granted that it leads to true beauty by a much more te­dious, laborious, and difficult path, than the study of the antique, which presents immediately to the artist’s view the object of his researches, and combines, in a clear and strong point of light, the various rays of beauty that are dispersed throughout the wide domain of nature.

As soon as the artist has laid this excellent foundation, acquired an intimate degree of familiarity with the beauties of the Grecian statues, and formed his taste after the ad­mirable models they exhibit, he may then proceed with advantage and assurance to the imitation of nature. The ideas he has already formed of the perfection of nature, by observing her dispersed beauties combined and collected in the compositions of the ancient artists, will enable him to acquire with facility, and to employ with advantage, the de­tached and partial ideas of beauty which will be exhibited to his view in a survey of nature in her actual state. When he discovers these partial beauties, he will be capable of combining them with those perfect forms of beauty with which he is already acquainted. In a word, by having al­ways present to his mind the noble models already men­tioned, he will be in some measure his own oracle, and will draw rules from his own mind.

There are, however, two ways of imitating nature. In the one a single object occupies the artist, who endeavours to represent it with precision and truth ; in the other, cer­tain lines and features are taken from a variety of objects, and combined and blended into one regular whole. All kinds of copies belong to the first kind of imitation ; and productions of this kind must be executed necessarily in the Dutch manner, that is to say, with high finishing, and little or no invention. But the second kind of imitation leads directly to the investigation and discovery of true beauty, of that beauty whose idea is connate with the hu­man mind, and is only to be found there in its highest per­fection. This is the kind of imitation in which the Greeks excelled, and in which men of genius excite the young artists to excel after their example, namely, by studying nature as they did. After having studied in the produc­tions of the Grecian masters their choice and expression of select nature, their sublime and graceful contours, their noble draperies, together with that sedate grandeur and ad­mirable simplicity that constitute their chief merit, the curious artists will do well to attend to the manual and me­chanical part of their operations, as this is absolutely ne­cessary to the successful imitation of their excellent manner.

It is certain that the ancients almost always formed their first models in wax. To this modern artists have substi­tuted clay, or some such composition. They prefer clay before wax in the carnations, on account of the yielding nature of the latter, and its sticking in some measure to every thing it touches. We must not, however, imagine from hence that the method of forming models of wet clay was either unknown or neglected among the Greeks. On the contrary, it was in Greece that models of this kind were invented. Their author was Dibutades of Sicyon ; and it is well known that Arcesilas, the friend of Lucullus, ob­tained a higher degree of reputation by his clay models than by all his other productions. Indeed if clay could be made to preserve its original moisture, it would undoubt­edly be the fittest substance for the models of the sculp­tor ; but when it is placed either in the fire or left to dry imperceptibly in the air, its solid parts grow more com­pact, and the figure, losing thus a part of its dimensions, is necessarily reduced to a smaller volume. This dimi­nution would be of no consequence did it equally affect the whole figure, so as to preserve its proportions entire. But this is not the case. For the smaller parts of the figure dry sooner than the larger ; and thus losing more of their dimensions in the space of time than the latter do, the symmetry and proportions of the figure inevitably suffer.

This inconvenience does not take place in those models that are made in wax. It iβ indeed extremely difficult, in the ordinary method of working the wax, to give it that de­gree of smoothness that is necessary to represent the soft­ness of the carnations or fleshy parts of the body. This inconvenience may, however, be remedied by forming the model first in clay, then moulding it in plaster, and lastly casting it in wax. And, indeed, clay is seldom used but as a mould in which to cast a figure of plaster, stucco, or wax, to serve henceforth for a model by which the mea­sures and proportions of the statue are to be adjusted. In making waxen models, it is common to put half a pound of colophony to a pound of wax ; and some add turpentine, melting the whole with oil of olives.

So much for the first or preparatory steps in this pro­cedure. It remains to consider the manner of working the marble after the model so prepared. The method here followed by the Greeks seems to have been extremely dif­ferent from that which is generally observed by modern artists. In the ancient statues we find the most striking proofs of the freedom and boldness that accompanied each stroke of the chisel, and which resulted from the artist’s being perfectly sure of the accuracy of his idea, and the precision and steadiness of his hand. The most minute parts of the figure carry these marks of assurance and free­dom ; no indication of timorousness or diffidence appears, nothing that can induce us to fancy that the artist had oc­casion to correct any of his strokes. It is difficult to find, even in the second-rate productions of the Grecian artists, any mark of a false stroke or a random touch. This firm­ness and precision of the Grecian chisel was certainly de­rived from a more determined and perfect set of rules than those which are observed in modem times.

The method generally observed by the modem sculptor is as follows. First, out of a great block of marble he saws another of the size required, which is performed with a steel saw without teeth, casting water and sand thereon from time to time; then he fashions it, by taking off what is superfluous with a steel point and a heavy hammer of soft iron ; after this, bringing it near the measure required, he reduces it still nearer with another finer point ; he then uses a flat cutting instrument, having notches in its edge, and a chisel to take off the scratches which the former has left ; till at length, taking rasps of different degrees of fine­ness, he by degrees brings his work into a condition for polishing.

After this, having studied his model with all possible at­tention, he draws upon this model horizontal and perpendicular lines which intersect each other at right angles. He afterwards copies these lines upon his marble, as the painter makes use of such transverse lines to copy a picture, or to reduce it to a smaller size. These transverse lines or squares, drawn in an equal number upon the marble and upon the model, in a manner proportioned to their respective dimen­sions, exhibit accurate measures of the surfaces upon which the artist is to work ; but cannot determine, with equal pre­cision, the depths that are proportioned to these surfaces. The sculptor, indeed, may determine these depths by ob­serving the relation they bear to his model ; but as his eye is the only guide he has to follow in this estimate, he is al­ways more or less exposed to error, or at least to doubt. He is never sure that the cavities made by his chisel are exact ; a degree of uncertainty accompanies each stroke ; nor can he be assured that it has carried away neither too much nor too little of his marble. It is equally difficult to determine, by such lines as have already been mentioned, the external and internal contours of the figure, or to trans­fer them from the model to the marble. By the internal contour is understood that which is described by the parts which approach towards the centre, and which are not mark­ed in a striking manner.