

### *Inequalities of Genius*

SINGULAR inequalities are observable in the labours of genius; and particularly in those which admit great enthusiasm, as in poetry, in painting, and in music. Faultless mediocrity industry can preserve in one continued degree; but excellence, the daring and the happy, can only be attained, by human faculties, by starts.

Our poets who possess the greatest genius, with, perhaps, the least industry, have at the same time the most splendid and the worst passages of poetry. Shakespeare and Dryden are at once the greatest and the least of our poets. With some, their great fault consists in having none.

Carraccio sarcastically said of Tintoret—*Ho veduto il Tintoretto hora eguale a Titiano, hora minora del Tintoretto*—” I have seen Tintoret now equal to Titian, and now less than Tintoret.”

Trublet very justly observes—The more there are beauties, and great beauties, in a work, I am the less surprised to find *faults* and *great faults*. When you say of a work—that it has many faults; that decides nothing: and I do not know by this, whether it is execrable, or excellent. You tell me of another—that it is without any faults; if your account be just, it is certain the work cannot be excellent.