

Wax-Work

WE have heard of many curious deceptions occasioned by the imitative powers of wax-work. A series of anatomical sculptures in coloured wax was projected by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, under the direction of Fontana. Twenty apartments have been filled with those curious imitations. They represent in every possible detail, and in each successive stage of denudation, the organs of sense and reproduction; the muscular, the vascular, the nervous, and the bony system. They imitate equally well the form, and more exactly the colouring of nature than injected preparations; and they have been employed to perpetuate many transient phenomena of disease, of which no other art could have made so lively a record.

There is a species of wax-work which, though it can hardly claim the honours of the fine arts, is adapted to afford much pleasure. I mean figures of wax, which may be modelled with great truth of character.

Menage has noticed a work of this kind. In the year 1675, the Duke de Maine received a gilt cabinet, about the size of a moderate table. On the door was inscribed, "*The Apartment of Wit.*" The inside exhibited an alcove and a long gallery. In an arm-chair was seated the figure

of the duke himself composed of wax, the resemblance the most perfect imaginable. On one side stood the Duke de la Rochefoucault, to whom he presented a paper of verses for his examination. Mr. De Marcillac, and Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, were standing near the arm-chair. In the alcove, Madame de Thianges and Madame de la Fayette sat retired, reading a book. Boileau, the satirist, stood at the door of the gallery, hindering seven or eight bad poets from entering. Near Boileau stood Racine, who seemed to beckon to La Fontaine to come forwards. All these figures were formed of wax; and this philosophical baby-house, interesting for the personages it imitated, might induce a wish in some philosophers to play once more with one.

There was lately an old canon at Cologne who made a collection of small wax models of characteristic figures, such as, personifications of misery, in a haggard old man with a scanty crust and a brown jug before him; or of avarice, in a keen-looking Jew miser counting his gold, which were done with such a spirit and reality that a Flemish painter, a Hogarth or Wilkie, could hardly have worked up the *feeling* of the figure more impressively. All these were done with truth and expression

which I could not have imagined the wax capable of exhibiting, says the lively writer of "An Autumn near the Rhine." There is something very infantine in this taste; but I have preserved it long in life, and only lament that it is very rarely gratified by such close copiers of nature as was this old canon of Cologne.