

able impress; for we see in nearly all, only portions of known animals, united by an unrestrained fancy, and in opposition to every law of nature. Those invented or put together by the Greeks are certainly graceful in their composition; like those arabesques which ornament the remains of some ancient edifices, and which the fertile pencil of Raphael has multiplied: forms are there united, totally repugnant to reason, offering to the eye agreeable proportions; these are the light productions of happy dreams; perhaps emblems of the oriental taste, in which they pretended to veil beneath mystic imagery, the refined suggestions of metaphysics and morals. Let us excuse those who endeavour to employ their time in unravelling the wisdom concealed in the Sphynx of Thebes, the Pegasus of Thessaly, the Minotaur of Crete, or the Chimera of Epirus; but let us hope that no one would seriously seek for them in nature: as well might we expect to find the animals of Daniel, or the beasts of the Apocalypse. Let us not attempt to seek for the mythological animals of the Persians, offsprings of a still more heated imagination; the *martichore*, or destroyer of men, which has the head of a man on the body of a lion, terminated by a scorpion's tale,(1) the *griffin*, or treasure-keeper, half eagle half lions:(2) the *cartazonon*,(3) or wild ass, whose head is armed with a long horn.

Ctesias, who has described these as existing animals, has passed with many for an inventor of fables, whilst he only attributed a reality to emble-

(1) Plin. viii. 31; Arist. lib. ii. cap. 11. Phot. Bibl. art. 72. Ctes. Indic. Ælian, Anim. iv. 21.

(2) Ælian, Anim. iv. 37.

(3) Id. xvi. 20; Photius Bibl. art. 72. Ctes. Indic.