can raiſe a laugh in the moſt ſerious ſubjects; but his tallies are rather thoſe of a buffoon than the effuſions of ingenuity and taſte. He is continually falling into the mean and the obſcene. If we ſhould make any excep­tion in favour of ſome of his comedies, of ſome paſſages in his Eneid traveſtied, and his Comic Romance, we muſt acknowledge that all the reft of his works are on­ly fit to be read by footmen and buffoons. It has been ſaid that he was the moſt eminent man in his age for burleſque. This might make him an agreeable compa­nion to thoſe who choſe to laugh away their time; but as he has left nothing that can inſtruct poſterity, he has but little title to poſthumous fame.

SCENE, in its primary ſenſe, denoted a theatre, or the place where dramatic pieces and other public (Hows were exhibited; for it does not appear that the ancient poets were at all acquainted with the modern way of changing the ſcenes in the different parts of the play, in order to raiſe the idea of the perſons repreſented by the actors being in different places.

The original ſcene for acting of plays was as ſimple as the representations themſelves; it conſiſted only of a plain plot of ground proper for the occaſion, which was in ſome degree ſhaded by the neighbouring trees, whole branches were made to meet together, and their vacancies ſupplied with boards, ſticks, and the like; and to complete the ſhelter, theſe were ſometimes co­vered with ſkins, and ſometimes with only the branches of other trees newly cut down, and full of leaves. Afterwards more artificial ſcenes, or ſcenical repreſentations, were introduced, and paintings uſed inſtead of the objects themſelves. Scenes were then of three forts; tragic, comic, and ſatyric. The tragic ſcene repreſent­ed ſtately magnificent edifices, with decorations of pil­lars, ſtatues, and other things ſuitable to the palaces of kings: the comic exhibited private houſes with balco­nies and windows, in imitation of common buildings: and the ſatyric was the repreſentation of groves, moun­tains, dens, and other rural appearances; and theſe de­corations either turned on pivots, or ſlid along grooves, as thoſe in our theatres.

To keep cloſe to nature and probability, the ſcene ſhould never be ſhiſted from place to place in the courſe of the play: the ancients were pretty ſevere in this reſpect, particularly Terence, in ſome of whoſe plays the ſcene never ſhifts at all, but the whole is tranſacted at the door of ſome old man’s houſe, whither with inimi­table art he occaſionally brings the actors. The French are pretty ſtrict with reſpect to this rule; but the Engliſh pay very little regard to it.

Scene is alſo a part or diviſion of a dramatic poem. Thus plays are divided into acts, and acts are again ſubdivided into ſcenes; in which ſenſe the ſcene is pro­perly the perſons preſent at or concerned in the action on the ſtage at ſuch a time: wſhenever, therefore, a new actor appears, or an old one diſappears, the action is changed into other hands; and therefore a new ſcene then commences.

It is one of the laws of the ſtage, that the ſcenes be well connected; that is, that one ſucceed another in ſuch a manner as that the ſtage be never quite empty till the end of the act. See Poetry.

SCENOGRAPHY, (from the Greek, σχηνη *ſcene,* and *deſcription),* in perſpective, a repreſentation of

a body on a perſpective plane; or a deſcription thereof

**in all its dimen**ſ**ions, ſuch as it appears to the eye.** See PerspecTIve.

SCEPTIC, σχηπτιχος from σχεπτομαν, "I conſider, look about, or deliberate, ” properly ſignifies *conſiderative* and *inquiſitive,* or one who is always weighing reaſons on one fide, and the other without ever deciding be­tween them. It is chiefly applied to an ancient ſect of philoſophers founded by Pyrrho (ſee Pyrrho), who, according to Laertius, had various other denominations. From their maſter they were called *Pyrrhonians*; from the diſtinguiſhing tenets or characteriſtic of their philoſophy they derived the name of *Aporetici,* from απορειν, “to doubt;” from their ſuſpenſion and heſitation they were called *ephectici,* from “to ſtay or keep back;”

and laſtly, they were called *zetetici* or *seekers,* from their never getting beyond the ſearch of truth.

That the ſceptical philoſophy is abſurd, can admit of no diſpute in the preſent age; and that many of the fol­lowers of Pyrrho carried it to the moſt ridiculous height, is no leſs true. But we cannot believe that he himſelf was ſo extravagantly ſceptical as has ſometimes been afferted, when we reflect on the particula∣s of his life, which are ſtill preſerved, and the reſpectful manner in which we find him mentioned by his contemporaries and writers of the firſt name who flouriſhed ſoon after him. The truth, as far as at this diſtance of time it can be diſcovered, ſeems to be, that he learned from De­mocritus to deny the real exiſtence of all qualities in bo­dies, except thoſe which are eſſential to primary atoms, and that he referred every thing elſe to the perceptions of the mind produced by external objects, in other words, to appearance and opinion. All knowledge of courſe appeared to him to depend on the fallacious report of the ſenſes, and conſtquently to be uncertain; and in this notion he was confirmed by the general ſpirit of the Eleatic ſchool in which he was educated. He was further confirmed in his ſcepticiſm by the ſubtilties of the Dialectic ſchools, in which he had been inſtructed by the lon of Stilpo; chooſing to overturn the cavils of ſophiſtry by recurring to the doctrine of univerſal un­certainty, and thus breaking the knot which he could not unlooſe. For being naturally and habitually inclined to conſider immoveable tranquillity as the great end of all philoſophy, he was eaſily led to deſpiſe the diſſenſions of the dogmatiſts, and to infer from their endleſs diſputes, the uncertainty of the queſtions on which they debated; controverſy, as it has often happened to others, becoming alſo with reſpect to him the parent of ſcepticiſm.

Pyrrho’s doctrines, however new and extraordinary, were not totally diſregarded. He was attended by ſeveral ſcholars, and ſucceeded by ſeveral followers, who preſerved the memory of his notions. The moſt emi­nent of his followers was Timon (ſee Timon), in whom the public ſucceſſion of profeſſors in the Pyrrhonic ſchool terminated. In the time of Cicero it was almoſt ex­tinct, having ſuffered much from the jealouſy of the dog­matiſts, and from a natural averſion in the human mind to acknowledge total ignorance, or to be left in abſolute darkneſs. The diſciples of Timon, however, ſtill continued to profeſs ſcepticiſm, and their notions were embraced privately at leaſt by many others. The ſchool itſelf was afterwards revived by Ptolaemeus a Cyrenian,and was continued byÆnefidemus a contemporaryot Cicero, who wrote a treatiſe on the principles of the Pyrrhonic philoſophy, the heads of which are preſerved by