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# **The Works Of Horatio Walpole, Earl Of Orford**

In Five Volumes

**Walpole, Horace**

**London, 1798**

Chap. III. Continuation of the State of Painting to the End of Henry VII.

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44 CONTINUATION OF THE STATE OF PAINTING

north side of the church, where Thomas More dean of St. Paul's in the reign of Henry V. restored an ancient chapel; but dying before he had accomplished it, it was finished by his executors, by license from Henry VI. On the walls of this cloister was painted, at the charge of Jenkyn Carpenter, a citizen of London, the Dance of Death, in imitation of that in the cloister adjoining to St. Innocent's church-yard at Paris. Underneath were English verses (to explain the paintings) translated from the French, by John Lidgate, the famous poetic monk of Bury. Dugdale has preserved the lines, and Holbein by borrowing the thought ennobled the pictures\*.

In this reign John de Whethamsted, abbot of St. Albans, a man of great learning and merit, adorned the chapel of our lady there with various paintings, as he did the sides of the church and his own lodgings, under all which paintings he caused mottoes and inscriptions to be placed. At his manor of Tittenhanger he had pictures in the church of all the saints of his own name †.

I shall close my notes on the state of painting under Henry VI. with observing that the portraits on glass in the windows of the college of All Souls at Oxford were painted in his reign.

\* See Dugdale's St. Paul's, p. 134, and Stowe, 354.

† Chauncy, 445.

C H A P. III.

*Continuation of the State of Painting to the End of HENRY VII.*

WHETHER it was owing to the confusions of his reign, or to his being born with little propensity to the arts, we find but small traces of their having flourished under Edward IV. Brave, aspiring and beautiful, his early age was wasted on every kind of conquest: as he grew older, he became arbitrary and cruel, not less voluptuous nor even ‡ more refined in his pleasures.

‡ His device, a falcon and fetter-lock, with a quibbling motto in French, had not even delicacy to excuse the witticism.

His picture on board, stiff and poorly painted, is preserved at Kenfington—the whole length of him at St. James's in a night-gown and black cap was drawn many years after his death by Belcomp, of whom an account will be given hereafter. A portrait \*, said to be of his queen, in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, conveys no idea of her loveliness, nor of any skill in the painter. Almost as few charms can be discovered in his favourite Jane Shore, preserved at Eton, and probably an original, as her confessor was provost of that college, and by her intercession recovered their lands, of which they had been despoiled, as having owed their foundation to Edward's competitor. In this picture her forehead is remarkably large, her mouth and the rest of her features small; her hair of the admired golden colour †: a lock of it (if we may believe tradition) is still extant in the collection of the countess of Cardigan, and is marvellously beautiful, seeming to be powdered with golden dust without prejudice to its silken delicacy. The king himself, with his queen, eldest son and others of his court, are represented in a MS. in the library at Lambeth, from which an engraving was made, with an account of it, and prefixed to the Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors. It was purchased of Peacham by sir Robert Cotton. Richard III. the successor of these princes, appears in another old picture at Kenfington. In the princess dowager's house at Kew, in a chamber of very ancient portraits, of which most are imaginary, is one very curious, as it is probably an original, of the duke of Norfolk killed at the battle of Bosworth.

Names of artists in these reigns, of which even so few authentic records exist, are not to be expected—one I have found, the particulars of whose

\* There is another at Queen's college, Cambridge, of which she was second foundress; it seems to be of the time, but is not handsome.

† This picture answers to a much larger mentioned by sir Thomas More; who, speaking of her, says, "her stature was mean; her hair of a dark yellow, her face round and full, her eyes grey; delicate harmony being betwixt each part's proportions, and each proportion's colour; her body fat, white and smooth; her countenance chearfull, and like to her condition: the picture which I have seen of her was such as the rose out of her bed in the morning,

having nothing on but a rich mantle, cast under one arm and over her shoulder, and sitting in a chair, on which one arm did lie." The picture at Eton is not so large, and seems to have been drawn earlier than that sir Thomas saw: it has not so much as the rich mantle over one shoulder. There is another portrait of Jane Shore to below the breasts, in the provost's lodge at King's college, Cambridge; the body quite naked, the hair dressed with jewels, and a necklace of massive gold. It is painted on board, and from the meanness of the execution seems to be original.

work.

work are expressed with such rude simplicity, that it may not be unentertaining to the reader to peruse them. They are extracted from a book belonging to the church of St. Mary Ratcliffe at Bristol.

## Memorandum,

That master Cumings hath delivered the 4th day of July in the year of our Lord 1470, to Mr. Nicholas Bettes vicar of Ratcliffe, Moses Couteryn, Philip Bartholemew, and John Brown, procurators of Ratcliffe before said, a new sepulchre well-gilt, and cover thereto, an image of God Almighty ryfing out of the same sepulchre, with all the ordinance that longeth thereto; that is to say,

A lath made of timber and iron work thereto;

Item, Thereto longeth *Heven*, made of timber, and stained cloth;

Item, Hell, made of timber and iron work, with devils, the number, thirteen;

Item, Four knights armed, keeping the sepulchre, with their weapons in their hands, that is to say, two spears, two axes, two paves;

Item, Four pair of angel's wings, for four angels, made of timber and well-painted.

Item, The fadre, the crown and visage, the bell with a cross upon it well-gilt with fine gold;

Item, The Holy Ghost coming out of heven into the sepulchre;

Item, Longeth to the angels four chevelers\*.

**H**ENRY VII. seems never to have laid out any money so willingly, as on what he could never enjoy, his tomb †—on that he was profuse; but the very service for which it was intended, probably comforted him with

\* This memorandum is copied from the minutes of the Antiquarian Society under the year 1736. *Two paves*: A pave (in French, pavois or talevas) is a large buckler, forming an angle in front, like the ridge of a house, and big enough to cover the tallest man from head to foot. *The bell with the cross*: probably the ball or mound. *Four chevelers*: chevelures or perukes.

† The whole chapel, called by his name, is

properly but his mausoleum, he building it solely for the burial-place of himself and the royal family, and accordingly ordering by his will that no other persons should be interred there. See Dart's *Antiquities of Westminster-abbey*, vol. i. p. 32. The tomb was the work of one Peter a Florentine, as one Peter a Roman made the shrine of Edward the Confessor.





A. Bamberman, sculp.

JOHN MABUSE .

the thought that it would not be paid for till after his death. Being neither ostentatious nor liberal, genius had no favour from him: he reigned as an attorney would have reigned, and would have preferred a conveyancer to Praxiteles.

Though painting in his age had attained its brightest epoch\*, no taste reached this country. Why should it have sought us? The king penurious, the nobles humbled, what encouragement was there for abilities? What theme for the arts? Barbarous executions, chicane, processes, and mercenary treaties, were all a painter, a poet or a statuary had to record—accordingly not one that deserved the title (I mean natives) arose in that reign. The only names of painters that Vertue could recover of that period were both foreigners, and of one of them the account is indeed exceedingly slight; mention being barely made in the register's office of Wells, that one Holbein lived and died here in the reign of Henry VII. Whether the father of the celebrated Holbein, I shall enquire hereafter in the life of that painter—but of this person, whoever he was, are probably some ancient limnings † in a cabinet at Kensington, drawn before the great master of that name could have arrived here. Among them is the portrait of Henry VII. from whence Vertue engraved his print. The other painter had merit enough to deserve a particular article; he was called

#### JOHN MABUSE OR MABEUGIUS,

and was born at a little town of the same name in Hainault ‡, but in what year is uncertain, as is the year § of his death. He had the two defects of his cotemporary countrymen, stiffness in his manner, and drunkenness. Yet his industry was sufficient to carry him to great lengths in his profession. His works were clear and highly finished. He was a friend rather than a

\* Raphael was born in 1483.

† Two miniatures of Henry VII. each in a black cap, and one of them with a rose in his hand, are mentioned in a MS. in the Harleian collection.

‡ Le Compt says it was in Hungary.

§ Le Compt and Descamps say it was in 1562: a print of him, published by Galle, says, "Fuit

Hanno patriâ Malbodiensis; obiit Antwerpiae anno 1532, in cathedrali æde sepultus." but Vertue thought part of this inscription was added to the plate many years after the first publication; and Sandrart, whom I follow, says expressly that he could not discover when Mabuse died. Vertue conjectured, that he lived to the age of fifty-two.

rival of Lucas\* of Leyden. After some practice at home he travelled into Italy, where he acquired more truth in treating naked subjects than freedom of expression. Indeed Raphael himself had not then struck out that majestic freedom, which has since animated painting, and delivered it from the fervility of coldly copying motionless nature. Mabuse so far improved his taste, as to introduce among his countrymen poetic history; for so I should understand † Sandrart's *varia poemata conficiendi*, if it is meant as a mark of real taste, rather than what a later ‡ author ascribes to Mabuse, that he first treated historic subjects allegorically. I never could conceive that riddles and rebuses (and I look upon such emblems as little better) are any improvements upon history. Allegoric personages are a poor decomposition of human nature, whence a single quality is separated and erected into a kind of half deity, and then, to be rendered intelligible, is forced to have its name written by the accompaniment of symbols. You must be a natural philosopher before you can decypher the vocation of one of these simplified divinities. Their dog, or their bird, or their goat, or their implement, or the colour of their clothes, must all be expounded, before you know who the person is to whom they belong, and for what virtue the hero is to be celebrated, who has all this hieroglyphic cattle around him. How much more genius is there in expressing the passions of the soul in the lineaments of the countenance! Would Messalina's character be more ingeniously drawn in the warmth of her glances, or by ransacking a farm-yard for every animal of a congenial constitution?

A much admired work of Mabuse was an altar-piece at Middleburgh §, a descent from the cross: Albert Durer went on purpose to see, and praised it. Indeed their style was very like. A picture of Mabuse now at St. James's is generally called Albert's. The piece at Middleburgh was destroyed by lightning. A great number of Mabuse's works were preserved in the same city in the time of Carl Vermander. M. Magnus at Delft had another descent from the cross by this master. The || sieur Wyntgis at Amsterdam had a Lucretia by him. But one of his most striking performances was the decollation of St. John painted in the shades of a single colour.

\* Lucas made an entertainment for Mabuse and other artists, that cost him sixty florins of gold.

† P. 234.

‡ Descamps, *Vies des Peintres Flamands*, p. 83.

§ Painted for the abbot Maximilian of Burgundy, who died 1524.

|| Mint-master of Zeland.



The marquis de Veren took him into his own house, where he drew the Virgin and Child, borrowing the ideas of their heads from the marquis's lady and son. This was reckoned his capital piece. It afterwards passed into the cabinet of M. Frosmont.

While he was in this service, the emperor Charles V. was to lodge at the house of that lord, who made magnificent preparations for his reception, and among other expences ordered all his household to be dressed in white damask. Mabuse, always wanting money to waste in debauchery, when the tailor came to take his measure, desired to have the damask, under pretence of inventing a singular habit. He sold the stuff, drank out the money, and then painted a suit of paper so like damask, that it was not distinguished, as he marched in the procession between a philosopher and a poet, other pensioners of the marquis; who, being informed of the trick, asked the emperor which of the three suits he liked best. The prince pointed to Mabuse's, as excelling in the whiteness and beauty of the flowers; nor did he, till convinced by the touch, doubt of the genuineness of the silk. The emperor laughed much—but, though a lover of the art, seems to have taken no other notice of Mabuse; whose excesses some time after occasioned his being flung into prison at Middleburgh, where however he continued to work. Vermander had seen several good drawings by him in black chalk.

At what time Mabuse came to England I do not find; Vermander says expressly that he was here, and the portraits drawn by him are a confirmation. The picture of prince Arthur, prince Henry and princess Margaret, when children, now in the china-closet at Windsor, was done by him. A neat little copy of, or rather his original design for it, in black and white oil-colours, is at the duke of Leeds's at Kiveton\*. Sandrart speaks of the pictures of two noble youths drawn by him at Whitehall. Over one of the doors in the king's anti-chamber at St. James's is his picture of Adam and Eve, which formerly hung in the gallery at Whitehall, thence called the Adam and Eve gallery †. Martin Papenbroech, formerly a famous collector in Holland, had

\* There is another of these in small in queen Caroline's closet at Kenfington; another, very good, at Wilton; and another in Mr. Methuen's collection. One of these pictures, I do not know which of them, was sold out of the royal collection, during the civil war, for ten pounds. The picture that was at Kiveton is now in London, and is not entirely black and white, but the carnations are pale, and all the shadows tinged with pure black: but that was the manner of painting at the time; blues, reds, greens and yellows not being blended in the gradations.

† Evelyn in the preface to his Idea of the perfection of painting, mentions this picture, painted,

another of them. It was brought over as a picture of Raphael in his first manner, in the time of Vertue, who by the exact description of it in Vermander discovered it to be of Mabuse. It was sold however for a considerable price \*. In a MS. catalogue of the collection of king Charles I. taken in the year 1649, and containing some pictures that are not in the printed list, I find mention made of an old man's head by Mabuse; sir Peter Lely had the story of Hercules and Deianira by him †. The only ‡ work besides that I know of this master in England, is a celebrated picture in my possession. It was bought for 200*l.* by Henrietta Louisa countess of Pomfret, and hung for some years at their seat at Easton Neston in Northamptonshire, whence it was sold after the late earl's death. The earl of Oxford once offered 500*l.* for it §. It is painted on board, and is four feet six inches and three quarters wide by three feet six inches and three quarters high. It represents the inside of a church, an imaginary one, not at all resembling the abbey where those princes were married. The perspective and the landscape of the country on each side are good. On one hand on the fore ground stand the king and the bishop of Imola who pronounced the nuptial benediction. His majesty || is a trift, lean, ungracious figure, with a down-cast look, very expressive of his mean temper, and of the little satisfaction he had in the match. Opposite to the bishop is the queen ¶, a buxom well-looking damsel, with golden hair. By her is a figure, above all proportion with the rest, unless intended, as I imagine, for an emblematic personage, and designed from its lofty stature to give an idea of something above human. It is an elderly man \*\*, dressed like a monk, except that his habit is green; his feet bare, and a spear in his hand. As the frock of no religious order ever was green, this cannot be meant for a friar.

Painted, as he calls him, by Malvagijs, and objects to the absurdity of representing Adam and Eve with navels, and a fountain with carved imagery in Paradise:—the latter remark is just; the former is only worthy of a critical midwife.

\* It is now at the Grange in Hampshire, the seat of the lord chancellor Henley.

† See catalogue of his collection, p. 48. N<sup>o</sup> 99.

‡ I have since bought a small one of Christ crowned with thorns, by him, with his name Malbodius on it; and Mr. Raspe mentions another at Rochester: Essay on Oil Painting, p. 56.

§ I gave eighty-four pounds.

|| He is extremely like his profile on a shilling.

¶ Her image preserved in the abbey, among those curious but mangled figures of some of our princes, which were carried at their interments, and now called the ragged regiment, has much the same countenance. A figure in Merlin's cave was taken from it. In a MS. account of her coronation in the Cottonian library mention is made of her fair yellow hair hanging at length upon her shoulders.

\*\* This allegoric figure seems to agree with the account of Descamps mentioned above; and Mabuse might have learned in Italy that the Romans always represented their divine personages larger than the human, as is evident from every model whereon are a Genius and an Emperor.

Probably it is St. Thomas, represented, as in the martyrologies, with the instrument of his death. The queen might have some devotion to that peculiar saint, or might be born or married on his festival. Be that as it may, the picture, though in a hard manner, has its merit, independent of the curiosity.

John Schorel studied some time under Mabuse, but quitted him on account of his irregularities, by which Schorel was once in danger of his life. Paul Van Aelst excelled in copying Mabuse's works, and John Mostart assisted the latter in his works at Middleburgh.

In the library of St. John's college, Cambridge, is an original of their foundress Margaret of Richmond, the king's mother, much damaged, and the painter not known. Mr. West has a curious missal (the painter unknown) which belonged to Margaret queen of Scotland, and was a present from her father Henry VII. His name of his own writing is in the first page. The queen's portrait praying to St. Margaret appears twice in the illuminations, and beneath several of them are the arms and matches of the house of Somerset, besides representations of the twelve months, well painted.

In this reign died John Rous, the antiquary of Warwickshire, who drew his own portrait and other semblances, but in too rude a manner to be called paintings.

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#### C H A P. IV.

##### *Painters in the Reign of HENRY VIII.*

1509. **T**HE accession of this sumptuous prince brought along with it the establishment of the arts. He was opulent, grand and liberal—how many invitations to artists! A man of taste encourages abilities; a man of expence, any performers: but when a king is magnificent, whether he has taste or not, the influence is so extensive, and the example so catching, that even merit

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has



Vol. III. p. 56.

C. Crispin. sculp.

J. M. M. p.

Marriage of Henry 7<sup>th</sup>.

