-worship the people proved themselves unprepared for religious truths so refined, and forfeited, on the very eve of reception, the privilege to which they had been chosen. Their law-

giver then perforce was driven to satisfy them with symbols and ceremonials, and took what seemed the best compromise the case admitted. As the people infallibly would clutch hard hold of ceremonialism in some form, he conceived and executed the plan to attach to such a system, repugnant as it might seem, the theory of a single, an invisible, a universal Godhead. They would not be contented to worship abstractedly an invisible God, but he at least restricted them to an invisible symbol, the closed ark, the secluded mercy-seat, the holy of holies accessible to an individual most exclusive and exceptional, and at rarest times. How well the compromise held,—if such really were the origin of the cumbrous ceremonial system,—is seen by the whole course of Jewish history. But to compromise is not to conquer; hints are rife throughout the prophetical writings, and become most distinctly an enunciation in the mouth of Amos, that there were those who knew and were ready to declare the real claims of the established structure. The entire system of temple and priesthood, of feasts and sacrifices, was, in the eyes of the vigorously spiritual, an abuse and the birth of an abuse, a concession to a stiff-necked generation,—an affliction and a yoke imposed by and upon them. The ceremonial law was a divine plague,—if divine in any sense,—for the apostasy of calf-worship; in principle and detail it was borrowed from idolatrous pagans, Phœnicians with their sacred tent (Diod. Sic.), the idols of Chiun, the astral, or at least the seasonal celebrations of Remphan.

"Is not obedience better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams?"—Samuel.

"I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."—Hosea vi. 6.

"I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of Egypt concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God," etc.—Jeremiah vii. 22, 23.

"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"—Micah vi. 6, 8.

"I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Put thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

"But let justice run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

"Did ye offer unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? Nay, ye

bore the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves.

"Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus."—Amos v. 21–27.

These same ideas dominate the allusions and the current of the speech ascribed to Stephen the Deacon in the Acts of the Apostles,—that surging of the first wave of effectual reaction against the ceremonial system that was inaugurated, according to tradition, at the foot of Sinai.

Whatever its true date and birthtime, I do not doubt that the impulse to reaction was continuously transmitted, both by means of and independently of literature, from those who were most aggrieved by its original establishment,—such is the tenacity of life of a religious or political party, of political or religious truth.

To return to the statue;—

The proportions of the foot are unusually small, and scarcely in accordance with the grand style of the hands. This peculiarity is observable in other works of the master, as in the figure of Il Crepuscolo on the Medici monument. The head, again, has always been remarked upon as very small. Something here may be due to an intention to give greater relative effect to the face by contrast, without undue increase of its absolute size. The proportions and form of the head however bring us to considerations that regard importantly its ideal type.

Pope inferred that Moses was indebted for his horns to Pan:—

> See the cirque falls, the unpillared temple nods,
> Streets paved with heroes, Tiber choked with Gods,
> Till Peter's keys some christened Jove adorn,
> And Pan to Moses lends his pagan horn.
> See graceless Venus to a Virgin turned, etc., etc.
>
> *Dunciad, III.*

We shall see that there was probably something in this, but other accidents contributed: the word describing the appearance of the face of Moses on his descent from Sinai, and which the Septuagint, St. Paul, 2 Cor. iii. 7, and other versions translate "to shine," is rendered by Aquila and the Vulgate "having horns." The equivoque is easy when "ray," "horn," and "peak" are interchangeable. It appears that the Arabian poets compare the rays of the rising sun to horns (Gesen. Thesaur. p. 1239), and the two meanings of the same Hebrew word are traceable perhaps to a not unnatural metaphor. However this may be, the literal Vulgate sufficed, throughout the Middle Ages, to equip Moses with horns, and the illuminators of manuscripts have no solicitude to soften or suppress them, but usually provide a pair, equivalent in size and outline to cow's horns.

The pair that Michael Angelo has given, have suggested by their form, position, and projection, very various associations. It will be good to exercise ourselves by reading with composure what is said of them by an unfavourable critic.

"Mosè.—Capo d'opera di Michel Angelo; se ne sta a sedere senza mostrar voglia di niente. La testa, recisole quel barbone ch'è più barbone di quello di Rauber, è una testa da satiro con capelli di porco.

Tutto com'è, e un mostino orribile, vestito come un fornaro, mal situato, ozioso. Si caratterizza così un legislatore che parla da tu a tu con Messer Domeneddio? Si decanta per un modello ammirabile dell' anatomia esterna. Me ne rallegro, e tanto più che si vuole ad imitazione del Torso di Belvedere."—*Dell' Arte di Vedere, p.* 8, A.D. 1792.

That the contours of the head, horned moroever as we see, appertain to the satyr type, it is utterly impossible with candour to deny, at the same time that he must be prejudiced or insensible indeed who detects in the face the specific expression of the degraded satyr,—degraded as subservient to the lower appetites, though still personifying an indispensable, a vigorous, and an independent energy of nature.

Others, to enhance vituperation, have said that the prophet has the head of a goat: this however is but an inflection of the same charge, inasmuch as the satyric physiognomy is caprine, and agreement lies in the place and jut of the close horns, the outline of the nose, and its composition with the slope and prominence of lip and bearded chin, and somewhat in the special exuberance of shaggy hair. Occasionally the satyrs of the train of Bacchus are represented as having their entire lower extremities in common with the goat, and the natural suggestion is obvious enough, and need not be repeated here, that made this animal and his characteristics an accessary of the god of the vineyard. The goat, however, like the wine, and with the wine, became not alone symbolic of the stimulant to animal excitement, but is equally

associated with elevation, with enlightenment and enthusiasm, and gave its name to tragedy,—the goat-song. The ancient sculptor found freest expression for the grosser vivacities of the goat-like satyr, but he, too, caught the nobler aspect, and was able to refine the very same physiognomical elements till they became exponents of the most exalted energies and instincts.

It will be remembered that it was in consequence of a successful sculptural essay on the head of an old Faun—we see it still at the Uffizii—that the youthful Michael Angelo obtained his valued introduction to the house and table of Lorenzo de' Medici. Surrounded here by votaries of classical literature and by Platonic enthusiasts, he was precisely in the place to hear those speculations on the relation of mythology to eternal truth, that would develope and give distinctness to his conception of significant if not symbolical art. Spurious as the Platonism of the Florentine Academy may seem to us now, it refreshed the world's memory for many a bright impression and nobler impulse, as happily as has frequently been done by very spurious forms of Christianity.

Fully to appreciate however the meaning and the motive of the introduction of Bacchic elements into the expressive image and ideal of Moses, we must allow ourselves a somewhat wider range.

The ancient stories of Bacchus and of Moses have many incidents, images and attributes in common, and many that invite comparison. The agreement, such

as it is, may often be the mere coincidence that is inevitable between all religions, but sometimes it must be a transference from a common source. The nature of the parallelism will be best shown in a late and well-known illustration, the rather artificial enthusiasm of the Horatian ode; here critics have long and often crossed their weapons, as some have recognized the archetype in Bacchus, and some in Moses, and some, the boldest, repudiate the comparison entirely. Voltaire gives reference to Vossius on the matter, and his collections are worth looking to.

"Bacchus I have beheld among rocks retired teaching verses to Nymphs and the prick-ears of goat-footed Satyrs. Evoe! my mind is tremulous with recent fright and in turbulent delight in my bosom that swells with Bacchus. Evoe! O Liber, mercy! spare, thou dreadful with the weighty thyrsus!

"Fairly may I sing the flighty Thyiades, the fount of wine and the rivers flowing milk, and celebrate the honey dropping from hollow trunks. . . .

"Thou divertest rivers and thou the barbaric sea; thou mellow among peaks remote, bindest the tresses of the Bistonides harmlessly with knotted vipers. Thou, when the impious brigade of giants scaled up the steep of your father's realm, didst with the nails and formidable cheek of a lion repulse Rhœtus. Held fitter for choruses and play, thou wert wont to be deemed inapt for battle; but thou the same hast nevertheless been master alike of peace and war. Thee, with thy horn of gold, Cerberus looked on inoffensively, gently wagging his tail, and licked your feet as you came back."

The custom of gilding the horns of victims occurs in the Odyssey, and helped even Roman authors to the associating them with fire and light:—

Tener vitulus
Fronte curvatos imitatus ignes.
Hor. Od. iv. 2, 54–7.

Caput aurea rumpunt
Cornua et indigenam jaculantur fulminis ignem.
Sidon. Apollin. Carm. xxii. 26–7, v. *Bacchus.*

One epithet of the God is—*bull-horned*, which is nearer to the illuminators than the satyr horns of Michael Angelo.

The miracle is here and habitually ascribed to Bacchus of producing springs an founts of water, wine, or any other refreshing form of humidity,—milk, honey, etc., by a stroke of his thyrsus for his following of errant enthusiasts. The coincidence with the description assigned to Moses of a promised land,—the land attested by the branch with the cluster of grapes,—as a land flowing with milk and honey, is not to be overlooked, and it is then as wielder of the water-producing rod that he is brought at once into Bacchic circles of association. Bacchus, in virtue of general power over the element of humidity, is a diverter of rivers and of sea-channels; and Bacchus, the author of festivals harmonizing civil life with the epochs of the agricultural year, became the lawgiver, the institutor of civil society and on occasion master of all the terrors serviceable in war. In all these aspects his image and ideal tended to interchange with the Hebrew lawgiver and leader, or fuse into his nature.

The Bacchæ of Euripides, that wise and wonderful drama, has scattered through its course most of the coincidences that come before us in Horace,—as well as some others of which the interest pertains to New Testament illustrations. Here again we find the horned God with his water-evoking thyrsus, the flowing milk and honey, the resort to rocky solitudes, the control of serpents, and (758) the hair of devotees lightened up with harmless fire. Much there is also of the prompt execution done upon recusant kindred at the hands of their nearest and dearest wrought up to religious frenzy. Here we have (*v.* 520) even a reception of the jeopardied infant power by a nursing river, as to mount to a still earlier authority, the Dionysus of Homer deserted by his nurses, who are scared by the onset of a frantic king, seeks refuge in the flood and a protectress in its Goddess Thetis; even so the Egyptian princess finds floating on her native Nile the Hebrew prophet, exposed by his timorous nurses in apprehension of the Pharaoh, and at this point the story of Moses threatens to become but a variation of that of Osiris, whom all antiquity agreed to accept as Bacchus by the Nile.

The Greeks of earliest days appear to have largely drawn upon barbaric sources for mythic materials, but then fused and recast them thoroughly. Thus transformed by genius, the adventures of Osiris contributed freely to the tale of the son of Semele, and yet imparted to it no more specific Egyptian character than is recognized in the Corinthian column, that affiliates with as high a probability to

the architecture of Karnak. Afterwards, growing prouder or bolder, they claimed earlier independence and originality, and likeness was assumed on their part as presumption of paternity rather than of descent. In this spirit the Greeks were always ready to fit with Hellenic surname whatever Eastern God they found extensively worshipped, and Astarte became Artemis, Neith Athene, Sandon Herakles, and Phthah Hephæstus, and so following; and consistency would require and cause that the most conspicuous personality of the Jewish religion, if only known, should be read off as currently in Greek.

To whichever period the traditions met with in late Greek and Roman writers, in which Moses and his works assume Bacchic form and colour, may pertain, they gave hint and opportunity enough for speculators who should be minded to recognize, like the Platonists of Florence, not merely Christianity foreshadowed by type and parallel in Judaism, but in both only the reappearances of the selfsame energies that had struggled into poetic and symbolical expression in Paganism, in mythology.

The play of type and antitype between subjects from the Old and New Testaments was a leading principle of mediæval Christian theology and mediæval Christian Art. Michael Angelo did not disdain in his Sistine ceiling to exhibit Jonah as a type of Jesus after the resurrection, on the ground of the analogy of the three days' detention, in one case in hell, in the other in the whale's belly. Harford, and others as orthodox, have been betrayed into honest denuncia-

tion of the triviality, overlooking the authority for it in Scripture text, which would certainly have sealed their lips, if not changed their note. Yet, after this instance, how is repugnance justifiable to accepting Isaac as he ignorantly carries up the mountain the wood for his own sacrifice, for a figure of Jesus bending perforce on the road to Calvary beneath the weight of his cross? Where is the wonder if fancy ran rather wild in identifying Samson with Hercules, or Jephtha with Agamemnon?

But philosophical analogy is one thing, and another and a different,—its ape and its disparaging counterfeit,—is superstitious wonderment at non-essential coincidences. Which of these is in question in the fusion of the ideals of Dionysus and of Moses? I have no doubt myself on the subject; I entertain no question but that it had a true and significant root. To justify this opinion, however, there is more to say, of the relations of Mosaic Judaism to mythology that is not without interest. I will begin the exposition of this from a more remote point, and pursue it until it brings us back to where I for the moment pause.

The early Christian apologists make such frequent allusion to the charge against their sect of worshipping an ass's head, that we may infer as we please, either that the calumny was really very current, or that it was made much of—more of, for the sake of disparaging the enemy by easy exposure of its absurdity. A proof of its currency, perhaps of its justification in limited instances—has recently been discovered at Rome, where, in a chamber of a palace of the Cæsars, the excavators have found scratched upon the wall a representation—it is rude, and has been called a caricature, it is as likely to be a devout memento—of a man worshipping a figure with an ass's head attached to a cross, inscribed in Greek, "Alexamenos worships God" (published by Garucci, and communicated by Cardinal Wiseman to the Royal Society of Literature).

The charge was made previously against the Jews, and thence naturally transferred to the Christians. Tacitus had helped to give currency to the story that the Jews had the figure of an ass in their sanctuary, and that it was in consequence of a troop of wild asses having guided Moses to water when he was conducting their ancestors through the desert from Egypt. But the tale has other numerous approvers (Tacitus, Hist. v. 4; Joseph. Apion, ii. 4; Plutarch, Sympos. iv. 5). Antiochus Epiphanes was said to have found in the temple at Jerusalem the figure of a man with a long beard, holding a book, seated on an ass (Diod. Siculus)—Moses, of course. The worship is often alluded to as of the ass's head—not of the ass. Josephus, against Apion, repels an accusation that Antiochus Epiphanes found an ass's head of gold of great value in the temple, and also a Greek reserved for secret sacrifice. Egyptian mythology exhibits an ass-headed God introduced at a certain period of their history, and it has been thought to have come from Syria, where the speaking

ass of the Moabitish Balaam may be a hint of such form of superstition. If this were really so, there is every probability that a section of the Jewish race would adopt this superstition, just as they did those of every race that they came in contact with; and at one time or other it was just as likely to get adopted —secretly or not, by priestly families as any others, and thus to find its way, with other abominations, into the sanctuary.

The idol Tharthak, mentioned in 2 Kings xvii. 31, was said by the Rabbins to have an ass's head (Talmud Sanhedrin, fol. 63).

An ingenious argument has been combined by a German investigator to prove that the golden calf of the desert is a misreading for golden ass. In the passage of Amos that Stephen quotes from the Septuagint, some Hebrew authorities have *Chiun*, on which name Aben Ezra notes—"He was worshipped among the Arabs in the form of an ass, and is regarded as the star of the seventh day" (Nork, Myth. Bib. p. 31).

In nature-cults, there was good reason for making the ass a symbol of superluxuriant vivacity (Movers, Phœnic. 365–383). See the hecatomb of asses sacrificed by the Hyperboreans to Apollo, and the mirth of the God (Pindar, Pyth. x.).

The ass on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem,—according to the Rabbins, the ass of the Messiah was to be descended from the speaking ass of Balaam, is spoken of as one whereon man had never yet sat,—a constant condition for animals employed for sacred

purposes (Deut. xxi. 3; 1 Sam. vi. 7; Virg. Æn. vi. 38; Geo. iv. 540; Macrob. Sat. ii. 5; Ovid, Met. iii. 11; Senec. Œdip. 721); and the emphasis is of the same nature as that laid upon his being buried in a tomb where never yet man was laid—and, indeed, on the birth of prophets generally, as first-born of their mothers, if not of absolute virgins. However, the stress laid upon the entry on the *asina intacta* as a fulfilment of prophecy, if not proof of the divinity of Christ, might well mislead a heathen, to whose associations it would be much more natural that an ass should be an object of worship as a divinity, than the contemporary Jew represented riding upon it.

In later times, Epiphanius (Hæres. i. 2, p. 41 of Latin) reports that the Gnostic Sabaoth, power of the seventh heaven, was said by some to have the form of an ass—their gems, engraved with such an effigy, are known to collectors—by others of a pig (cf. Plutarch, Sympos., who speculates on Jewish worship of ass or pig). Moreover, a sect of Gnostics, among other books had a genealogy of Mary, in which it was related that Zacharias, entering into the temple, saw a vision of a human form with ass's head. Issuing forth, he would have told the people what they were miserably worshipping, but was struck dumb by the vision. When he regained speech, and told his tale, the people killed him,—the bells on the priestly dress were to give the ass-headed power notice to hide himself. The story of the father of John, in Luke, is here blended with that of the prophet Zechariah, who furnishes the text for the entry of Jesus

into Jerusalem on an ass, and of the high-priest Zacharias slain between the temple and the altar. —2 Chron. xxiv. 21 (mis-cited as son of Barachias, Matt. xxiii. 35).

Tacitus further reports of the Jews—"Because their priests chanted to pipe and tabor (*tibia tympanisque*), crowned with ivy, and a golden vine was found in their temple, some have thought that they worshipped Liber Pater, victor of the Orient. But the rites of the Jews, absurd and sordid," he adds, "do not agree with the gay and festive rites of Bacchus." The objection is put a little too strongly, for there is in fact very striking analogy between the festivals of the Jews in their reference to the agricultural occasions and epochs of the year, and those in which Dionysus was connected with Demeter. Plutarch, in the 'Symposium,' more aptly compares the feast of Tabernacles with a Dionysiac festival (see 2 Maccabees x. 6); and has the same tale that the Jews worshipped Bacchus, but connects Sabbath with Σαββος, arbitrarily enough. Compare enjoined vivacity at this festival, 5 Moses xvi. 13; Winer, 2, p. 8, and note.

The introduction of the vine in at least the decorations (capitals of columns) of the Herodian Jewish Temple, seems to indicate a policy on the part of the designers to make the most of the Bacchic analogy alluded to, as a valuable means (so universal in the East was the diffusion of the Bacchic symbolism)—of creeping a little towards extension of Jewish restrictions,—of slipping in some symbols that would have a hold upon other valuable subjects or allies be-

sides the strict, unsymbolical Jew; and if the vine, why not, with a good excuse, the Bacchic ass? It may illustrate the development of symbolism to remark that it was probably in allusion to the golden vine over the door of the Herodian Temple (Mischna, Middoth, iii. 8; Joseph. Bell. Jud. v. 5, 4), that in John xv. 1, Jesus makes the vine a symbol of himself, as himself of the church; and hence, again, it was probably not a door generally, but this special and conspicuous door that is in view in the parallel symbolism, "I am the door,"—as "I am the light" has been referred to the illumination of the same festival. (See Winer.) The vine flourished in Judæa, and was a favourite prophetic symbol (Jer. ii. 21; Ezek. xix. 10; Joel i. 7; compare, for other golden vines, Herod. vii. 27; Plin. xxxiii. 15; Diod. Sic. xix. 48); and naturally may have been taken for the symbol of the God of the temple, like the golden olive-tree of the temple of Hercules at Gades (Philost. Apollon. v. 5), or the palm-tree of the Erechtheum with its golden cones.

Taking Tacitus at his word, then, that many were induced to regard the Jewish worship as that of Bacchus, from the prevalence of symbols of the God, where symbols of all else were wanting, and with Bacchus, especially, as conqueror of the Orient, it is not difficult to trace the course of misconception by which an adventure of Liber Pater became transferred to Moses, leader of an unclean race of migrating sectarians to sacrifice in the desert. Liber, says Hyginus (Poet. Astron. xi. 23), maddened by

Juno, fled in distraction through Thesprotia, intent to reach the temple of Dodonæan Jupiter, and there seek a response to enable him to recover his pristine state of mind: arrived at a great marsh which he was unable to cross, he caught one of a pair of asses that he met with, and was so carried across that he did not touch the water at all. When he reached the Temple of Jupiter, at Dodona, he was immediately liberated from his rage, and in gratitude to the asses placed them among the stars." "Some also say that he gave to the ass on which he was carried a human voice, and that the animal thus endowed afterwards contended with Priapus *de naturâ*, and was by him conquered and killed, and then transferred by Liber Pater to the stars." Lactantius, to suit his book, having laid different odds, declares the ass winner over Priapus; but in any case he died for it. Another story follows,—that when Jupiter warred with the giants, he summoned all the Gods; among them came Liber Pater, Vulcan, the Satyrs, and Sileni, carried on asses—(the procession of these Gods, Liber, Vulcan, etc., is yet to be seen on the vases), and it was by the horrible braying that the giants were dismayed, and took to flight, but fled in vain.

The ass of the East was and is a much nobler brute than our own, chiefly it may be from greater congeniality of the climate. The Arabian ass goes three and a half English miles an hour to the two and three-quarters of a camel. The Persians even employed them in war for mounting a cavalry (Strabo, xv. 727; Ælian. Anim. xii. 32). Darius Hystaspis (Herod. iv. 129) made use of them in a battle with the Scythians to frighten the enemy's horses by their braying.

The effect of the braying of the ass points to Eastern origin, and, indeed, the more primitive legends all connect Satyrs and Sileni especially with the progress of Dionysus from the East. Like his ass, Silenus loses dignity as he comes westward; and the instructor of Midas in lessons of Orphic wisdom turns out in the hands of the artists, a simple sot, little better than one of the wicked.

Both characters are united, not to say confounded, in the philosophical Silenus of the sixth Eclogue of Virgil; a still purer ideal is supplied by ancient sculpture in the favourite group of which the finest repetition is in the Louvre, of Silenus nursing the infant Bacchus. Emil Braun gives a remarkable interpretation of the copy at Rome, and he is fully supported by critics who may be thought more habitually sober.

"The slender figure rests with firmly planted feet against the trunk of a tree, and gazes with an expression of deep but satisfied seriousness on the infant cradled in his arms. It is as if, not his feelings only, but his whole being, nay, even the aged body, had received new youth,—as if he now for the first time arrived at full enjoyment of life and of self-knowledge.

"Even apart from all mythical relations and simply keeping in view the manner in which infancy and age are here brought into contact, this touching scene must fill every thoughtful spectator with deep emotion. As

we read that Moses was only permitted to gaze on the promised land from the summit of the mountain where he was doomed to die, we here see the aged man who has nearly reached the goal of life absorbed in thoughts of the better fate awaiting the coming generations." —*R. and M. of Rome*, p. 144.

The reminiscence of Moses here is curiously coincident with the purport of our inquiries, especially as a still apter comparison lay so near at hand.

On the basis of one copy, words are put into the mouth of Silenus by an inscribed distich. (*Müller and Osterlei*, n. 406, p. 19):—

> Bella manu pacemque gero; mox, præscius ævi
> Te duce venturi, fatorum arcana recludam.

Verses and group taken together recall the presentation of Jesus in the Temple and the canticle of the aged Simeon when he took the child up in his arms,—

> Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,
> For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.

What now is the meaning of the statement of Pausanias vi. 24, 6, that in the country of the Hebrews there was a tomb of Silenus?

Strange, then, as the transformation of Moses into a Bacchus, Silenus, or satyr, may at first appear, when the intermediate steps are supplied, it turns out not such an unnatural mistake,—by no means a mere fiction suggested by calumny; indeed, in some leading points, no mistake at all, for it is not to be doubted that the festivals and rites of the Jewish law that are concerned so markedly with the operations and

epochs of agriculture, were originally much more Bacchic than Mosaic institutions—that is to say, had much more concern with the suggestions of festivity and religious worship that in all nations of antiquity clung to the conclusions of summer harvest, autumnal harvest, and of the labours of seed-time, and which in Greek countries were universally associated with Dionysus (Bacchus),—than with historical reminiscences of a forty years' sojourn in a sandy desert, or, at least, ungrateful wilderness.

Such is the secret of the ideal forms of the Moses of Michael Angelo, in many respects the most remarkable ideal figure since the time of the Greeks. The horns upon his head are symbols, be it said and allowed, of his radiance of visage on descending from the Mount of the Law, but they are also attributes of Bacchus, conqueror of the East, and institutor of the civilizing laws and festivals of the natural year, and they spring from the fronts of his wild and mysterious followers, the Satyrs and Sileni, who are now the types of the wildest enthusiasms and natural spontaneous energies, and now the revealers of wisdom, and guides of kings, and oracles of futurity.

The type of the face and head of the Moses leaves no doubt as to the sculptor being informed of the Hellenic antitype, and imbued with the sentiment of its significance. The head of the lawgiver, and the movement given to it, is *caprine*—the solemnity and the caprice of the horned and bearded goat, haunter of rocky peaks and mountain-tops, are blended with the human,—the superhuman expression so wonder-

fully, that the result may be regarded as a symbol of the analogies by which instinct allies with intellect,—that blend the refined and expressive fancies of the Greeks with the disorderly traditions of the Jews, and in virtue of which the passions and ambitions of such a Pope as Julius, for whose tomb it was made, were the conditions for the best manifestations of the creative art of the universally-gifted Florentine.

THE END.

JOHN EDWARD TAYLOR, PRINTER,
LITTLE QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

By the same Author:

THE HOMERIC DESIGN
OF
THE SHIELD OF ACHILLES.

WITH AN ILLUSTRATION.

PINDAR AND THEMISTOCLES:
ÆGINA AND ATHENS.