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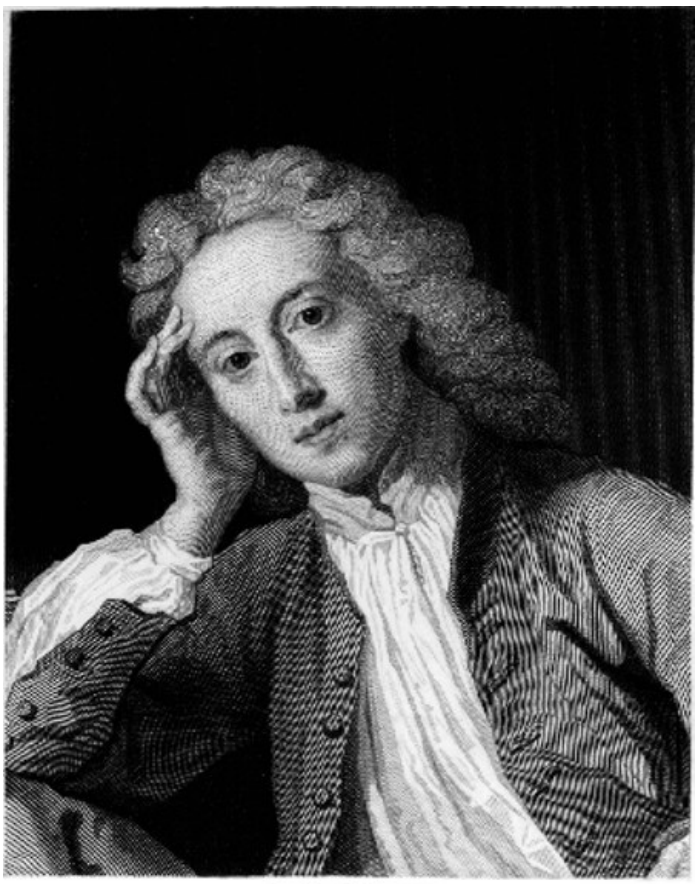

Geo. Dawe, R.A. Engraver.

Alexander Pope.

From the Painting by Richardson, in the possession of Lord Lyttelton, at Hagley.

London: Published by John Murray, Albemarle Street.

# THE WORKS

## OF

# ALEXANDER POPE.

### NEW EDITION.

### INCLUDING

### SEVERAL HUNDRED UNPUBLISHED LETTERS, AND OTHER NEW MATERIALS.

### COLLECTED IN PART BY THE LATE

## R[T]. HON. JOHN WILSON CROKER.

### WITH INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES.

## BY REV. WHITWELL ELWIN.

### VOL. I.

### POETRY.—VOL. I.

### WITH PORTRAITS AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1871.



LONDON:
BRADBURY, EVANS, AND CO., PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

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# CATALOGUE

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## Of Pope's Collected Editions of his Works.

The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope. London: Printed by W. Bowyer for Bernard Lintot, between the Temple Gates, 1717. 4to and folio.

This volume consists of all the acknowledged poems which Pope had hitherto published, with the addition of some new pieces.

The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope. Volume ii. London: Printed by J. Wright, for Lawton Gilliver, at Homer's Head in Fleet Street, 1735. 4to and folio.

The volume of 1735 contains, with a few exceptions, the poems which Pope had printed since 1717. The pages of each group of pieces—Epistles, Satires, Epitaphs, etc.—are numbered separately, and there are other irregularities in the numbers, arising from a change in the order of the Moral Essays after the sheets were struck off.

Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope, and Several of his friends. London: Printed by J. Wright for J. Knapton in Ludgate Street, L. Gilliver in Fleet Street, J. Brindley in New Bond Street, and R. Dodsley in Pall-Mall, 1737. 4to and folio.

This is Pope's first avowed edition of his letters. A half-title, "The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope in Prose," precedes the title-page.

The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope, in Prose. Vol. ii. London: Printed for J. and P. Knapton, C. Bathurst, and R. Dodsley, 1741. 4to and folio.

The half-title is more precise: "The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope, in Prose. Vol. ii. Containing the rest of his Letters, with the Memoirs of Scriblerus, never before printed; and other Tracts written either singly, or in conjunction with his friends. Now first collected together." The letters are the Swift correspondence, and they are in a different type from the rest of the book. The numbers of the pages are very irregular, and show that the contents and arrangement of the volume had been greatly altered from some previous impression. The folio copies of the two volumes of poetry, and the two of prose, are merely the quarto text portioned out into longer pages, without a single leaf being reprinted. The trifling variations from the quartos were introduced when the matter was put into the folio size.

[Pg viii]

The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.; vol. i. with explanatory Notes and Additions never before printed. London: Printed for B. Lintot, 1736. Small 8vo.

This is the first volume of an edition which extended to nine volumes, and which from the want of uniformity in the title-pages, the dates, and names of the publishers appears to consist of odd volumes. The copyright of Pope's works belonged to different proprietors, and they at last agreed to print their respective shares in small octavo, that the several parts united might form a complete set. Each proprietor commenced printing his particular section of the octavos when the previous sizes he had on hand were sold, and thus it happened that the second volume of the edition came out in 1735 before the first, which was published in 1736. The series was not finished till 1742, when the fourth book of the Dunciad was added to the Poems, and the Swift Correspondence to the Letters. Some of the volumes were reprinted, and the later editions occasionally differ slightly from their predecessors. The Poems and Letters of Pope are more complete in the octavos than in the quartos, but the octavos, on the other hand, omit all the prose works except the Letters, and the Memoirs of Scriblerus, and octavos and quartos combined are imperfect in comparison with the editions which have been published since Pope's death.

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# A MEMORIAL LIST

[Pg ix]

## OF

# DEPARTED RELATIONS AND FRIENDS.

## WRITTEN BY POPE IN AN ELZEVIR VIRGIL, NOW IN THE LIBRARY OF

## THE EARL OF MANSFIELD.[1]

## NATUS MAJI 21, 1688, HORA POST MERID. 6-3/4.

Quo desiderio veteres revocamus amores
Atque olim amissas flemus amicitias.

*Catullus.*

Anno 1700, Maji primo, obit, semper venerandus, poetarum princeps, Joannes Dryden, æt. 70.[2]

Anno 1708, mens. Aprili, obiit Gulielmus Walsh, criticus sagax, amicus et vir bonus, æt. 49.

Anno 1710, Jan. 24, Avita mea piissimæ mem., Eliz. Turner, migravit in cœlum, annum agens 74.

Anno 1710, mens. Aprili, Tho. Betterton, Roscius sui temporis, exit omnium cum plausu bonorum, æt. 74.

Anno 1712, mens. Januario, decessit vir facetissimus, juventutis meæ deliciæ, Antonius Englefield, æt. 75.

Anno 1718, obit Tho. Parnell, poetica laude, et moribus suavissimis insignis.

Anno 1715, mens. Martio, decessit Gul. Wycherley, poeta morum scientia clarus, ille meos primus qui habebat amores, æt. 75.

Anno 1716, mens. Decemb. obit Gulielmus Trumbull, olim Regi Gul. a secretis, annum agens 75. Amicus meus humanissimus a juvenilibus annis.

Pater meus, Alex. Pope, omnibus bonis moribus præditus obit, an. 1717.

Simon Harcourt, filius, obit, mens. Junio 1720, Lutet. Parisior. Quem sequitur Pater, olim M. Britann. Cancellar., mense Julio 1727.

Jacobus Craggs R.M.B. a secretis, natura generosus et ingenuus, amicus animosus, charissim. memor., e vita exc. Feb. 1720/1.

Robertus Oxoniæ Comes, mihi perfamiliaris et jucundus, fortiter obit, 1724.

Jo. Sheffield, Buckinghamiæ Dux, mihi lenis et amicissimus, fato functus est Feb. 1720/1 æt. 73.

Nutrix mea fidelissima M. Beech, obiit 5 Novem. 1725, æt. 77. [Pg x]

Robertus Digby, ex Patre antiquis præditus moribus, e vita migravit, Apr. 1726.

Edwardus Blunt, vir amicissimus obit, Aug. 1726.

Anno 1728/9, Jan. 20, æt. 57, mortuus est Gulielmus Congreve, poeta, eximius, vir comis, urbanus, et mihi perquam familiaris.

Elijah Fenton, vir probus, et poeta haud mediocris, decessit men. Julio 1730, æt. 48.

Francisc. Atterbury, Roffens Episcopus, vir omni scientia clarus, animosus, ex Anglia exilio pulsus, an. 1723. Obiit Parisiis, mense Febr. 1732, æt. 70.

Joan. Gay, probitate morum et simplicitate insignis, socius peramabilis, sub oculis meis mortuus est, Dec. 4, 1723, æt. 44.

Mater mea charissima, pientissima et optima, Editha Pope, obiit septima die Junii 1733, annum implens nonagesimum tertium.

G. Garth, MD. homo candidus et poeta urbanus, obiit 1719.

Joan. Arbuthnot, MD. vir doctiss., probitate ac pietate insignis, obiit Febr. 27, 1734/5, æt. 68.

Carolus Mordaunt. Com. Peterbor., vir insigniss. bellica virtute, ac morum comitate, obiit Ulyssipont. anno ætatis 78, 1735, mense Octobris.

### FOOTNOTES:

[1] The Virgil was probably bought by William Murray at some sale of Pope's books, for on the fly-leaf is written "E. Libris A. Popei, Pr. 5*s.*"

[2] Pope who had only once set eyes on Dryden, and had no acquaintance with him, marks his admiration by including him in this memorial of relations and friends.

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# ADVERTISEMENT OF WARBURTON TO HIS EDITION OF POPE'S WORKS, 1751. [Pg xi]

Mr. Pope, in his last illness, amused himself, amidst the care of his higher concerns, in preparing a corrected and complete edition of his writings;[1] and, with his usual delicacy, was even solicitous to prevent any share of the offence they might occasion, from falling on the friend whom he had engaged to give them to the public.[2] In discharge of this trust, the public has here a complete edition of his works, executed in such a manner, as, I am persuaded, would have been to his satisfaction. The editor hath not, for the sake of profit, suffered the author's name to be made cheap by a subscription;[3] nor his works to be defrauded of their due honours by a vulgar or inelegant impression; nor his memory to be disgraced by any pieces unworthy of his talents or virtue. On the contrary, he hath, at a very great expense, ornamented this edition with all the advantages which the best artists in paper, printing, and sculpture could bestow upon it.[4]

If the public hath waited longer than the deference due to its generous impatience for the author's writings should have suffered, it was owing to a reason which the editor need not be ashamed to tell. It was his regard to the family interests of his deceased friend. Mr. Pope, at his death, had left large impressions of several parts of his works, unsold, the property of which was adjudged to belong to his executors; and the editor was willing they should have time to dispose of them to the best advantage, before the publication of this edition (which hath been long prepared) should put a stop to the sale. But it may be proper to be a little more particular concerning the superiority of this edition above all the preceding, so far as Mr. Pope himself was concerned. What the editor hath done, the reader must collect for himself.

The first volume, and the original poems in the second, are here first printed from a copy corrected throughout by the author himself, even to the very preface,[5] which, with several additional notes in his own hand, he delivered to the editor a little before his death. The juvenile translations, in the other part of the second volume, it was never his intention to bring into this edition of his works, on account of the levity of some, the freedom of others, and the little importance of all. But these being the property of other men, the editor had it not in his power to follow the author's intention. [Pg xii]

The third volume (all but the Essay on Man, which together with the Essay on Criticism, the author, a little before his death, had corrected and published in quarto, as a specimen of his projected edition,) was printed by him in his last illness, but never published, in the manner it is now given. The disposition of the Epistle on the Characters of Men is quite altered; that on the Characters of Women much enlarged; and the Epistles on Riches and Taste corrected and improved. To these advantages of the third volume must be added a great number of fine verses, taken from the author's manuscript copies of these poems, communicated by him for this purpose to the editor. These, the author, when he first published the poems to which they belong, thought proper, for various reasons, to omit. Some, from the manuscript copy of the Essay on Man, which tended to discredit fate, and to recommend the moral government of God, had, by the editor's advice, been restored to their places in the last edition of that poem.[6] The rest, together with others of the like sort, from his manuscript copy of the other Ethic Epistles, are here inserted at the bottom of the page, under the title of Variations.

The fourth volume contains the Satires, with their Prologue,—the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot; and Epilogue,—the two poems intitled MDCCXXXVIII. The Prologue and Epilogue are here given with the like advantages as the Ethic Epistles in the foregoing volume, that is to say, with the Variations, or additional verses from the author's manuscripts. The Epilogue to the Satires is likewise inriched with many and large notes, now first printed from the author's own manuscript.

The fifth volume contains a correcter and completer edition of the Dunciad than hath been hitherto published, of which, at present, I have only this further to add, that it was at my request he laid the plan of a fourth book. I often told him, it was pity so fine a poem should remain disgraced by the meanness of its subject, the most insignificant of all dunces,—bad rhymers and malevolent cavillers; that he ought to raise and ennoble it by pointing his satire against the most pernicious of all,—minute philosophers and free-thinkers. I imagined, too, it was for the interests of religion to have it known, that so great a genius had a due abhorrence of these pests of virtue and society. He came readily into my opinion; but, at the same time, told me it would create him many enemies. He was not mistaken, for though the terror of his pen kept them for some time in respect, yet on his death they rose with unrestrained fury in numerous coffee-house tales, and Grub Street libels. The plan of this admirable satire was artfully contrived to show, that the follies and defects of a fashionable education naturally led to, and necessarily ended in, freethinking, with design to point out the only remedy adequate to so destructive an evil. It was to advance the same ends of virtue and religion, that the editor prevailed on him to alter everything in his moral writings that might be suspected of having the least glance towards fate or naturalism, and to add what was proper to convince the world that he was warmly on the side of moral government and a revealed will. And it would be great injustice to his memory not to declare that he embraced these occasions with the most unfeigned pleasure. [Pg xiii]

The sixth volume consists of Mr. Pope's miscellaneous pieces in verse and prose. Amongst the verse several fine poems make now their first appearance in his works. And of the prose, all that is good, and nothing but what is exquisitely so, will be found in this edition.

The seventh, eighth, and ninth volumes consist entirely of his letters, the more valuable, as they are the only true models which we, or perhaps any of our neighbours, have of familiar epistles.[7] This collection is now made more complete by the addition of several new pieces. Yet, excepting a short explanatory letter to Col. M[oyser], and the letters to Mr. A[llen] and Mr. W[arburton]

(the latter of which are given to show the editor's inducements, and the engagements he was under, to intend the care of this edition) excepting these, I say, the rest are all here published from the author's own printed, though not published copies delivered to the editor.[8]

On the whole, the advantages of this edition, above the preceding, are these,—that it is the first complete collection which has ever been made of his original writings; that all his principal poems, of early or later date, are here given to the public with his last corrections and improvements; that a great number of his verses are here first printed from the manuscript copies of his principal poems of later date; that many new notes of the author are here added to his poems; and lastly, that several pieces, both in prose and verse make now their first appearance before the public.

The author's life deserves a just volume, and the editor intends to give it. For to have been one of the first poets in the world is but his second praise. He was in a higher class. He was one of the "noblest works of God." He was an "honest man,"[9]—a man who alone possessed more real virtue than, in very corrupt times, needing a satirist like him, will sometimes fall to the share of multitudes. In this history of his life,[10] will be contained a large account of his writings, a critique on the nature, force, and extent of his genius, exemplified from these writings; and a vindication of his moral character, exemplified by his more distinguished virtues,—his filial piety, his disinterested friendships, his reverence for the constitution of his country, his love and admiration of virtue, and (what was the necessary effect) his hatred and contempt of vice, his extensive charity to the indigent, his warm benevolence to mankind, his supreme veneration of the Deity, and above all his sincere belief of Revelation. Nor shall his faults be concealed. It is not for the interests of his virtues that they should. Nor indeed could they be concealed, if we were [Pg xiv] so disposed, for they shine through his virtues, no man being more a dupe to the specious appearances of virtue in others.[11] In a word, I mean not to be his panegyrist but his historian. And may I, when envy and calumny have taken the same advantage of my absence (for, while I live, I will freely trust it to my life to confute them) may I find a friend as careful of my honest fame as I have been of his! Together with his works, he hath bequeathed me his dunces. So that as the property is transferred, I could wish they would now let his memory alone. The veil which death draws over the good is so sacred, that to tear it, and with sacrilegious hands, to throw dirt upon the shrine, gives scandal even to barbarians. And though Rome permitted her slaves to calumniate her best citizens on the day of triumph, yet the same petulancy at their funeral would have been rewarded with execration and a gibbet.[12] The public may be malicious; but is rarely vindictive or ungenerous. It would abhor all insults, on a writer dead, though it had borne with the ribaldry, or even set the ribalds on work, when he was alive. And in this there is no great harm, for he must have a strange impotency of mind indeed whom such miserable scribblers can disturb or ruffle. Of all that gross Beotian phalanx who have written scurrilously against the editor, he knows not so much as one whom a writer of reputation would not wish to have his enemy, or whom a man of honour would not be ashamed to own for his friend.[13] He is indeed but slightly conversant in their works, and knows little of the particulars of their defamation. To his authorship they are heartily welcome. But if any of them have been so far abandoned by truth as to attack his moral character in any respect whatsoever, to all and every one of these and their abettors, he gives the lie in form, and in the words of honest Father Valerian, *mentiris impudentissime*.

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] "I own the late encroachments upon my constitution made me willing to see the end of all further care about me or my works. I would rest for the one in a full resignation of my being to be disposed of by the Father of all mercy; and for the other (though indeed a trifle, yet a trifle may be some example) I would commit them to the candour of a sensible and reflecting judge, rather than to the malice of every short-sighted and malevolent critic, or inadvertent and censorious reader. And no hand can set them in so good a light," &c.—*Let. cxx.* to Mr. W.—WARBURTON.

[2] "I also give and bequeath to the said Mr. Warburton, the property of all such of my works already printed as he hath written or shall write commentaries or notes upon, and which I have not otherwise disposed of or alienated; and as he shall publish without future alterations."—*His Last Will and Testament.*—WARBURTON.

[3] A subscription would have been simply a petition from Warburton to the public, soliciting them to increase the value of the legacy bequeathed him by Pope.

[4] The engravings were execrable; the type and paper good, but not extraordinary. The outlay upon the edition, for which Warburton takes credit as for a munificent act, was a common-place commercial transaction, with the certainty of a large return.

[5] The corrections are few and trivial. The account which Warburton gives of the novelties in his edition is from first to last exaggerated.

[6] The only restored lines which improve the orthodoxy of the Essay on Man relate to a future state.

[7] Either Warburton had never heard of Madame de Sévigné's letters, or what is more likely, he was unable to taste their charm. Their delicate graces, and native liveliness, would have been lost upon the man who thought that Pope's artificial epistles were "true models of familiar" letters.

[8] The assertion that the copies had not been published is unaccountable. Every line of them had been published twice over by Pope in his lifetime, and all but two or three pages, had been published again and again.

[9] A wit's a feather, and a chief's a rod,
An honest man's the noblest work of God.—WARBURTON.

[10] It will be printed in the same form with this, and every future edition of his works, so as to make a part of them.—WARBURTON.

The Life which Warburton promised with such solemn pomp was never written and he was content to assist Ruffhead in his feeble compilation.

[11] Warburton intimates that Pope's only faults grew out of his credulous belief in "the specious appearance of virtue," which was a sarcasm directed against those friends of Pope who were the enemies of Warburton.

[12] The demand of Warburton was not for a truce on the day of Pope's funeral, which took place seven years before. He insisted that because Pope was dead no one should ever again question his title to be called "good." Neither Pope nor Warburton was accustomed to spare dead men, and the claim for exemption was specially inconsistent in the preface to works which were full of bitter attacks upon both living and dead. Warburton was to go on circulating Pope's venom, and any victim who retaliated was to be pronounced "sacrilegious," "a scandal even to barbarians," and worthy to be "rewarded with execration and a gibbet."

[13] Warburton was a fortunate author. Though he published a host of paradoxical notions, his opponents, if we are to trust his repeated assertions, were always fools and knaves.

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# INTRODUCTION.

[Pg xvii]

In his will, dated December 12, 1743, not quite six months before he died, Pope bequeathed his printed works to Warburton, on condition that he published them without "future alterations." Warburton states that the object of the proviso was to relieve him from the obloquy he might incur by reproducing offensive strokes of satire. A few slight alterations which had not the sanction of any prior edition were nevertheless introduced by Warburton into some of the poems, and he announced on the title-page and in the preface, that they were taken from a corrected copy delivered to him by Pope. Mr. Croker mistrusted the genuineness of the "alterations," and he intended to reject the text of Warburton, and adopt in the main the text of the last octavo edition which had appeared during the lifetime of the poet. The honour of Warburton is not above suspicion, but Mr. Croker was misled by erroneous inferences when he accused him of tampering with the text, and falsely pleading the authority of "a copy corrected by the author himself."

Fantastic in his conceptions, violent in his animosities, hasty and imperious in the expression of his opinions, Warburton sometimes repented his rashness, and cancelled numerous leaves in his Shakespeare and Pope after the volumes were printed off. Mr. Kilvert, who edited his Literary Remains, found among his papers a cancelled leaf of the Pope, containing the commencement of the Prologue to the Satires. On the first page Warburton had inserted among the "Variations" a couplet which he said was copied from the manuscript of Pope:

And now vile poets rise before the light,
And walk, like Margaret's ghost, at dead of night.

[Pg xviii]

The allusion was to the ballad of William and Margaret, written by Mallet. He was the ally of Pope and Bolingbroke, and when Pope was dead he was employed by Bolingbroke to blast the memory of their former friend.[1] The mention of Margaret's ghost gave Warburton the opportunity of appending a bitter note upon Mallet, whom he accused of "arraigning his dead patron for a cheat," and the leaf was cancelled to get rid of both note and variation. Mr. Croker believed that Warburton "forged" the variation to gratify his spleen against Mallet, whom he detested, and that before the volume was published "either his own conscience, or some prudent friend, suggested that such manifest fraud would not be tolerated." The conjecture was unfounded. Pope presented several of his manuscripts to the son of Jonathan Richardson, the portrait-painter, for his trouble in collating them with the printed text. Richardson's interlined copy of the first quarto volume of Pope's poetry passed into the hands of Malone, and was ultimately bought by Mr. Croker. The manuscripts which Richardson possessed in the handwriting of Pope were purchased by Dr. Chauncey, and are still the property of his descendants. Among them is the Prologue to the Satires, and it contains the couplet Mr. Croker believed to have been forged. In every instance where the manuscripts exist the variations printed by Warburton are found to be authentic.

The inference of Mr. Croker from the variations must be reversed. They do not invalidate, but attest, the fidelity of Warburton, and the "alterations" in the text of the poems must pass unchallenged unless there is some direct proof of their inaccuracy. The arguments, on the contrary, are altogether in their favour. Four printed pages of the first Moral Essay, with the corrections in manuscript, were discovered by Mr. Kilvert among Warburton's papers. "Some of the words," says Mr. Croker, "are so neatly written as to leave a strong impression on my eye of

their being Pope's; other portions of the manuscript are more like Warburton's looser hand." The faint doubt expressed by Mr. Croker would hardly have arisen if his suspicion had not been previously awakened, for the corrections are all indubitably in the handwriting of the poet. Nor [Pg xix] was the manuscript in this instance the guide of Warburton. He followed a copy of the Moral Essays printed by Pope in his last illness, though never published. "Warburton has the propriety of it as you know," wrote Bolingbroke to Lord Marchmont, one of the executors; "alter it he cannot by the terms of the will."[2] This of itself is an answer to Mr. Croker. The executors had access to Pope's latest printed version of the Moral Essays, which was Warburton's avowed authority, and he could not alter a single word without certain detection, and the consequent forfeiture of his legacy. He was alive to the risk. A portion of Pope's revised edition of his poetical works was passing through the press at the time of his death, and Warburton directed the printer to give the sheets, when the executors inquired for them, to their colleague the celebrated Murray, who was afterwards Lord Mansfield, adding, "Pray preserve all the press copy to the least scrap."[3] The terms of the will bound the editor to be faithful to his trust, under a penalty of 4,000*l.*, the estimated value of the bequest,[4] and he saw the necessity of having the voucher of the poet's handwriting for the minutest departure from the previous text in such of the proofs as had not received Pope's final imprimatur. A more ample guarantee could not be desired for the authenticity of the particulars in which Warburton's text differs from the printed copies superintended by Pope. All the displaced readings, which are not utterly insignificant, are preserved in the notes to the present edition, as well as numerous unpublished variations, which are taken from the manuscripts of Pope, or the transcripts of Richardson.

The text of Pope's poems is more easily settled than elucidated. No other poet so near to our own time presents equal difficulties. His satires abound in uncertain allusions, and controverted topics which require a large amount of illustration and discussion. His philosophy was not understood by himself, and it is a study to disentangle his confused arguments, and interpret his doubtful language. He often expressed his opinions with wilful ambiguity, took refuge in [Pg xx] equivocations, or had recourse to falsehoods, and we are constantly forced upon perplexing investigations to recover the truth he endeavoured to conceal. Fortunately his best poems and choicest passages are least incumbered with puzzling questions, and his obscurities have not much interfered with his popularity because the mass of readers are content to enjoy the beauties and leave the enigmas unsolved.

The number and eminence of the commentators on Pope, the diversity of their attainments, and the extent of their annotations appear to promise all the help which knowledge, acuteness, and taste could supply. The result is far below what might reasonably have been anticipated. Warburton, Pope's first editor, had a vigorous understanding, and possessed the enormous advantage that he carried on the work in concert with the poet, and could ask the explanation of every difficulty. A diseased ambition rendered his talents and opportunities useless. Without originality he aspired to be original, and imagined that to fabricate hollow paradoxes, and torture language into undesigned meanings was the surest evidence of a fertile, penetrating genius. He employed his sagacity less to discover than to distort the ideas of his author, and seems to have thought that the more he deviated from the obvious sense the greater would be his fame for inventive power. He has left no worse specimen of his perverse propensity than the spurious fancies, and idle refinements he fathered upon Pope. They are among his baldest paradoxes, are conveyed in his heaviest style, and are supported by his feeblest sophistry. His lifeless and verbose conceits soon provoke by their falsity, and fatigue by their ponderousness. Lord Marchmont said laughingly to Pope that "he must be the vainest man alive, and must want to show posterity what a quantity of dulness he could carry down on his back without sinking under the load."[5] The exuberant self-sufficiency of Warburton deluded him into the belief that the text derived its principal lustre from the commentary. He selected for the frontispiece to his edition a monument on which were hung medallions of himself and the poet, and Blakey, the draughtsman, [Pg xxi] told Burke that "it was by Warburton's particular desire that he made him the principal figure, and Pope only secondary, and that the light, contrary to the rules of art, goes upwards from Warburton to Pope." A gentleman remarked, when Burke related the anecdote, that they were drawn looking in opposite directions.[6] The sarcasm summed up the opinion which has always prevailed. The clumsy inventions of Warburton had not the semblance of plausibility, and scarce anybody except his shadow, and fulsome echo, Bishop Hurd, ever doubted that the text and commentary looked different ways.[7]

Proud of his dreary paradoxes, Warburton scorned the humble office of furnishing useful information. Pope had said, in his Imitations of Horace, that because three ladies liked a luckless play, a spendthrift had taken the whole house upon the poet's night,[8] which drew from Warburton the following note:—"The common reader, I am sensible, will be always more solicitous about the names of these three ladies, the unlucky play, and every other circumstance that attended this piece of gallantry, than for the explanation of our author's sense, or the illustration of his poetry, even where he is most moral and sublime. But had it been in Mr. Pope's purpose to indulge so impertinent a curiosity, he had sought elsewhere for a commentator on his writings. Which defect in these notes, the periodical scribblers, however, have been stupid and shameless enough to object to them."[9] Warburton's reserve was praiseworthy when his motive was respect for private feelings. His general neglect to clear up the allusions in Pope's poems did not admit of this apology, and in default of a better defence he called his critics "stupid and shameless." His habit when reasons failed him was to supply their place with abuse.

The edition of Warburton was published in 1751, and no attempt was made to supersede it till Gilbert Wakefield commenced a new edition in 1794. He was "labouring," he says, "for a [Pg xxii] subsistence," and the cost of the work, which was printed at his own expense, obliged him to bring out a volume at a time. Before the first volume was quite through the press he learned that Joseph Warton was engaged on a similar undertaking. Warton had the support of the London booksellers, and the edition of Wakefield ended with his opening volume. The world did not lose the benefit of his annotations. He published in 1796 his Observations on Pope, which consist of notes on the remaining poems, and of supplemental notes to the poems he had previously edited. Wakefield said that an "inculpable perfection pervaded the whole body of Pope's compositions," and in the extravagance of his admiration he overlaid the volume of his unfinished edition with weak rhapsodies which masked the useful part of his labours. He restrained his eulogistic excesses in his Observations, and kept more closely to his main design of tracing Pope's "imitations of his predecessors." All persons tolerably read in poetry could perceive that the obligations Pope acknowledged in his notes were but a fraction of the whole, and in 1740, Bowyer, the printer, with the assistance of Mr. Clarke, a clergyman, commenced a collection of parallel passages. From the letters of Clarke to Bowyer it appears that Pope was annoyed. Bowyer profited by his irritation, and offered to treat with him. "I think," wrote Clarke in 1742, "you buy his friendship cheap with a whole hecatomb of notes, essays, illustrations, and the mob of commentators."[10] The progress of the negociation is not recorded. The result is revealed in the fact that Bowyer shortly afterwards became Pope's printer. The sensitiveness which was disturbed at the gleanings of Bowyer would have shuddered at the abundant harvest of Wakefield. He himself had no intention of depreciating the merits of Pope. He only wished to illustrate a favourite author. Many of the parallelisms are too slight to be applicable, or they are common phrases the property of every Englishman. A vast number remain which are a curious exhibition of Pope's patience and skill in the art of poetical mosaic, and of the large amount of [Pg xxiii] borrowed beauties he intermixed with his undoubted originality. The interpretation of the text, though subordinate with Wakefield, was not neglected by him. He and a friend who assisted him, Dr. William Bennet, Bishop of Cloyne, have explained more allusions than all the other commentators, and the least known and appreciated of the editors of Pope is the man who has done the most for his author.

The edition of Warton appeared in 1797. "His reason," he says in his preface, "for undertaking the work was the universal complaint that Dr. Warburton had disfigured and disgraced his edition with many forced and far-sought interpretations, totally unsupported by the passages which they were brought to elucidate." Warton had the stimulus of a second motive. He published in 1756 the first volume of his Essay on Pope, and his criticisms were roughly attacked in many passages of Ruffhead's Life of the poet, which was prompted and partly written by Warburton. While Warburton lived Warton did not venture to retaliate. The thirty years which intervened had not extinguished his resentment, and he seized the opportunity to revenge the ancient grudge. His consciousness of Warburton's defects did not keep Warton from repeating the error of filling page upon page with irrelevant matter. His Essay on Pope had been a receptacle for his store of miscellaneous reading, and in a separate work there was no objection to a medley of anecdote and criticism. He was seventy-five when he published his edition of Pope, and to save himself trouble he apportioned out the old farrago in notes. Profuse in digressions, he is sparing of needful explanations. His turn was for the lighter portions of criticism and biography, and most of his apposite remarks are critical opinions. They are often just, but never profound, for he had neither fervid feelings nor a robust understanding, and his highest qualities are a fair poetical taste, and a tolerable acquaintance with ancient and modern authors.

Bowles was a school-boy at Winchester when Warton was head-master, and he intimated that this early connection was the cause of his being employed to revise the next edition of Pope. It appeared in 1806. His poetic sensibility was exquisite, and he was well-read, shrewd, and candid. [Pg xxiv] His failing was a hurry of mind which disqualified him for a painstaking commentator. He was content to jot down in a careless, colloquial style the off-hand thoughts of his quick and cultivated intellect, and he did not add much to the scanty explanations of Warton and Warburton. The chief merit of his edition is his excellent literary criticism, which is truer, deeper, and more refined than that of his old Winchester master. The estimate Bowles formed of the poetry and character of Pope was allowed to pass unchallenged for thirteen years, when some remarks of Campbell, in his Specimens of British Poets, commenced a controversy which lasted from 1819 to 1826. In the series of pamphlets he published to vindicate his opinions, Bowles exhibited his wonted acuteness, courage, and negligence. With all his slips in minor points the fresh facts which have come to light have more than confirmed his view of Pope's moral obliquities, and in the discussion on the principles of poetry he reduced the whole of his adversaries to silence. He and Hazlitt were the only persons among the disputants, eminent or obscure, who showed any real comprehension of the subject.

The next edition of Pope, justly considered by Mr. Croker to be the worst, came out in 1824, and was superintended by Roscoe, the author of the Life of Lorenzo de Medici, and Leo X. He barely contributed a single illustrative note, his criticisms are platitudes, and his vindications of Pope a tissue of blunders. He was misled by his credulous faith in his hero, by the rashness with which he imposed his own guesses for facts, and above all by his want of penetration and research. His half-knowledge was worse than ignorance. A few of his multitudinous errors were exposed by Bowles whom he had attacked. Roscoe replied in a feeble, disingenuous pamphlet, which drew from Bowles his taunting and crushing retort, Lessons in Criticism to William Roscoe, Esq. This ended the Pope controversy.

The faults of plan and execution in the editions of Warburton, Warton, Bowles, and Roscoe stand out in strong relief, and Mr. Croker resolved, as far as possible, to correct the mistakes, retrench [Pg xxv] the superfluities, and supply the omissions. Warton and Bowles dismissed a large proportion of the barren, oppressive commentaries of Warburton. Roscoe put back the whole of the bulky excrescence. Most of it had been adopted by Pope, and to relieve the text, without excluding interpretations sanctioned by the poet, Mr. Croker determined to print the pedantic lumber in appendixes. The notes of the other editors rested upon their intrinsic merits, and he intended to sift out the surplusage, and only retain what was pertinent. To curtail is easy. The difficulty was to clear up the many obscurities which remained, and Mr. Croker was anxious to furnish his share of explanation, though he was convinced that numerous contemporary allusions would always baffle curiosity. His chief attention was directed to the satires, and he continued for many years to pursue his investigations, and accumulate materials. His busy life was succeeded by failing health, and he died before he had prepared his notes for the press. The results of his research have luckily all been preserved, for his habit was to write them out in full at the time. He was an acute and eager enquirer into political, personal, and social history, and no man could have been more competent to bring to the surface the under-current of forgotten circumstances.

I have kept to the plan sketched out by Mr. Croker. "A commentary," says Johnson, "must arise from the fortuitous discoveries of many men in devious walks of literature," and few poets have had more commentators than Pope. I have borrowed whatever I met with in previous writers that throw light upon his meaning, faults, and beauties, have cast aside what was plainly inapplicable and erroneous, and have done what I could to fill up deficiencies. My own notes will be recognised by the absence of any signature; all other notes throughout the work have the names of their authors attached, even when a note is by the same author as the text. The extracts from Warton are sometimes taken from his Essay, and both in his case and that of Bowles I have occasionally joined together scattered fragments which were connected in their subject. The rest of the arrangements will be understood at a glance. [Pg xxvi]

The letters of Pope demand a more particular discussion. Estimated by their intrinsic merits they would call for little notice. "He laboured them," says Horace Walpole, "as much as the Essay on Man, and as they were written to everybody they do not look as if they had been written to anybody."[11] Their dry and frigid generalities could not be more happily exposed. The chief importance of the correspondence is in its relation to the morality of Pope, and the fame of men whose reputation is involved in the question of his uprightness. His real nature has always been hotly debated. "His detractors," says De Quincey, "fancy that in his character a basis of ignoble qualities was here and there slightly relieved by a few shining spots; we, on the contrary, believe that in Pope lay a disposition radically noble and generous, clouded and overshadowed by superficial foibles; or, to adopt the distinction of Shakespeare, they see nothing but 'dust a little gilt,' and we 'gold a little dusted.'"[12] Pope boasted loudly of his virtue, and his champions judge him by his own representations. His accusers hold that his professions were hypocritical, as when Lord Macaulay speaks of his "spite and envy, thinly disguised by sentiments as benevolent and noble as those which Sir Peter Teazle admired in Mr. Joseph Surface."[13] The charges brought against him are thickly scattered over his life, and either the guilty appearances are deceptive, or we must admit that his mind was essentially corrupt. His correspondence brings up the ever-recurring enquiry, and we have to decide whether his letters are not many of them fraudulent, [Pg xxvii] and the circumstances attending their publication a series of ignominious plots, infamous false accusations, and impudent lies.

Every examination into the history of the letters was slight before Mr. Dilke engaged in the laborious task. His familiarity with the books, pamphlets, and periodicals of the time could not be exceeded, and his doubts once awakened he accepted nothing upon trust. With an immense amount of research and skill he proceeded to track Pope through his tortuous courses. He laid bare the ramifications of the plot against Curll, which was only known in a few of its prominent particulars. He detected, what none of the editors and biographers had perceived, the base manœuvres and deceit which accompanied the publication of the "Letters to and from Dr. Swift." He was originally put upon his investigations by the manuscript collection of Pope's letters to Caryll, and these revealed a new set of frauds in the evidence they supplied of letters converted into a fictitious correspondence. His inclination was to favour Pope whenever there was an opening for a liberal interpretation, and it was not from hostility that he exposed the net-work of fraud, and brought out the dark traits of a dishonourable disposition with new and terrible force. He printed his discoveries in the Athenæum[14], and after studying the facts afresh by the light of his essays, I am compelled to adopt his conclusions. The evidence upon which they rest is often circumstantial and intricate, and cannot be followed to the end without steady attention, and some trial of patience.

The letters of the poet which were first sent to the press were given by Cromwell to his mistress, Elizabeth Thomas, who sold them in her distress to Curll for ten guineas. She was a shameless woman, and boldly justified her conduct. "Everyone," she said, "knows that the person to whom a letter is addressed has the same right to dispose of it as he has of goods purchased with his money." The right which originally belonged to Cromwell, of publishing to the world whatever [Pg xxviii] had been written to him in the confidence of friendship, he had, by his gift, transferred to herself; and thus it appeared that Cromwell had a right to be treacherous to Pope, and Mrs. Thomas a right to be treacherous to both Pope and Cromwell. With more reason she inferred that neither of them at heart would be vexed at the proceeding. Cromwell, she urged, could not be angry that the world should know "the professions of love, gratitude, and veneration made him by so

celebrated an author," and Pope could not resent the exhibition of the "early pregnancy of his genius." "And yet," she continued, "had either of you been asked, common modesty would have obliged you to refuse what you would not be displeased with if done without your knowledge."[15] There can be little doubt, from his subsequent conduct, that this was the light in which the publication was viewed by the poet, notwithstanding his assertion in a note to the Dunciad, "that he was ashamed of the letters as very trivial things, full not only of levities, but of wrong judgments of men and books, and only excusable from the youth and inexperience of the writer." Mrs. Thomas did him an incalculable injury, not by revealing his secrets, but by flattering his vanity. The favourable reception of his correspondence originated the desire to give some further specimens to the world, and led him into the miserable series of falsehoods and frauds by which he endeavoured to accomplish his design without seeming to be privy to it.

The letters to Cromwell were published in Curll's "Miscellanea," of which the title-page says "Printed in the year 1727;" but the dedication to the letters themselves is dated June, 1726, and it was in 1726 that they appeared. The incidental and scanty notices of them at the time are sufficient to indicate the impression they produced. Thompson, writing in October to Aaron Hill, says that "though careless and uncorrected, they are full of wit and gaiety." There may have been many who thought that they did as much credit to the heart as to the head of the poet. "I have read the collection of letters you mention," Fenton wrote to Broome in September, 1726, "and [Pg xxix] was delighted with nothing more than that air of sincerity, those professions of esteem and respect, and that deference paid to his friend's judgment in poetry which I have sometimes seen expressed to others, and I doubt not with the same cordial affection. If they are read in that light, they will be very entertaining and useful in the present age; but in the next, Cicero, Pliny, and Voiture may regain their reputation." The comments on Pope's sincerity were plainly ironical. Fenton considered him to be extremely hypocritical, and some person concerned in the publication of 1726 must have formed the same opinion of his character, if the ludicrous tail-piece is intended to be typical of the letters. A little man whose diminutive stature did not permit him to clasp the taller figure in his arms while they stood upon a level, is represented as having jumped off the ground and seized his companion round the waist, who, with his hands thrown into the air at the painful vehemence of the embrace, is struggling to get loose. Undiscerning persons, who judged the poet by his words, would form a different estimate, and would perceive only proofs of his excellence where Fenton saw examples of his habitual insincerity. "His correspondence," says Johnson, of the later collection of 1735, "filled the nation with praises of his candour, tenderness, and benevolence, the purity of his purposes, and the fidelity of his friendship."[16]

The letters to Cromwell had more than an ephemeral success. Curll, in his reply in 1729 to the attack on him in the Dunciad, after noticing Pope's affected depreciation of them, says, "However, they sell very well; price 5*s.*"[17] The poet had already devised an excuse for following them up by a second set. Theobald, who had earned his lasting enmity by pointing out the errors in his edition of Shakespeare, was employed by some booksellers to edit the posthumous papers of Wycherley, which had been purchased from his heir. The work appeared in 1728. Pope saw in this circumstance a pretence for dragging his own letters before the world, and an opportunity of gratifying his spleen against Theobald. He said that the poems were disreputable to the memory [Pg xxx] of his early friend, and that the correspondence was published because it showed that it was his last resolution to have suppressed them.[18] It showed the reverse. The last printed letter of Wycherley exhibits him as intent as ever upon preparing his poems for the press, and if we are to believe that he subsequently abandoned the design, we must accept the fact upon the bare assertion of Pope, which derives no support from any part of the correspondence. But though it failed to answer the purpose avowed by its editor, it answered purposes not avowed which were much nearer to his heart. It shows that the verses of Wycherley were rugged, feeble, and full of repetitions, and that whatever they possessed of strength and harmony was due to the revision of Pope. It shows that he furnished entire passages, and where the text is not explicit on the point he is careful to reclaim his contributions in the notes. It displays on the one hand the "first sprightly runnings" of the precocious young poet, and on the other the "last dull droppings" of the veteran author, who was verging upon his dotage. "If we were to judge," says Warburton, "of this set of letters by the manner of thinking and turn of expression, we should conclude that they were all mistitled, and that those given to the boy of sixteen were written by the man of seventy, and the contrary,—such sober sense, such gravity of manners, and so much judgment and knowledge of composition, enlivened with manly wit, distinguish those of Mr. Pope, while a childish jealousy, a puerile affectation, a lying at catch for points, together with a total contempt of method, make up the character of those of Mr. Wycherley." Warton transcribes the judgment of Warburton, and adds his testimony to the superiority of the letters of Pope. He says that he "has excelled Wycherley in his own way of striving to be always witty," and that "the perpetual attempt of the vain old man to be brilliant, the accumulation of simile upon simile, the antithesis, the cant of satire, the severity on authors, critics, and women, are sufficiently disgusting." In short, the whole effect of the correspondence was to display the infirmities of Wycherley and the [Pg xxxi] merits of Pope; and his mode of relieving his departed friend from the reproach of the posthumous poems was to reveal the secret that the only portions of them which might have done him credit were not his own, but the work of this zealous vindicator of his fame.

With such a futile excuse for printing the letters, Pope was anxious to throw the responsibility upon some other person. He was the intimate friend of Edward, the second Earl of Oxford, who, without being possessed of much ability, courted the society of eminent men, and who, with no great tincture of literature, had inherited from his father a passion for collecting books and

manuscripts. His correspondence with the poet descended, with the rest of his personal papers, to his only child, who married the Duke of Portland in 1734. From the Duchess the papers passed to her eldest daughter, Lady Elizabeth, wife to the third Viscount Weymouth, who subsequently became the first Marquess of Bath. The Oxford manuscripts were consequently removed to Longleat, where they have remained ever since among the treasures of a library which is worthy of the regal edifice it adorns.[19] In Pope's letters to his friend we have his own record of the device he adopted. He wrote to Lord Oxford in September, 1729, and complained that the publication of Wycherley's posthumous poems was derogatory to their author, as well as to the critic who had advised him to re-cast them. "Something," he said, "will be necessary to be done to clear both his and my reputation, which the letters under his hand will abundantly do; for which particular reason I would desire to have them lodged in your lordship's hands." He had been slow in discovering that something was necessary to be done to clear the reputation of his deceased friend; for Theobald's book had come forth in 1728, and it was now the autumn of 1729. His tardy zeal appears to have been entirely begotten by the idea that it could be made the pretext for producing the correspondence; but having once conceived the scheme, he did not allow it to [Pg xxxii] languish. On the 6th of October he advanced a step further, and began to shadow forth the real object of the request. He informed Lord Oxford that some of the letters were to be printed, and asked permission to state that they were already in his library, "which," says he, "they shall be as soon as you will give orders to any one to receive them." "I would not," he went on, "appear myself as publisher of them, but any one else may, or even the bookseller be supposed to have procured copies of them,—formerly or now, it is equal. Certain it is that no other way can justice be rendered to the memory of a man to whom I had the first obligations of friendship, almost in my childhood." Lord Oxford merely replied that if the documents were left in a box with the porter, the man had orders to place it in the library, and that any mention of that library would be agreeable to its owner;[20] but he took no notice of the intimation that the poet designed to ascribe the publication to an imaginary agent. Pope now considered him to be sufficiently prepared, and his next letter disclosed the whole of the scheme, and at the same time announced its execution. It then appeared that his noble dupe, who, as he was both weak and amiable, was expected to prove a submissive tool, had been asked to become the keeper of the manuscripts, that he might be held up to the world as their publisher. "I am extremely obliged to you," Pope wrote to him, "for your kind permission to quote your library, and to mention it in what manner I pleased. I consulted Mr. Lewis upon the turn of the preface, and have exceeded perhaps my commission on one point, though we both judged it the right way; for I have made the publishers say that your lordship permitted them a copy of some of the papers from the library, where the originals remain as testimonies of the truth. It is indeed no more than a justice due to the dead and to the living author."[21] In other words, his lordship was asserted to have permitted the bookseller to print the papers in his library, when they were not even sent to his house till after they were printed, and this fiction was fathered upon him without so much as his leave being [Pg xxxiii] asked, or his having been suffered to read a single line of the work he was stated to have authorised. When Pope alleged that the proceeding was "no more than a justice due to the dead and the living author," he must have hoped that the outrage to Lord Oxford of which he had been guilty in committing the act, would appear to be diminished by the assurance with which he communicated it. His deceptions were not confined to the preface. He shortly afterwards wrote to Swift, and contrived to mention that he had contracted a friendship at sixteen with a man of seventy. "I speak," he said, "of old Mr. Wycherley, some letters of whom, by-the-bye, and of mine, the booksellers have got and printed, not without the concurrence of a noble friend of mine and yours. I do not much approve of it, though there is nothing in it for me to be ashamed of, because I will not be ashamed of anything I do not do myself, or of anything that is not immoral, but merely dull."[22] The booksellers had printed the letters with the concurrence of a noble friend, and the noble friend had never heard a word on the subject till the printing was completed. Pope did not much approve of it, and he had protested to Lord Oxford that in no other way could justice be rendered to the memory of a man to whom he had the first obligations of friendship. He would not be ashamed of what he did not do himself, and he alone had edited the work and sent it to the press. The value of his asseverations may be measured by the triple falsehood he volunteered to Swift. He was aware that the arguments by which he hoped to persuade Lord Oxford to become his dupe would not impose upon the penetrating understanding of the Dean, and he therefore openly repudiated what he was unable to excuse. If the publication had vindicated Wycherley, it would have been its own justification; but as it was put forth to do honour to Pope, he sacrificed his veracity to avoid the imputation of vanity. He cruelly sneered, in his "Prologue to the Satires" at the poor garretteer, who urged the plea for printing his compositions that he was "obliged by hunger and request of friends." The poet had not the excuse of hunger, and he improved upon the model he satirised when he pretended that *his* friends had [Pg xxxiv] taken his papers, and printed them against his will.

The deception which Pope practised was never suspected till it was revealed by his correspondence with Lord Oxford, which has hitherto remained in manuscript. The repetition of the attempt on a more elaborate scale was less successful, and it has always been believed by the immense majority of inquirers that the promulgation of the collection of 1735, which the poet vehemently denounced as an act of intolerable treachery, was from first to last his own deed. "It seems," says Johnson, "that Pope being desirous of printing his letters, and not knowing how to do, without imputation of vanity, what has in this country been done very rarely, contrived an appearance of compulsion, that when he could complain that his letters were surreptitiously published, he might decently and defensively publish them himself."[23] Fresh facts have rendered the evidence against him stronger than ever, and the whole derives increased force

from the information we now possess that he had previously had recourse to a kindred falsehood. In the first case he made a tool of a friend; in the second, he varied his plan, and made a tool of an enemy.

Pope tells us, in the preface to the authorised edition of his correspondence, which he brought out in quarto in 1737, that his disgust at the publication of his letters to Cromwell, and "the apprehension of more treatment of the same kind, put him upon recalling as many as he could from those who he imagined had kept any."[24] He applied to his friend Caryll, in December, 1726, to surrender his collection; and, on renewing the request a few days later, he added, "I have desired the same thing of Mrs. Blount, with whose late worthy husband I entertained so long a correspondence, and of all others." It was more than two years before Caryll could be induced to comply with the demand, and it would seem that Mrs. Blount was little less backward; for, on November 28, 1729, Pope wrote to Swift, "I *lately* received from the widow of one dead correspondent, and the father of another,[25] several of my own letters of about fifteen and [Pg xxxv] twenty years old." When the poet had gleaned together all the letters he could extort, "he immediately," he says, "lessened the number by burning three parts in four of them: the rest he spared, not in any preference of their style or writing, but merely as they preserved the memory of some friendships which will ever be dear to him, or set in a true light some matters of fact from which the scribblers of the time had taken occasion to asperse either his friends or himself." He was not more anxious to destroy the three parts than to secure the fourth from destruction. "He laid by the originals together with those of his correspondents, and caused a copy to be taken to deposit in the library of a noble friend, that in case either of the revival of slanders, or the publication of surreptitious letters during his life or after, a proper use might be made of them."[26] The noble friend was Lord Oxford, and the request to be allowed to place the letters in his library was made by Pope in September, 1729, when he stated that "he had had it at heart for half a year and more." Upon obtaining Lord Oxford's consent, he had the correspondence transcribed under his own inspection; and on October 16 he says, "I am causing the manuscripts to be fairly written, and hope at your lordship's return to be the presenter of them in person." By his own avowal he had carefully culled his letters, had prepared the selected portions for some public purpose, and had taken the unusual precaution of preserving them in duplicate. The end which he declared they were intended to serve was a palpable pretence. He never specified any slanders they refuted, and he could have had little idea of employing them to test the truth of surreptitious letters when he began by burning three parts of the collection, and only retained a fourth. The manifest fact was, that, while he was desirous of consigning to oblivion those portions of his correspondence which would not add to his reputation, he was eager to circulate the picked specimens which he imagined would promote his fame.

No advance seems to have been made towards the accomplishment of his design till 1733, when Curll advertised a life of Pope. An unknown person who wrote a feigned hand, and who signed his [Pg xxxvi] letters with the initials P. T., then opened a correspondence with the bookseller, and furnished some information upon the genealogy of the poet. He vindicated him from the charge of plebeian descent, and affirmed that he sprung from the same stock as Lord Downe.[27] This assertion was repeated by Pope in one of the notes to his "Prologue to the Satires," though Mr. Pottinger, his cousin, ridiculed the "fine pedigree," which had never been heard of in the family, and which there is nothing to confirm.[28] There is thus at starting a curious identity between the apocryphal statements of P. T. and the apocryphal statements of Pope. But as P. T. must have had access to the manuscripts in the keeping of Lord Oxford, he might be supposed to have found the account among the memoranda of the poet, and no great stress could be laid upon the coincidence to prove that P. T. was Pope in disguise, if the general tenor of the correspondence did not indicate its origin.

There was a feud between Pope and Curll. The bookseller believed that the poet had drugged him with an emetic, he had been subsequently satirised in the Dunciad, and he had lost no opportunity of retaliating. An uncompromising panegyric upon his antagonist would have run counter to his prejudices, and while P. T. is careful to tell nothing which is not for the honour of Pope, he has the precaution to consult the antipathies of Curll. He pretends that the poet, with whom he was formerly well acquainted, has treated him like a stranger, and that he cannot give so good an account of his manners as of his parentage. He promises, if he receives encouragement, to make these moral deficiencies the subject of a future letter, "without entering into anything in anywise libellous." He omitted, however, in his next communication, to keep this part of his engagement, and never reverted to it. He had spoken of Pope's family in the same flattering and perhaps fictitious terms as Pope himself; but, in spite of his pledge, and his animosity, he forbore to relate the minutest particular to the discredit of the poet. The [Pg xxxvii] inconsistency between the assumed character and the actual conduct of P. T. is much too glaring. An enemy would have been far less partial and considerate.

The first communication of P. T. was dated October 1733. He directed Curll to signify the acceptance of his offer by inserting in the Daily Advertiser the notice, "E. C. hath received a letter, and will comply with P. T." This Curll did, and on the 15th of November got an answer from P. T., in which the true purpose of the manœuvre transpires. Instead of sending traits of the defects in Pope's manners, he announces that he has "a large collection of his letters from the former part of his days till the year 1727, which will alone make the most authentic memoirs of him that could be." He adds that they will form a four or five shilling volume, and "yet I expect no more," he says, "than what will barely pay a transcriber, that the originals may be preserved in mine or your hands to vouch for the truth of them." He appealed to the hatred as well as to the

avarice of the bookseller. He again asserted that he had experienced bad treatment from Pope and that his sole motive was "to bestow upon him" the same "care" which Curll had done already.[29] Again his thirst for retaliation ended in homage, for the collection consisted of the identical letters which the poet had prepared for the press, and which were intended to raise instead of to lower his reputation. The conduct of P. T., who, having abjured profit and only feigned revenge, was to get nothing by his roguery, is altogether incomprehensible, if we are to suppose that he was what he professed; but his conduct ceases to be a mystery if P. T. was Pope, who, having finished editing his letters, may be presumed to have had the same desire to find a pretext for printing them as he had exhibited in the instance of the correspondence with Wycherley.

The point upon which the bargain went off for a time is equally significant. P. T. enclosed an advertisement of the letters, and required as a preliminary that it should be put forth by Curll, "for I shall not," he said, "be justified to some people on whom I have dependence, unless it seem to the public eye as no entire act of mine; but I may be justified and excused if, after they see [Pg xxxviii] such a collection is made by you, I acknowledge I sent some letters to contribute thereto."[30] This reasoning carries its own refutation. If his patrons could believe that Curll, without his aid, had got at the bulk of the correspondence, they would quite as readily have credited that he had not assisted the bookseller to the remainder. Nor is it likely that the men who would have renounced P. T. if he had been a principal in the business, would have connived at his becoming an accomplice. His plea was as fanciful as his desire for revenge; but assume that Pope was the real negotiator and his motive is transparent. The advertisement would have threatened that very surreptitious publication of his letters, against which he affirmed that he kept his own version in readiness. He would have repudiated the impending piracy, and hastened in self-defence to commit the genuine edition to the press. The promise contained in the advertisement, that "the originals would be shown at Curll's when the book was published," would have empowered him to give an air of imposture to the transaction, and to damage his foe, who when challenged would not have been able to produce the documents. According to the language which Pope uttered in the name of P. T. he did expect to be justified in his proceedings by means of the advertisement, but not at all in the manner which he wished the bookseller to believe.

All the conditions required by Pope seemed met together in Curll. He was an enemy, and could be denounced when he had been deceived. He had printed the letters to Cromwell without the consent of the poet, and it would readily be credited that he had repeated the act. He was not nice in his notions of honour, and he might be expected to catch at an offer, however discreditable, which promised both profit and revenge. But whatever might be his greediness and his malice, they had not swallowed up his caution, and notwithstanding that P. T. wrote again to express his dissatisfaction that no advertisement appeared, Curll forbore to announce letters he did not possess, at the bidding of a conspirator whose name and person he did not know. The subject in consequence slept from November 1733 till March 1735, when the poet was [Pg xxxix] meditating some fresh proceeding respecting his correspondence, for on the third of that month, he requested Lord Oxford to send him by the hearer "the bound book of copies of letters," which, he wanted, he said, "to inspect for a day or two." There are transcripts among the Oxford papers of some of the letters of Wycherley to Pope, which appeared in 1729. There are transcripts of Pope's correspondence with Atterbury, which appeared in 1737. There are transcripts of a large part of the Swift correspondence, which appeared in 1741. But while the earlier and later letters are preserved on loose sheets the bound book has vanished, and there is not a single transcript of any letter which was first given to the world in the collection of 1735. The probability is that the book which Pope professed to require for a day or two was never returned. The circumstance is the more suspicious because he had the originals at home, which would have served him for reference, whereas if his object was to commit the letters clandestinely to the press he would use the copy which had been specially prepared for the purpose,—which had been expurgated, altered, and sometimes remodelled. Accordingly we find that P. T. reappears at this crisis with the correspondence in print. He had failed to lure Curll by a promise of letters which he would not produce. He now changed his tactics, and offered him an entire impression of the book.

This second act of the plot was opened by a communication of Curll to Pope on the 22nd of March, three weeks after the letters had been withdrawn from the library of Lord Oxford. He invited the poet to close their differences, and, as a proof of his readiness to oblige him, sent him the old advertisement of P. T. Curll asserted that he took the step "by direction."[31] When he republished this statement he volunteered another, which seems to be inconsistent with it, and says that the discovery of the advertisement, when arranging his papers, determined him to propose a cessation of hostilities.[32] As he was unconscious, however, of any contradiction in the double account, it is probable that he may have been influenced by some concurring advice. It strengthens this view that Pope, in an anonymous "Narrative," which he subsequently put forth, [Pg xl] reports what Curll told a few days later, "to persons who sifted him in the affair,"[33] which shows that the bookseller had people about him in the interest of the poet, and these sifters, as the critic in the Athenæum remarks, might, when needful, become prompters. The progress of events proved that the letter of Curll was at least singularly opportune, and if not written "by direction," was one of those fortunate chances which often contribute to the success of the best laid schemes. Pope replied to it by inserting an advertisement in the "Grub Street Journal," the "Daily Journal," and "The Daily Post Boy." He stated in this manifesto, that Curll "pretended that P. T. had offered him to print a large collection of Pope's letters," that he would have no correspondence with Curll, that he knew no such person as P. T., that he believed the letters to be a forgery, and that he should not trouble himself in the matter.[34] The poet might not choose

to have any intercourse with a former enemy of no good fame, but it was a strange return for his peace-offering that he should advertise an insult on him, and equally singular when he was incredulous, and had resolved not to trouble himself about the matter, that he should parade in the newspapers the contents of a private note. Yet extraordinary as was his conduct, if he had not any covert design, it was consistent enough if he was the agent in the plot for bringing his letters before the world. His advertisement would convey the impression that he could not have connived at the publication he was contriving; it would afford an opening for P. T. to come again upon the stage; and by infuriating Curll it would induce him to close at once with the proposal which was ready to be made to him. In conformity with this supposition P. T., who had not communicated with the bookseller for upwards of two years, saw the advertisement directly it appeared, and he lost not an instant in informing Curll that since their last negotiation he had printed the letters.[35] It was true that Curll had betrayed him to Pope, but P. T. was generous and would still give him the preference. The game required that Pope should be incapable of [Pg xli] being conciliated, and P. T. of taking offence.

P. T. demanded that Curll should show he was in earnest by putting forth the old advertisement. Curll complied, and the negotiation went forward. An agent was sent to him who assumed the name of Smythe and professed to be a clergyman, but who was so little conversant with the character he personated that he wore a clerical gown and lawyer's bands. On the 7th of May he went to Curll's house at night; and, to bring the bargain to a conclusion, exhibited to him most of the sheets of the volume, and a dozen original letters.[36] Before Curll had published this statement Pope, for the purpose of discrediting the promise which had been made in the advertisement, that the originals should be produced when the book appeared, had committed himself to the assertion that they all remained in their proper place.[37] They must nevertheless, observes the critic in the Athenæum, have been out of his possession, and doing service on the evening when Smythe trafficed with Curll. The bookseller was not likely to be deceived, for he had the Cromwell correspondence in his keeping, and knew the poet's handwriting well.[38] He was as little likely to deceive, for he told the fact in the course of a straight-forward story, without perceiving, or at least without pointing out, its force in attesting the connivance of Pope.

Fifty copies of the letters were in the possession of Curll by the 12th of May, and were speedily sold. Smythe sent for him at one o'clock to a tavern in Leicester Fields, and half an hour afterwards one hundred and ninety additional copies were brought by a couple of porters, who were directed to carry them to the shop of the bookseller. There they were immediately seized by an order from the House of Lords, and Curll was commanded to attend next day.[39] The peers in 1722 had voted it a breach of privilege to publish the writings of any member of their body without his consent. Curll, in an advertisement which appeared for the first time that morning, had given a list of the persons to whom Pope's letters were addressed, and among the names were those of the Earl of Halifax and the Earl of Burlington. To print letters to lords was no [Pg xlii] offence. It was necessary that there should be letters from them, and of this there was no other indication than that the list of names was followed by the words,—"with the respective answers of each correspondent."[40] Curll asserted that the advertisement came to him through Smythe,[41] and the proceedings founded upon it in the hour that it issued wet from the press were, as Johnson states, instigated by Pope, "who attended to stimulate the resentment of his friends."[42] If he had never set eyes upon the book before it was published, curiosity would still have prompted him to turn over the leaves, and he must immediately have discovered that it did not contain a single letter from a peer. The wording of the advertisement may, therefore, be suspected to have been devised by him to afford a colour for what he must have known was a groundless prosecution. A committee was appointed to investigate the complaint. It met on the 14th of May, and the case would have ended as soon as it was begun, if Pope's spokesman, Lord Hay, who resided at Twickenham, and was one of his associates, had not adduced from a letter to Jervas a passage which he alleged to be a reflection on Lord Burlington. But the person who furnished the work to Curll had, by an elaborate device, provided against a charge which no one except its contriver could have foreseen. The fifty copies, which were sold on the morning of the 12th, before the power of the House of Lords was put in motion, contained the letter. Those which were furnished in the middle of the day, as if to meet the messenger sent to seize them, were all defective, and in every case the letter to Jervas was among the omissions.[43] Nor had the leaves which contained it been simply kept back, but every trace of it had been obliterated by [Pg xliii] an alteration at the printing-press. In the complete work the missing letter commenced on p. 115 of vol. ii.[44] and ended on p. 117. In the imperfect books a note on Trumbull, which began at p. 114, is carried on to the top of p. 115, and Pope's epitaph upon him, which appears in no other copies of the correspondence, is added to cover a little of the vacant space. The word "Finis" follows the note, though, in spite of this indication that the whole is concluded, the work recommences on p. 117 with the letters to Gay, which continue to p. 154.[45] The coincidence was far too extraordinary to be undesigned. Pope, who had incited the prosecution the very hour the book was published, and who had been in such haste to instruct Lord Hay that the debate in the House of Lords was concluded, and the sheets seized by two o'clock, could alone have adapted one batch to afford a pretext for the proceeding, and another batch to render the proceeding abortive,—he alone could have arranged the delivery of the respective parcels, and sent the fifty copies which contained the obnoxious passage, in time to be sold in the morning, and the one hundred and ninety copies in which it was wanting, just in time to be captured by the messenger from the House of Lords. His object was not to procure the confiscation of the correspondence, and stop the sale. He wished to simulate indignation, and divert suspicion from himself without

interfering with the success of the work, and he conducted the prosecution with so much care to ensure defeat that we may readily credit the assertion of Curll, "that the lords declared they had been made Pope's tools."[46]

While the copies seized by the messenger had not the letter to Jervas, they contained in compensation an address "to the reader," which was not in the first fifty copies sent to Curll. This preface betrays throughout the hand of Pope. The original proposition was that it should be furnished by Curll; and, notwithstanding the revenge by which he professed to be actuated, P. T. [Pg xliv] maintained that the poet ought to be mentioned with praise. "We must by no means," he said, "seem to use him with disregard, but rather commend, lest by any circumstances I writ to you the publisher be detected."[47] I This was seven years after the appearance of the Dunciad, and Pope was not so universally beloved as that the intimation that the correspondence was put forth by an enemy could direct suspicion to the culprit. The pretence was too palpable to impose upon any one, and P. T., who, among other motives for his procedure, probably mistrusted Curll's cordiality or skill in a panegyric, determined upon consideration to supply it himself. He was not sparing in his tribute. "Mr. Pope," he wrote, "has not any great cause to think the publication much offence to his modesty, or reflection on his judgment, when we take care to inform the public that there are few letters of his in this collection which were not written under twenty years of age. On the other hand, we doubt not the reader will be much more surprised to find at that early period so much variety of style, affecting sentiment, and justness of criticism in pieces which must have been writ in haste, very few perhaps ever re-viewed, and none intended for the eye of the public." [48] This was the very language of the poet. He coveted the distinction of precocity of talent, and was perpetually directing attention to the early age at which he affirmed, and sometimes falsely, that many of his letters and poems were penned. He asserted that his most finished epistles were thrown off in haste, which, as they were always held to bear the marks of labour in every sentence, is the last topic of praise that would have been selected by anybody else. He was anxious to persuade the world that they were not revised before they were published, and he prevaricated to foster the deception.[49] He protested that they were never meant for the press, which no one believed, and which could least of all be credited by the assumed traitor who transcribed them from the copy that had been deposited in the library of Lord Oxford to ensure [Pg xlv] their preservation. The vindictive P. T. was both so fortunate and so hearty in his commendations that he proved the mere echo of Pope in his self-applauding moods.

The other topics in the address "to the reader" were the same topics which were subsequently reiterated by the poet. In his narrative of the P. T. plot, and in the preface to the authorised edition of his correspondence, he relates the method by which the Cromwell letters were obtained as affording a vindication of his own collection.[50] P. T. was beforehand with him in citing the precedent to explain the means by which his piratical volume was formed, and to justify its publication.[51] The similarity of language and ideas in the mention of the Wycherley letters was much more peculiar. Lord Oxford appears to have refused to father the volume of 1729, for Pope never again alleged that he sent it to the press. But neither did the poet avow that he himself was responsible for its appearance. On the contrary, he renewed the false statement that the letters were not printed till after they were deposited in Lord Oxford's library, and spoke indefinitely of the agency through which they were given to the world. "It happened soon after," he says in his Narrative, "that the posthumous works of Mr. Wycherley were published in such a manner as could no way increase the reputation of that gentleman, who had been Mr. Pope's first correspondent and friend; and several of these letters so fully showed the state of that case that it was thought but justice to Mr. Wycherley's memory to print a few to discredit that imposition." [52] "The next year," he says, in the preface to the quarto of 1737, "the posthumous works of Mr. Wycherley were printed in a way disreputable enough to his memory. It was thought a justice due to him, to show the world his better judgment, and that it was his last resolution to have suppressed those poems. As some of the letters which had passed between him and our author cleared that point, they were published in 1729, with a few marginal notes added by a friend."[53] [Pg xlvi] "The letters to Mr. Wycherley," says P. T.'s address to the reader, "were procured some years since on account of a surreptitious edition of his posthumous works. As those letters showed the true state of that case, the publication of them was doing the best justice to the memory of Mr. Wycherley."[54] Pope misrepresented the tenor of the letters as an excuse for divulging them; but how came the vindictive P. T. to be the first to hit upon an untruth in which he had no sort of interest, and to serve the cause of his antagonist by promulgating the fanciful description? Pope ascribed the publication to an indefinite agency, to avoid acknowledging that he was the sole originator of the work; but how came his enemy P. T. to anticipate his wishes, and the ambiguous phraseology in which he conveyed them? The identity of thought and expression was the more singular that P. T., in a private communication to Curll, had confirmed the original story of the poet, and asserted that "a noble lord had handed to the press the letters of Wycherley."[55] To the world he varied the tale, and the variation was the same which was adopted a week or two afterwards by Pope.

A coincidence remains which more than all the rest proclaims Pope to be the author of the address "to the reader." Nothing would have served better his purpose in the prosecution than to prevail upon Curll to confess that the letters were of his own procuring and printing. Upon the seizure of the books Smythe wrote to him in the name of P. T., promising that he should have the work upon easier terms, and holding out the prospect of a second and more important volume of correspondence if he would keep secret the whole transaction, would assert that he had the

letters from different hands, and avow that he had printed them, as he did Cromwell's before.[56] The preface, which had never been seen by Curll, and which was appended, as if in anticipation of the event, to all the copies carried off to the House of Lords, contained the same tale he was [Pg xlvii] instructed to tell. "The collection," it said, "hath been owing to several cabinets, some drawn from thence by accidents, and others, even of those to ladies, voluntarily given. It is to one of that sex we are beholden for the whole correspondence with H. C[romwell] Esq., which letters being lent her by that gentleman she took the liberty to print." On the 12th of May, the day the work was published, Pope gave a similar account to Caryll of the mode by which the contents were procured. "What," he said, "makes me sick of writing is the shameless industry of such fellows as Curll, and the idle ostentation, or weak partiality of many of my correspondents, who have shown about my letters (which I never writ but in haste, and generally against the grain, in mere civility; for almost all letters are impertinent further than *Si vales, bene est; ego valeo*) to such a degree that a volume of two hundred or more are printed by that rascal. But he could never have injured me this way, had not my friends furnished him with the occasion, by keeping such wretched papers as they ought to have burned." The whole of this passage is an egregious specimen of misrepresentation and hypocrisy. A glance at the work must have revealed to Pope that the new letters it contained were those which had been returned to him,—the letters to Gay, Digby, Blount, and Caryll; that it comprised letters *to* as well as *from* him,[57]—letters of which he was the sole depositary; that the text was not taken from the originals, but from the copy he had amended and re-cast; and that it was, therefore, impossible that his acquaintances should have furnished materials which could only have been derived from one source,—the bound book in the Oxford library. His pretence that his letters were hasty and insignificant expressions of civility, when he had spared no pains in collecting and editing them; his affected indignation at his [Pg xlviii] friends "for keeping such wretched papers as they ought to have burned," when he himself had preserved them in duplicate, and designed them for publication; his transparent fiction that almost the entire circle of his correspondents,—Addison, Steele, Congreve, Gay, Walsh, Trumbull, Craggs, Digby, Blount, and others,—had been guilty of "idle ostentation or weak partiality," in showing these "wretched papers" to somebody who transcribed them for the press,—are all so many additional arguments to show the conscious guilt of Pope, and the gross and clumsy inventions by which he endeavoured to divert suspicion. The fable he concocted is, in its essential circumstance, identical with the fabulous story of P. T. While P. T. on his part is telling a falsehood to the public in the preface, and begging the bookseller to tell it in the House of Lords, Pope on his own behalf is telling the same falsehood in private to Caryll. This concurrence of misrepresentation between the letter of the poet, and P. T.'s address "to the reader" and instructions to Curll, could not have proceeded from independent and hostile persons.

Curll did not choose, when he was before the Committee of the House of Lords, to father the lie which had been suggested to him. The proceedings were adjourned from the 14th to the 15th, that the clerk might search through some more copies of the book for the missing letter to Jervas, and P. T. employed the interval in again pressing Curll to assume the entire responsibility of the work. He gently rebuked him for owning that the books were sent by an unknown hand which might, he said, "be thought shuffling, and induce inquiry and suspicion of some dark transaction;" and he assured him that the lords would consider him more sincere if he professed that he had the letters from different hands, and had printed them himself.[58] Curll repudiated the notion of evidencing his sincerity by deposing to a falsehood, and of silencing inquiry and suspicion by pretending that he had procured a quantity of manuscripts from a variety of persons whom he must have refused to name. "My defence," he replied, "is right; I only told the Lords I did not [Pg xlix] know from whence the books came. This was strict truth and prevented all further inquiry."[59] The pertinacity of P. T. in endeavouring to persuade the bookseller to commit himself to a lie was as gratuitous as it was shameless, for he had no interest in the deception he urged. Curll had several weeks before announced to Pope that this mysterious agent was the collector of the letters, and Pope in communicating the intelligence to the public declared that he knew no such person. The renewed mention of a couple of fanciful initials could not increase P. T.'s risk of detection, any more than it could signify whether he had sold the correspondence to Curll to be printed, or had printed it first and sold it afterwards. But what would have been purposeless in P. T. was important to Pope. The friends who had returned him the letters which appeared in the volume must have joined with the public in ascribing the work to him, and it was of the utmost moment that Curll should absolve him from the imputation. Having entrapped his victim into a false confession, he would have loudly appealed to it to prove that he was not only innocent but injured. He would have complained to the world, as he had done to Caryll, of the "idle ostentation and weak partiality" which had caused his hasty and artless letters to be printed, and his vanity would have been doubly gratified by the appearance that his choicest compositions were the careless scratchings of his pen, and that the personal and literary merits they displayed had been forced into day to the grievous annoyance of his reluctant modesty.

Every incident which arose in the progress of the controversy strengthened the case against Pope. At the same time that Smythe, on the behalf of P. T., exhorted Curll to give false evidence before the House of Lords, he informed the bookseller of the method by which a portion of the correspondence had been acquired. P. T. had been engaged with a noble friend of Mr. Pope in preparing for the press the letters of Wycherley, and had caused some extra copies to be struck off. These, he said, "put into his head the thought of collecting more," and when he printed the materials he had since accumulated he imitated as closely as possible the type and paper of the [Pg l] stored up sheets.[60] P. T. made a merit of the revelation, and wished that Curll should see in it a proof of the openness and confidence with which he was treated. In reality it was an endeavour

to explain the awkward circumstance that the prose part of Pope's Wycherley had been done up with the letters of 1735. The publication of 1729 was entitled the second volume of Wycherley's "Posthumous Works," and contained a couple of notes referring to poems which were inserted or omitted in what was called "the present edition." But as Pope's letters were not an edition of Wycherley's Works, the absurdity of the reference might have led at any moment to the exposure of the fact that the sheets of the old book had been transferred to the new, and it was better at once, by an air of candid confession, to account for the importation than to run the risk of discovery. Curll had soon a rival version to give of the manner in which these sheets were procured. He announced that Gilliver, who published the Wycherley volume of 1729, had declared that Pope bought of him the remainder of the impression, consisting of six hundred copies, and directed the other letters comprised in the volume of 1735 to be printed to match them.[61] There can be no difficulty in deciding between these opposite statements. The assertion of P. T. we know to be a falsehood, for Pope himself, and not the noble friend, prepared the letters of Wycherley for the press. None of the inferior agents could have carried off any large number of books, without detection, nor could have stowed them away from 1729 to 1735. The motive to thieve what was already published could only have been lucre, and yet thirty pounds were taken for three hundred octavos of 470[62] pages each, when but 50 of these pages were derived from the sheets that cost nothing. If, too, there was any truth in P. T.'s story, he was encumbered with the pile of stolen goods when he opened the correspondence with Curll in 1733, whereas it is clear from his communications at that time that the idea of supplying printed books had not then occurred to him. The trick which had been practised was known to Pope when he put forth his "Narrative," and he might have obtained a clue to the culprit by an investigation at the printing-office. He nevertheless made no comments on the subject, nor, [Pg li] loudly as he exclaimed against the abstraction of his letters, did he breathe a whisper against the abstraction of the sheets of the Wycherley. Not a single specimen, again, of the work of 1729 is now known to exist, which is in some degree explained by its absorption into the volume of 1735; but, on the supposition that the sheets transferred to that volume were merely extra copies, struck off secretly for P. T., there is no reason why the Wycherley of 1729 should have disappeared. The conflicting statement of Curll is not embarrassed by any of these difficulties, and was never denied by either Gilliver or Pope, which is of itself sufficient to establish its truth, when we bear in mind that, instead of confronting calumny with silence, the poet denounced every charge he could repel.

The letter urging Curll anew to make a false statement of the means by which he obtained the correspondence, was received by him on the morning of May 15. "I am," he said, in his reply, "just again going to the Lords to finish Pope."[63] He verified his boast. In place of adopting the advice of P. T., he showed the letter which contained it.[64] Pope's double dealing had been strongly suspected on the previous day, when it was discovered that the copies seized had been altered in anticipation of the charge he preferred. There was now a second coincidence to connect him with the plot. The letter produced by Curll revealed that the correspondence had been taken from the archives of Lord Oxford, and that the story Pope had volunteered to Caryll, and which he undoubtedly reiterated to his friends among the Lords, was not only an invention to conceal the truth, but the same invention which P. T. exhorted the bookseller to adopt. Some step was necessary to save the poet from discomfiture. He therefore put forth an advertisement in the "Daily Post-boy," acknowledging, what he was no longer able to deny, that "some of the letters could only be procured from his own library, or that of a noble Lord," and promising twenty guineas to either Smythe or P. T. if they would "discover the whole affair," and forty guineas if they "could prove that they had acted by the direction of any other person."[65] This was an old [Pg lii] device of the poet. To escape from the obloquy he incurred by an impious and indecent parody of the First Psalm, he inserted an advertisement in the "Postman," offering a reward of three guineas for the discovery of the person who sent it to the press. The publisher, Mrs. Burleigh, declared that she possessed the manuscript in his own handwriting, and expressed her readiness to produce it, but he never ventured to accept the challenge or to contradict her assertion.[66] Pope did not acknowledge that the essence of a falsehood was in the deceit. "If you have seen a late advertisement," he wrote to Miss Blount, August 7, 1716, alluding probably to this transaction, "you will know that I have not told a lie, which we both abominate, but equivocated pretty genteelly." Without in strict language disclaiming the authorship, he intended that the reader should understand it as a disclaimer. His advertisement respecting the letters was a kindred case. He meant it to be received as a denial of all connivance at the publication of his correspondence, and in strict language he denied nothing. He said that the book was printed by P. T., in combination with Smythe, which was equally true, if P. T. was Pope. He could use the phrase "*some* of the letters," when driven to confess that they were procured from the library of Lord Oxford, because the volume contained the Cromwell and Wycherley letters, which had been printed before. He could hold out the bait of rewards to himself without any risk of betrayal, and the manœuvre must have been adopted in concert with his accomplice Smythe, upon whose secresy and fidelity he was already dependent.

The Committee of the Lords reported that there was not a letter from any peer in the work, and since no law had been infringed, they recommended that the seized copies should be restored.[67] Motte, the bookseller, writing to Swift in July 31, 1735, says, that when Curll was before the House, "he was ruffled for the publication in a manner as, to a man of less impudence than his own, would have been very uneasy." With whatever virulence he may have been attacked by the partisans of the poet, he was invulnerable from his want of character as well as from his want of [Pg liii] shame, and he had the gratification of inflicting wounds he could not receive. "Pope," he said to

the Lords, "has a knack of versifying, but in prose I think myself a match for him."[68] He afterwards boasted that he had not only vindicated his assertion, but that he might affirm "with regard to all the attacks made upon him by the petulant little gentleman,—*veni, vidi, vici*."[69] His ally, P. T., derived no satisfaction from this victory over their common antagonist. Curll had proved a less ready dupe than had been anticipated, and his insidious prompter reproached him for his adherence to the truth. Smythe informed him that P. T. was out of humour with him for not "owning the printing" at his final attendance before the Committee of the House of Lords; that he had probably by his wilfulness lost a future copyright of immense value, and that his imperfect sheets would not be completed, nor additional books supplied, unless he paid twenty pounds in advance.[70] The reply of Curll was lofty and defiant. He said he cared nothing for any man's ill-humour; that he would never stoop to own a fact of which he was innocent; that he had acted justly, which was what he should always think wisely; that he despised the future copyright of which hopes were held out to him; that he would have no more dealings with such dark suspicious characters, and that unless he was frankly and fairly treated, he would print all the letters he had received from them.[71] P. T. had previously stipulated that his letters should be given up to him,[72] but Curll had the precaution to take copies before he returned the originals, and, to avoid cavil, he stated that he would make an affidavit of their accuracy. The effect of the threat showed the alarm it excited. Smythe completely changed his tone. He no longer prefers complaints against Curll, nor exacts conditions. He is his friend and servant, and will bring him the remainder of the impression on Thursday. He professes to be tired with the caprice of P. T. and has hardly written the words when he announces that he has been sent for by him, and hears [Pg liv] from the messenger that he is in good humour.[73] Though P. T. was awed, Curll no longer trusted him, and before Thursday came the bookseller had advertised what he called, from the signature of the chief conspirator, the "Initial Correspondence."[74]

P. T. and Smythe put forth a counter-advertisement on the 23rd of May, in which they declared that they would retaliate by committing to the press the letters of Curll.[75] The ostensible motive of the mock clergyman and his employer was to cover the bookseller with infamy. The effect, they said, will be, "to open a scene of baseness and foul-dealing that will sufficiently show to mankind his character and conduct." The correspondence does not bear out this description. The documents show that the lying and trickery rested with P. T., while the bookseller was veracious in his assertions and straight-forward in his proceedings. "That Curll," says Johnson, "gave a true account of the transaction it is reasonable to believe, because no falsehood was ever detected." [76] It was his boast that falsehood had been his abhorrence throughout the discussion, and he drew vaunting comparisons between Pope's addiction to the vice, and his own detestation of it. [77] His very failings in one direction had helped to sustain his virtue in another. He had too much effrontery to care to descend to duplicity, and it is impossible to read his many controversial manifestoes without perceiving that he was in general as truthful as he was impudent. In the instance of Pope's letters, there is the original blot, that he saw no discredit in publishing papers which he supposed to be purloined; but he had already avowed the fact before the House of Lords, and the crime was more than shared by P. T. In everything else the acts and language of the bookseller contrast favourably with the meanness and falsehoods of his correspondent, who would not have assisted to disseminate the record of his own misdeeds. But it was different with the poet. He must have seen that the inevitable tendency of the "Initial Correspondence" would [Pg lv] be to convict him of the offences he had tried to fasten upon Curll. His single chance of diminishing its disastrous effect was to promulgate it as evidence upon his own side, and not to allow it to come forth solely as the hostile statement of an opponent. The proceeding in P. T. would have been to aid in propagating the proofs of P. T.'s "baseness and foul-dealing." In Pope it was an effort to throw upon the initials the stigma which would otherwise have fallen upon Pope himself.

The resolution of P. T. to proclaim his own disgrace was less extraordinary than his manner of doing it. It was announced on the 24th of May, that "the clergyman concerned with P. T. and Edmund Curll to publish Mr. Pope's letters hath discovered the whole transaction, and a narrative of the same will be speedily printed."[78] Hence it appears that Smythe had made a full confession to the author of the "Narrative," and P. T. must be presumed to have been a party to it, since he transmitted the originals of the communications he had addressed to Curll, together with Curll's replies. This "Narrative" was the work of Pope. He alone could have furnished several of the particulars, together with the letter which Curll wrote to him in March, 1735; and the statements, the misrepresentations,[79] the reflections, and sometimes the words, are the same [Pg lvi] which he employed in the preface to the quarto of 1737. Hitherto, P. T. had been so fearful of detection by the poet, that in the language of Smythe, he suspected his own shadow. He now unmasked himself without a motive, and without reserve, to the man he had injured. He had nothing to tell of Curll but what Curll had insisted upon relating before the House of Lords, and the only novel information he could give was the details of his own thefts and frauds. This, indeed, was what Pope would chiefly have cared to learn. He would have been eager to ascertain who the person could be that had got access to his letters, and the means by which they were copied and printed; and he certainly would not have called anything "a discovery of the *whole* transaction," which contained no revelation upon the only points of the least importance. But it is extremely improbable that the wary P. T. should have wantonly turned self-accuser. To the last this fabulous personage continued to act in the manner which was most convenient to Pope, and the true explanation of the pretended confession is, that it was a fiction of the poet to account for his possession of the correspondence with Curll.

More inexplicable than all was the forbearance of Pope to produce the facts in his "Narrative." He might feel bound to suppress the names of culprits who had volunteered a confession of their crime; but he might have told the manner of the theft, and specified the printer employed by P. T. He refrained, on the contrary, from revealing the particulars which would have absolved him from an odious imputation. He kept back every tittle of evidence which would have acquitted him if he was innocent, and have implicated him if he was guilty. His story has none of the circumstantiality of an actual occurrence; his statements are as indefinite as the agents were shadowy. He disclosed the dealings of P. T. with Curll, which Curll had noised abroad, and was about to publish, but he does not bestow a thought upon the far more essential question of the [Pg lvii] mode in which the correspondence was purloined, and seems to be satisfied himself, and wishes that the world should be satisfied likewise, with learning that a person, whose only designation was a couple of initials, sent the letters ready printed to the bookseller. Obliged to abandon his original story of the means by which they found their way to the press, Pope had now some powerful reason for diverting attention from the subject, and leaving the mystery unexplained.

He speedily manifested his desire to consign P. T. to oblivion, and reverted to his former scheme of imputing the publication to Curll. In the very "Narrative" which showed that the bookseller had no share in gathering together the correspondence, Pope inculcated the idea that he had been active in the task. He charged him with having put forth an advertisement of the letters to Cromwell, in which "he promised encouragement to all persons who should send him more," and adds, a little lower down, "By these honest means Mr. Curll went on increasing his collection."[80] The accused challenged him to produce the advertisement, and the accuser was silent. He persevered nevertheless in misrepresenting to his acquaintances Curll's part in the business. Writing to Fortescue, on March 26, 1736, of the volume of 1735, he calls it "the book of letters which Curll printed and spared not," though the poet's own witnesses, P. T. and Smythe, had demonstrated, even in their anger against Curll, that he had nothing to do with procuring or printing the letters, and was merely the vendor of the copies he had bought. In Pope's complaints to his other friends, Curll is the single culprit to whom he ascribed the injury he had suffered, and on no one occasion did he go through the form of keeping up his P. T. fiction. His misrepresentations to the world at large were more covertly expressed. He spoke in his authorised edition of the "publisher's own accounts in his prefaces," and, as his first example, quotes P. T.'s address "to the reader," which he knew from the letters of Smythe had never been seen by the publisher till it was shown him at the bar of the House of Lords. To help out the mis-statement in the text his reference in a note is made to Curll's reprint of the collection of 1735, [Pg lviii] instead of to the volume in which the address "to the reader" was originally produced.[81] Nor was it, perhaps, without design that in the catalogue of surreptitious editions, prefixed to an octavo impression of his letters which appeared in 1737, he put first in the list, as if it had been the parent of the rest, an edition of Curll, which was taken from the volume of P. T., and allotted the second place to the primitive text. He never revived the clumsy fabrication he had been compelled to promulgate in his "Narrative." In private he transferred the crimes of P. T. to Curll; in public he insinuated what he dared not assert for fear of retaliation; but neither in public nor private was anything heard of the phantom who had purloined, printed, and sold the correspondence. Had his existence been real, or the invention been credited, Pope would not have persisted in calumniating the bookseller for want of a culprit upon whom to lay the offence.

Faulkner, the Dublin printer, told Dr. Birch, in 1749, that James Worsdale was the person who went to Curll, by Pope's direction, in the habit of a clergyman.[82] Before the entry in Birch's diary was published, Dr. Johnson had given the same account in his "Lives of the Poets."[83] Worsdale was a painter, dramatist, and actor, and, as if his triple calling was insufficient for his versatile disposition, he followed a fourth, and was hired, Johnson says, to conduct clandestine negotiations. When an attempt was made to extort money from the second son of Sir Robert Walpole, he was engaged to mix with the conspirators, to win their confidence, and to betray it. They were convicted of the fraud, and Worsdale, in giving his evidence, "acted with so much life and spirit the several parts he had performed during the time of sifting out the mystery as gave no small diversion to the court."[84] According to Horace Walpole, the poet had employed this personator and detector of rogues in his more reputable capacity, to make several copies of a portrait of Atterbury.[85] He seemed formed to carry on the traffic with Curll, and since it was his profession to aid in plots, he might be expected to be a secret as well as a willing assistant. [Pg lix] Johnson, who attached some weight to his evidence, says he was of doubtful veracity,—an objection which would have applied to the disclosures of any representative of Smythe; for no upright man would have played a part in a scheme of deception. His assertion would have been worthless, if it had stood alone; but it at least falls in with the numerous circumstances which all conjoin to criminate Pope.

If his impatience to print the Wycherley correspondence renders it probable that he would be anxious to print the more important collection which he had sedulously prepared for the press; if the deception he practised in 1729, to avoid being taxed with the proceeding, and to throw it upon somebody else, favours the belief that he repeated the deception in 1735 with the same intention; and if the various facts connected with the publication unite to prove with accumulative force that he was the sole contriver of it, there is the further argument that no other person had the slightest interest in perpetrating the act. "The numbers," says Dr. Johnson, "offered to sale by the private messengers, showed that the hope of gain could not have been the motive to the impression." Money was so little the object that a parcel of the books was sent to Lintot, "for which no price was ever demanded, as he had made known his resolution not to pay a

porter, and consequently not to deal with a nameless agent."[86] Any person in the employment of Lord Oxford, who had access to the papers, and was competent to transcribe them, would not have undergone the toil, and risked detection, disgrace, and ruin for the sake of a few pounds which he must have shared with his accomplice Smythe. The vaunted revenge of P. T. could not have been the motive; for beyond the empty profession, it was belied alike by his words and deeds. The poet in truth loved himself too well to be able to counterfeit speciously the part of a hater. P. T. published the letters which Pope meant to be published; he lauded Pope in Pope's own strain; he took the measures which were most to Pope's advantage; he reflected Pope's vanities, weaknesses, and falsehoods, and behaved throughout in a manner as identical with [Pg lx] Pope's position as it was remote from his own. Lucre and revenge were propensities to which P. T. was a stranger, though he aspired to a reputation for the latter, and the only passion apparent in his conduct is his mania to gratify by dishonesty and deceit the literary ambition of Pope.

"The engineer was hoist with his own petard," and Curll, the intended victim, had the satisfaction of being the executioner. The poet plainly considered him to be a scoundrel whom he had a right to damage by any means, foul or fair. Walter Scott believed that his inveterate persecutor administered the emetic to him, and extraordinary as it may seem that a celebrated man of letters should adopt this method of punishing an obnoxious bookseller, the language of Pope obliges us to accept the conclusion[87]. The trick was puerile and degrading, but it inflicted no injury. The prosecution in the House of Lords, and the subsequent effort to fasten his own misdeeds upon his enemy was an outrage of a different description. To lure him into purchasing a book, and then to employ the influence conferred by genius in founding charges upon the act which were absolutely groundless, and in branding him with the disgrace which belonged to his accuser, was a baseness of which the lowest Grub-street scribbler satirised in the Dunciad would probably not have been capable. A spirit of unfairness, which, bad as it might be, was less injurious, pervaded his commercial dealings with Curll. The bookseller paid ten pounds in money, and twenty pounds in promissory notes, for three hundred copies of the work. Two hundred and forty only were delivered, and of these one hundred and ninety wanted the letters to Jervas, Digby, Blount, and others[88]. P. T. and Smythe stated in their advertisement of May 23 that Curll's notes "had proved not negotiable," which they seem to have designed as an excuse for not completing the imperfect books[89]. Curll maintained that the defence added slander to treachery; for the notes were not due till the 12th of June, and he indignantly declared that they would be honoured if the terms of the bargain were fulfilled[90]. But these terms were never [Pg lxi] intended to be performed. Smythe had contracted to reserve the whole impression for Curll, and assured him on May 10 that no one else should sell a single copy.[91] The pledge was violated as soon as made by sending a parcel of the books to Lintot, and one of the artifices which marked every part of the transaction was employed in public to counteract the promises which had been given in private. As Curll was to provide his own title-page and preface, and the copies seized by the order of the House of Lords had a title-page and preface by P. T., Smythe wrote to Curll on the 13th of May to explain this departure from the arrangement. A "wonderful caution" had suddenly seized P. T., who, apprehending that an injunction might be obtained in Chancery against Curll, had furnished a preface which "threw the publication entirely off him," and a title-page, in which, substituting the entire trade for an individual, it was said that the volume was "printed and sold by the booksellers of London and Westminster."[92] This was pronounced by Smythe to be "as lucky as could be," and it was certainly a curious piece of fortune which caused P. T. to transmit the fifty early copies without title or preface, and inspired him immediately afterwards to attach both to the copies which were instantly to be pounced upon by a messenger from the Lords. To deceive Curll by promises was the first end to be attained, and he was led to believe that he would have a monopoly of the work. To deprive him of the advantages he imagined he had secured was a second, though a subordinate object of the conspiracy. The whole corporation of booksellers were to be invited to encroach upon his rights, and the preface and title-page affixed to the copies produced at the bar of the House of Lords had been drawn up with the secret purpose of contradicting any claim which might be set up by Curll. When Smythe wrote his deceptive explanation of the motives of P. T., these confederates were endeavouring to coax their dupe into owning that he was the collector of the letters, and it was necessary that he should still be humoured and beguiled. When the mask was thrown off, P. T. and Smythe joined in the declaration that they had neither of them "given or could pretend to give any title whatever to [Pg lxii] Mr. Pope's letters to Curll," and they promised "that every bookseller should be indemnified every way from any possible prosecution or molestation of the said Curll."[93] This invitation to all the world to republish the correspondence of Pope was advertised in the newspapers, and the poet shortly afterwards reprinted it in his "Narrative" without a word of direct remonstrance against the pretension to dispose of his property. P. T. had always hitherto adopted the course which furthered the projects of Pope, and Pope, in return, appeared to smile upon the enormous prerogative to make a general grant of his correspondence which had been assumed by P. T. Commercial honesty was not to be expected in a plan which was based upon falsehood and calumny; but if an ordinary tradesman had conducted his dealings in the same manner as Pope, his custom and character would have been destroyed. The events which followed the publication lead to the same conclusion with the incidents which preceded and attended it. Pope stated in his "Narrative" that there were so many omissions and interpolations in the surreptitious volume, that it was impossible for him to own the contents in their present condition.[94] In two distinct advertisements which he put forth in May and July, 1735, he went further, and declared that some of the letters were not his at all.[95] Nevertheless the bookseller, Cooper, with whom he was now in alliance, reprinted the entire collection, and brought it out on the 12th of June. He at the

same time announced that his edition had been entered at Stationers' Hall, according to the Act of Queen Anne, and that "Edmund Curll or any other pirater of the book should be prosecuted." Curll then served upon him a process, the purport of which does not appear, and Pope wrote to his friend and counsel Fortescue, who a few months later was raised to the bench, and informed him that he had bid Cooper send him the document for his legal opinion, begged to be acquainted with the steps which were necessary to be taken, and acknowledged that he had connived at Cooper's publication. In a subsequent note he asks for further directions in the conduct of the case. The poet and the bookseller were therefore working in conjunction, or to speak more [Pg lxiii] correctly, the bookseller was the agent of the poet. It must have been by Pope's authority that he appropriated the copyright of the letters, and threatened proceedings against any one who invaded it. When Curll took up the gauntlet Pope adopted the cause, engaged Fortescue in the defence, and carried on with him the correspondence respecting it. His sanction of the publication is confirmed by the catalogue of surreptitious editions, since this impression of Cooper is omitted from the list, notwithstanding the insertion of a later impression by the same bookseller, containing some slight additions that had not been ordered by Pope. Thus while the poet pretended that he could not own the P. T. collection, with its mutilated, interpolated, and forged letters, he had secretly authorised a reprint which was identical with the collection he denounced. His actions evince the insincerity of his words. He had the power to erase the forgeries and interpolations with a stroke of his pen, and unless he had approved of the book in its primitive state he would not have entered into a league with Cooper to produce it unaltered. He afterwards seemed to disclaim the republication he had espoused. In the preface to his avowed edition in 1737, he spoke of the "piratical printers" of the surreptitious editions, without making any exception, and said that there was "not one of them to whom he had ever given the least title, or any other encouragement than that of not prosecuting them." This was either a direct untruth or, what was more in accordance with his peculiar morality, a deceptive quibble. Though he knew that his readers must infer that the epithet "piratical" was applied to all the printers who had put forth an edition of the volume of 1735, he may yet have justified to himself the assertion that he had never given the least title to any of them, by the reflection that as he had given a title to Cooper he was not a piratical printer.

While the inquiry was going on before the House of Lords in May, Smythe impressed upon Curll that P. T. had his whole heart set upon the publication of the letters, not so much on account of the volume which had been seized, as because it was the precursor of a much more important correspondence with Swift, the late Lord Oxford, the Bishop of Rochester, and Lord Bolingbroke. [Pg lxiv] [96] When P. T. disappeared from the scene, Pope is found to have inherited his ideas and to be animated by the desire to complete the schemes his enemy left unfulfilled. "Since I saw you," he wrote to Lord Oxford, June 17, 1735, "I have learnt of an excellent machine of Curll's, or rather his director's, to engraft a lie upon, to make me seem more concerned than I was in the affair of the letters. It is so artful an one that I longed to tell it you—not that I will enter into any controversy with such a dog. But I believe it will occasion a thing you will not be sorry for relating to the Bishop of Rochester's letters and papers." There are no further particulars to explain in what degree Pope had acknowledged to Lord Oxford that he was "concerned in the affair of the letters,"[97] nor does any record remain of the artful device of Curll, or of the new director who had succeeded to P. T. and Smythe. The want of all foundation for the allegations against the bookseller is probably the cause of the vagueness of the allusions. The single palpable circumstance is that, in spite of his lamentations at the publication of his letters, Pope was already designing to send a fresh instalment of them to the press. Whatever may have been the "excellent machine" to which he darkly referred, Curll had furnished him with the pretence he sought. The bookseller put forth a new edition of the printed copies he purchased from P. T., and called it the first volume of "Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence." Partly, perhaps, to vex Pope, and partly to attract purchasers, he affixed the same title to future volumes, which were principally a medley of trash that had no relation to the poet. Among the promised contents of the second volume were "Atterbury's Letters to Mr. Pope." Pope cited the announcement as a reason for publishing his correspondence with the bishop, which P. T. had enumerated among "the much more important correspondence" that was intended to follow, and which, the poet, in precise [Pg lxv] agreement with him, declared was "of a nature less insignificant" than the printed collection.[98] The coincidence of opinion between these bitter antagonists is especially remarkable, because others have not been struck with the superiority of the letters of Atterbury. Mr. Croker thought them, with one or two exceptions, dull, pedantic, and common-place, and Warton complains that they are, many of them, crowded to affectation with trite quotations from Horace and Virgil. The excuse for making them public was weak in the extreme. On the 12th of June Cooper replied to Curll's advertisement of his second volume by a counter-advertisement, and offered him ten pounds for any letter of Atterbury to Pope, or of Pope to Atterbury, of which he could produce the original or a voucher. P. T.'s copy, if it existed, must have been demanded when he made his confession, and it is among the circumstances which show this confession to have been a fiction, that the poet in his Narrative omitted to mention the surrender of the important transcript, and never subsequently alluded to its existence. Without copies or originals Curll could not violate the secrecy for which Pope affected to be anxious. The poet, in fact, did not put forth his pretence for printing the correspondence till he had received practical evidence of the poverty of the bookseller's resources. Curll's volume was published on the 14th of July,[99] and Pope's advertisement did not come out till the following day. It was drawn up on the 13th,[100] when he had probably seen an early copy of the book, or he would have waited till the next morning, when he could have read in conjunction with the rest of the public the letters which Atterbury was alleged to have written to him. They were three in number. The longest was a statement printed

by the bishop, and addressed to the entire world, refuting a charge of having corrupted the manuscript of Clarendon's History. The remaining two were pronounced by Pope to be forgeries, and of these one had already appeared in a Biographical Dictionary,[101] and the other consisted chiefly of poetical quotations. Not a line had oozed out from his private papers, and the argument for divulging them was gone. A man who was eager to drag them into day might use the incident as a pretext, but anybody who did not court publicity would have left them in their obscurity upon the discovery that they continued safe from prying eyes and transcribing fingers. Pope's practice and professions were as usual at variance. He raised a cry of distress at the publication of his letters by P. T., and laid hold of the first hollow excuse for completing the obnoxious design, and spreading before the world that portion of his correspondence which P. T. had been unable to smuggle into print, in consequence of Curll's unexpected revelation of the plot.

[Pg lxvi]

Pope stated in his advertisement, that along with his correspondence with the Bishop of Rochester he should publish such of the letters as were genuine from the surreptitious volume, and added, that the work would be printed "with all convenient speed."[102] But speed was not convenient. The project slept till March 26, 1736, when he writes to Fortescue, "Your too partial mention of the book of letters, with all its faults and follies, which Curll printed and spared not (nor yet will spare, for he has published a fourth sham volume yesterday), makes me think it may not be amiss to send you—what I know you will be much more pleased with than I can be—a proposal for a correct edition of them, which at last I find must be offered, since people have misunderstood an advertisement I printed some time ago, merely to put some stop to that rascal's books, as a promise that I would publish such a book." His excuse for the delay in redeeming his pledge of supplying an authentic edition, is a curious instance of the absurdity to which a man of genius may be reduced, when, unable to divulge his true reasons, he has recourse to invention. "People" could not have "*misunderstood*" the advertisement as "a promise that he would publish such a book," for the promise was distinct, and there was no room left for misunderstanding in the matter. But if we allow that an advertisement in the newspapers, asserting that he was under a necessity of putting out a genuine edition, which would be printed with all convenient speed, was only designed to be read as a threat for the purpose of stopping Curll's trade, it is plain that Curll must have become acquainted with an interpretation which was apparent to the rest of the world, and would have paid no attention to a menace that was not intended to be executed. Unless Pope desired that the public should believe he was serious, the whole proceeding was objectless. He was long in learning the misconstruction which had been put upon his words. While the announcement was fresh, and likely to have been a topic of conversation, he remained completely passive, and it was not till after an interval of more than eight months that he discovered he was supposed to have given a pledge, and must immediately redeem it. He had forgotten that he had betrayed to Fortescue that he was in earnest at the time the advertisement appeared. On August 2, 1735, a fortnight after it was issued, Pope wrote to him, and asked to have back his letters; "for," said he, "I find my collection, such as it is, must be hastened, or will not be so effectual." It had not yet occurred to him to maintain that his promised publication was a feint. The true cause of his procrastination has been suggested by the critic in the Athenæum. He had distributed portions of his extensive correspondence with Caryll among other groups, and addressed several of the letters to men of higher position or greater fame. He must have rejected the fictitious compound from his genuine edition, or waited till Caryll, who was sinking with age and illness, was in his grave. The latter was the course which Pope preferred. His friend was no doubt dying at the close of March, 1736, and on the 6th of April he expired. With him disappeared the sole difficulty which stood in the way of the new edition, and the poet from that moment was active in its prosecution.

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It is amusing to observe the indifference and distaste which Pope feigned for an undertaking that was entirely within his own discretion. He began by announcing that the work would be printed with speed. He then protested he did not mean what he said, and only yielded because others had erroneously inferred, that by advertising in the papers that he would immediately print a book he intended to signify that a book would be printed. He next resolved to publish by subscription, which was a mode of levying forced contributions through the canvass of the author and his friends. He hoped nevertheless that the subscription would fail, in order that he might be excused from an act to which he had been over-persuaded.[103] His hope that support would be withheld had grown to a belief when he wrote to Allen, on the 30th of April, and Allen, who had sought his acquaintance from admiration of the benevolence and goodness of heart which pervaded his letters, offered to bear the cost of the impression. The public by their backwardness afforded Pope the opportunity he professed to desire of dropping the work, but the patronage of an individual was sufficient encouragement. He at once replied that he would "not serve his private fame entirely at another's expense," but that he would "accept the assistance in any moderate degree," which meant that he would allow Allen to defray the outlay which was in excess of the amount subscribed.[104] Time wore on, the letters were three-quarters printed, and the subscribers were few.[105] In his first receipts the poet had stated that if he did not proceed with the book the money should be returned on demand after midsummer.[106] The unwilling public pleaded the uncertainty as a reason for not putting down their names. He admitted that the doubt they expressed was a pretence, and informed Allen that to deprive them of the pretext he had substituted receipts in which he promised to deliver the volume by Lady Day.[107] His object, he said, was to save Allen's purse. The reluctance had ceased to be with the poet. He began by consenting to print a book he would rather not have printed, that he might oblige the world, and ended by compelling the world to subscribe to a book they would rather not have purchased, that they might oblige Pope.

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The subscription was a guinea for a quarto volume, and the donation of Allen, which Pope acknowledged in his will, was probably paid in part on this occasion. The copyright was purchased by Dodsley,[108] and from these united sources of emolument the book produced, as Johnson had heard, "sufficient profit."[109] It appeared on May 18, 1737, in folio and quarto, and a little later in octavo, that the various sizes might range with previous editions of the poet's works. In the preface he enters into a history of the fate which had attended his letters, and of the circumstances which compelled him to publish them, but with a studious avoidance of every question which had been raised by the collection of 1735. He says it is notorious what means have been taken to procure his correspondence, and disposes of the single instance which required explanation by enumerating among the methods "the transacting with people who dealt without names in the dark." He says that several letters have been ascribed to him which he did not write, and specifies examples, none of which appeared in the book sold to Curll. He says that the piratical editions contain various passages "which no man of common sense would have printed himself," and this he could assert with truth, because the greater part of the Cromwell series owed their publicity to Mrs. Thomas alone. He declares that he had not authorised any of the surreptitious impressions, but forbore to allege that the primitive impression was surreptitious, and shunned all allusion to its birth and parentage. He laments the need which exists for his own volume, and when he proceeds "to state the case fairly in the present situation," none of his reasons appertain to the work of P. T. He indulges in general declamation upon the enormity of procuring letters by disreputable contrivances, but carefully avoids affirming that any of those which first saw the light in 1735 were obtained in the manner he deprecates. He assures us, indeed, that his epistolary effusions are "emanations of the heart, and not efforts of genius," and adds, "this alone may induce any candid reader to believe their publication an act of necessity rather than vanity," which honestly interpreted implies that he [Pg lxix] was not the person who originally sent them to the press. The candid writer, however, omitted to [Pg lxx] inform the candid reader of the pains he had taken to render them worthy of his head as well as of his heart, and the falsification of the premises destroys the credibility of the inference. The silence of Pope upon the P. T. collection is, under the circumstances, equivalent to a confession of guilt. He gives an account of the surreptitious publication of his letters to Cromwell. He states the reason of the publication of his letters to Wycherley. He reverts once and again to what he justly called the sham volumes of Curll. He records the minutest wrong he can detect in the execution of any of the hostile schemes. But though the conduct of P. T. was the most flagrant of all; though the poet was believed to be the contriver of the plot, and his enemies taunted him with the fraud; though he professed to have learnt the details of the mystery, and half a dozen sentences, if he was innocent, would have set him right with both friends and foes; though the collection of 1735 was in its nature and extent far more important than the rest, and though it was the basis and primary cause of the edition he was ushering into the world, he yet relates no particulars, he offers no opinion, he ventures upon no denial. He endeavours instead to mask his evasion of the subject, and tries to confound the main point with subsidiary topics. There are wilful misrepresentations in his preface, and he was not restrained in his language by his homage to truth; but he had been baffled by the disclosures of Curll, and he was afraid to risk specific assertions which had been already exposed.

His correspondence with Atterbury, and several other letters, were printed for the first time in the avowed edition of Pope. He omitted as well as added, and left out some of the letters to and from Wycherley, some of the letters to and from Cromwell, some of the letters to ladies, and a few scattered letters from the remaining groups. In the letters he republished he here and there erased a sentence which had appeared in the volume of 1735, or inserted a sentence which was new. The minuter verbal alterations are numerous, but many of them are only corrections of errors of the press. In all essential particulars the collection of P. T., a little more sifted, is reproduced in the quarto of 1737. Pope had profited in the interval by the criticisms of the public. [Pg lxxi] He set aside the portions of his correspondence which were condemned, he endeavoured to rectify the inconsistencies into which he had been betrayed in its reconstruction, and he sometimes altered a word or a phrase in the final revision to which he subjected the work. The changes leave it apparent that the Pope text and the P. T. text are identical in their origin, and neither of them are the text of the actual letters of the poet. His selection affords an imperfect test of the parts which he disowned as being counterfeited. He said in his advertisement of July 15, 1735, that he would reprint whatever was genuine in the surreptitious editions; but he relinquished this design, and wrote to Allen that "he was determined to leave out every syllable that could give the least ill example to an age apt to take it, or the least offence to any good or serious man."[110] He accordingly stated in his preface that he had not only omitted the letters which "were not his," but those which "were not approved of by him." Without committing himself to an assertion which might be refuted, he probably wished to obtain the benefit of the first alternative for letters which he had rejected under the last. Nevertheless in his eagerness to particularise any real forgery, he in effect accredited the entire collection of P. T. He had far greater interest in showing that it was not authentic than in damaging the trumpery volumes of Curll, and his forbearance to select a single instance of imposition from its pages is a plain proof that none existed for which he himself was not responsible. The charge of interpolation, which he had twice put forth in his advertisements,[111] and subsequently repeated to Allen,[112] was still more openly abandoned; for he tells us in his preface that the passages he omitted were "improper, or at least impertinent to be divulged to the public," and he no longer pretended that they were any of them spurious. He did not, in short, disown in his genuine edition one sentence of the volume of 1735, but practically receded from his previous allegations, which were mis-statements intended to persuade Caryll that he was not answerable for the garbling of the [Pg lxxii]

letters, and the world that he was not a party to their publication.

His acts continued to confirm his guilt. A little while after the quarto was published there appeared the 5th and 6th volume of the octavo edition of Pope's works, which the title-page says "consists of Letters, wherein to those of the author's own edition are added all that are genuine from the former impressions, with some never before printed."[113] This edition bears internal evidence of having been printed concurrently with the quarto itself. A sheet signed *Dd, the pages of which are numbered from 215 to 222, is interpolated in the quarto between the two last leaves of Dd, and the numbers are of necessity repeated on the succeeding eight pages. The interpolated letters of the quarto are equally an interpolation in the octavo, where they follow p. 116 of Vol. VI., on a duplicate half-sheet signed *I, and the paging is repeated on the half-sheet which follows. Consequently the octavo must have been struck off before the letters were interpolated in the quarto, or they would not have been printed in the octavo on an interpolated half-sheet. A second insertion tells the same tale. A few letters are added at the end of the quarto with the announcement that they had been published "since the foregoing sheets were printed off." These letters appear in like manner at the end of the octavo after *finis*. At the very moment, therefore, that Pope was compelling his reluctant friends to subscribe to his expurgated quarto, he was clandestinely printing an octavo edition in which he put back the whole of the omitted letters he allowed to be genuine, and his imperfect quarto was simply a fraud upon the purchasers for the purpose of accrediting his feigned reprobation of the P. T. volume.

One Watson, who assumed for the occasion the name of T. Johnson, printed a piratical edition of the new octavos. Dodsley filed a bill against him in Chancery on November 25 for the invasion of [Pg lxxiii] the copyright of Pope's edition in folio. On October 31, Dodsley had entered at Stationers' Hall, "The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq., Vol. V. and Vol. VI. The second edition corrected. 8vo." He had omitted to enter the previous edition of the octavos, and in a letter which Watson wrote on November 30 he objected that the folio was not the book he had pirated, and that the octavo volumes were only entered at Stationers' Hall on October 31, which he says "was at least a full month after the publication of the edition complained of, and Pope's own first edition entirely sold before the octavo was entered." His meaning was that since the first edition of the octavo had not been entered, the entry of the second edition, which was subsequent to the piracy, came too late to secure the copyright. The greater part, however, of Watson's volumes were identical with the text of the folio which had been entered on May 18, and Watson did not persevere in his defence. He consented to deliver up the 1646 copies in his possession on the receipt of 25*l.*, and to give Pope a bond in which he undertook to pay a penalty of 100*l.* if he ever again invaded his rights by printing any of his works.[114]

Pope's prohibition of Watson's work, coupled with his own publication of the octavos, is fresh evidence of the insincerity of his professed dissatisfaction with the P. T. selection. His apology for replacing in the octavos the letters he had rejected was that they were in process of being reinstated in a piratical edition of the quarto.[115] Pope had the power, which he used, to stop piratical publications, and at the same time he absurdly made the piracy the plea for publishing himself the condemned letters he had cast aside. His mode of relieving his disgust at their appearance, and of giving effect to his eager desire for their suppression was to lay hold of a hollow excuse for reprinting them.

While Pope proceeded against Watson he submitted to the piracies of Curll. His conduct once [Pg lxxiv] more betrayed that he was the author of the P. T. plot. Curll had all along persisted in printing the P. T. letters. He immediately seized the new letters in the quarto, and inserted them in his fifth volume of "Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence." He was not content with usurping Pope's property. He insulted, defied, and accused him. Pope had the strongest motive in self-vindication to grapple with the charges of Curll, and he shrunk from the contest. He resented the infringement of his copyright by an indifferent person, and he could not willingly have endured to be despoiled by his mocking antagonist, and sit down quietly under the contumely and wrong. The bill filed against Watson discovers the cause of his forbearance. There we find that Pope in applying for an injunction was obliged to state that his quarto edition was the first publication of his letters "with his consent, direction, or approbation,"[116] and if he had filed a similar bill against Curll, the bookseller would have proved that he had purchased the P. T. edition, and that Pope had printed and sold it. Curll announced in September, 1735, that he had filed a bill against Smythe to compel the fulfilment of his contract, and he made Gilliver a party to the suit in consequence of his confession that Pope had purchased of him the old sheets of the Wycherley, and directed the rest of the P. T. collection to be printed to match them.[117] Smythe was a shadow who could not be reached. The facts remained, and Pope could not attempt to convict Curll of piracy without being himself convicted of having sold him the work. He had been worsted on this very point when he fought with his best weapon, the pen, and he did not dare to renew the conflict in a court of law where allegations could neither be passed over in silence, nor be met by evasions and quibbles. Any doubt that the motive for his toleration was fear was done [Pg lxxv] away by his filing a bill against Curll the instant he pirated the Swift Correspondence which was entirely distinct from the P. T. transaction.

Pope had shown earlier that he was afraid to join issue with Curll before a legal tribunal. Curll inserted an advertisement in "Fog's Journal" of July 26, 1735, in which he accused Pope of having printed the P. T. collection, and of telling falsehoods in self-defence. The proprietor of "Fog's Journal" was induced by a threat of prosecution to apologise for the insertion of the advertisement, and Curll immediately reprinted it in the second volume of Mr. Pope's Literary

Correspondence, accompanied by a scornful account of Pope's interference. Pope did not venture to accept the taunting challenge. His vapouring ceased when he was dared to fight. He menaced the publisher of a newspaper, who would not brave a trial in a cause which was not his own, and tamely retreated before the real offender in person.

The octavo edition of 1737 enables us to put the veracity of Pope in repudiating the P. T. collection to yet another proof. In May and July, 1735, he published advertisements protesting that several letters ascribed to him in the P. T. volume were not his.[118] He prefixed to the octavo of 1737 a catalogue of surreptitious editions, in which he repeated that the P. T. publication "contained several letters not genuine."[119] He had hitherto been loud in exclaiming against the P. T. forgeries without being imprudent enough to name them. His caution relaxed as time wore on, and he had the courage to state on the title-page of the first octavo edition of 1737 that he had "added to the letters of the author's own edition all that are genuine from the former impressions." The spurious letters in the P. T. collection were thus declared to be the letters which were excluded from the octavo edition of 1737. They were seven in number. Three were letters, or extracts of letters, from Wycherley, two belonged to the section headed "Letters to Several Ladies," and two were letters to Gay. Unless they were really forgeries, Pope told and [Pg lxxvi]
retold emphatic lies to discredit the P. T. collection, and establish his innocence, and the deceit would leave no doubt of his criminality.

Four letters out of the seven we know to have been genuine. The three letters of Wycherley were on the sheets transferred from the edition of his posthumous works which was published by Pope, and copies of two of them are among the Oxford papers. One of the suppressed letters to ladies exists in duplicate, and was sent by Pope to Miss Blount, and to Miss Marriot, the friend and neighbour of his coadjutor Broome. The letters are both originals in the handwriting of Pope. There are no means of verifying the remaining three letters, nor is it necessary to test them, when more than half the pretended forgeries are found to be authentic. Once again we have absolute evidence that his accusation of forgery was an acted clamour to screen himself. He finally adopted all the letters but seven, and his assertion that these seven were fabrications was a falsehood.

Besides the necessity Pope was under of rejecting some of the P. T. letters to bear out his mendacious charge of forgery, he had particular reasons for disclaiming three at least of the four letters which proceeded from his own pen. The letter he addressed to Miss Blount and Miss Marriot was a disquisition on a human monstrosity exhibiting in London. He had said in his Essay on Criticism that "vile obscenity should find no pardon." He was among the offenders he pronounced unpardonable, and often revelled in dull and studied indecorums which he mistook for wit. The laboured letter he esteemed so highly that he sent it to two of his female correspondents was more than ordinarily gross and stupid. The fancied humour appeared to the public revolting coarseness, and he cast out the letter because it excited disgust and contempt.

The next letter Pope rejected consisted of a satirical and false description of Blenheim. He represented a fraction of the house to be the whole, and founded upon his mis-statement the reflection, "I think the architect built it entirely in complaisance to the taste of its owners; for it is the most inhospitable thing imaginable, and the most selfish." A second sarcasm on the Duchess [Pg lxxvii]
in the P. T. volume was obliterated in the octavo of 1737. "Cleland," Pope writes to Gay, "is at Tunbridge. He plays now with the old Duchess of M——, nay, dines with her after she has won all his money." In the octavo of 1737 he erased the name, and left the passage to be applied to any old duchess who was then alive. He had obviously some inducement to renounce his abuse of the Duchess of Marlborough, and the probable cause was that a friendly intercourse had grown up in the interval. He speaks of her to Swift in 1739 as paying "great court to him."[120]

His desire to disavow an ebullition of enmity which had been succeeded by renewed cordiality, was his apparent motive for cancelling a letter addressed to Gay. Fielding relates that no person during "the reign of King Alexander" would read a work which had not his license, and "this license he granted to only four authors—Swift, Young, Arbuthnot, and Gay—his principal courtiers and favourites."[121] It chanced that one of the courtiers was in disgrace when the P. T. volume appeared, and Pope introduced a sneer at his egotism and pomposity. "In a word," he says to Gay, "Y——g himself has not acquired more tragic majesty in his aspect by reading his own verses than I by Homer's." The offence of Young was a species of remonstrance he sent to the monarch under the guise of advice. Pope completed his Essay on Man in 1734, and Young urged him in "a pressing letter to write something on the side of revelation in order to take off the impression of those doctrines which the Essay seemed to convey." Harte, a minor courtier of king Alexander, told Warton that the sensitive monarch "took the letter amiss."[122] He was annoyed at the censure implied in the exhortation, and retaliated by ridiculing the self-importance of his monitor. When Pope was taxed with personalities he could not defend, he never scrupled, where it was possible, to deny that he alluded to the person who remonstrated. When evasion was impracticable, and the work had not been avowed, the easiest course was to repudiate the authorship. [Pg lxxviii]

These were the circumstances which chiefly governed Pope's selection of the P. T. forgeries. Had there been a single fabricated letter he would have hastened to name it, just as he specified in his preface to the quarto some fictitious letters which were not in the P. T. publication. The P. T. letters being authentic, he was afraid to disclaim in print particular letters which surviving persons might know to be his, and he could not venture to advance beyond the indirect statement that the octavo of 1737 "contained all the letters that were genuine from former impressions."

Trusting that no one who could convict him would be at the trouble to collate the editions, he thought himself safe from exposure, and he could privately appeal, with little risk of detection, to the disclaimer on his title-page when he had merely to disown a letter in his individual intercourse with the Duchess of Marlborough or Young. He did not care to increase the hazard of discovery by repeating his title-page. He dropped it in the second edition of the octavo, and the assertion that he had printed "all the letters that are genuine from the former impressions" dwindled down to the assurance that "there is not one but is genuine."[123]

The controversies on Pope's character have naturally drawn forth uncompromising language both from defenders and accusers. Those who believed him incapable of the acts imputed to him could but conclude that he was bitterly calumniated. Those who believed that the charges were true could but brand him with reprobation. The offences were not of a nature to be softened by apologies. De Quincey was in a lenient mood when he wrote his sketch of Pope's Life, and his more favourable impressions necessarily carried with them the conviction that the "disgraceful imputation" against Pope of having made Curll his tool and victim was "most assuredly unfounded."[124] Speaking, on another occasion, of Pope's attack on Hill and the Duke of Chandos, he says, "Evil is the day for a conscientious man when his sole resource for self-defence [Pg lxxix] lies in a falsehood."[125] De Quincey was ignorant of the history of the letters, and he would have altered his opinion if he had known that Pope in self-defence had been prodigal of the falsehoods which are the last refuge of guilt.

There still remains the small episode of the six letters unconnected with the P. T. volume, which were declared by Pope to be spurious in his preface to the quarto. Four of them purported to be from Pope to Miss Blount, and two to be letters of Atterbury to Pope. Those to Miss Blount were forwarded to Curll by a correspondent who signed himself S. E. The bookseller published them in the third volume of "Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence," and announced that he had discovered them to be translations from Voiture. S. E. only professed to send copies, which are now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Mr. Carruthers states correctly that the size and quality of the paper is precisely the same as in the genuine letters of the poet, and that the handwriting appears to be his "a little disguised." The letters bear on their face the marks of their origin, and Pope acted according to usage in endeavouring to delude Curll that he might afterwards build a charge upon his own deceptions. There is, however, a second claimant for the honour of having devised the cheat. In an edition of Pope's works, which belonged to Douce the antiquary, some one has copied an extract from a letter of Mr. J. Plumptre, dated May 1, 1744, in which he informs his wife that their son Charles, who was afterwards Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, London, and Archdeacon of Ely, was the author of the trick.[126] The incident was nine years old when Mr. Plumptre proudly acquainted Mrs. Plumptre with the secret. He mentioned that the letters were sent to Curll by the penny post, and the original cover in the Bodleian Library shows that they were not sent by post at all. He said that his son translated them, and Pope had proclaimed that they were borrowed from a published translation. The account is false, and the pretended extract from the letter may be itself apocryphal, for its authenticity is guaranteed by no external [Pg lxxx] testimony. The similarity of paper and handwriting, coupled with the pressing necessity Pope was under to supply himself with examples of fabrication, strongly indicate that the person who profited by the imposition contrived it.

Pope affirmed in his preface that the two letters ascribed to Atterbury had never been seen by the bishop or himself, and to show the absurdity of the fraud he adds that "they were advertised even after that period when it was made felony to correspond with him." At length, in 1739, one of the letters was adopted in a reprint of Cooper's octavos, and undoubtedly by the order of the poet himself, since it was included in the collection he delivered to Warburton. "We have ventured," says a note in the Cooper edition, "to insert this letter, which was plainly intended for Mr. Pope, though we are informed that on second thoughts it was not judged proper to send it him. A copy was preserved and published soon after in the English additions to Bayle's Dictionary, under the article of Atterbury." Pope's assertion, in the preface to the quarto, that the letter was fabricated, was either a reckless charge or a falsehood, and there are strong grounds for believing that he was all along aware that the letter was genuine. In the catalogue of surreptitious editions we are told of Curll's second volume that it has no letters to Mr. Pope, "but one said to be Bishop Atterbury's, and another in that bishop's name, certainly not his." The distinction drawn between the two amounts to an admission that the former might be authentic; and this is confirmed in the conclusion of the catalogue, where a reprint of the P.T. collection is described as containing the "forged letter," not letters, "from the Bishop of Rochester," though this very reprint contained them both. They were introduced into all the reprints themselves in a manner which showed that they were not considered of equal authority. In Curll's work, they are represented to be alike by Atterbury, and to be addressed alike to Pope. In the reprints of the P. T. collection, the letter which Pope ultimately accepted is alone given as written by Atterbury, or addressed to the poet. Its fellow has asterisks to represent the person to whom it was sent, and neither asterisks nor name to represent the sender. Pope's ally, Cooper, is supposed to have been [Pg lxxxi] concerned in the volume to which the Atterbury epistles were first transferred from the publication of Curll, and it is obvious that no bookseller would have originated the alteration, and that no other person would have prompted it who had not a peculiar interest in the correspondence of the poet, and who was not aware that these stray productions would be at once appended to a current P. T. impression. The distinction between the letters was made in the reprints of the P. T. collection before Pope published the preface to the quarto, in which he affirmed that both were counterfeited. He made the distinction in the catalogue almost immediately after the quarto appeared. He did not the less preserve the passage in his preface

unchanged in every edition of his correspondence, and never uttered a single word of recantation. He allowed the charge of forgery to be circulated till it had served his purpose; and then, without an allusion to his former language, imported the letter into his works with the complacent announcement "that it was plainly intended for Mr. Pope."

The reason assigned by Pope why a letter must be forged which he afterwards admitted to be genuine, was one of his usual deceptions. By the Bill of pains and penalties against Atterbury it was declared to be felony to correspond with him in his exile after June 25, 1723. Pope disregarded the enactment with little risk of discovery, and perhaps without much danger of punishment if his harmless intercourse was detected. He condoled with the bishop on the death of his daughter, Mrs. Morice; and the bishop thus commenced his reply, which is dated Montpelier, November 20, 1729: "Yes, dear sir, I have had all you designed for me, and have read all, as I read whatever you write, with esteem and pleasure. But your last letter, full of friendship and goodness, gave me such impressions of concern and tenderness, as neither I can express, nor you, perhaps, with all the force of your imagination, fully conceive." This again must have drawn forth a response from the poet, for Atterbury says in an answer without date, "I venture to thank you for your kind and friendly letter, because I think myself very sure of a safe conveyance, and I am uneasy till I have told you what impressions it made upon me. I will do it with the same [Pg lxxxii] simplicity with which I wrote to you from Montpelier upon a very melancholy occasion." These extracts testify that the letter which Curll published of November 23, 1731, was not a solitary instance, and that other letters had passed between the poet and Atterbury "even after that period when it was made felony to correspond with him." The proof which Pope urged with triumphant scorn to demonstrate that the letter of November 23 must be counterfeited was therefore an absolute fraud. His disingenuousness did not end here. He printed Atterbury's letter of November 20, 1729, at the same time that he reproduced the letter published by Curll, and said in a note,—"This also seems genuine, though whether written to Mr. P. or some learned friend in France, is uncertain; but we doubt not it will be acceptable to the reader." To support the alleged uncertainty he omitted the passages which showed that it was addressed to a sickly poet in England. The complete letter was inserted by Mr. Nichols in the "Epistolary Correspondence of Atterbury," and his version is confirmed by a copy among the Oxford papers at Longleat. The bishop died in February, 1732; and if in 1739 Pope thought it unsafe to admit that he had held communication with him in his banishment upon literary and domestic topics, he might have left the letter to be published by Warburton, and not have violated truth for the sake of hurrying it before the world.

Such was the series of stratagems which ushered in and accompanied the collection of 1735, from its first appearance in the volume of P. T. to its final shape in the volumes of Cooper. Pope's skill in deception was not equal to his passion for it. Audacity was the chief characteristic of his contrivances, and equivocation and lying his weapons of defence. When a trick or a subterfuge was detected, and could no longer be denied, he yet remained unabashed, and dropping all allusion to the points which had been proved against him, he continued to rely upon the falsehoods or fallacies which had been less completely exposed. His pertinacity in reiterating that he was sinned against when he was sinning, derived support from his literary fame, which gave currency to his representations, and in some degree gained credit to them. But his duplicity and [Pg lxxxiii] his artifices were known to many, and it would be difficult to say whether his effrontery or his hypocrisy was most conspicuous when he affixed to the preface to the quarto of 1737 the punning motto, *Vellem nescire literas*, bewailed in the preface itself the necessity for the publication, hoped that no honest man might be reduced to a similar dilemma, talked with injured indignation of thefts, forgeries, and piracies, and exhorted the legislature to provide a remedy against the evil. His tone was not moderated by the suspicions he had roused, and the humiliations he had undergone. They had just as little effect in abating his love of treachery, or blunting his appetite for epistolary fame, and he was no sooner clear of one plot than he engaged in another of the same description, and for the same ends.

His correspondence with Swift appeared in 1741. The English edition was a sequel to the quarto of 1737, and formed part of what was called on the title-page, "The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope, in Prose, Vol. II." In a prefatory notice to the reader, the letters are stated to have been "copied from an impression sent from Dublin, and said to have been printed by the Dean's direction," an impression, it is added, "which was begun without our author's knowledge, and continued without his consent." Pope held the same language in private to Allen and Warburton, and professed to be extremely annoyed at the step. His account has been almost uniformly accepted as true till the critic in the Athenæum showed that the publication of the correspondence with Swift was no exception to the previous proceedings of the poet, and that, as in the case of the Wycherley letters of 1729, and the miscellaneous collection of 1735, he himself had sent the manuscripts to the press, and charged the act upon others.

On November 28, 1729, Pope protested to Swift that it was many years since he endeavoured to play the wit in his familiar correspondence. He assured the Dean that as he had a greater love and esteem for him than for others, so he wrote to him with even more than ordinary negligence. "I smile to think," he continues, "how Curll would be bit were our epistles to fall into his hands, [Pg lxxxiv] and how gloriously they would fall short of every ingenious reader's expectations." Warburton tells us that Pope valued himself upon this abstinence from all effort to be brilliant;[127] but his pretence of sinking the author in the friend gained no credit from Swift, who took care to show his incredulity. "I find," he replied on February 26, 1730, "you have been a writer of letters almost from your infancy; and, by your own confession, had schemes even then of epistolary fame. Montaigne says that if he could have excelled in any kind of writing it would have been in

letters; but I doubt they would not have been natural, for it is plain that all Pliny's letters were written with a view of publishing, and I accuse Voiture of the same crime, although he be an author I am fond of. They cease to be letters when they become a *jeu d'esprit*." Pope seems to have suspected that this half-direct, half-oblique criticism was suggested by his recent collection and arrangement of his correspondence, and he denied, in his answer of April 9, that he was open to the censure. "I am pleased," he observed, "to see your partiality, and it is for that reason I have kept some of your letters, and some of those of my other friends. These if I put together in a volume for my own secret satisfaction in reviewing a life passed in innocent amusements and studies, not without the good will of worthy and ingenious men, do not therefore say I aim at epistolary fame. I never had any fame less in my head; but the fame I most covet, indeed, is that which must be derived to me from my friendships." The poet as usual adapted his assertions to the exigencies of the moment; for it was not for "his own secret satisfaction in reviewing a life passed in innocent amusements and studies," that he had deposited a duplicate of the volume with Lord Oxford, or kept it in readiness "against the revival of slanders, and the publication of surreptitious letters." This suppression of facts and motives could have had no effect in deluding Swift. Once on September 3, 1735, when his faculties were waning, and his powers rose and fell with his malady, he echoed back Pope's former language. "Neither," he said, "did our letters contain any turns of wit, or fancy, or politics, or satire, but mere innocent friendship. I believe we [Pg lxxxv] neither of us ever leaned our head upon our hand to study what we should write next." But by the 21st of October he had already returned to his old conviction, and after mentioning the publication of the poet's correspondence by Curll, he added, "I believe my letters have escaped being published because I writ nothing but nature and friendship, and particular incidents which could make no figure in writing,"—a plain intimation that the opposite qualities had, in his opinion, caused the letters of Pope to be communicated to the world.

The poet made the volume of 1735 the plea for pressing Swift to return him his letters. He had ceased to smile at the thought how Curll would be bit by getting hold of them, and earnestly demanded that the Dean should "secure him against that rascal printer."[128] If it is admitted that Pope was the publisher of the P. T. collection, his accusations against the rascal printer were groundless, and his fears were feigned. He was endeavouring, under cover of a false pretence, to obtain possession of his letters to Swift, and it was easy to foresee that when he had succeeded in his object the secret store would soon be laid open to the public. He had previously forced his other friends to surrender his correspondence by the clamorous apprehensions he expressed of Curll. The letters which were safe in their guardianship had not been long committed to his keeping when they came forth from the shop of this very individual, and Pope was now urging the fact as a reason why fresh letters should be transferred from a custody which had been effectual to a custody which had proved to be insecure. Swift, perhaps, by this time, had begun to penetrate the designs of his friend, and he declined to comply with his request. "You need not fear any consequence," he wrote September 3, 1735, "in the commerce that hath so long passed between us, although I never destroyed one of your letters. But my executors are men of honour and virtue, who have strict orders in my will to burn every letter left behind me. Yet I am loth that any letters from you and a very few friends should die before me." No answer could have been less pleasing to Pope than to be told that his letters were doomed to destruction. His [Pg lxxxvi] eagerness to rescue them must have been increased by the announcement, and he offered, if Swift would let him have them at once, to send him copies. The poet's excuse for a proposal which defeated his professed purpose, was "merely that the originals might not fall into the hands of Curll, and thereby a hundred particulars be at his mercy."[129] The particulars would have been as much at Curll's mercy in the copies as in the originals they replaced, unless Pope intended to disavow the transcripts he had himself furnished, which shows how much value is to be attached to his assertion that parts of the collection of 1735 were forged. His remonstrances induced Swift to promise that the letters should not be committed to the flames; but he persevered in refusing to surrender them while he lived. "As to what you say of your letters," he wrote April 22, 1736, "my resolution is to direct my executors to send you all your letters well sealed and pacquetted, and leave them entirely to your disposal. These things are all tied up, endorsed and locked in a cabinet, and I have not one servant who can properly be said to write or read. No mortal shall copy them, but you shall surely have them when I am no more." Since Swift persisted in believing that he could protect private papers from Curll quite as efficiently as the poet, who had signally failed in the attempt, Pope reversed his petition, and disclosing his real intention, begged that he might have them to print. "I told him," he says, in his account to Lord Orrery, "as soon as I found myself obliged to publish an edition of my letters to my great sorrow, that I wished to make use of some of these, nor did I think any part of my correspondence would do me a greater honour, and be really a greater pleasure to me, than what might preserve the memory how well we loved one another. I find the Dean was not quite of the same opinion, or he would not, I think, have denied this." When Pope affected in 1729 to depreciate his correspondence with Swift, that he might mask his design in gathering together his other letters, he had even smiled to reflect "how gloriously our epistles would fall short of every ingenious reader's expectations." He now maintained that "our epistles" would confer upon him a vast deal [Pg lxxxvii] of honour, which he could not suppose would be obtained by balking expectation. But though none of these inconsistencies are immaterial, the most important circumstance, and one which bears upon the whole of the subsequent evidence, is that Pope was pining for the publication of the letters, and Swift would not consent to it.

An event happened opportunely to assist the solicitations of the poet. Towards the close of 1736 Curll printed a couple of letters to Swift, of which the first was written by Pope, and the second by Bolingbroke. The bookseller announced that they were transmitted to him from Ireland,

together with several other valuable originals, and Pope on the 30th of December employed this practical proof to convince the Dean that the correspondence was not safe in his custody. The two letters, as they were called, were in fact a joint epistle; for not only does the portion of Bolingbroke purport to be a continuation of the portion of the poet, but Swift, who had been absent, says in the reply, which on his return home he addressed to Pope, "I found a letter from you with an *appendix* longer than yours from Bolingbroke." The letter and its appendix were printed by Curll at the period when Pope had exhausted his arguments to induce Swift to resign the correspondence, and the occurrence was so well timed for the purposes of the poet, and the device so much in accordance with his practices, that it is impossible not to suspect that he contrived the injury as a means of extorting the redress. The original of his share of the epistle still exists,[130] and shows that the published version has been edited in his usual fashion. The variations, in the aggregate, could not have arisen from carelessness, and they are not of a kind which an independent person could have had any motive to introduce from design. The appendix of Bolingbroke had been in the power of Pope, who might have transcribed it, together with his [Pg lxxxviii] own contribution, before it was sent; but he declared that he never possessed a copy of either, [131] and small as is the credit due to his protestations, he may have spoken the truth in this particular, and been guilty not the less. The Dean was accustomed to lend his acquaintances a volume in which he had stitched specimens of the letters of his eminent friends.[132] The joint letter of August, 1723, was preserved,[133] when the letters of Pope to Swift for a considerable period before and after were lost or destroyed, and it is likely that it escaped the common fate by its insertion in the volume of selections. There it was easily accessible, and as Worsdale, the reputed mock-clergyman, who had personated Smythe, was sometimes resident in Dublin, his old employer had a trusty, or at any rate a trusted agent, ready to his hand. Curll did not print any more of his boasted originals, and he probably only spoke on the faith of promises which had been made him with a view to compel compliance from the Dean, by persuading him that traitors had admission to his cabinet.

The announcement of the publication by Curll of the joint letter of August 23 had not the desired effect upon Swift. In his reply he took no notice of the circumstance, and Pope, finding that nothing he could urge would shake his resolution, addressed, in the beginning of March, 1737, a statement of the case to Lord Orrery, who was then in Ireland, and engaged him to second his entreaties. Lord Orrery obtained a promise from Swift that the correspondence should be returned, and offered to be the bearer of it. The Dean accordingly acquaints Pope, July 23, 1737, that "when his lordship goes over, which will be, as he hopes, in about ten days, he will take with him all the letters I preserved of yours." "I cannot," said Swift, in making the communication, "trust my memory half an hour," and this passage was a proof that he did not exaggerate his infirmity. Lord Orrery had set sail in the middle of June, and under the same date that Swift [Pg lxxxix] wrote from Ireland that his lordship would go over in about ten days, his lordship wrote to Swift from England, "Your commands are obeyed long ago. Dr. King has his cargo, Mrs. Barber her Conversation, and Mr. Pope his letters." Mrs. Barber's Conversation was the manuscript of the "Polite Conversation" of Swift, which she had asked permission to print for her own advantage, and the cargo for Dr. King was the manuscript of the "History of the Four Last Years of Queen Anne," which the Dean was anxious to print for his own credit. But much as it was in his thoughts at this time, he only remembered his settled intention to send the papers—whether history, conversation, or letters—by Lord Orrery, and the act by which the intention was fulfilled had already faded from his mind. The understanding of Swift was rapidly yielding to his mournful malady, and the first faculty to suffer was his memory.

The letters of Pope were therefore in his own keeping, and out of the power of Swift, before July 23, 1737. The Dean, however, informed him that "by reading the dates he found a chasm of six years," and that he had searched for the missing correspondence in vain. Pope did not abandon the hope of recovering it, and Swift, apparently in reply to his applications, wrote on August 8, 1738, to acquaint him that every letter received from him for twenty years and upwards had been sealed up in bundles, and consigned to the custody of Mrs. Whiteway, whom he describes as "a very worthy, rational, and judicious cousin of mine." Mrs. Whiteway, who had none of the papers, had a short time before kept Swift from sending a similar fictitious account, but the idea had taken deep root in his mind, and rightly conjecturing that he would reiterate it, she engaged Lord Orrery to inform Pope that she had neither got any of the correspondence herself, nor had the slightest knowledge where it was.[134] On the present, as on the former occasion, Swift showed her what he had written, and on the 24th of August he subjoined a postscript in which, after saying that he would correct, if it were possible, the blunders committed in his letter, he simply added that his cousin had assured him that "a great collection of your/my letters to me/you are [Pg xc] put up and scaled, and in some very safe hand." The counter-assurance of Mrs. Whiteway to Lord Orrery that she had no knowledge of the collection, shows that the corrected version was as fanciful as the original statement. Swift's language in 1738 would imply that the chasm in the correspondence no longer existed, and that no part of the series had yet been transmitted to England; but it was the language of a man labouring under the misapprehension and obliviousness produced by disease, and could have little weight in opposition to the testimony that Pope had received back a packet of his letters in the previous year. Any doubt which could have existed on the point is done away by the admission of Pope himself. Mrs. Whiteway had refused in 1740 to send back some of his letters by the mother of the Mr. Nugent, who afterwards became Lord Clare, because the poet had authorised her to entrust them to a Mr. M'Aulay. "I believe," Pope wrote to Mr. Nugent, "they had entertained a jealousy of you, as the same persons did before of my Lord Orrery. They then prevented the Dean from complying to any

purpose with my request. They then sent a few just to save appearances, and possibly to serve as a sort of plea to excuse them of being taxed with this proceeding, which is now thrown upon the Dean himself."[135] The "proceeding" was the committing the correspondence to the press, and Pope, on his own part, to avoid being taxed with it, was privately putting forth the plea that the bulk of his letters had not been returned to him. The confession that he had received a few is a complete answer to the delusion of Swift, and they must have been more than a very few, or they would not have been sufficient "to save appearances." Setting aside the representations of the poet, upon which no dependence can be placed, except when he bears witness against himself, there is nothing to oppose, and much to confirm the idea that they were the identical "few" which were published in the quarto of 1741.

[Pg xci] When Swift first collected the letters in May, 1737, he mentioned that they were not much above sixty, and in July, when they had been sent away, and he described his past act in the language of intention, he said they were not above twenty-five. His account in July, when the correspondence was no longer under his eye, and when his failing memory made him forget the departure of Lord Orrery, is far less reliable than his account in May when he was fresh from the task of sorting the letters. A smaller number than he specified appeared in the quarto which, exclusive of the answers of the Dean, contains only forty. This upon an average does not amount to two a year, and the poet, when he had an end to serve, would not have scrupled to call even sixty "few" in comparison with the many that had been written. Swift imagined that the missing letters might have been lost on some of those occasions when he had been compelled to entrust his papers to friends, and Pope may honestly have believed that they were detained by designing persons; but they were never published, while those which were printed have a chasm of seven years, from June, 1716, to August, 1723, or only one year more than the Dean detected in the series he got ready to despatch to Twickenham. The new correspondence, like Pope's previous volumes, was merely a selection, and there is but a single letter of the poet to Swift in 1714, none whatever in 1715, and again but a single letter in 1716. The suppression of the letters in 1717, as in 1715, or even a slip of memory or a slip of the pen with the Dean, both of which had become a frequent occurrence, will account for the slight discrepancy between the chasm in the printed volume, and the chasm which Swift announced. The letter of August, 1723, is the joint letter of Pope and Bolingbroke, which was sent corrected to Curll, and this is followed by a second gap from August, 1723, to September 14, 1725. The extensive hiatus in the correspondence of which Pope was forewarned by Swift, must in all reason be supposed to be the chief deficiency of which Pope complained, though in language coloured to suit his purpose; and when a similar blank exists in the quarto, there is a strong presumption that the letters which he acknowledged had been sent to save appearances, were the same letters of which the book was composed. A kindred circumstance supports the conclusion. The last letter of Pope in the quarto is dated March 23, [Pg xcii] 1737, which falls in with the fact that the collection was gathered together in May and transmitted to him in June; but if the volume of 1741 had proceeded from Swift, it would be a curious coincidence, that not a single line written by the poet since the time when his correspondence was returned to him should have found its way into the work.

It is against the innocence of Pope that in his public statements he kept out of sight the fact that he had received back a certain portion of the correspondence, and designedly conveyed the impression that the whole of it remained with Swift. In the advertisement to the quarto it is said that Pope could not be prevailed upon to revise the volume printed in Dublin; but that he had furnished the London booksellers with a few more of the letters of the Dean a little to clear up the history of their publication. The reader is informed that he will see this history in one view if he observes the passages marked by inverted commas. The story they reveal is that Swift ultimately promised to send the correspondence, that he collected it for the purpose, and ended by sending none of it. The Dean's communication of August 8 is produced as exhibiting the final result, and Pope marked with inverted commas the declaration, "I can faithfully assure you that every letter you have favoured me with, these twenty years and more, are sealed up in bundles and delivered to Mrs. Whiteway." The sense in which the poet wished the passage to be understood is defined in the table of contents. "The entire collection of his and Mr. Pope's letters for twenty years and upwards found, and in the hands of a lady, a worthy and judicious relation of the Dean's.—This a mistake, not in hers, but in some other safe hands." A note was added by Pope to the letter for the purpose of strengthening the case against Swift; but not one syllable did he let drop to indicate that the Dean was deceived in supposing that the series remained unbroken, and that no part of it had been sent back. The testimony of another witness, which had the appearance of corroborating the error, was produced by the poet. The assertion in the postscript that Mrs. Whiteway vouched for "a great collection being in some very safe hand," seems to have beguiled him into the belief that the missing letters had turned up, and Lord [Pg xciii] Orrery having lately come from Ireland he applied to him on the subject. Lord Orrery answered, that Mrs. Whiteway knew nothing of the letters, that he was satisfied they were neither lost nor burnt, and that his attempts to discover where they were deposited had been fruitless. To us, who are aware that Lord Orrery had been the bearer of an instalment of the correspondence, it is plain that he is referring to that portion of it which could not be found when he carried over the remainder. To those who had only before them the version contained in the quarto, and who merely read of an intention to send letters by him in July, 1737, which had not been forwarded in August, 1738, his general expressions in answer to Pope would appear to apply to the whole of the correspondence, and seem a confirmation of the delusion of Swift. The poet made himself responsible for the misconceptions of the Dean by marking them with inverted commas, by supporting them with specious subsidiary evidence, and attesting that they embodied the history of the publication; and since they leave an impression which he knew to be false upon the precise

particular which implicates himself, his disingenuous sanction of the error must be considered to be the act of conscious guilt.

"I should think with you, madam," Lord Orrery wrote to Mrs. Whiteway, "that some of Mr. Pope's servants had stolen the letters, did not many appear from various people to the Dean, of which Mr. Pope cannot be supposed either to have seen the copies or originals." With our present information, the letters in the collection which are not from the pen of Pope tell the other way, and contribute in a powerful degree to fix the publication on him. The replies of Swift, together with much of Swift's correspondence with Gay, are included in the volume, and it will be found upon examination that all these materials were likely to have been furnished by the poet, and that part of them could have been furnished by nobody else. He has twice touched upon the subject in the annotations to the quarto. The first note is attached to the heading, "Letters of Dr. Swift to Mr. Gray," and states that they were "found among Mr. Gay's papers, and returned to Dr. Swift by the Duke of Queensberry and Mr. Pope." The second note is appended to that portion of [Pg xciv] the postscript of August 24, 1738, in which the Dean mentions "a great collection of your/my letters to me/you." "It is written," subjoins the poet, "just thus in the original. The book that is now printed seems to be part of the collection here spoken of, as it contains not only the letters of Mr. Pope, but of Dr. Swift, both to him and Mr. Gay, which were returned him after Mr. Gay's death, though any mention made by Mr. P. of the return or exchange of letters has been industriously suppressed in the publication, and only appears by some of the answers."

The case of Gay is first to be considered. There is not an allusion in any of the "answers," either to the exchange of the letters which passed between Gay and Swift, or the return of the letters which Swift addressed to Gay. An exchange, at all events, had not taken place. The letters of Gay were retained by Swift, and after the death of the Dean they were printed from the originals. Three only are contained in the quarto of 1741, and these are joint productions of Gay and Pope, [136] which would naturally have been made over to the latter when he reclaimed the whole of his correspondence with Swift. If the Dean was the culprit we must believe that while publishing, or permitting others to publish, his own letters to Gay, he deliberately excluded every one of Gay's replies, with the exception of the three in which Pope had a share. If Pope was the culprit the peculiarity is explained. He published the three letters which, being in part his own writing, had been sent back to him in 1737, and he published no others because the rest of the letters of Gay were not in his possession.

As the Duke of Queensberry was living, the introduction of his name is a species of guarantee that Swift had received back his letters to Gay; but the conclusion does not follow, which Pope intended to be drawn, that the Dean must therefore have supplied them to the printer. "One thing," says Swift to Gay, Nov. 20, 1729, "you are to consider, because it is an old compact, that [Pg xcv] when I write to you, or Mr. Pope, I write to both." On the death of Gay the correspondence passed a second time through Pope's hands, and with his habit at that period of getting the letters of his intimates, as well as his own letters, transcribed for future use, it may readily be imagined that he would not miss the opportunity of securing a valuable collection, in which he may be said to have had a common property with his departed friend[137]. Hence it happens that copies of all Swift's letters to Gay, together with one that was not printed, are preserved among the Oxford manuscripts, and with this evidence that the entire series was not less in the power of Pope than of Swift, suspicion must incline to the one who had made elaborate preparations for publication, and who had shown himself eager for it. The suppression too of Gay's replies, contrary to the general rule observed in the work, would here again favour the opinion that the letters of Swift were sent to the press by the person to whom the replies were inaccessible, and not by the person who had the correspondence on both sides at his command.

The assertion that the letters were returned which Swift addressed to Pope, is next to be examined. According to the poet his surrender of them appears from *some* of the answers of Swift; but the single passage by which it is implied, is that in which the Dean speaks of "a great collection of [your/my] letters to [me/you]." The very letter in which the sentence occurs commences with a lament by Swift that he has "entirely lost his memory," and the strange double form in which he describes the correspondence seems chiefly to indicate a consciousness that his [Pg xcvi] recollection of its nature was uncertain and confused. On one half of the subject he had manifested his misconceptions a few days before. He had forgotten the chasm in the series of Pope's letters, had forgotten that any of them had been restored to their author, had forgotten Mrs. Whiteway's denial that she possessed them, and when she again corrected him, continued to fancy they were deposited with some person he knew not whom, in some place he knew not where. His notions respecting his letters to Pope were not likely to be better founded than his notions respecting the letters of Pope to him. But more than this, he only professed to make the statement upon the authority of his cousin, and his cousin disavowed all knowledge of the collection. Far from being aware that the Dean had received back his letters to Pope, she expressed her conviction that the materials for the printed volume could not have been drawn from Ireland, just because those letters formed part of it.[138] The literal interpretation of a single phrase of Swift, in a letter which bears internal evidence of the grievous extent of his malady, being negatived by the authority upon which it claims to be based, there still exists the ambiguous assurance of Pope that he returned the correspondence after the death of Gay, which happened in December, 1732. The replies, however, of Swift in the quarto, instead of stopping at this date, extend to August, 1738, and those of the last half-dozen years must have remained with the poet. The Dean had said in 1717, that he kept no copies of letters. Mrs. Whiteway testified that he had never taken a copy during the twelve years she had been at his elbow, "excepting of a

letter to a lord-lieutenant or a bishop, whom he feared might make an ill use of it;" and as for the letters to Pope she had seen him write them, and send them off immediately. Letters of which Pope had the originals, and Swift no copies, must plainly have owed their publicity to Pope.

There is another inconsistency which makes it very doubtful whether the poet could have sent back the earlier letters of Swift any more than the later. After informing the Dean, on December 30, 1736, that the joint letter of August, 1723, had been recently printed by Curll, Pope went on to say, "Your answer to that letter, he has not got; it has never been out of my custody; for whatever is lent is lost, wit as well as money, to these needy poetical readers." Here we have Pope avowing that he retained in 1736 an answer of the Dean, which belonged to the year 1723. There is no indication that it was an exception to the rest of the correspondence, and the presumption therefore is that none of the letters which Pope received from Swift had been restored upon the death of Gay in 1732. The poet's assertion is rendered more suspicious by the absence of all allusion to the circumstance in the arguments which he addressed through Lord Orrery to Swift, in March, 1737, with a view to convince him that his refusal to return Pope's own letters was unjust. No plea could have had greater force than the statement that Pope had already sent back the letters of Swift, and was only asking the Dean to deal by him as he had dealt by the Dean.

[Pg xcvii]

Although we were to suppose, against the evidence, that the poet had given up the whole of the originals, he must still have retained copies. He avowedly inserted six letters of the Dean in the quarto to clear up the history of the publication, and four of the number belong to the years 1732 and 1733, which shows that Pope continued to have the command of the correspondence at the period of its appearance in 1741. Indeed copies of five of the published letters of Swift to Pope, with eight that are unpublished, are in the Oxford papers, and since none of the six, which the poet contributed to the quarto, are among them, more must have existed, unless he had kept the originals. That he had never parted with them is the just conclusion from the facts,[139] and his note is one of those instances in which he had recourse to the licence he allowed himself of "equivocating genteelly." The letters of Swift to Gay may be presumed to have been returned to Swift, when the Duke of Queensberry examined Gay's papers after his death. The expressions in the Dean's child-like postscript of August 24 gave a colour to the notion that he had also got back his letters to Pope. The admission suggested to the poet to draw up a note which, read by the ordinary rules of language, affirms that the letters to himself were returned, as well as the letters to Gay, but in which the return of the letters, by a forced construction, might be made to apply to Gay alone, who is the immediate antecedent. This accounts for the death of Gay having been fixed upon for the era of the alleged restoration to the Dean of his correspondence with Pope, though there was no connection between the events, and though the choice of so early a date left unexplained the appearance in the quarto of the subsequent letters of Swift. That "any mention made by Mr. P. of the return or exchange of letters should be industriously suppressed" by Mr. P. "in the publication," was a necessary consequence, or it would have been manifest that the only letters which had been returned were those of Gay. By evasions like these the poet satisfied a conscience that held a lie to be justifiable, provided it was couched in language which could be wrested by the deceiver into a different sense from what it bore to the deceived.

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The correspondence between Swift and Bolingbroke completed the series, which Pope complained was printed without his consent. Of the eight letters from Bolingbroke, seven were written in conjunction with the poet. These joint compositions, like the partnership letters of Gay, are exactly those which would have been returned to Pope. One of the number furnishes evidence, which almost amounts to a demonstration, that the collection of 1741 proceeded from himself. When he brought out the avowed edition of his letters in 1737, he inserted at the end of the volume a letter of Swift, a letter of his own, and the joint letter from himself and Bolingbroke, of which Curll had obtained a copy. This little supplement was ushered in by a notice which says, "Since the foregoing sheets were printed off, the following letters having been published without the consent of their writers, we have added them, though not in the order of time." Whatever the motive the announcement was deceptive. The letter of Swift was his reply to the joint letter of Pope and Bolingbroke—that very reply which the poet boasted a month or two before could not be produced surreptitiously, because it had never been out of his custody. Nobody else, by his own showing, had the power to make it public, no earlier impression of it is known to exist, and, as will be seen by comparing it with the copy from the Oxford papers, it was printed with omissions and variations, which must have been the act of the poet, or he would have restored the genuine readings when he included it in his appendix. In juxtaposition with it is a letter from Pope to Swift, dated December 10, 1725, which in like manner has never been found in any prior publication, and which of all his letters to the Dean is the single one we are certain was in his power when the quarto of 1737 was in the press. He transcribed the original at the time it was written, and sent a copy to Lord Oxford, ostensibly to let him see the way in which he was mentioned in it, but partly, perhaps, because the poet thought well of the production.[140] This letter of December, 1725, reappears in tho quarto of 1741, with the addition for the first time of a postscript by Bolingbroke. A copy of the entire performance is among the Oxford papers, and reveals the fact that the Pope portion, and the Bolingbroke portion, are both abridged in the published version. Yet although the persons who brought out the collection of 1741, had the manuscript before them, or they could not have given Bolingbroke's share of the letter, they nevertheless, by a marvellous coincidence, print Pope's share precisely as it had been printed by Pope himself in 1737. The conclusion is irresistible that the editor of the quarto of 1737, was the editor of the collection of 1741. The postscript of Bolingbroke was not written when he was in the house with Pope, but was added subsequently when he got back to Dawley,[141] and its omission

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from the volume of 1737 was due to the circumstance, that the poet had not then received back his correspondence from Swift, and only possessed a copy of his own carefully composed essay. [Pg c]

The letter of Bolingbroke to Swift, in which the poet had no share, was commenced at Aix-la-Chapelle on August 30, 1729, and completed at Dawley on October 5. Pope appears not to have seen it before it was sent; for four days later, on October 9, he says to Swift, "Lord Bolingbroke has told me ten times over, he was going to write to you. Has he or not?" The elaborate epistle of Bolingbroke was a reply to a letter which Swift had addressed to Pope, and the consequent interest that Pope would have had in the answer, may have induced the author, proud of his production, to provide him with a copy; but however he came by it, a copy was deposited by him in Lord Oxford's library, where, as in the quarto of 1741, it is the single example of an epistle by Bolingbroke alone. Swift had by him a quantity of Bolingbroke's correspondence, some of which would have been full as appropriate as the specimen that is given, and it is a weighty fact in the question whether the Dean or the poet furnished the materials to the printer, that the one letter selected was the one letter that Pope possessed. The three letters which are inserted from Swift to Bolingbroke incline the scale to the same side. The first relates in part to Pope, the conclusion of the second is addressed to him, and the third is the answer to the letter of August 30, 1729. It was never pretended that the Dean received back his letters to Bolingbroke, and it was not his habit to make copies; but with our knowledge that the poet and Bolingbroke had much of their correspondence with Swift in common, we may be sure that these three letters, at least, had been in the hands of Pope, and if he did not retain the originals, it would in 1729, the year to which they all belong, have been in accordance with his common practice to transcribe them.

Thus what was printed of the correspondence, and what was not printed, concur to show that Pope must have been the source from which it was derived. The history of the circumstances under which the publication took place will confirm this inference. Pope asserted that the quarto was "copied from an impression sent from Dublin." There is now proof in abundance that the [Pg ci] Dublin edition, which came out as the seventh volume of Swift's works, was copied from an impression sent from England. Mr. Deane Swift, a cousin of his famous namesake, and the son-in-law of Mrs. Whiteway, informed Mr. Nichols, in 1778, that "he was the only person then living who could give a full account how Faulkner's seventh volume, that is, how Swift's and Pope's correspondence came to be, not *first printed*, but first published in Ireland."[142] The italics are Mr. Swift's own, and the fact on which he laid such especial emphasis is at once attested and explained by the statement of Faulkner himself to Dr. Birch in August, 1749. "Mr. Pope," he said, "sent to Ireland to Dr. Swift, by Mr. Gerrard, an Irish gentleman, then at Bath, a printed copy of their letters, with an anonymous letter, which occasioned Dr. Swift to give Mr. Faulkner leave to reprint them at Dublin, though Mr. Pope's edition was published first."[143] Faulkner also solicited the sanction of Pope, and we have the poet's summary of the application, in the letter he wrote to Mr. Nugent on August 14, 1740: "Last week I received an account from Faulkner, the Dublin bookseller, that the Dean himself has given him a collection of letters of his own and mine, and others, to be printed, and he civilly asks my consent, assuring me the Dean declares them genuine, and that Mr. Swift, Mrs. Whiteway's son-in-law, will correct the press, out of his great respect to the Dean and myself. He says they were collected by some unknown persons, and the copy sent with a letter importing that it was criminal to suppress such an amiable picture of the Dean, and his private character appearing in those letters, and that if he would not publish them [Pg cii] in his lifetime others would after his death." It is manifest from these particulars that Faulkner was not then aware that Pope himself had sent the correspondence to Swift, and the conviction was only forced upon his mind by subsequent events. But the bookseller could not be mistaken on the point that the letters were handed to him in print. As he later told Dr. Birch that the Dean had given him leave to reprint them because they were printed already, so he proclaimed that his volume was a reprint at the time. He inserted at the end of his *first* edition the few new letters which were added in the quarto of 1741, and says that he found them in the London impression "after he had *reprinted* the foregoing sheets." Faulkner had no sort of motive to deceive. Whether the letters were in type or in manuscript he had equally received them from Swift, and obtained his authority to publish them.

If further testimony is required it is supplied by Pope. To the mention of Mrs. Whiteway in Lord Orrery's letter of 1738 the poet appended a note in which he says, "This lady since gave Mr. Pope the strongest assurances that she had used her utmost endeavours to prevent the publication—nay, went so far as to secrete the book, till it was commanded from her, and delivered to the Dublin printer, whereupon her son-in-law, D. Swift, Esq., insisted upon writing a preface to justify Mr. P. from having any knowledge of it, and to lay it upon the corrupt practices of the printers in London; but this he would not agree to, as not knowing the truth of the fact." It was therefore a book, and a *printed* book, which was delivered to Faulkner, since if the collection transmitted to the Dean had been in manuscript, Mrs. Whiteway and her son-in-law would not have laid it upon the corrupt practices of the printers, and it must have been transmitted from England, or they would neither have laid it upon the printers of London, nor have proposed "to justify Mr. P. from having any knowledge of it." The story was told him while it could be refuted if it was false; but he did not venture to question the existence of the printed volume, and had nothing more to say than that he did not personally know that it was due to the corrupt practices of the London [Pg ciii] booksellers. He might have gone further, and stated that he knew the booksellers to be innocent.

The assertion of Faulkner, that it was Pope who sent this volume to Swift, is equally supported by unexceptionable evidence. The collection of 1735 was secretly printed and sold to Curll, and when a secretly printed work turns out to be the origin of the collection of 1741, the nature of the device proclaims its author. But the circumstance which most implicates Pope is his anxiety that

it should not transpire that a printed volume had been sent to Swift at all. He informed his friend Allen that he had endeavoured to put a stop to the work, and that this had drawn forth replies from the "Dean's people—the women and the bookseller." With their statements before him, he kept back from Allen the main fact that the Dublin volume was taken entirely from a printed copy, and speaks instead as if it was taken from the originals. He adds that it is too manifest to admit of any doubt how many tricks have been played with the Dean's papers, and accused his "people" of secreting them as long as they feared he would not permit them to be published. This dishonest substitution of "originals" and "papers" for the printed book is a convincing proof that Pope had some motive, incompatible with innocence, for his studious perversion of the truth. The desire to obliterate the traces of his delinquency reappears in the preface to the quarto. He writes with implied censure of Swift for his sanction of the Dublin edition, and has the disingenuousness to conceal that he had merely allowed Faulkner to reproduce in Ireland a volume which had been printed in England—a volume over which the Dean had no control, and which being printed, he knew would inevitably be published.

The artful wording of the very note in which Pope refers to the printed book betrays his desire to keep the fact out of sight. His statement could enlighten no one who was previously ignorant. It was not from choice that he promulgated, however obscurely, the allegation of Mrs. Whiteway that the work had its origin in London. But he was forced upon one of two evils, and he selected the least. Mrs. Whiteway knew that the letters must either have been printed by Pope, or have [Pg civ] found their way to the press by the corruption of those who had access to his papers. She acquitted Pope, out of courtesy, perhaps, to his own protestations, and accepted the second conclusion, that the London booksellers had procured the manuscripts by bribes, though she could hardly have entertained the serious belief that the Curlls had been at the expense of purchasing and printing them, for no other purpose than to ship a solitary copy to Ireland. She was eager to be cleared from any possible imputation of abusing the trust which devolved on her through the imbecility of Swift,[144] and her anxiety to absolve herself and the Dean, is the secret of her son-in-law insisting upon writing a preface to prove that the traitors must have been in England and not in Ireland. He alone would have been responsible for the facts and arguments he adduced, and they would have appeared in the edition of Faulkner, where they would not have claimed the sanction of Pope. His ignorance could be no reason why an independent person should not tell what he knew and believed, and his unwillingness to be justified was in direct opposition to his conduct through life. It was for a different cause that he interfered with the execution of the design. Mr. Swift would have disclosed the fact that the letters of the poet had been returned to him through Lord Orrery, in 1737, that he had exclusive possession of the letters of the Dean, that the ground-work of the collection was at Twickenham, that it had been printed at London, and had come printed to Dublin. When he insisted upon fulfilling his intention, Pope, to divert him from it, must have been driven to propose the insertion of the exculpatory note. He drew it up in a form which would bear one meaning to those who were acquainted with the facts, and another to the multitude who were in the dark. He had the contradictory ends to answer of propitiating Mrs. Whiteway and concealing the truth, and his language, like everything he wrote on the question, is consequently vague and evasive.

In the same letter in which Pope ignored the existence of the printed book to Allen, and pretended that the Irish edition was taken directly from the originals, he further asserted that the [Pg cv] "Dean's people" had at length consented to give up the manuscripts. If the originals were really in their possession there would be strong grounds for concluding that the conspirators were at Dublin. If, on the contrary, the allegation of the poet was a wilful untruth, this additional misrepresentation must lead us to conclude that he was the author of a fraud from which he defended himself by falsehood. Mrs. Whiteway had, it is true, commissioned Mr. Nugent to acquaint him that she had secured several of his letters. Mr. Nugent, having delivered the message in March, 1740, informs her in April that he was authorised to receive them, and begs her to transmit them to him in London by a safe hand.[145] She evidently preferred that they should go direct to their owner, and wrote to Pope in May, that she would forward them by the first trustworthy messenger who would deliver them to Pope himself. It was agreed between them that Mr. M'Aulay should be the person; but they were ultimately sent to Lord Orrery, at his country seat in Ireland, in January or February, 1741, and were, no doubt, conveyed by him to their final destination when he visited England in March. The critic in the Athenæum plausibly conjectures that they were the letters which had been written since the transmission of the collection in June, 1737, and the late period at which they were received would account for none of them appearing in the quarto, which was published by the middle of April, 1741.

When Pope, at the beginning of August, 1740, heard from Faulkner that the Dean had given him permission to print, or rather to reprint, the correspondence, he expressed his conviction to Mr. Nugent, who was still meddling in the business, that the offer of returning the letters was a feint. "I presume now," he added, "that she would have sent but a few of no consequence, for the bookseller tells me there are several of Lord Bolingbroke's, &c., which must have been in the Dean's own custody."[146] Mrs. Whiteway had merely undertaken to return to Pope the letters [Pg cvi] which were written by Pope, and it is not apparent why the printing of several of the letters of Bolingbroke should have involved the conclusion that she was practising a feint, and would only have sent a few of no consequence. The incongruity of the observation seems to have been the result of the guilt which dictated it. The poet was aware that the originals promised him were a comparatively small number, which had no connection with the printed letters, and he was meeting the circumstance by anticipation, in the probable event of its reaching the ears of Mr. Nugent. The rest of the correspondence was already in his possession, and he assigned a foolish

reason why Mrs. Whiteway would not have sent it, because the real reason could not be stated.

It was several months subsequent to this communication to Mr. Nugent, and after he had received the comments of Mrs. Whiteway on the volume which came from England, that he opened his griefs to Mr. Allen. The letter is not dated; but a letter to Warburton, which gives a portion of the same information as a piece of novel intelligence, bears the date of February 4, 1741. "They now offer," Pope tells Allen, "to send me the originals, which have been so long detained, and I will accept of them, though they have done their job." A few months later he reverted to the subject and says to Allen, "It will please you to know that I have received the packet of letters safe from Ireland by the means of Lord Orrery."[147] He has not the candour to acknowledge that the letters were voluntarily tendered him by Mrs. Whiteway long before the printed collection had been heard of. He wished to have it believed that they had only been offered to him since the booksellers "had done their job," and the motive for this deception must have been the desire to identify the letters from Mrs. Whiteway with the letters in Faulkner's volume, while he had a secret consciousness that they had nothing in common. It might be conjectured, indeed, that he was speaking of a distinct occurrence, and that Lord Orrery was the bearer of two sets of letters, though Pope mentions only one, if it were not certain, as I shall now proceed to show, that the originals of the printed collection sent to Dublin were never offered to him at all. [Pg cvii]

After the collection had been consigned to Faulkner, Mrs. Whiteway wrote her sentiments at large to Lord Orrery. She asked him, with reference to a letter of Pope's, if he believed the collection genuine, and slight as were her doubts, the question would have been absurd if she had professedly the originals of the correspondence in her hands. She declared her conviction that the poet had been betrayed by his own servants, and since the letters extended over three and twenty years, she could not have imagined that they had all the while been intercepted on their road to the post, but must have assumed that they had been abstracted from the cabinets in which they were stored away at Twickenham. The main stress of her argument against the theory that the work had been concocted in Ireland, was laid upon the presence of the letters of the Dean, which Pope alone could command, and not upon the letters of Pope, which might have been copied while they remained in the possession of Swift; but she pointed out the improbability of the supposition by remarking that no use had been made of the book in which Swift had stitched specimens of the correspondence of various eminent men, and which was peculiarly accessible from his habit of circulating it among his friends. In particular, she noticed that she had formerly his permission to take from it a letter of Pope, and she triumphantly remarks that this letter had not been printed. The boast could have had no force if all the printed correspondence had been the same correspondence she had promised to return. The notion that she had offered to send back the originals of the collection of 1741 is inconsistent with every part of her defence—a defence in which she was not afraid to challenge contradiction, since she authorised Lord Orrery to pass it on to Pope. Neither could the originals have been offered by Faulkner; for both at the time and afterwards he asserted that his volume was only a reprint. Pope may even be said to bear testimony against himself. He was eager to make it appear that the work was composed of materials which must have been drawn from the papers of Swift, and he took advantage of the erroneous phrase in Swift's postscript of August 24, to add, in a note, "The book that is now printed *seems* to be part of the collection here spoken of." The announcement that the "Dean's people" had acknowledged that they possessed a large proportion of the originals would have decided the question, and the silence of the poet is an admission that he dared not repeat in public, where it would meet the eye of the persons implicated, the fable he had palmed off upon Allen in private. Nay, when stating in the quarto that Mrs. Whiteway and her son-in-law charged the whole proceeding upon the corrupt practices of the London printers, he still did not venture to retort that the originals had never left the custody of the "Dean's people," who detained them in Dublin until, according to his own expression, the Dublin printers had "done their job." The fact was, that Allen had intimated his apprehension that Pope would be suspected of being concerned in the publication, and Pope replied that "the whole thing was so circumstanced that this could never be the case." To stifle the suggestion, he based a falsehood upon a foundation of truth, and spoke of the letters which Mrs. Whiteway had offered to send him, in the beginning of 1740, as though they had been the originals of the printed correspondence. His invention of a fiction to establish his innocence, is a sure indication of his guilt. [Pg cviii]

The Dean's people promised Pope the copy of the correspondence, that he might correct and expunge what he pleased. "I dare not," he wrote to Allen, "even do this, for they would say I revised it." His mind immediately veered from decision to uncertainty, and in the next sentence but one he states that "he knows not whether to make any use of the permission or not." A little further, and he comes to the conclusion that until he sees the letters he can form no judgment of the proper measures to be pursued. "The excessive earnestness," he adds, "the Dean has been in for publishing them makes me hope they are castigated in some degree; or he must be totally deprived of his understanding." Lord Mansfield deposed, from the personal information of Pope, that his imperfect memory of their contents increased his anxiety to stop the publication.[148] In the midst of his apprehensions, his knowledge of Swift's incapacity, and his conviction that it would be insanity to allow the correspondence to go forth in its integrity, he yet resolved not to expurgate the copy, and then doubted whether he would expurgate it or not. This easy kind of hesitation, which has none of the appearance of genuine alarm, was what might be expected in a man who had already revised the letters to his heart's content, and was poorly performing a borrowed part. Though he ended by refusing to retouch a text of his own preparing, he employed [Pg cix]

the interval while the sheets were submitted to his criticism in forestalling the Dublin edition. Mr. D. Swift believed that the correspondence was first published in Ireland. Faulkner asserted that it was first published in England, and Faulkner, who could not well be mistaken, was right. No advertisement of the Irish volume is to be found in the "Dublin News Letter" till some time after the English volume was on sale, and no copy exists in the public libraries, or after long search could be heard of from the second-hand booksellers, which does not contain the additional matter inserted in the quarto.[149] In the prefatory notice to the quarto itself we are told that the letters are taken "from an impression sent from Dublin, and said to be printed by the Dean's direction." This was the impression which had been privately forwarded to Pope, and the language seems to have been carefully selected to avoid the assertion that there had been a publication of the work. The poet's scheme may be discerned in the account he gave to Allen. He informed him that the book, being most of it printed, was "put past preventing," but that he was "trying all the means possible to retard it." In plain words, he was manœuvring to keep back the Irish edition till his rival reprint was in the market. When he had succeeded in his device, he repeated his old tactics of advertising that the surreptitious collection was the cause of his own, and at the same time bespoke the preference for his reprint by announcing that it would contain "several additional letters."[150]

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Apart from these additions, the quarto of Pope is a reproduction, with some variations, of the Dublin impression, and a few notes which Faulkner had doubtless found in the volume sent from England, are said in the quarto to be taken from Faulkner. Nevertheless there is strong internal evidence that a portion of the quarto had an independent origin, and had been printed off before the Irish edition was received. The correspondence consists of 209 pages, which are numbered consecutively from 1 to 115. At this point the letters of Swift to Gay commence, and instead of the numbers proceeding in regular order, they go back to page 89, and are thence continued without any break to the final page, 182. That the arrangement is not a typographical mistake is clear from the signatures of the sheets being in accordance with the paging,—a coincidence which was barely possible if the figures had been a misprint. The correspondence of Swift with Gay begins on sheet N, which is the letter of the alphabet that answers to page 89 in a quarto volume, and this keeping between the letters and the figures is preserved throughout. But there is a second coincidence which is absolutely fatal to the idea that the confusion in the paging was an error of the press. The quarto edition was accompanied by an edition in folio, which was the same impression with the matter parcelled out into pages of greater length, and with the requisite changes in the numbering of the pages and the signatures of the sheets. In spite of the change there is the identical peculiarity that distinguishes the quarto. The numbers run on unbroken from 1 to 108, when we arrive at the letters to Gay. Here we recommence with page 85, and starting from this new basis the figures proceed in regular succession to the end. The sheet at page 85 is marked Y, the proper letter for the folio size, and as in the quarto the signatures, in every instance, correspond with the pages. The defect cannot be explained by the supposition that the work had been divided into portions, which were printed separately for the sake of expedition. With the text of the Dublin copy to guide his calculations, no compositor could have committed the error of pronouncing that matter which covers 115 pages could he contained in 88. The evident cause of the anomaly is that, after the quarto in its original form had passed through the press, Pope saw reason to cancel the opening part of the volume which preceded Swift's correspondence with Gay. The materials in their second form occupied more space than in their first, and instead of filling only 88 pages in the quarto, and 84 in the folio, run on to 115 in the one, and 108 in the other. The consequence is that the pages in excess bear the same numbers with the succeeding uncancelled pages which could not be altered. The process is rendered further apparent by the signatures to the sheets. In both folio and quarto, those on the surplus pages, in the cancelled division of the volume, have an asterisk affixed to denote that the signatures had been already employed;[151] but though the sheets have this mark of repetition, they are placed in the volume before the uncancelled sheets which retain the primitive signatures, and which did not admit of any change. In the quarto, again, a half sheet precedes the letters to Gay, which could not have happened unless it had been a subsequent interpolation, when the matter was insufficient to make the sheet complete. The half-sheet, the duplicate paging, and the duplicate signatures, are all the result of the insertion of fresh materials after the work was struck off, and betray that there was an earlier form of the quarto of 1741, which contained less than the Dublin edition, and which, therefore, being prior to it, is a proof that the correspondence was originally printed by Pope. The letters in the quarto are numbered, and since the series is unbroken throughout, the original cancelled division must ostensibly have comprised as many letters as when it was subsequently enlarged. But a letter to Gay, dated Nov. 23, 1727, is found by the copies preserved in the Oxford papers, to be compounded of three distinct letters, and this system of fusion would have permitted the introduction of large additions without deranging the continuity Of the numbers, which Pope would have been anxious to preserve. The cancels he made to suit his varying views were in accordance with his practice. The miscellaneous prose works, which follow the letters, have in one place alone a cancel of upwards of a hundred pages. Equally characteristic was the desire to preserve any of the old sheets which could be retained, regardless of the blemish to the book, and the trace they might afford of his manœuvres. It was a repetition of the paper-sparing policy which led him to incorporate the suppressed sheets of his Wycherley into the volume of 1735.[152]

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On the 22nd of March, 1741, Pope called upon Lord Orrery at his house in London, and found him writing to Swift. The poet took the pen from his hand, and continued the letter. After large professions of affection, he went on to say, "I must confess, a late incident has given me some

pain; but I am satisfied you were persuaded it would not have given me any, and whatever unpleasant circumstances the printing our letters might be attended with, there was one that pleased me,—that the strict friendship we have borne each other so long is thus made known to all mankind. As far as it was your will, I cannot be angry at what, in all other respects, I am quite uneasy under. Had you asked me, before you gave them away, I think I could have proposed [Pg cxiii] some better monument for our friendship, or, at least, of better materials." Any words addressed to Swift were lost upon him now, and Pope in reality was speaking to Lord Orrery, and to those who might hereafter read his protestations. He had apparently forgotten that just four years before he had complained to the same Lord Orrery, that the Dean had denied his request when he wished to insert some of the letters in the quarto of 1737.[153] The monument he was eager to erect to their friendship in 1737, he repudiated in 1741. He affirmed that he could have proposed a better, but never hinted what it was; or at least of choicer materials, but never troubled himself further about them. This was the smallest part of the contradiction. He refused his consent to the reprint of the book sent to Dublin, and had even tried, he told Allen, to stop it by threats of law. It is true, he confessed to Mr. Nugent at the outset, and continued to confess to Allen, that he had no hope of prevailing; but his efforts are not the less the measure of his pretended disgust. Yet he instantly appropriated the correspondence he was anxious to stifle in its birth, contrived to anticipate the Dublin edition, incorporated the entire collection into his works, and published it simultaneously in folio, quarto, and octavo. He stated in the prefatory notice, that he had refused to revise the letters, because they were committed to the press without his consent; but the annoyance which would not permit him to revise the letters was no check to his haste in adopting, or to his zeal in circulating them. For a man who was "quite uneasy" at their appearance, his eagerness to countenance, to parade, and to propagate them was amazing, and the manifest duplicity is not the least forcible of the arguments which bring the whole contrivance home to Pope. Warburton applauded him for the little resentment "he expressed at the indiscretion of his old friend." He affected far more than his advocate supposed; but if it had been otherwise it is strange that Warburton should not have perceived that to talk of resentment was ridiculous when the poet was espousing "the indiscretion," and was doing his utmost to [Pg cxiv] disseminate the letters he feigned a wish to suppress.

Curll republished the letters under the title of "Dean Swift's Literary Correspondence." Pope filed a bill in Chancery against Curll on June 4, 1741. The poet not only demanded protection for his own letters, but desired that the bookseller should be restrained from vending the letters of Swift, who was not a party to the suit, nor had commissioned any one to interfere on his behalf. The case was memorable both from its intrinsic importance, and from the celebrity of the plaintiff. In his answer, on the 13th of June, Curll admitted that nobody had authorised his work. He rested his defence on three propositions. He maintained that private correspondence did not come within the Copyright Act of Queen Anne, because the Act was declared in the title to be for the "Encouragement of *Learning*," whereas letters on familiar subjects were not *learned* productions; and because the Act was designed to protect books which were avowedly composed for the press, whereas letters were written without the intention of converting them into a literary commodity. He said that he was informed, and believed, that the letters were first "printed"[154] at Dublin, and he contended that all persons in England had a right to reproduce books which were first "published" in Ireland. He finally argued that letters were in the nature of a gift to the receiver, and that after they were delivered to the Dean they became his property. On the motion to dissolve the injunction on these grounds, Lord Hardwicke decided that they were none of them valid. He refused to recognise a distinction between letters and other compositions. He denied that a prior publication in Ireland could deprive an English author of his English rights. He, above all, determined that though the paper on which the letter was written might possibly be the property of the receiver, the matter remained the property of the writer. [Pg cxv] For the same reason that he admitted Pope's title to his own letters, he declined to continue the injunction with respect to the letters addressed to him, which had never ceased to belong to the persons who penned them.[155] The celebrated Murray was one of the counsel for the poet,[156] and afterwards, when Lord Chief Justice, he quoted and confirmed the decision of the Chancellor. "The question," he said, "was whether the property was not transferred to the correspondent. Lord Hardwicke thought not, and that the writer was still the proprietor."[157] "Dean Swift," he said subsequently, "was certainly the proprietor of the paper upon which Pope's letters to him were written; but no disposition, no transfer of paper upon which the composition is written can be construed a conveyance of the copy, without the author's express consent to print and publish, much less against his will."[158] Just and valuable as is the rule of law which prohibits the publication of a letter without the permission of its author, the manner in which Pope invoked it was singular. According to his statement it was Swift that had prepared and put forth a correspondence, in which more of the letters were from the pen of the Dean than from the pen of the poet. Pope, while professing to be vexed beyond measure at this exposure of private papers, asked for an injunction, not for the purpose of suppressing them, but to obtain a monopoly of the sale. He was not even content to reclaim his personal share in the publication of the friend whom he upbraided for the act. He tried to prevent any one except himself from profiting by Swift's part [Pg cxvi] of the book, and at the same time that he was endeavouring to secure goods which did not belong to him, he reproached their owner for displaying them. His conduct once more betrayed the truth he laboured to conceal. He was the compiler of the collection, and instinctively regarded a rival edition as an invasion of his rights. His proceedings were unnatural, if Swift was the sole originator of the work; but if it had a different source we can perceive why Pope was jealous of the least interference with property which, from the outset, he considered to be exclusively his own.

A fatality attended the correspondence of Pope. Curll, in defiance of him, printed his letters to Cromwell. Lord Oxford, in spite of his disapproval, printed his letters to Wycherley. An unknown person, by unknown means, obtained the whole of the collection of 1735, printed it secretly at his own expense, and sold it for a song. To render the history uniform and complete, Swift, who would not permit Pope to print their letters, printed them himself, while Pope, changing sides with him, remonstrated and threatened. That nothing might be wanting to the singularity of the case, the three last sets of letters stole into the world when they were under the vigilant guardianship of the poet, and the two last sets got abroad after the abiding paroxysm of terror, engendered by the indiscretion of a single dissolute friend, had induced him to wrest his correspondence from friends of every degree for the purpose of securing it from the possibility of publication. Mrs. Whiteway remarked to Lord Orrery, that among the letters in the Dean's stitched book were numbers from the greatest men in England for genius, learning, and power,—from Bolingbroke, Oxford, Bathurst, and Peterborough; from Addison, Congreve, Prior, Parnell, and Gay. She said these were as easily pilfered, and would have been as interesting to the world, as the letters of Pope and Swift;[159] but nobody invaded the sanctity of the private correspondence of the poet's contemporaries, even when the papers were open to half the gossips of Dublin. He stood alone in a misfortune which happened to him no less than four times, [Pg cxvii] and which it is to be feared would have happened a fifth if he had lived long enough to accumulate the materials for a fresh volume. He relaxed his correspondence with Caryll in 1729, and with Swift in 1737, as a means to compel them to resign his former letters, and to both he used the same expression,—that "he did not write upon the terms of other *honest* men."[160] The fallacy of the parallel was in the epithet. If he had resembled other men in their honesty he might have shared in their immunity from the alleged treachery of friends like Oxford and Swift, and of enemies like Curll.

Of all the deceptions which the poet practised to get his correspondence under the eye of the world, his dealings towards Swift are the worst. He had failed to gain his consent to putting forth the letters while any judgment yet remained to him; but no sooner had he sunk into dotage than, trusting to his inability to detect the cheat, Pope beguiled him into sanctioning the publication by sending him the volume ready printed, with a flattering exhortation, the echo of what he had written on a former occasion,[161] "importing that it was criminal to suppress such an amiable picture of the Dean and his private character."[162] The moment Swift fell into the pit his friend had dug for him, his friend denounced him for the act. "I think," he wrote to Mr. Nugent, "I can make no reflections upon this strange incident but what are truly melancholy, and humble the pride of human nature,—that the greatest of geniuses, though prudence may have been the companion of wit (which is very rare) for their whole lives past, may have nothing left them at last but their vanity. No decay of body is half so miserable!" Extraordinary language to come from the pen of the man whose vanity, without any excuse from the decay of his faculties, had made him eager to print the letters in 1737, and who had been only thwarted in his desire because Swift was wanting in the vanity by which he himself was impelled,—infamous language [Pg cxviii] when the deed he reprobated was his own, and Swift the innocent dupe; and when having traded successfully in the mental afflictions of his friend, he proceeded to hold up his victim, as the criminal. But the simulated indignation is less revolting than the simulated fondness. "When the heart is full of tenderness," he said to the Dean, in the letter of March 22, 1741, "it must be full of concern at the absolute impotency of all words to come up to [it]. I value and enjoy more the memory of the pleasure and endearing obligations I have formerly received from you than the perfect possession of any other. Think it not possible that my affection can cease but with my last breath. If I could think yours was exhausted I should grieve, but not reproach you. If I felt myself even hurt by you I should be confident you knew not the blow you gave, but had your hand guided by another." The hand which guided him was the same hand that was at that moment aiming a blow at his reputation. Taking advantage of his cruel malady and prostrate understanding, Pope was even then endeavouring to fasten upon him the stigma of his own personal treachery, and this pretended magnanimity in forgiving a deed which he had contrived and instigated was in itself a calumny and a fraud.

If any doubt could exist that it was Pope who put forth the collection of 1735, and the Swift collection of 1741, we have still in the quarto of 1737 his own avowed version of a large portion of his correspondence. He published it with the express object of correcting the corrupt text of spurious editions, and there remains the inquiry whether he published it truly. When he burnt three-fourths of it, and deposited copies of the rest in the library of Lord Oxford, he professed to have preserved the originals from which the copies were taken. Lord Bolingbroke discovered a great number of returned letters among his papers after his death, and told Dr. Heberden that they contained many alterations and corrections, which he supposed had been made with the intention of printing them some time or other.[163] From this it would be inferred that those [Pg cxix] which had been printed were not part of the collection, and that the poet had found it inexpedient to retain vouchers, which would condemn if they did not acquit him. Unfortunately the whole of the manuscripts were destroyed by Lord Bolingbroke, and beyond the unsatisfactory information conveyed in his remark, nothing can now be known of them. The literal interpretation of his language is favoured by the evidence yet within our reach, and we should conclude that Pope had not kept originals which would have revealed alterations in the published letters of a far more serious nature than any which Bolingbroke appears to have suspected.

John Caryll, a Roman Catholic country gentleman residing in Sussex, was among the intimate correspondents of Pope for twenty-five years, from 1710 to 1735. The poet wrote to him on Nov. 19, 1712, and asked to have the "whole cargo of his epistles returned," which he said might be of

use "in a design he had lately engaged in." This design was probably to furnish some essays to the "Guardian," which commenced on the 12th of March, 1713. He promised to restore the letters when he had done with them, and his friend at once complied with his desire. After the surreptitious publication of his correspondence with Cromwell, Pope, in December, 1726, renewed his petition to Caryll to make over to him "all such papers as he had too partially preserved;" but the object of the request this time was "to put them out of the power of Curll." The poet announced that he would send back those which could do no hurt to the character of himself, his friend, or any other person; that he would retain those which "would serve to bear testimony of his own love for good men, or theirs for him;" and implied, as a consequence, that he would destroy those which did not fall under either of these heads. By this division the insignificant letters alone would have been restored to Caryll, and whether he was mistrustful of the use to which Pope might apply the remainder, or whether he was anxious to preserve intact the memorials of his intimacy with a celebrated man, he did not think fit to accede to the demand. A diminution in the frequency and cordiality of their correspondence ensued, and lasted for upwards of two years. Caryll at length complained, and Pope replied in February 1729, that [Pg cxx] he could not open his mind to his acquaintances unless they would return him at the end of every year "the forfeitures of his discretion, and commit to his justice what he trusted only to their indulgence." Upon this intimation that compliance was to be the condition of intimacy, Caryll yielded the point, and the receipt of the letters was acknowledged by the poet on the 8th of April. The Sussex squire defeated the purpose for which they were extorted by copying the greater part of the collection. He persevered in the practice till near the close of his life. The last letter from Pope which he caused to be transcribed is dated July 17, 1735, and he died on the 6th of April, 1736. When his grandson sold the hereditary estate in 1767, and retired from England to the continent, the family papers were left behind, stowed away in boxes, where they remained for nearly three quarters of a century. They then came into the possession of Mr. Dilke, and have since been presented by his grandson, Sir Charles W. Dilke, to the British Museum. Among the manuscripts were a dozen folio books, containing the farm and domestic accounts, and in a volume similar in appearance Mr. Dilke discovered the copies of the letters of Pope, together with copies of others from the Dukes of Berwick, Beaufort, and Norfolk, from Dryden, Wycherley, Steele, Roger Lestrange, St. Evremond, and Le Grand. The external and internal evidence leaves no doubt of their authenticity. One unexpected confirmation of their genuineness turned up in an autograph letter of Pope to the younger Caryll, dated Nov. 8, 1712, and which was sent by Mr. Tuckwell to Mr. Croker. The letters to the younger Caryll remained with his widow. The few which exist are originals in the custody of different collectors, and this letter of Nov. 8 is a link in a series of facts that are only known through the transcripts in the Caryll folio. The recovery of documents, which Pope did not suspect were in existence, discloses to us his mode of dealing with his correspondence when, having no idea that it could rise up against him, he ventured to use it without reserve.

After calling in his letters to his friends, Pope proceeded to arrange them in order, and said "they formed altogether an unimportant, but yet an innocent history of himself." "You make, I assure [Pg cxxi] you," he wrote to Caryll, July 8, 1729, "no small figure in these annals from 1710 to 1720 odd. Upon my word, sir, I am glad to see how long, and how often, and how much I have been obliged to you, as well as how long, how often, and how much I have been sensible of and expressed it." Notwithstanding this assurance, Caryll made a very small figure indeed in the published collection. Four letters only were addressed to the "Hon. J. C., Esq." in the volume of 1735, and these initials, in the quarto of 1737, were added to a fifth letter which had previously been headed, "Mr. Pope to ----." One other letter, in the quarto, bore the title to "Mr. C——"; but it was separated from the former group, and it is from the Caryll copy that we learn how to fill up the blank. Both in the edition of 1735 and 1737 Pope published a letter to the "Hon. James Craggs, Esq.," which induced Roscoe to conclude that he was the person indicated by the initials, and it is not improbable that the poet designed to mislead his readers, especially as the claim of Caryll to be styled Honourable was only a Jacobite assumption, derived from his being heir to his uncle, who had been created a peer by the exiled James II. But though Pope did not wish to repeat in public his profuse professions in private, and appear as the familiar friend and constant correspondent of a Roman Catholic country gentleman, he as little desired to suppress the choicer portions of the effusions he had addressed to him. He conceived the idea of re-directing them, and compiled from them, in whole or in part, four fictitious letters to Blount, four to Addison, two to Congreve, and one each to Wycherley, Steele, Trumbull, and Digby. A second letter to Digby, which appeared in the edition of 1735, was transferred to Arbuthnot in the quarto of 1737. Half a dozen letters at most were allotted to the initials of the Sussex squire, while fifteen were assigned to more imposing names, and a sixteenth was printed in a group of three to the "Hon. ——" Rather than credit an imposition so childish, and yet so unwarrantable, we should have recourse to the theory that Pope sometimes sent the same letter to different persons. Swift assured him that the best system extant for the conduct of human life might be collected from his epistles, and they certainly abound in generalities which, like the clown's answer, that suited all [Pg cxxii] questions, might have been written to anybody. But a comparison of the printed letters with the Caryll copies, shows that this solution is inadmissible, and the observation of the clown, when his answer proved inopportune, is equally applicable to the contrivance of Pope—"I see things may serve long, and not serve ever."[164]

The "Spectator" of the 10th of November, 1712, contained some remarks by Pope on the verses which the Emperor Hadrian composed when he was dying. The poet asked Caryll's opinion of the criticism, and the substance of his reply is embodied in the rejoinder of Pope. "The supposition you draw from the suspicion that Adrian was addicted to magic, seems to me a little uncharitable,

—that he might fear no sort of Deity, good or bad,—since in the third verse he plainly testifies his apprehension of a future state by being solicitous whither his soul was going. As to what you mention of his using gay and ludicrous expressions, I have already owned my opinion that the expressions are not so, but that diminutives are often in Latin taken for expressions of tenderness and concern." This comment is introduced, in the printed correspondence, into the letter to Steele of November 29, 1712, and if it was sent to him as well as to Caryll both must have objected to the gay and ludicrous expressions of Hadrian, both must have spoken of the suspicion that he was addicted to magic, both must have inferred from it that he feared no sort of Deity, good or bad, and the language of both must have been as identical as their ideas.

"I know," Pope wrote to Caryll, August 22, 1717, "you will take part in rejoicing for the victory of Prince Eugene over the Turks, in the zeal you bear to the Christian interest, though your cousin of Oxford, with whom I dined yesterday, says there is no other difference in the Christians beating the Turks or the Turks beating the Christians, than whether the Emperor shall first declare war against Spain, or Spain declare it against the Emperor." In the published version the passage forms part of a letter to Edward Blount dated September 8, 1717, and either we must admit that it was never written to him, or believe that Caryll and Blount had each an Oxford [Pg cxxiii] cousin, that the poet dined with the Oxford cousin of Caryll on August 21, and with the Oxford cousin of Blount on September 7, that both these cousins made, at their respective dinners, the same epigrammatic observation in the very same words, and that the extraordinary coincidence struck Pope so little that he did not even remark upon it.

Another passage of a letter to Caryll, dated September 20, [1713] reappears in a letter to Blount dated February 10, 1716. "I am just returned from the country, whither Mr. Rowe did me the favour to accompany me, and to pass a week at Binfield. I need not tell you how much a man of his turn could not but entertain me; but I must acquaint you there is a vivacity and gaiety of disposition almost peculiar to that gentleman, which renders it impossible to part from him without that uneasiness and chagrin which generally succeeds all great pleasures. I have just been taking a solitary walk by moonshine in St. James's Park, full of reflections of the transitory nature of all human delights, and giving my thoughts a loose into the contemplation of those sensations of satisfaction which probably we may taste in the more exalted company of separate spirits, when we range the starry walks above." Thus Pope, who on his return to town in September, 1713, after a week's companionship with Rowe, took a solitary walk by moonlight and meditated on the transitory nature of human delights, and the happy intercourse of spirits, was led by the power of association, after another week spent at Binfield with Rowe in February, 1716, to renew the solitary walk by moonlight the instant he returned, and indulge in the old contemplation on the transitory nature of human delights, and the happy intercourse of separate spirits. What renders more singular the second moonlight walk is that the date assigned to it was the memorable season when the Thames was frozen over, and when the quantity of snow was as unusual as the intensity of the cold. The thaw commenced the day before the fragile little bard sallied out for his stroll, and he must indeed have been lost in contemplation "of the starry walks above" not to have been checked in his moonlight rambles by the deplorable condition of the walks below. None of the phenomena which were attracting the attention of the rest of the world, [Pg cxxiv] —the breaking up of the long and terrible winter, the deluge of melting snow, the chilling atmosphere, the dreary prospect,—received a passing notice from him. He saw nothing except the moonshine, despite its watery gleam, and thought of nothing except the spirits in the stars.

In the collection of 1735 there appeared a letter to Digby, which is dated September 10, 1724, and is compounded from two letters, to Caryll of November 23 and December 25, 1725. In the letter of November 23, Pope says to Caryll, "My time has been spent in a trembling attendance upon death, which has at last seized one of our family,—my poor old nurse." This sentence was inserted in the letter to Digby, but as the nurse did not die till November 5, 1725, the information could not have been communicated to him in September, 1724. The motive of the poet in altering the dates of his letters when he assigned a fanciful address to them was probably to adapt the chronology to the circumstances of his new *dramatis personæ*. His earliest letter to Edward Blount is dated August, 1714, and when he transferred the moonlight reverie from 1713 to 1716, he may have been influenced by the consideration that in the former year his correspondence with Blount had not commenced. The letter to Caryll of November 23, and the letter to Digby of September 10, both open with the same compliment on their return from the Continent, and the date may have been altered from 1725 to 1724 to make it harmonise with Digby's travels abroad. In remedying one inconsistency, Pope fell into another. A new use was found for the letter in the quarto of 1737. Arbuthnot died in February, 1735, at the very time when there is reason to suppose that the poet printed the P. T. collection. The final letter in the volume is from the Doctor, and it was apparently added at the last moment. It was then too late to be thinking of a re-distribution of the materials, and the idea was not executed, or perhaps conceived till 1737, when the address, which had been changed from Caryll to Digby, was once more changed from Digby to Arbuthnot. In the interval Pope appears to have detected the anachronism. He retained the day of the month, but struck out the year. He preserved the announcement, "death has seized [Pg cxxv] one of our family," but dropped the words "my poor old nurse." Her death nevertheless could alone have been meant; for in the letters to Caryll, as in the letter to Digby, several contemporaneous particulars are mentioned, which being repeated in the letter to Arbuthnot, limit its date to the period of the poor old nurse's decease. In both cases Pope's time had been spent in attending upon the dying patient, in both cases he and his mother had been ill together, in both cases these incidents had hindered his writing, in both cases he had been questioned respecting the effect produced upon his mind by the attacks upon his translation of the "Odyssey," and in both cases he had been less troubled by the criticisms upon his writings than

by the imputations upon his morals, in consequence of some reports which had been spread of his intrigues with Martha Blount. It follows that the letter to Arbuthnot, though dated September 10, must have been written subsequent to the death of the nurse on November 5. But there is unanswerable evidence that at that time, and for weeks and months afterwards, he had constant personal intercourse with the poet. He was at his elbow, and not on the Continent,[165] and the event could not have been communicated to him as news upon his return from any journey he ever made to France. The year was omitted by Pope exactly because he could fix upon none which would bear the test of examination.[166] When it is plain that the letter could not have been addressed to Arbuthnot, it is superfluous to dwell upon the improbability that he and Caryll should have put the same question with regard to the "railing papers about the 'Odyssey,'" or to enumerate the other coincidences which are beyond the range of belief. The letter in all its shapes contains a passage which forms a strange comment upon Pope's proceedings, and is the bitterest sentence that will ever be pronounced upon them: "Falsehood is folly, says Homer, and liars and calumniators at last hurt none but themselves, even in this world. In the next, it is charity to say, God have mercy on them. They were the devil's vice-regents upon earth, who is the father of lies, and, I fear, has a right to dispose of his children." [Pg cxxvi]

On June 12, 1713, Pope wrote to Caryll, "As I hope, and would flatter myself, that you know me and my thoughts so entirely as never to be mistaken in either, so it is a pleasure to me that you guessed so right in regard to the author of that 'Guardian' you mentioned." On June 23 he wrote again, and said, "Your last is the more obliging as it hints at some little niceties in my conduct which your candour and affection prompt you to recommend to me." Both these sentences are inserted in an undated letter to Addison, which is compiled from three letters to Caryll, and no one could credit that Caryll and Addison had independently, and almost simultaneously communicated their guesses to Pope that he was the author of a particular essay in the "Guardian," and at the same time "hinted at little niceties in his conduct." The remainder of the letter to Addison is full of inconsistencies. The result of the imposition is to confound dates, events, opinions, and persons. Addison knows Pope and his thoughts so entirely as never to be mistaken in either; Addison's candour and affection prompt him to advise Pope in little niceties of conduct, and the perfect knowledge, the affection, the candour, and the advice, which are represented as proceeding from the most exquisite genius of the age, all appertain to an obscure country gentleman whose intimacy could not confer, in the eyes of the world, any lustre upon his friend. The whole of the letters to Addison are an absolute fiction. Four out of the five are from the Caryll correspondence, and the internal evidence is opposed to the genuineness of the fifth. The deception is aggravated by the erroneous aspect it imparts to the celebrated quarrel. In the letters which preceded the commencing rupture Pope appears as the zealous champion and bosom associate of the man he afterwards maligned, and we are left to suppose that the vaunted generosity on one side had been met by envy and hostility on the other. It is of virtual forgeries like these, which were specially concocted for the public, that the poet had the hardihood to say in his preface, "Many of them having been written on the most trying occasions, and all in the openness of friendship, are a proof what were his real sentiments, as they flowed warm from his heart, without the least thought that ever the world should be witness to them." He not only pretended that they derived a value from being the spontaneous expression of his feelings as they rose, but pledged his word that his motive in treasuring them up was to supply an authentic register of historical, literary, and personal events, and especially to provide a corrective to the misrepresentations of less scrupulous chroniclers. "I think more and more of it," he said to Lord Oxford, September 15, 1729, when dwelling upon the value of the collected letters and the importance of preserving them, "as finding what a number of facts they will settle the truth of, both relating to history and criticism, and parts of private life and character of the eminent men of my time." In the preface to the quarto of 1737 he made a statement of the same nature, and protested that the letters he kept were selected from the letters he destroyed, "merely as they preserved the memory of some friendships which would be ever dear to him, or set in a true light some matters of fact from which the scribblers of the times had taken occasion to asperse either his friends or himself." He volunteered the declaration to Lord Oxford when he was engaged in the manufacture of the correspondence which was to falsify the facts he pretended it "would settle the truth of," and he renewed the assertion in public as a prelude to the fabrications themselves. [Pg cxxvii]

The Wycherley correspondence furnishes fresh illustrations of the malpractices of the poet. For Pope's own share in it the published version is our only authority. The originals of Wycherley's part in it were placed in Lord Oxford's library in October, 1729, and withdrawn in June, 1735; but there still exist among the Oxford papers copies of six out of the eighteen published letters, besides six which are unpublished.[167] Imperfect as is the series, it is sufficient to show the infidelity of the work Pope put forth to the world. The letter borrowed from the Caryll group may conveniently be considered in connection with the rest. It was probably not included in the original volume of the Wycherley correspondence, which Pope published in 1729, for it is printed in the edition of 1735 on an interpolated half sheet signed * c. This is placed between sheet b and sheet c, and the numbers of its four pages—11 to 14—are repeated on sheet c. The space being greater than was required the letter has been divided into an unusual number of paragraphs, which are double the ordinary distance from each other, and as this device for spreading out the matter only brought it three or four lines over the top of the fourth page the remainder is left blank, contrary to the plan adopted in the rest of the book.[168] Pope we may presume had not completed in 1729 his task of reconstructing his letters to Caryll, and first introduced the manufactured letter into the old sheets of the Wycherley when he incorporated them into the [Pg cxxviii]

volume of 1735. A single circumstance is enough to prove that the letter is fictitious. It is made up of extracts from two letters to Caryll of July 31, 1710, and January 25, 1711, and in the former of the two the poet quotes a remark from the "Tatler" on the reason why women are vainer than men. The passage is repeated in the letter to Wycherley which is dated June 23, 1705, nearly four years before the "Tatler" commenced, and Pope imagined he had obliterated the anachronism by changing the phrase "the 'Tatler' observes of women" into the general formula "it is observed of women."

The concoction of the letter to Wycherley out of the letters to Caryll is attended by the usual distortion of facts. The extract from the letter of July 31 is an expostulation against Caryll's extravagant compliments. A few months after the date which Pope assigned to the passage when he applied it to Wycherley, the old dramatist had addressed a kindred remonstrance to Pope. "I must confess," he wrote March 22, 1705-6, "you try my patience, as you say in the beginning of [Pg cxxix] your letter, not by the many lines in it, but the too many compliments you make me for nothing, in which you prove yourself, though a sincere friend, a man of too much fiction; for I have not seen so much poetry in prose a great while, since your letter is filled with so many fine words and acknowledgments of your obligations to me, the only asseverations of yours I dare contradict; for I must tell you your letter is like an author's epistle before his book,—written more to show his wit to the world than his sincerity or gratitude to his friend, whom he libels with praise, so that you have provoked my modesty even whilst you have soothed my vanity; for I know not whether I am more complimented than abused, since too much praise turns irony, as too great thanks for small favours turns ingratitude, or too much ceremony in religion hypocrisy."[169] Pope thought fit in the published letters to reverse the parts. He ascribed the adulation to Wycherley, and the rebuke of it to himself. He gives a false air of manly independence to his youthful character, and does it at the expense of his friend.

The extract from the letter to Caryll of January 25, 1711, which forms the second portion of the made-up letter to Wycherley of June 23, 1705, is a comment on the eulogy lavished by Caryll on some verses of the poet. The change of name and date flattered in a double manner the vanity of Pope,—the applause appeared to proceed from a celebrated wit instead of from a country squire, and to be bestowed upon a lad of seventeen instead of upon a man who was nearly twenty-three. He always aspired to the credit of precocity, and some of his falsifications seem to have had no other purpose than to exaggerate his juvenile fame. Wycherley wrote to him on February 19, 1708-9, and spoke of the genius which promised him immortality, of his great, vigorous and active mind. In a postscript it is mentioned that the "Miscellany," which contained Pope's Pastorals, would not be out for three weeks.[170] Pope suppressed, amongst other passages, the allusion which fixed the period at which the panegyric was penned, and altered the year to 1706- [Pg cxxx] 7, for no perceptible reason except that he wished to antedate the praise. There can be little doubt that his opening letter to Wycherley was manufactured or misplaced with a similar object. It is printed in the edition of 1735 on an interpolated half sheet, marked *B, the pages of which are correctly numbered from 1 to 4. As the first page of sheet B which follows is numbered 3, it is evident that it was originally preceded by only two pages, which must have been cancelled, and the present letter put in their place.[171] This new letter is dated December 26, 1704, and contains his reflections on a compliment which he alleges had been paid to him by Wycherley—that his compositions were above the attacks of envious critics. "It is pleasant to remark," says Dr. Johnson, "how soon Pope learned the cant of an author, and began to treat critics with contempt, though he had yet suffered nothing from them."[172] He did not in fact publish a single line till more than four years later, and with our present evidence that the letter was an interpolated after-thought, we cannot but suspect that Wycherley's premature compliment, and Pope's premature cant both belonged to a subsequent period, or perhaps were fabricated for the press. "The author's age then sixteen," says the poet in a note, and in this ostentatious announcement we have the motive to the act. The opinion of Warburton, that the letters of the boy displayed all the characteristics of the man, is an argument the more that they were the productions of the man and not of the boy.

"I have received," writes Wycherley, in an unpublished letter, dated December 6, 1707, "yours of the 29th of November, which has so much overpaid mine in kindness that, as Voiture says, I doubt whether the best effects of those fine expressions of your friendship to me can be more obliging than they themselves; and for my humility you talk of, you have lessened while you magnify it, as by commending my good nature with so much more of yours you have made me almost incapable of being grateful to you; for you have said so many kind things of me you have hardly left me anything of the same kind to return you, and the best actions are not capable of [Pg cxxxi] making you amends for so many good words you have given me, by which you justly magnify them and yourself by saying they are sincere, so that you have obliged me to be vain rather than not think you a Plain Dealer. Thus, even against your own opinion, your freedom with me proves not you a fool, but me so, especially if I could think half the good you say of me my due. As for the good book you sent me I took it as kindly as the reprimand from the good man, which I think you heard, and was that I should not stand in my own light."[173] Pope printed his letter of November 29, to which this letter was a reply, and it touches upon none of the topics to which Wycherley refers. There are none of the fine expressions of friendship, none of the many honied words, none of the encomiums on his correspondent's good nature and humility. He reproves him, on the contrary, in rather a lofty tone for his excessive acknowledgments for trifling services, tells him he will continue the revision of the poems the old dramatist had submitted to him, insists that he must be permitted to alter and add as well as omit, and in answer to an observation of Wycherley, that "the sprightliness of wit despises method," assures him that if method is neglected his verses

had better be converted into separate maxims in prose. As Pope's letter does not contain one syllable upon the subjects to which Wycherley alludes in his reply, so the reply takes no notice of the subjects which monopolise the epistle of Pope. Though he had discoursed exclusively upon the remodelling of Wycherley's poems, Wycherley himself disdains to offer in return a single word of thanks, of encouragement, of acquiescence, or dissent. The omission cannot be explained by the supposition that the copy was abridged. Whatever passages might have been left out, those would certainly have been retained which confirmed under Wycherley's own hand the particulars which were Pope's professed justification for printing the letters, and his excuse for depositing them in the library of Lord Oxford.

The Wycherley correspondence concludes with a letter from Pope dated May 2, 1710. A coldness then ensued of which Dr. Johnson gives this account: "The fondness of Wycherley was too violent [Pg cxxxii] to last. His esteem of Pope was such that he submitted some poems to his revision, and when Pope, perhaps proud of such confidence, was sufficiently bold in his criticisms and liberal in his alterations, the old scribbler was angry to see his pages defaced, and felt more pain from the detection than content from the amendment of his faults. They parted, but Pope always considered him with kindness, and visited him a little time before he died."[174] The statement is incomplete. Pope engaged in the revision as early as April, 1706, when he describes to Wycherley the nature of the emendations he has made: "Some parts I have contracted as we do sun-beams to improve their energy and force; some I have taken quite away, as we take branches from a tree to add to the fruit; others I have entirely new expressed, and turned more into poetry." In November, 1707, he informs his friend that he has subjected the poem on "Dullness" to the same process, that he has condensed the piece one half, suppressed deficiencies, heightened the language, and smoothed the versification. Far from being angry at these "bold criticisms and liberal alterations," the old scribbler was profuse in his thanks, and replied to Pope's request, that he would keep the assistance a secret, by declaring that he always does, and always will own to whose genius and judgment he is indebted for the improvement of his unmusical numbers and harsher sense. Between three and four years afterwards he submitted a fresh set of poems to Pope's castigation, and in two successive letters of April 1 and April 11, 1710, entreats him to show no mercy in his corrections; "for I had rather," he says, "be condemned by my friend in private, than exposed to my foes in public." Pope answered that the repetitions were more numerous than he anticipated, and that crossing them out defaced the copy to a degree that he feared would be displeasing. "Let me know," he added, "if I am to go on at this rate, or if you would prescribe any other method." Wycherley rejoined that tautology was the last fault of which he would be guilty, that he thought with care he could remove the blemish, and that he would not occupy Pope in a task which might "prevent his writing on new subjects of his own." "All," he [Pg cxxxiii] continues, "that I desire of you is to mark in the margin, without defacing the copy at all, any repetition of words, matter, or sense, which if you will be so kind as to do for me, you will supply my want of memory with your good one, and my deficiencies of sense with the infallibilities of yours,—which if you do you will most infinitely oblige me, who almost repent the trouble I have given you, since so much." The comment on Pope's strong criticism is equally cordial: "As to what you call freedom with me, which you desire me to forgive, you may be assured I would not forgive you unless you did use it; for I am so far from thinking your plainness a fault or an offence to me that I think it a charity and an obligation, which I shall always acknowledge with all sort of gratitude to you for it, who am therefore, dear Mr. Pope, your most obliged humble servant." Dr. Johnson overlooked the rude ordeal to which Wycherley's vanity had been exposed in April, 1706, and the proof he then gave that he had not in his character the slightest tincture of irritable impatience at the wholesale correction of his works. He implored a renewal of the rigour when he invoked, with full experience of the treatment he was to expect, the same good offices in April, 1710, and the anger which Johnson imputes to him on that occasion at the detection of his faults is not only in singular contradiction to the whole of his previous conduct, but is belied, as we have seen, by his letter to Pope. The notion that he was offended at the freedom of his friend's remarks was an inference drawn from the tone of Pope's reply, and not from the language of Wycherley himself.

"I am sorry," Pope commences, "you persist to take ill my not accepting your invitation, and to find, if I mistake not, your exception not unmixed with some suspicion." The letter of Wycherley is dated April 27, 1710, and if the contents of the letter of Pope, which is dated May 2, did not show that it was the answer, all doubt would be removed by the fact that it was headed "The Answer" by the poet, both in the octavo of 1735, and the quarto of 1737. This led to the conclusion that Wycherley, while professing to receive the strictures on his verses with kindness, had at the same time manifested in his letter some displeasure which his friend thought proper to omit, and which [Pg cxxxiv] connected their quarrel with the secret soreness of the author at the candour of the critic.[175] Pope did indeed suppress the beginning and the end of Wycherley's communication; but the passages he kept back betray the falsity of his own insinuation. "I answered," the letter begins, "yours of the 15th, which I think was the last I had from you, about three days after my receiving it; but having not yet received any answer to it from you, I doubt your old pain of the head-ache has prevented it, which gives me a great deal of concern for you, insomuch that I have had thoughts of making you a visit before my journey into Shropshire, which has been delayed by delays and disappointments to me out of the country." The end is as follows: "My most humble service pray to Sir William Trumbull, and your good father and mother, whilst I can assure you from hence all the world here are your servants and friends. I know not but I may see you very suddenly at Binfield after all my broken promises."[176] Instead, therefore, of Wycherley being annoyed at Pope's refusal to accept his invitation, it was Wycherley who was designing to visit Pope; and instead of his persisting to take ill any part of his friend's conduct, his language was

throughout expressive of cordiality and kindness.

The first intimation of a rupture is in a letter of Pope to Cromwell, on August 21, 1710, in which he says, "Since Mr. Wycherley left London, I have not heard a word from him, though just before, and once since, I writ to him, and though I know myself guilty of no offence but of doing sincerely just what he bid me." On October 28, he reverts to the subject, and protests by everything that is holy that he is not acquainted with the cause of the estrangement. He goes on, however, to state [Pg cxxxv] that he did not suppose any man could have been so suspicious as not to credit his own experience of a friend, and avers that he had done nothing which deserved to be concealed—a defence which seems to indicate a consciousness that Wycherley had heard some disparaging report. It was subsequently asserted by Pope's enemies, and never contradicted by Pope, that the alienation was produced by a copy of satirical verses he had written on the man he affected to caress. His offensive reply of May 2, to the genial letter of April 27, might alone explain the resentment of Wycherley, if the ungracious answer in its printed shape could be received as authentic. But I have shown that the opening sentence, in which Pope regrets that his correspondent persisted in taking ill his not accepting an invitation, is altogether fictitious, and with the evidence before us in the critical epistle of November 29, 1707, that he replaced his complimentary effusions by unvarnished truths, we may suspect that the uncompromising tone of his final letter was softened in the original, and that the published version is merely another instance of his anxiety to conceal the deference he had shown to Wycherley before the celebrity of the old dramatist had been eclipsed by the fame of the youthful poet. The almost eastern style which Pope adopted towards him a year and a half after the close of their correspondence, may be seen in one of his genuine epistles to Cromwell, which was printed by Curll. "I am highly pleased," the poet writes, November 12, 1711, "with the knowledge you give me of Mr. Wycherley's present temper, which seems so favourable to me. I shall ever have such a fund of affection for him, as to be agreeable to myself when I am so to him, and cannot but be gay when he is in good humour, as the surface of the earth, if you will pardon a poetical similitude, is clearer or gloomier, just as the sun is brighter or more overcast." Whatever may have caused the sun to be overcast, there could have been little ground of complaint against Wycherley, or Pope would not have fabricated the pretence that he had provoked his anger by declining an invitation.

On the appearance of Theobald's edition of the Posthumous Works of Wycherley, the poet poured out his indignation to Lord Oxford. "I foresaw," he said, October 6, 1729, "some dirty trick in [Pg cxxxvi] connection with my friend Wycherley's papers which they were publishing, and nothing can at once do justice so well to him and to me, who was by him employed in them, as the divulging of some parts of his and my letters." At the moment that he was penning this denunciation against "dirty tricks in relation to Wycherley's papers," though no trick had been practised, he was busily engaged in aspersing his friend by garbling the papers he professed to divulge out of justice to his memory. His motives were not malignant. He was simply desirous to do credit to himself, but to effect this end he did not scruple to falsify their private correspondence, and under the plea of justifying a man who was in his grave, took advantage of his death to libel him in safety. When with our scanty means of testing the fidelity of the letters, we find that part of them were misplaced, distorted, and invented, the rest of the series must be received with distrust, and some which cannot be proved to be fabricated are among the most suspicious of the whole.

Where the originals of Pope's letters were in hostile hands, as was the case with his letters to Cromwell and to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, he was compelled to be sparing in his operations. He omitted sentences and altered phrases, but could not venture upon wholesale perversions of the truth. Of the bulk of the letters he published we have neither the originals nor reliable copies; but when we chance to light upon the materials from which he worked, we find, as might be expected, that he was not more conscientious in his use of them than in his reckless falsification of his correspondence with Wycherley and Caryll. The volume of 1735 concludes with a letter from Arbuthnot, dated July 17, 1734, and in the quarto of 1737 we have the pretended reply of the poet. Among the Arbuthnot papers in the possession of Mr. Baillie, is the actual answer sent by Pope, and it turns out that the printed substitute is an elaborate composition that has hardly any resemblance to the genuine text. He must have revised the letter of Arbuthnot as well as remodelled his own. "I am almost displeased," he remarks in the real, not in the counterfeit reply, [Pg cxxxvii] "at your expression '*scarcely* any of those suspicions or jealousies which affect the truest friendships;' for I know of *not one* on my part." He accordingly erased from Arbuthnot's letter the expression he disapproved, and fathered upon him the unqualified assertion, "I think since our first acquaintance there has not been any of those little suspicions or jealousies that often affect the sincerest friendships." To what extent he may have carried this principle of altering the opinions of his correspondents to fit his personal views cannot be discovered. A single instance of the artifice in a man so unscrupulous destroys all confidence in the documents which rest on his unsupported authority, and there is often reason to suspect that he gives us not what others said, but what he thought it advantageous to himself that they should say.

In comparison with this perversion of facts, the attempt of Pope to improve his letters, regarded as literary productions, would be of trifling moment, if it did not present another example of the audacious falsehoods he imposed upon the world. Speaking in the preface to the quarto of 1737 of the correspondence he reprinted from what he calls the surreptitious editions, he says "for the chasms in it, we had not the means to supply them, the author having destroyed too many letters to preserve a series." He intends us to infer that the selection was not his own, though the passage is virtually an admission that the collection of P. T. was the collection deposited with Lord Oxford, or there could not have been such an identity between them as that none of the gaps in the P. T. volume could be filled up from the bound book in the Oxford library. "Nor," he

continues, "would he go about to amend them, except by the omission of some passages improper, or at least impertinent to be divulged to the public, or of such entire letters as were either not his, or not approved of by him." He would have us believe that they had been dragged before the world in their first crude state, without a single subsequent touch from his pen, though he had previously amended them with studious care—had culled the best passages, blended extracts from two or three letters into one, and constantly corrected composition which had been originally laboured. Some of his ambitious epistles, like his letter to Arbuthnot of July 26, 1734, were no doubt mere essays, which were only written when they were committed to the press. In the quarto of 1741, he repeated the device he had employed in the quarto of 1737. He pretended in both cases that the correspondence he printed himself had been printed by others without his knowledge, and in defiance of his wish. He next adopted and republished the letters he affected to repudiate, and having already revised them to the uttermost, asserted that he could not be induced to revise them at all. So completely had truth with him been swallowed up in vanity. "Had he," he tells us in the preface to the quarto of 1737, "sat down with a design to draw his own picture, he could not have done it so truly, for whoever sits for it, whether to himself or another, will inevitably find his features more composed than his appear in these letters; but if an author's hand, like a painter's, be more distinguishable in a slight sketch than a finished picture, this very carelessness will make them the better known from such counterfeits as have been, and may be, imputed to him." He did everything he professed to have left undone. The careless sketch was a studied portrait got up for exhibition, and the minutest details had been disposed with a view to flatter the likeness and increase the effect.

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In the conduct of Pope to Bolingbroke there are points of resemblance to his conduct in the case of the correspondence, which render the evidence a material supplement to the present inquiry. Bolingbroke allowed him to get put into type the political letters on "The Spirit of Patriotism," on "The Idea of a Patriot King," and on "The State of Parties," under the promise that the pamphlet should be confined to five or six persons, who were named by the author. Pope fulfilled his pledge by causing a separate edition of 1500 copies to be struck off, and enjoined the printer to lay by the sheets "with great secresy till further orders."[177] In the dangerous manœuvre of printing covertly the original volume of the Swift correspondence which he sent to the Dean, he may, perhaps, have remained concealed from the inferior agents, and have conducted the details of the business through the medium of Worsdale. In the instance of the pamphlet he was not afraid to put himself into the power of the printer, who, says Bolingbroke, "kept his word with him better than he kept his with his friend."[178] The poet not only committed a breach of trust in preparing a work for sale which he received upon the condition that it should remain strictly private, but he had the boldness to tamper with the substance of the work, and in the impression, which was ultimately designed for the public, "he took upon him to divide the subject, and to alter and omit passages according to the suggestions of his own fancy."[179] From Warburton we learn that Pope "frequently told his acquaintance that Lord Bolingbroke would at his death leave his writings to his disposal,"[180] and the changes he introduced by anticipation into the single instalment within his power show the manner in which he designed to discharge his functions, and strengthen the suspicion that he may have falsified the letters of his correspondents as well as his own. Johnson, in censuring Lyttelton for publishing the posthumous edition of Thomson's poem on "Liberty," in an abridged form, condemns a practice "which, as it has a manifest tendency to lessen the confidence of society, and to confound the characters of authors, by making one man write by the judgment of another, cannot be justified by any supposed propriety of the alteration or kindness of the friend."[181] The freedom used by Pope was especially reprehensible from the concealment he practised. The copy of the pamphlet which he sent to Bolingbroke, and the other privileged persons, did not exhibit the modified text, and though the occurrence took place several years before the death of the poet he never, in all that time, whispered one word upon the subject to the author of the tracts, from which it is clear that he neither intended him to learn what he had done, nor expected him to approve the changes he had made. It was not till he was in his grave that his deception was divulged by the application of the printer to Bolingbroke for instructions how to dispose of the impression. Warburton argued that Pope must have wished his friend to have a knowledge of the clandestine edition and clandestine alterations, or he would have ordered the work to be destroyed during his final illness,[182] as if, in the lingering hope that life would be protracted a little longer, it had not happened times out of number that men had deferred burning tale-telling papers till their minds were diverted from the duty by the lassitude of sickness, and as if such procrastination was not in the highest degree probable when the poet had been first at the pains of revising the work, and next at the cost of an edition of 1500 copies.[183] He may even have believed that his secret, under any circumstances, was safe with the printer. A theory which has been verified by endless examples is a more credible alternative than to assume that Pope had designed to leave behind him evidences of a dishonesty which he had not dared to disclose during years of familiar intercourse, and which, notwithstanding that Bolingbroke was perpetually at his side, he did not venture to reveal in his dying hours when he might have palliated his motives, and obtained pardon for his fault. But if we admit the supposition of Warburton, and allow that he had ultimately arrived at the resolution of suffering the course of events to betray the misdoings he had not the courage to confess, there will still remain the facts, which Warburton never questioned, that he pretended to Bolingbroke that some half dozen copies had alone been printed, when he had printed a distinct edition of 1500; that he handed an impression to the author which was taken faithfully from the manuscript, while the impression he hid from him was garbled and adulterated; and that, having concealed the double treachery for years, he left the world without an allusion to the wrongful

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act he had committed. Johnson justly considered that the resentment of Bolingbroke at this violation of faith was with reason "more acrimonious in proportion as the violator had been more trusted or loved," for the professions which win confidence increase the baseness of betraying it; but with equal justice Johnson condemned the "thirst for vengeance" which excited Bolingbroke "to blast the memory" of the man who had lived with him in a constant interchange of affection, and who, both in public and private, had paid him the tribute of his heartiest homage and applause.[184]

The scrutiny to which the lives of celebrated men are subjected is one of the severest penalties they pay for fame. Their private weaknesses have often been exposed with wanton cruelty; but the delinquencies of Pope are public acts by which he himself has challenged inquiry. He endeavoured to pass off a sophisticated correspondence for genuine, and the interests of truth demand that the deception should be exposed. He laboured to throw his own misdoings upon innocent men, and justice requires that his victims should be absolved, and the discredit, augmented beyond measure by the perfidy and deceit, be laid where it is due. He was the bitter satirist of individuals out of an assumed indignation at everything base, and his claim to adopt this lofty strain, his sincerity in it, and his fairness, are all involved in his personal dealings. The office of an editor is neither that of an advocate nor of an accuser. He is a judge, whose only client is truth. I have endeavoured to investigate the facts with impartiality, and narrate them with fidelity, and if I have anywhere failed, it is from unconscious, not from wilful error; but [Pg cxlii] having once been satisfied of the guilt of Pope, I do not pretend to think that genius is an extenuation of rascality. He rightly refused others the benefit of the plea, and said in the Essay on Man, whoever is "wickedly wise is but the more a fool, the more a knave." The sketch which Lord Macaulay has given of his character, when describing his conduct on the appearance of Tickell's version of the first book of the Iliad, is not too severe for the treacheries and falsehoods which were the instruments of his malevolence, cowardice and vanity. "An odious suspicion had sprung up in the mind of Pope. He fancied, and he soon firmly believed, that there was a deep conspiracy against his fame and his fortunes. The work on which he had staked his reputation was to be depreciated. The subscription, on which rested his hopes of a competence, was to be defeated. With this view, Addison had made a rival translation; Tickell had consented to father it, and the wits at Button's had consented to puff it. We do not accuse Pope of bringing an accusation which he knew to be false. We have not the smallest doubt that he believed it to be true; and the evidence on which he believed it he found in his own bad heart. His own life was one long series of tricks, as mean and as malicious as that of which he had suspected Addison and Tickell. He was all stiletto and mask. To injure, to insult, and to save himself from the consequences of injury and insult by lying and equivocating, was the habit of his life. He published a lampoon on the Duke of Chandos; he was taxed with it; and he lied and equivocated. He published a lampoon on Aaron Hill; he was taxed with it; and he lied and equivocated. He published a still fouler lampoon on Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; he was taxed with it; and he lied with more than usual effrontery and vehemence. He puffed himself, and abused his enemies, under feigned names. He robbed himself of his own letters, and then raised the hue and cry after them. Besides his frauds of malignity, of fear, of interest, and of vanity, there were frauds which he seems to have committed from a love of fraud alone. He had a habit of stratagem, a pleasure in outwitting all who came near him. Whatever his object might be, the indirect road to it was [Pg cxliii] that which he preferred. For Bolingbroke, Pope undoubtedly felt as much love and veneration as it was in his nature to feel for any human being. Yet Pope was scarcely dead, when it was discovered that from no motive, except the mere love of artifice, he had been guilty of an act of gross perfidy to Bolingbroke."[185] Many of the falsehoods and perfidies I have detailed have come to light since Macaulay wrote, and there are more behind which will appear in their proper place in Pope's life and works. There have been no lack of men whose moral conduct was in an almost inverse ratio with their intellectual gifts; but there never was an author of equal genius, who habitually practised such despicable deceptions for such paltry purposes;

> "Who for this end would earn a lasting name,
> Join moral infamy to mental fame,
> Would tear aside the friendly veil of night
> To stand degraded in a blaze of light."

His crooked policy was ineffectual, even when his worst devices were undetected. Few believed that he was vexed at the publication of his letters, or that they were careless effusions, or that the virtues he paraded in them were the just reflection of his mind. Both men and compositions will seem to be what they are, and the poet's protestations did not prevent the world from discovering that his epistles were laboured, that many of his sentiments were feigned, and that he eagerly promoted the publications he pretended to deplore.

Having finished a discussion which from its nature will be dull to many, and from its length will be wearisome to all, I turn to speak of the present edition of the Correspondence. The last edition published in the lifetime of Pope comprised, according to Mr. Croker's calculation, 354 letters. These, Mr. Croker states, were increased by Warburton to 384, by Warton to 502, by Bowles to 644, and by Roscoe to 708, or exactly double the number that were included in the last edition of the poet. The present edition will contain more new letters than were collected by Warburton, Warton, Bowles, and Roscoe combined, and many of them are of immeasurably greater [Pg cxliv] importance in determining the character and conduct of Pope than any which have previously appeared. There are others among them which, under ordinary circumstances, would be too trivial to be printed; but particulars, which are separately insignificant, have assisted in

dispelling some of the mystery or exposing some of the deceptions in which it was the poet's pleasure to involve his life, and as nobody can pronounce with certainty what facts may be of service to future inquirers, I have thought it better to add a few superfluous pages than to run the risk of rejecting materials which may prove useful hereafter. I have, in like manner, admitted letters which had a biographical value, although they were neither written by Pope nor to him. Second-hand statements cannot supply the place of authentic documents, and to have dissociated the subsidiary from the main correspondence would have frequently deprived both of the increased importance they derive from being read in connection.

In Pope's own, and every succeeding edition, the letters are divided into groups. The arrangement of the entire collection in one consecutive chronological series is, in his case, neither desirable nor possible. It is not desirable because a unity of subject often runs through his intercourse with particular persons, and the interposition of the topics upon which he touched with other friends, far from presenting a connected view of his thoughts and actions, would reduce the whole to a medley of disjointed fragments. It is not possible because many of his letters are undated, and, though we can frequently determine their place in each class, there are no means of settling their order when all the letters of doubtful date are thrown together. In numerous instances the year in which they were written can at most be discovered, and the attempt to fix their precedency within that period would be attended with as much uncertainty as if they were shuffled like a pack of cards.

The liberties which Pope took with his correspondence in preparing it for publication diminish the authority of that extensive portion of it which we owe to his printed or manuscript copies alone, and have rendered it essential to specify the source from which, every letter is derived. [Pg cxlv] Where the letter was sent to one person and was published by Pope as if it had been addressed to another, it is inserted in its proper place, and again in the group to which it was falsely assigned by the writer. Unless the correspondence was exhibited in its double form, a just idea could not easily be obtained of the shape and colour he imparted to it, or of the relations which he pretended to have maintained with his contemporaries. Where the direction was not changed, and we possess both the genuine and the corrected letter, the true version is given in the text, and any variations in his amended version which seemed worthy of notice are pointed out in the notes. Even here, from the nature and extent of the alterations, it has sometimes been necessary to preserve a letter in its twofold state.

The greater part of the collection of 1735 was reproduced in the quarto of 1737; but as the texts are not always identical the earliest has been followed, except where there is manifestly an error of the press, or where the quarto supplies passages which are not in the volume of P. T. I had once intended to subjoin the whole of the various readings at the foot of the page. I abandoned the design upon finding that the vast majority of them were verbal, and apparently unimportant changes, which could only have interested the few curious inquirers who would always have recourse to the original editions. I have not the less carefully collated these original editions throughout, and have thus got rid of numerous mistakes which had become traditional in the subsequent reprints. The notes signed "Pope, 1735," were first published in the P. T. collection, with the exception of a few in the Wycherley group, which, though they are only known to us through the P. T. volume, had undoubtedly appeared in 1729. Many of the P. T. notes were transferred to the authorised impression of 1737, and they were nearly all in the copies which the poet delivered to Warburton for posthumous publication. The notes signed "Pope, 1737," were added in the quarto of that year; and those signed "Cooper, 1737," are from the octavos which bear the name of this bookseller on the title-page. [Pg cxlvi]

Language was current in Pope's day which would be considered grossly indelicate in ours, and though he abounds in refined and elevated strains, he was yet among the worst offenders of his time. "He and Swift," says Dr. Johnson, "had an unnatural delight in ideas physically impure, such as every other tongue utters with unwillingness, and of which every ear shrinks from the mention." His correspondence is not altogether free from the defect; but no editor can now efface the blots which Warburton, Warton, and Bowles felt bound to preserve. Roscoe set aside a few sentences, and showed by his inconsistency the uselessness of the process. He confined his expurgations to the part of Pope's works which were little read, and where the omissions in consequence would rarely be remarked; but did not venture to disturb a single syllable of the far more numerous and more objectionable passages which occur in the pieces that are in the hands of all the world. The stains which sully so much of our beautiful literature are unhappily indelible, and it could answer no useful end to adopt the capricious principle of Roscoe in removing the lesser blemishes which are seldom noticed, and leaving the worst and most conspicuous defilements undisturbed. More freedom may be used with the unpublished letters; but I have exercised the discretion very sparingly, and have not excluded every coarse word, phrase, or idea, when it was characteristic of the age, the man, and his writings, and when, though an offence against taste, it could not be injurious to morals.

I have mentioned at the several places where their contributions are inserted, the numerous persons to whose liberality Mr. Croker and myself have been obliged for materials and assistance. The services rendered by Mr. Dilke require to be noticed here. Until he published his articles in the Athenæum little had been added to our knowledge of Pope since Johnson produced his masterly Life. The truths which Mr. Dilke established, and the errors he dissipated, were not more important than the change he gave to the former superficial investigations. His rigid scrutiny became the standard for every subsequent inquirer. He loved his studies for their own sake, and never did a man of letters work less for personal ends. He at once placed at my [Pg cxlvii]

disposal his Caryll correspondence, which he had carefully annotated, and the explanation of all its obscure allusions are due to him. He supplied me with a multitude of letters which were widely scattered through books and periodicals, and collated others with the originals in the British Museum and Bodleian Library. Large masses of the letters are undated, or dated falsely, and he was at the labour of fixing dates which sometimes appeared to defy conjecture. He lent me his rare editions, was unwearied in answering questions, in solving difficulties, in revising proofs, and in communicating, without reserve, his stores of information. He was then suffering from a long and painful illness, and he died when only the first volume of correspondence was printed, or I should have had his generous and invaluable aid to the end.

Mr. Bowles remarked in the course of the skirmish of pamphlets he provoked, that the editorship of Pope's works had been to no one a bed of roses. For the larger part of the discomforts his commentators may have endured, Pope himself was responsible. His mysteries, his double-dealings, his falsifications, and his quarrels have rendered half the acts of his life a fertile theme for debate. None of the angry controversialists who mingled fifty years ago in the fray had prepared properly for the contest, and the insolence and assumption, the virulence and the dogmatism, were commonly greatest with the persons whose acquaintance with the subject was the least. The intemperate, and usually ignorant warfare, left nearly all the vexed questions in confusion, and it is only in recent years that a new generation of dispassionate students have begun to replace the blunders of sciolism by facts. In the many battles yet to be fought over Pope there will be this advantage which will be certain to produce solid results, that the critic will be in possession of the materials for judgment, and will not have to write without knowledge of his cause.

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] Johnson, Lives of the Poets, ed. Cunningham, Vol. iii. p. 368.

[2] Marchmont Papers, Vol. ii. p. 335.

[3] Nichols, Lit. Anec. Vol. ii. p. 165.

[4] Johnson, Lives of the Poets, Vol. iii. p. 72.

[5] Prior's Life of Malone, p. 385.

[6] Prior's Malone, p. 370.

[7] Hurd said of Warburton's Pope, that "it was the best edition that was ever given of any classic."

[8] Imit. Bk. i. Epist. vi. ver. 87.

[9] This last sentence was added by Warburton in the later editions of his Pope.

[10] Nichols, Lit. Anec. Vol. IV. p. 429-437.

[11] Letters of Horace Walpole, ed. Cunningham, Vol. vi. p. 422.

[12] De Quincey, Works, ed. 1863. Vol. xv. p. 137. He usually maintained the opposite view, and sided altogether with the "they who could see nothing in Pope but 'dust a little gilt.'" "There is nothing," he says, "Pope would not have sacrificed, not the most solemn of his opinions, nor the most pathetic memorial from his personal experiences, in return for a sufficient consideration, which consideration meant always with him poetic effect. Simply and constitutionally, he was incapable of a sincere thought, or a sincere emotion. Nothing that ever he uttered, were it even a prayer to God, but he had a fancy for reading it backwards. And he was evermore false, not as loving or preferring falsehood, but as one who could not in his heart perceive much real difference between what people affected to call falsehood, and what they affected to call truth."

[13] Macaulay's Essays, 1 Vol. ed. p. 719.

[14] Athenæum, July 8, 1854, Sept. 1, Sept. 8, and Sept. 15, 1860.

[15] Mrs. Thomas to Cromwell, June 27, 1727.

[16] "Lives of the Poets," edited by Cunningham, Vol. III. p. 62.

[17] "The Curlliad," p. 22.

[18] Vol. I. p. xxxviii. Where no other work is mentioned, the references throughout this Introduction are to the present edition of Pope's Correspondence.

[19] Mr. Croker and myself have been indebted to the kindness of the present Marquess of Bath for the use of the Oxford papers preserved at Longleat. They are most important for the light they throw upon the character and proceedings of Pope.

[20] Lord Oxford to Pope, Oct. 9, 1729.

[21] Pope to Lord Oxford, Oct. 16, 1729.

[22] Pope to Swift, Nov. 28, 1729.

[23] "Lives of the Poets," Vol. III. p. 62.

[24] Vol. I. p. xxxvii.

[25] The father was probably Lord Digby, and the letters were those addressed to the Hon. Robert Digby, who died in April, 1726.

[26] Vol. I. pp. xxxvii, xxxviii.

[27] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 423.

[28] Warton's "Essay on Pope," Vol. II. p. 255.

[29] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 424.

[30] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 425.

[31] Vol. I. Appendix, pp. 421, 423.

[32] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 441.

[33] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 422.

[34] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 422.

[35] Vol. I. Appendix, pp. 425, 441.

[36] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 442.

[37] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 432.

[38] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 434.

[39] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 443.

[40] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 428.

[41] Vol. I. Appendix, pp. 428, 433.

[42] "Lives of the Poets," Vol. III. p. 61. Mr. Roscoe says that no evidence for this statement appears. Johnson is himself the evidence. He went to London in 1737, when he was 28 years of age, to try his fortunes as an author, and became intimate with Savage, who was the ally of Pope, with Dodsley, who published the authentic edition of the poet's correspondence, and with numerous other persons from whom he was likely to have received reliable information upon a fact so recent. It is not to be supposed that Johnson imagined or invented a circumstance which there is nothing to discredit.

[43] Vol. I. Appendix, pp. 433, 434.

[44] Though the work is printed in two thin volumes, it was always done up as one.

[45] "Notes and Queries," No. 260, p. 485. This article is from the same pen as the articles on Pope's correspondence in the "Athenæum."

[46] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 430. The statement occurs in a private note written at the time to Smythe, before the bookseller had any idea of appealing to the public, or suspected that the letters were printed by Pope himself.

[47] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 442.

[48] Vol. I. p. xxxvi.

[49] Vol. I. pp. xl. xli. All the statements to which I have referred occur in this preface of Pope to the quarto of 1737, and some of them in many other places besides.

[50] Vol. I. p. xxxvii. Appendix, p. 419.

[51] Vol. I. p. xxxv.

[52] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 420.

[53] Vol. I. p. xxxviii. The anonymous friend was put in the place of Lord Oxford. Half the notes relate to the Wycherley manuscripts in the Harley library, and could only have proceeded from the author of that fiction. Pope's official editor, Warburton, signed all the notes with Pope's name.

[54] Vol. I. p. xxxv.

[55] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 445.

[56] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 444.

[57] This circumstance at once attracted the attention of Swift. "I detest the House of Lords," he wrote to Lady Betty Germain, from Dublin, June 8, 1735, "for their indulgence to such a profligate, prostitute villain as Curll; but am at a loss how he could procure any letters written to Mr. Pope, although by the vanity or indiscretion of correspondents the rogue might have picked up some that went from him. Those letters have not yet been sent hither; therefore I can form no judgment on them." Swift's detestation of the House of Lords for not punishing a man who was proved to be innocent of the offence with which he was charged, is an instance of the kind of justice to be expected from violent partisans.

[58] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 445.

[59] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 429.

[60] Vol. I. Appendix, pp. 429, 445.

[61] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 439.

[62] P. T. said 380, but the 3 was probably a misprint for 4.

[63] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 429.

[64] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 430.

[65] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 423.

[66] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 438. Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," Vol. II. p. 261.

[67] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 435.

[68] Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," Vol. III. p. 61.

[69] "Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence," 12mo. Vol. II. p. vi.

[70] vol. I. Appendix, p. 446.

[71] vol. I. Appendix, p. 430.

[72] vol. I. Appendix, p. 442.

[73] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 447.

[74] Vol. I. Appendix, pp. 431, 435.

[75] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 431.

[76] Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," Vol. III. p. 61.

[77] "Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence," 12mo. Vol. III. p. xii. Vol. I. Appendix, p. 439.

[78] The "Athenæum" of Sept. 8, 1860.

[79] When Pope put forth his preface to the quarto he could not have intended to disguise that he was the writer of the "Narrative," or he would have been at greater pains to vary his language. If the general resemblance had been less marked, an invention common to both productions would reveal their common origin. In the "Narrative" we are informed that the complete collection of Pope's had been copied into a couple of books before Theobald published his edition of Wycherley's posthumous works, and that it was from these manuscript books that the Wycherley correspondence was transcribed for press. This assertion was untrue. Theobald's volume came out in 1728, while Pope's collection, as appears from his announcements to Lord Oxford, was still in the process of formation in September, 1729, and he was only "causing it to be fairly written" in October, after his own Wycherley volume had passed through the press. The false account is repeated in the preface to the quarto, where we are told that the posthumous works of Wycherley were printed the year after the copy of Pope's collection of letters had been deposited in the library of Lord Oxford, which throws back the deposit of the letters from the close of 1729 to 1727. Since the poet revived and authenticated an anonymous fiction respecting his personal acts, he may reasonably be supposed to have been the author of it. The object of the imposition was to uphold the tale he had advanced in his Wycherley volume. He had ceased to state openly that the publication was the act of Lord Oxford; but he wished to have it believed that the letters were in the keeping of his noble friend at the time, and to leave the impression that the notion of printing them had not originated with himself.

[80] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 420.

[81] Vol. I. p. xxxix.

[82] Warton's Pope, Vol. II. p. 339.

[83] "Lives of the Poets," Vol. III. p. 63.

[84] "Athenæum," Sept. 8, 1860.

[85] Maloniana, p. 385.

[86] "Lives of the Poets," Vol. III. p. 62.

[87] Vol. I. p. 417.

[88] Vol. I. Appendix, pp. 430, 431, 443.

[89] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 431.

[90] Vol. I. Appendix, pp. 431, 443.

[91] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 443.

[92] Vol. I. Appendix, pp. 444, 445.

[93] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 431.

[94] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 432.

[95] Vol. I. Appendix, pp. 423, 447.

[96] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 444.

[97] From a letter which Lord Oxford addressed to Swift on June 19, 1735, he would appear to have known no more than the rest of the public. "Master Pope," he writes, "is under persecution from Curll, who has by some means (wicked ones most certainly) got hold of some of Pope's private letters, which he has printed, and threatens more."

[98] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 447.

[99] "Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence," 12mo. Vol. III, p. x.

[100] Pope to Buckley, July 13, [1735].

[101] Art. Atterbury in "A General Biographical Dictionary translated from Bayle, interspersed with several thousand lives never before published. By Rev. J. P. Bernard, Rev. T. Birch, Mr. John Lockman, and other hands." Vol II. p. 447.

[102] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 447.

[103] Pope to Fortescue, March 26, 1736, and April, 1736.

[104] Pope to Allen, June 5 and Nov. 6, 1736.

[105] Pope to Allen, Nov. 6, 1736.

[106] Pope to Fortescue, April, 1736.

[107] Pope to Allen, Nov. 6, 1736.

[108] Chancery Bill, Dodsley *v.* Watson.

[109] Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," Vol. III. p. 63.

[110] Ruffhead's "Life of Pope," p. 465.

[111] Vol. I. Appendix, pp. 423, 447.

[112] Pope to Allen, June 5, 1736.

[113] Pope probably kept back from the quarto the unpublished letters he inserted in the octavo that their novelty might assist the sale of the edition which was intended to come out last. He would not use the new letters without his unfailing pretext that they "were in such hands as to be in imminent danger of being printed."

[114] These particulars are derived from the Chancery Bill *Dodsley* v. *Watson*, and from the documents preserved by Pope's solicitor, Mr. Cole, and now in the possession of his successors in the business, Messrs. Janssen and Co. I owe the extracts from Cole's papers to Mr. Dilke, who was indebted for them to the present members of the firm.

[115] Vol. I. p. xliii.

[116] The words were introduced by the poet's friend and counsel Murray when he revised, or, in legal phrase, settled the bill. The rough draft submitted to him is among the papers of Mr. Cole, and the parallel passage only states that the letters written and received by Mr. Pope "having fallen into the hands of several booksellers, they thought fit to print a surreptitious edition," which did not preclude the supposition that one or more of the editions might be genuine. Whenever Pope, throughout the business, could use equivocal language he always selected it.

[117] "Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence," 12mo. Vol. III. p. xii.

[118] Vol. I. Appendix, p. 423, 447.

[119] Vol. I. p. 1. He is speaking of Curll's reprint, which has no letters that were not in the original P. T. volume.

[120] Pope to Swift, May 17, 1739.

[121] Covent Garden Journal, No. 23, March 21, 1752.

[122] Warton's Pope, Vol. I. p. lv.

[123] The second edition of the octavo has a few more notes than the first edition. To distinguish it I have quoted it by the title of Cooper 1737, from the name of the publisher. I had not seen the first edition of the octavo till after Vol. I. of the Correspondence was printed, and I have erroneously stated of one or two letters that they originally appeared in the Cooper edition of 1737 which had not any new letters.

[124] De Quincey, Works, Vol. xv. p. 132.

[125] Works, Vol. vii. p. 66.

[126] Carruthers, Life of Pope, p. 442.

[127] Warburton's Pope, Ed. 1753, Vol. IX. p. 111.

[128] Pope to Lord Orrery, March, 1737.

[129] Pope to Lord Orrery, March, 1737.

[130] It is among the papers of his friend Lord Bathurst. The letter is undated, and was published without any date by Curll. When Pope reproduced it in the quarto of 1737, he dated it August, 1723; and in the quarto of 1741 he changed the date to January, 1723, which must be incorrect, since Bolingbroke was then abroad, and did not return to England till June. Swift's reply is dated September 20, and as it was between this period and June that the joint letter must have been written, August is either the true date, or a close approximation to it.

[131] Pope to Lord Orrery, March, 1737.

[132] Mrs. Whiteway to Lord Orrery.

[133] It is stated in a note to the Dublin edition of the collection of 1741 that the original of Bolingbroke's appendix had been discovered among Swift's papers since the publication of the letter by Curll.

[134] Lord Orrery to Pope, Oct. 4, 1738.

[135] Pope to Mr. Nugent, August 14, 1740. This letter was first published in the "Gentleman's

Magazine" for August, 1849. It is printed, together with the other letters on the subject, among the Pope and Swift correspondence in this edition.

[136] The earliest of the three letters bears in the body of the work, the heading "Mr. Gay to Dr. Swift;" but in the Table of Contents it is entitled "From Mr. Gay and Mr. Pope," and the language in portions of the letter itself shows that it was the production of both.

[137] "I never," said the poet to Caryll, November 19, 1712, "kept any copies of such stuff as I write," which would be decisive of his custom at that early date, if much reliance could be placed on his word. In 1716 he commenced correspondence with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and afterwards published several of the letters among his "Letters to Ladies." He was then at enmity with her, and as she retained the originals, he must either have borrowed them prior to the quarrel for the purpose of copying them, or else must have copied them before they were sent. There is no direct evidence to show at what time he commenced the practice of transcribing letters; but at the close of 1726 he began to compile the collection of 1735, and thenceforward he was sure to let nothing escape which could contribute to his design.

[138] Mrs. Whiteway to Lord Orrery.

[139] Dr. Hawkesworth published a letter from Swift to Pope, introducing his cousin, Mr. D. Swift, and three more were published by Mr. D. Swift himself. He does not say by what means he obtained them, but they form part of a collection of some seventy stray letters addressed by Swift to thirty or forty different persons, who had certainly not returned them.

[140] Pope to Lord Oxford, Dec. 14, 1725.

[141] Pope to Lord Oxford, Dec. 14, 1725.

[142] Nichols's "Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century," Vol. V. p. 379.

[143] Birch MSS. Brit. Mus., quoted in Warton's Pope, Vol. II. p. 339. When Mr. Gerrard was about to return to Ireland from Bath, Pope wrote to him, May 17, 1740, to say that he had found another conveyance for the letter he had intended to send by him to Swift. Mr. Gerrard may nevertheless have carried over the printed correspondence, which would not have been openly entrusted to him by Pope, who professed to know nothing about it. The poet may have thought upon reflection that it would look less suspicious if his avowed letter and the anonymous parcel were not transmitted by the same bearer.

[144] Mrs. Whiteway to Lord Orrery.

[145] Pope to Mr. Nugent, March 26, 1740, and Mr. Nugent to Mrs. Whiteway, April 2, 1740.

[146] Pope to Mr. Nugent, August 14, 1740.

[147] Ruffhead's "Life of Pope," p. 469. The letter to Allen was not published till twenty-five years after Pope's death.

[148] Millar *v.* Taylor, Burrow's Reports, Vol. IV. p. 2397.

[149] "Athenæum" for Sept. 15, 1860.

[150] "Whereas there is an impression of certain letters between Dr. Swift and Mr. Pope openly printed in Dublin without Mr. Pope's consent, and there is reason to think the same hath been, or will be done clandestinely in London, notice is hereby given that they will be speedily published with several additional letters, &c., composing altogether a second volume of his works in prose."—"London Daily Post" for March 24, 1741, quoted in the "Athenæum" for September 15, 1860. The advertisement displays the same cautious phraseology as was employed in the prefatory notice to the quarto, and speaks of the Dublin volume as only printed, not published. One motive which probably induced Faulkner to delay it was, that the work would have been incomplete without the additional letters.

[151] Page 89 in the quarto bears, in the cancelled division, the signature M., and the later page 89 has the signature N. The cause of the difference is plain. It is the ordinary habit to begin the body of a work on sheet B, and reserve the signature A, for the preliminary matter. This is the method adopted with the three previous quarto volumes of Pope's works, and was followed in the original quarto impression of the correspondence; but after the poet had cancelled the beginning of the volume, the sheet commonly marked B was in the second state of the quarto marked A, which occasioned the usual sheet N to become M. The discrepancy is an additional proof that the opening sheets had been cancelled and reprinted.

[152] There were probably minor cancels which did not disturb the general arrangement, as at page 124, where there is a note which purports to be copied from the Dublin edition. The final sheet of all was evidently printed after Faulkner's volume was in type.

[153] Pope to Lord Orrery, March, 1737.

[154] Curll, who delivered his answer upon oath, was no doubt aware that the work was not first published in Dublin. He therefore used the evasive word "printed," and left it to his opponents to detect the fallacy. The methods, however, by which Pope had obtained his priority would not permit him to plead it, nor was he likely, by mooting the question, to risk the revelation of his plot.

[155] Atkyns's Reports, Vol. II. p. 342.

[156] The other counsel were Sir Dudley Ryder, then Attorney-General, and Mr. Noel. They all paid Pope the tribute of refusing their fees.

[157] Tonson *v.* Collins, Blackstone's Reports, Vol. I. p. 311.

[158] Millar *v.* Taylor, Burrow's Reports, Vol. IV. p. 2396. "I know," Lord Mansfield observed, "that Mr. Pope had no paper upon which the letters were written," which means that he had received this assurance from Pope, and supposed it to be true. In one particular the memory of Lord Mansfield deceived him. Blackstone on the authority of the preface to the quarto of 1741, stated, while arguing the case of Tonson *v.* Collins, that the letters "were published with the connivance at least, if not under the direction of Swift," to which Lord Mansfield replied, "Certainly not. Dr. Swift disclaimed it, and was extremely angry." But this is opposed to the united evidence of Mrs. Whiteway, Faulkner, and Pope, who all concur in testifying that Swift consented to the publication.

[159] Mrs. Whiteway to Lord Orrery.

[160] Pope to Caryll, Feb. 3, 1729. Pope to Swift, March 23, 1737.

[161] To Lord Orrery, March, 1737. "His humanity, his charity, his condescension, his candour are equal to his wit, and require as good and true a taste to be equally valued. When all this must die, I would gladly have been the recorder of so great a part of it as shines in his letters to me, and of which my own are but as so many acknowledgements."

[162] Pope to Nugent, August 14, 1740.

[163] The statement is recorded by Dr. Birch in his Journal, May 14, 1751. He received the information from Dr. Heberden, who was then attending Lord Bolingbroke in his last illness.

[164] "All's Well that Ends Well." Act II. Scene 2.

[165] In September, 1725, Arbuthnot had an illness which was expected to prove mortal. Pope, in announcing his recovery to Swift on October 15, added, "He goes abroad again, and is more cheerful than even health can make a man." He meant that Arbuthnot was able to go about again, which was still one of the commonest significations of the phrase. Arbuthnot did not leave England, and from his letter to Swift on October 17, it is clear that he had never entertained the design.

[166] Roscoe dated the letter 1726. Without recapitulating the circumstances, which are fatal to the conjecture, it is enough to say that on September 10, 1726, Pope was unable to hold a pen, owing to the injury he had received a day or two before when he was upset in Bolingbroke's carriage. It was several weeks before he recovered the use of his hand. In the case of Digby there is the additional difficulty that as the nurse did not die till after September, 1725, so he himself was dead before September, 1726.

[167] I did not discover the letters of Wycherley at Longleat till after his correspondence with Pope had been printed off.

[168] "Notes and Queries," No. 260, p. 485.

[169] Oxford MSS.

[170] Oxford MSS.

[171] "Notes and Queries," No. 260, p. 485.

[172] "Lives of the Poets," Vol. III. p. 9.

[173] Oxford MSS. The rest of the letter is taken up with an account of some religious fanatics.

[174] "Lives of the Poets," Vol. III. p. 10.

[175] The general impression produced by the correspondence was expressed by Spence, when he observed to Pope, "People have pitied you extremely on reading your letters to Wycherley. Surely it was a very difficult thing for you to keep well with him." "The most difficult thing in the world," was Pope's reply. On another occasion he said to Spence, "Wycherley was really angry with me for correcting his verses so much. I was extremely plagued, up and down, for almost two years with them. However it went off pretty well at last." When Pope tampered with the written records which he cited as evidence upon the question, we can place no reliance on his passing words.

[176] Oxford MSS.

[177] This statement is from the edition of the pamphlet published in 1749. Mallet was the nominal, and Bolingbroke the real editor. The particulars of Pope's misconduct are related with much asperity in a preliminary advertisement, of which the original, corrected by Bolingbroke, is in the British Museum.

[178] Advertisement to the edition of 1749.

[179] Advertisement to the edition of 1749. In the same year Warburton put forth a short pamphlet entitled, "A Letter to the Editor of the Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism," &c., which was reprinted, in 1769, in the Appendix to Ruffhead's Life of Pope. In this reply Warburton extenuates, without justifying, the act of his friend, and is more successful in his attack upon Bolingbroke for exposing the treachery than in his defence of Pope for perpetrating it. The "Letter to the Editor of the Letters" is chiefly valuable for its admission of the principal charges against the poet. His advocate, who had seen both the genuine and corrupted edition of the phamphlet, allows that he had tampered with the text. Bolingbroke had only specified alterations and ommissions. Warburton goes further, and speaks of interpolations. In the body of Ruffhead's work it is stated that Pope altered nothing, and "only struck out some insults on the throne and the then reigning monarch." But this is opposed to the language of Warburton twenty years before, when the subject was fresh, and Bolingbroke was living.—Ruffhead's Life of

Pope, p. 526. Appendix, p. 573.

[180] "A Letter to the Editor of the Letters" in Ruffhead, p. 573.

[181] "Lives of the Poets," Vol. III. p. 232.

[182] "A Letter to the Editor of the Letters" in Ruffhead, p. 572.

[183] Warburton says that the expense had been considerable.—Ruffhead, 571.

[184] "Lives of the Poets," Vol. III. p. 92.

[185] Macaulay's Essays. I Vol. edit. p. 718.

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# THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

[Pg 1]

> The clearness, the closeness, and the elegance of style with which this preface is written, render it one of the best pieces of prose in our language. It abounds in strong good sense, and profound knowledge of life. It is written with such simplicity that scarcely a single metaphor is to be found in it.—WARTON.

[Pg 2]

This preface first appeared in the Works of Pope, 4to, 1717. The poet submitted the manuscript to Atterbury, and the bishop thus replied in December, 1716: "I return the preface, which I have read twice with pleasure. The modesty and good sense there is in it, must please every one that reads it. And since there is, as I said, nothing that can offend, I see not why you should balance a moment about printing it, always provided that there is nothing said there which you have occasion to unsay hereafter, of which you yourself are the best, and the only judge. This is my sincere opinion, which I give, because you ask it, and which I would not give, though asked, but to a man I value as much as I do you, being sensible how improper it is, on many accounts, for me to interpose in things of this nature, which I never understood well, and now understand somewhat less than ever I did." The suspicion which Atterbury hinted to his friend, that some of the sentiments expressed in the preface might hereafter be quoted against him, probably referred to the vaunts in the concluding paragraphs. The poet paid no regard to the warning, and lived to violate nearly all his professions. Johnson says that the preface is "written with great sprightliness and elegance," but the praise of Warton is hyperbolical when he terms it "one of the best pieces of prose in our language." The style is often faulty, and never rises to any extraordinary pitch of excellence; the "knowledge of life," which Warton calls "profound," is such as a little experience would supply; and the "strong good sense" is interspersed with obvious thoughts and erroneous maxims. The language of Atterbury is sober, and even in writing to the author he was not betrayed by the partiality of friendship into the exaggerations of Warton.

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# THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

[Pg 3]

I am inclined to think that both the writers of books, and the readers of them, are generally not a little unreasonable in their expectations. The first seem to fancy that the world must approve whatever they produce, and the latter to imagine that authors are obliged to please them at any rate. Methinks, as on the one hand, no single man is born with a right of controlling the opinions of all the rest; so on the other, the world has no title to demand, that the whole care and time of any particular person should be sacrificed to its entertainment. Therefore I cannot but believe that writers and readers are under equal obligations for as much fame, or pleasure, as each affords the other.

Every one acknowledges, it would be a wild notion to expect perfection in any work of man: and yet one would think the contrary was taken for granted, by the judgment commonly passed upon poems. A critic supposes he has done his part if he proves a writer to have failed in an expression, or erred in any particular point: and can it then be wondered at if the poets in general seem resolved not to own themselves in any error? For as long as one side will make no allowances, the other will be brought to no acknowledgments.[1]

[Pg 4]

I am afraid this extreme zeal on both sides is ill-placed; poetry and criticism being by no means the universal concern of the world, but only the affair of idle men who write in their closets, and of idle men who read there. Yet sure, upon the whole, a bad author deserves better usage than a bad critic: for a writer's endeavour, for the most part, is to please his readers, and he fails merely through the misfortune of an ill judgment; but such a critic's is to put them out of humour; a design he could never go upon without both that and an ill temper.[2]

I think a good deal may be said to extenuate the fault of bad poets. What we call a genius, is hard to be distinguished by a man himself, from a strong inclination: and if his genius be ever so great, he cannot at first discover it any other way than by giving way to that prevalent propensity which renders him the more liable to be mistaken. The only method he has is to make the experiment by writing, and appealing to the judgment of others. Now if he happens to write ill, which is certainly no sin in itself, he is immediately made an object of ridicule. I wish we had the humanity

to reflect that even the worst authors might, in their endeavour to please us, deserve something at our hands. We have no cause to quarrel with them but for their obstinacy in persisting to write; and this too may admit of alleviating circumstances. Their particular friends may be either ignorant or insincere; and the rest of the world in general is too well-bred to shock them with a truth, which generally their booksellers are the first that inform them of. This happens not till [Pg 5] they have spent too much of their time to apply to any profession which might better fit their talents; and till such talents as they have are so far discredited as to be but of small service to them. For, what is the hardest case imaginable, the reputation of a man generally depends upon the first steps he makes in the world; and people will establish their opinion of us, from what we do at that season when we have least judgment to direct us.

On the other hand, a good poet no sooner communicates his works with the same desire of information, but it is imagined he is a vain young creature given up to the ambition of fame, when perhaps the poor man is all the while trembling with the fear of being ridiculous. If he is made to hope he may please the world, he falls under very unlucky circumstances: for, from the moment he prints, he must expect to hear no more truth than if he were a prince or a beauty. If he has not very good sense (and indeed there are twenty men of wit for one man of sense) his living thus in a course of flattery may put him in no small danger of becoming a coxcomb: if he has, he will consequently have so much diffidence as not to reap any great satisfaction from his praise: since, if it be given to his face, it can scarce be distinguished from flattery, and if in his absence, it is hard to be certain of it. Were he sure to be commended by the best and most knowing, he is as sure of being envied by the worst and most ignorant, which are the majority;[3] for it is with a fine genius as with a fine fashion, all those are displeased at it who are not able to follow it: and it is to be feared that esteem will seldom do any man so much good, as ill-will does him harm. Then there is a third class of people, who make the largest part of mankind,—those of ordinary or indifferent capacities—; and these, to a man, will hate or suspect him: a hundred honest gentlemen will dread him as a wit, and a hundred innocent women as a satirist. In a word, [Pg 6] whatever be his fate in poetry, it is ten to one but he must give up all the reasonable aims of life for it. There are indeed some advantages accruing from a genius to poetry, and they are all I can think of,—the agreeable power of self-amusement when a man is idle or alone; the privilege of being admitted into the best company; and the freedom of saying as many careless things as other people, without being so severely remarked upon.[4]

[5]I believe if any one, early in his life, should contemplate the dangerous fate of authors, he [Pg 7] would scarce be of their number on any consideration. The life of a wit is a warfare upon earth; and the present spirit of the learned world is such, that to attempt to serve it any way one must have the constancy of a martyr, and a resolution to suffer for its sake. 'I could wish people would believe, what I am pretty certain they will not, that I have been much less concerned about fame than I durst declare till this occasion, when methinks I should find more credit than I could heretofore: since my writings have had their fate already, and it is too late to think of prepossessing the reader in their favour. I would plead it as some merit in me, that the world has never been prepared for these trifles by prefaces,[6] biassed by recommendations, dazzled with the names of great patrons,[7] wheedled with fine reasons and pretences, or troubled with excuses.'[8] I confess it was want of consideration that made me an author; I writ because it amused me; I corrected because it was as pleasant to me to correct as to write; and I published because I was told I might please such as it was a credit to please. To what degree I have done this, I am really ignorant. I had too much fondness for my productions to judge of them at first, and too much judgment to be pleased with them at last. But I have reason to think they can have no reputation which will continue long, or which deserves to do so:[9] for they have always fallen [Pg 8] short not only of what I read of others, but even of my own ideas of poetry.

If any one should imagine I am not in earnest, I desire him to reflect, that the ancients, to say the least of them, had as much genius as we; and that to take more pains, and employ more time, cannot fail to produce more complete pieces. They constantly applied themselves not only to that art, but to that single branch of an art, to which their talent was most powerfully bent; and it was the business of their lives to correct and finish their works for posterity.[10] If we can pretend to have used the same industry, let us expect the same immortality: though, if we took the same care, we should still lie under a further misfortune: they writ in languages that became universal and everlasting, while ours are extremely limited both in extent and in duration. A mighty foundation for our pride! when the utmost we can hope,[11] is but to be read in one island, and to be thrown aside at the end of one age. [Pg 9]

All that is left us is to recommend our productions by the imitation of the ancients;[12] and it will be found true, that in every age, the highest character for sense and learning has been obtained by those who have been most indebted to them. For, to say truth, whatever is very good sense, must have been common sense in all times; and what we call learning, is but the knowledge of the sense of our predecessors. Therefore they who say our thoughts are not our own, because they resemble the ancients, may as well say our faces are not our own, because they are like our fathers: and, indeed, it is very unreasonable that people should expect us to be scholars, and yet be angry to find us so.[13]

I fairly confess that I have served myself all I could by reading; that I made use of the judgment of authors dead and living; that I omitted no means in my power to be informed of my errors, both by my friends and enemies:[14] but the true reason these pieces are not more correct, is

owing to the consideration how short a time they, and I, have to live.[15] One may be ashamed to consume half one's days in bringing sense and rhyme together: and what critic can be so unreasonable, as not to leave a man time enough for any more serious employment, or more agreeable amusement? [Pg 10]

The only plea I shall use for the favour of the public, is, that I have as great a respect for it as most authors have for themselves; and that I have sacrificed much of my own self-love for its sake, in preventing not only many mean things from seeing the light, but many which I thought tolerable. 'I would not be like those authors, who forgive themselves some particular lines for the sake of a whole poem, and *vice versâ* a whole poem for the sake of some particular lines.'[16] I believe no one qualification is so likely to make a good writer as the power of rejecting his own thoughts; and it must be this, if any thing, that can give me a chance to be one. For what I have published I can only hope to be pardoned; but for what I have burned I deserve to be praised. On this account the world is under some obligation to me, and owes me the justice in return to look upon no verses as mine that are not inserted in this collection.[17] And perhaps nothing could make it worth my while to own what are really so, but to avoid the imputation of so many dull and immoral things, as partly by malice, and partly by ignorance, have been ascribed to me. I must further acquit myself of the presumption of having lent my name to recommend any Miscellanies,[18] or works of other men;[19] a thing I never thought becoming a person who has hardly credit enough to answer for his own. [Pg 11]

In this office of collecting my pieces, I am altogether uncertain whether to look upon myself as a man building a monument,[20] or burying the dead. If time shall make it the former, may these poems, as long as they last, remain as a testimony, that their author never made his talents subservient to the mean and unworthy ends of party or self-interest; the gratification of public prejudices or private passions; the flattery of the undeserving, or the insult of the unfortunate. If I have written well, let it be considered that it is what no man can do without good sense, a quality that not only renders one capable of being a good writer, but a good man. And if I have made any acquisition in the opinion of any one under the notion of the former, let it be continued to me under no other title than that of the latter.[21] [Pg 12]

But if this publication be only a more solemn funeral of my remains, I desire it may be known that I die in charity, and in my senses, without any murmurs against the justice of this age, or any mad appeals to posterity. I declare I shall think the world in the right, and quietly submit to every truth which time shall discover to the prejudice of these writings; not so much as wishing so irrational a thing as that every body should be deceived merely for my credit. However, I desire it may then be considered, that there are very few things in this collection which were not written under the age of five-and-twenty, so that my youth may be made, as it never fails to be in executions, a case of compassion; that I was never so concerned about my works as to vindicate them in print, believing if any thing was good it would defend itself, and what was bad could never be defended; that I used no artifice to raise or continue a reputation, depreciated no dead author I was obliged to, bribed no living one with unjust praise, insulted no adversary with ill language,[22] or, when I could not attack a rival's works, encouraged reports against his morals. To conclude, if this volume perish, let it serve as a warning to the critics not to take too much pains for the future to destroy such things as will die of themselves; and a *memento mori* to some of my vain contemporaries the poets, to teach them that when real merit is wanting, it avails nothing to have been encouraged by the great, commended by the eminent, and favoured by the public in general.[23] [Pg 13]

*Nov. 10, 1716.*

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] In all editions till that of Warburton it was thus: "For as long as one side despises a well meant endeavour, the other will not be satisfied with a moderate approbation." The first sentence of the next paragraph is expanded in the manuscript: "Indeed they both proceed in such a manner as if they really believed that poetry was immediate inspiration. It were to be wished they would reflect that this extraordinary zeal and fury is ill placed, poetry and criticism being by no means the universal concern of the world. I do not say this to imitate those people who make a merit of undervaluing the arts and qualifications without which they had never been taken notice of. I think poetry as useful as any other art, because it is as entertaining, and therefore as well deserving of mankind."

[2] Until the edition of Warburton the reading was slightly different: "Yet sure upon the whole a bad author deserves better usage than a bad critic; a man may be the former merely through the misfortune of an ill judgment, but he cannot be the latter without both that and an ill temper."

[3] The instance of Pope himself is a refutation of his theory that the world was almost exclusively composed of flatterers and detractors, and chiefly of the last. Where he could count the deniers of his genius by tens he could number his admirers by thousands.

[4] What is here said of the privileges of the poetic character will not, I believe, bear the test of truth and experience. Surely a poet is not particularly allowed "the freedom of saying careless things," and his moral character and manners are to be estimated, as well as his talents, before he is entitled to a certain station in society.—Bowles.

[5] In the MS. it followed thus: "For my part, I confess, had I seen things in this view at first, the public had never been troubled either with my writings, or with this apology for them. I am sensible how difficult it is to speak of one's self with decency: but when a man must speak of himself, the best way is to speak truth of himself, or, he may depend upon it, others will do it for him. I will therefore make this preface a general confession of all my thoughts of my own poetry, resolving with the same freedom to expose myself, as it is in the power of any other to expose them. In the first place, I thank God and nature that I was born with a love to poetry; for nothing more conduces to fill up all the intervals of our time, or, if rightly used, to make the whole course of life entertaining: *Cantantes licet usque (minus via lædet).* It is a vast happiness to possess the pleasures of the head, the only pleasures in which a man is sufficient to himself, and the only part of him which, to his satisfaction, he can employ all day long. The muses are *amicæ omnium horarum*; and, like our gay acquaintance, the best company in the world as long as one expects no real service from them. I confess there was a time when I was in love with myself, and my first productions were the children of self-love upon innocence. I had made an epic poem, and panegyrics on all the princes in Europe, and thought myself the greatest genius that ever was. I cannot but regret those delightful visions of my childhood, which, like the fine colours we see when our eyes are shut, are vanished for ever. Many trials and sad experience have so undeceived me by degrees, that I am utterly at a loss at what rate to value myself. As for fame, I shall be glad of any I can get, and not repine at any I miss; and as for vanity, I have enough to keep me from hanging myself, or even from wishing those hanged who would take it away. It was this that made me write. The sense of my faults made me correct: besides that it was as pleasant to me to correct as to write."—WARBURTON.

Spence relates that Pope said to Mr. Saville: "If I was to begin the world again, and knew just what I do now, I would never write a verse." In the passage from his manuscript preface, he intimates that he would have amused himself by writing poetry, but would have forborne to publish what he wrote. Either he was not honest in the opinion, or he was self-deceived. He valued his fame above all things, and left no means untried to protect and promote it.

[6] As was the practice of his master Dryden, who is severely lashed for this in the Tale of a Tub.—WARTON.

[7] Pope was not justified in his boast. He dropped the practice of fulsome dedications, but he made the most of his distinguished friends in the body of his pieces, and though no "names of great patrons" are given in this preface, he could not abstain from announcing in the final sentence how much they had countenanced him. This, moreover, was to proclaim the "recommendations" he repudiated, and in every issue of his works the preface, which contained the inconsistency, was followed in addition by a series of Recommendatory Poems.

[8] The passage in inverted commas was first added in 1736.

[9] One of Pope's favourite topics is contempt for his own poetry. For this, if it had been real, he would deserve no commendation; and in this he was certainly not sincere, for his value of himself was sufficiently observed; and of what could he be proud but of his poetry? He writes, he says, when "he has just nothing else to do;" yet Swift complains that he was never at leisure for conversation, because he "had always some poetical scheme in his head." It was punctually required that his writing-box should be set upon his bed before he rose; and Lord Oxford's domestic related that in the dreadful winter of 1740, she was called from her bed by him four times in one night to supply him with paper lest he should lose a thought.—DR. JOHNSON.

[10] For the next sentence the manuscript has this passage: "But I fear it is far otherwise with modern poets. We must bring our wit to the press, as gardeners do their flowers to the market, which if they cannot vend in the morning are sure to die before night. Were we animated by the same noble ambition, and ready to prosecute it with equal ardour, our languages are not only confined to a narrow extent of country, but are in a perpetual flux, not so much as fixed by an acknowledged grammar, while theirs were such as time and fate conspired to make universal and everlasting."

[11] In place of the remainder of the sentence he had written in the manuscript, "is but to live twenty years longer than Quarles, or Withers, or Dennis." The doctrine of Pope was unworthy the countryman of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, and Milton. The first three had not been "thrown aside at the end of one age," and no one who was capable of comprehending the last could seriously believe that his reputation would be ephemeral. The hypothesis, that the writers in a dead tongue can alone secure a worthy audience, is altogether chimerical. The literature of living languages has the ascendancy, and Shakespeare is more read, and better appreciated, than Æschylus and Sophocles.

[12] I have frequently heard Dr. Young speak with great disapprobation of the doctrine contained in this passage, with a view to which he wrote his discourse on Original Composition.—WARTON.

The assertion of Pope is in the face of the facts. All the greatest names in modern literature have a marked originality, and those authors who have imitated the ancients, except in subordinate circumstances, have usually produced tame and lifeless compositions, which were speedily forgotten.

[13] The sophistry is transparent. A man may be a scholar without being a plagiarist or an imitator.

[14] Here followed in the first edition, "and that I expect not to be excused in any negligence on account of youth, want of leisure, or any other idle allegations." This was inconsistent with his request, at the conclusion of his preface, that those who condemned his poems

would remember his youth when he composed them. After the omitted sentence he had added in the manuscript, "I have ever been fearful of making an ill present to the world, for which I have as much respect as most poets have for themselves. What I thought incorrect I suppressed; and what I thought most finished I never published but with fear and trembling."

[15] From hence to the end of the paragraph the manuscript continues thus: "A man that can expect but sixty years may be ashamed to employ thirty in measuring syllables, and bringing sense and rhyme together. We spend our youth in the pursuit of riches or fame in hopes to enjoy them when we are old, and when we are old we find it is too late to enjoy anything. I have got over the mistake pretty early. I therefore hope the wits will pardon me if I leave myself time enough to save my soul, and some wise men will be of my opinion even if I should think a part of it better spent in the enjoyment of life than in pleasing the critics."

[16] This sentence was in the manuscript, but Pope omitted it in the edition of 1717, and restored it in 1736.

[17] In the manuscript he added, "which indeed was my chief view in making it, for in the present liberty of the press, a man is forced to appear as bad as he is, not to be thought worse." The assertion is qualified in the text, but he could not entirely abandon the affectation of pretending that he collected his works to escape the disgrace of the pieces which were falsely attributed to him, and not to obtain credit from his own performances.

[18] "I am always highly delighted," said Addison in the Spectator, No. 523, Oct. 30, 1712, "with the discovery of any rising genius among my countrymen. For this reason I have read over, with great pleasure, the late Miscellany published by Mr. Pope, in which there are many excellent compositions of that ingenious gentleman." The announcement referred to the first edition of Lintot's Miscellany, and from the literary intercourse which existed between Addison, Steele, and Pope at the time, the compilation was not likely to have been ascribed to the latter in the Spectator without sufficient authority. The language of Pope seems carefully selected to avoid the direct denial that he was the editor. The work was published anonymously, and he only asserts that he had "never lent his *name* to recommend any miscellanies." The disclaimer was probably directed against the device adopted by Lintot in the second edition, 1 vol. 8vo, 1714, which bore this title, "Miscellaneous Poems and Translations. By several hands. Particularly, etc." Here followed a list of Pope's contributions, and his alone. Underneath the list a line was drawn across the page, and below this line was printed in capital letters, "By Mr. Pope." The complete separation between the list of pieces and the name of the poet disconnected them to the eye, and left the impression that Pope was the editor of the entire work. The same plan was continued till the fifth edition, 2 vols. 12mo, 1727, when Lintot grew bolder, and inserted bastard title-pages with the words, "Mr. Pope's Miscellany." The poet, who corrected the proofs of his own pieces for the fifth edition, assured Christopher Pitt, in a letter of July 23, 1726, that he had never had anything to do with the remainder of the work; but the private assurance, after many years, of a man who had no regard for truth does not outweigh the assertion in the Spectator, when coupled with the peculiar wording by which he evaded the public contradiction of the statement.

[19] In 1721 he broke through his rule by recommending the poems of Parnell to Lord Oxford in an Epistle in verse.—CUNNINGHAM.

[20] A few sentences before he had said, "for what I have published I can only hope to be pardoned," and already he has forgotten his mock modesty, and admits he has a hope that his works may prove "a monument."

[21] The commendation of his own goodness is a theme which constantly recurs in Pope, as if he hoped to conceal his delinquencies by his loud profession of the contrary qualities. The topic is introduced into this preface in a forced manner, and treated with singular weakness. Intellectual capacity and literary pre-eminence are no security for moral excellence; and it was idle to ask the public to forget his reputation as a poet, which was his sole claim to fame, and to commemorate him for virtues of which the world had no proof, and which, if they were real, he shared with thousands.

[22] This was written in 1716; did our author recollect this sentiment in 1729[8]?—WARTON.

Warton alludes to the Dunciad, but to have "insulted adversaries with ill language" was only one out of several particulars, in which Pope's subsequent career belied the protestations in his preface.

[23] This far-fetched excuse of Pope for rebuking the vanity of contemporary poets, was a clumsy expedient to gratify his own vanity in proclaiming to the world that "he had been encouraged by the great, and commended by the eminent." He had not much title to reprove the vanity of his brethren, when, in the same sentence, he recorded the praise which the different orders of mankind had bestowed upon himself.

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# PREFACE TO POPE'S WORKS.

[Pg 15]

## VOL. II. 4TO, 1735.

## THE AUTHOR TO THE READER.

All I had to say of my writings is contained in my preface to the first of these volumes, printed for J. Tonson, and B. Lintot in quarto and folio in the year 1717; and all I have to say of myself will be found in my last Epistle.[1] I have nothing to add, but that this volume, and the above-mentioned contain whatsoever I have written, and[2] designed for the press, except my translation of the Iliad (with my preface and notes), of twelve books of the Odyssey, with the postscript (not the notes), the preface to Shakespeare, and a few Spectators[3] and Guardians. Whatever besides I have written, or joined in writing with Dr. Swift, Dr. Arbuthnot, or Mr. Gay (the only persons with whom I ever wrote in conjunction) are to be found in the four volumes of Miscellanies by us published.[4] I think them too inconsiderable to be separated and reprinted here; nevertheless, [Pg 16] that none of my faults may be imputed to another, I must own that of the prose part, the Thoughts on Various Subjects at the end of the second volume, were wholly mine; and of the verses, the Happy Life of a Country Parson, the Alley in imitation of Spenser, the characters of Macer, Artimesia, and Phryne, the Verses to Mrs. M[artha] B[lount] on her Birth-day, and a few epigrams.[5] It will be but justice to me to believe that nothing more is mine, notwithstanding all that has been published in my name, or added to my[6] miscellanies since 1717,[7] by any bookseller whatsoever.

A. Pope.

*Jan. 1, 1734-[5].*

### FOOTNOTES:

[1] In the reprint of this preface in 1740, Pope added the words, "to Dr. Arbuthnot."

[2] In the octavo of 1735, Pope omitted the words "written, and." In 1740 he again inserted them, and omitted the words, "and designed for the press."

[3] The Messiah was first published in the Spectator, but as it was also inserted in the quarto of 1717, the poet cannot have included it among the pieces which were not contained in either the first or second volume of his works. His only other known contribution to the Spectator was a short letter in No. 532, Nov. 10, 1712, on the verses which the Emperor Hadrian spoke when he was dying. The "few Spectators" to which Pope referred have not been identified, and since he never reproduced, or particularised them, it may be taken for granted that they were of slight importance.

[4] In the edition of 1740 Pope affixed to this sentence the clause, "or make part of the Memoirs of Scriblerus, not yet printed." His enumeration of the Scriblerus among his genuine productions was doubtless the consequence of his resolution to publish it, and it accordingly appeared in 1741 in the second volume of his prose works.

[5] The passage from "I think" down to "epigrams," was left out in 1740, for Pope soon admitted into his collected works those pieces in the Miscellanies which he here said were "too inconsiderable to be reprinted."

[6] "Any" in the edition of 1740.

[7] He omitted "1717" in 1740. His insinuation that none of the other pieces ascribed to him were genuine, is in his ordinary style of equivocation, and is now known to be erroneous.

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# RECOMMENDATORY POEMS.[1] [Pg 19]

## JOHN SHEFFIELD, DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.[2]

## ON MR. POPE AND HIS POEMS.

With age decayed, with courts and bus'ness tired,
Caring for nothing but what ease required;
Too dully serious for the muses' sport,
And from the critics safe arrived in port;
I little thought of launching forth again,
Amidst advent'rous rovers of the pen:
And after so much undeserved success,
Thus hazarding at last to make it less.
  Encomiums suit not this censorious time,
Itself a subject for satiric rhyme; [Pg 20]
Ignorance honoured, wit and worth defamed,
Folly triumphant, and ev'n Homer blamed!
But to this genius, joined with so much art,
Such various learning mixed in ev'ry part,
Poets are bound a loud applause to pay;
Apollo bids it, and they must obey.
  And yet so wonderful, sublime a thing

As the great Iliad, scarce could make me sing,
Except I justly could at once commend
A good companion, and as firm a friend,
One moral, or a mere well-natured deed
Can all desert in sciences exceed.
'Tis great delight to laugh at some men's ways,
But a much greater to give merit praise.

## ANNE, COUNTESS OF WINCHELSEA.[3]

### TO MR. POPE.

The muse, of ev'ry heav'nly gift allowed
To be the chief, is public, though not proud.
Widely extensive is the poet's aim,
And in each verse he draws a bill on fame.
For none have writ (whatever they pretend)
Singly to raise a patron, or a friend;
But whatsoe'er the theme or object be,
Some commendations to themselves foresee.
Then let us find, in your foregoing page,
The celebrating poems of the age;
Nor by injurious scruples think it fit
To hide their judgments who applaud your wit. [Pg 21]
But let their pens to yours the heralds prove,
Who strive for you as Greece for Homer strove;
Whilst he who best your poetry asserts,
Asserts his own, by sympathy of parts.
Me panegyric verse does not inspire,
Who never well can praise what I admire;
Nor in those lofty trials dare appear,
But gently drop this counsel in your ear.
Go on, to gain applauses by desert,
Inform the head, whilst you dissolve the heart;
Inflame the soldier with harmonious rage,
Elate the young, and gravely warm the sage;
Allure with tender verse the female race,
And give their darling passion courtly grace;
Describe the Forest still in rural strains,
With vernal sweets fresh breathing from the plains.
Your tales be easy, natural, and gay,
Nor all the poet in that part display;
Nor let the critic there his skill unfold,
For Boccace thus, and Chaucer tales have told.
Soothe, as you only can, each diff'ring taste,
And for the future charm as in the past.
Then should the verse of ev'ry artful hand
Before your numbers eminently stand;
In you no vanity could thence be shown,
Unless, since short in beauty of your own,
Some envious scribbler might in spite declare,
That for comparison you placed them there.
But envy could not against you succeed, }
'Tis not from friends that write, or foes that read; }
Censure or praise must from ourselves proceed. }

## MR. WYCHERLEY.

### TO MR. POPE, ON HIS PASTORALS.[4]

In these more dull, as more censorious days,
When few dare give, and fewer merit praise, [Pg 22]
A muse sincere, that never flatt'ry knew,
Pays what to friendship and desert is due.
Young, yet judicious; in your verse are found
Art strength'ning nature, sense improved by sound.
Unlike those wits whose numbers glide along
So smooth, no thought e'er interrupts the song:[5]
Laboriously enervate they appear,
And write not to the head, but to the ear:
Our minds unmoved and unconcerned they lull,
And are at best most musically dull:
So purling streams with even murmurs creep,

And hush the heavy hearers into sleep.
As smoothest speech is most deceitful found,
The smoothest numbers oft are empty sound,
And leave our lab'ring fancy quite aground.[6]
But wit and judgment join at once in you,
Sprightly as youth, as age consummate too:
Your strains are regularly bold, and please
With unforced care, and unaffected ease,
With proper thoughts, and lively images: [Pg 23]
Such as by nature to the ancients shown,
Fancy improves, and judgment makes your own:
For great men's fashions to be followed are,
Although disgraceful 'tis their clothes to wear.
Some in a polished style write pastoral,
Arcadia speaks the language of the Mall;
Like some fair shepherdess, the sylvan muse,[7]
Decked in those flow'rs her native fields produce,
With modest charms would in plain neatness please,
But seems a dowdy in the courtly dress,
Whose awkward finery allures us less.[8]
But the true measure of the shepherd's wit
Should, like his garb, be for the country fit:
Yet must his pure and unaffected thought
More nicely than the common swain's be wrought.
So, with becoming art, the players dress
In silks the shepherd and the shepherdess;
Yet still unchanged the form and mode remain,
Shaped like the homely russet of the swain.
Your rural muse appears to justify
The long lost graces of simplicity:
So rural beauties captivate our sense
With virgin charms, and native excellence.
Yet long her modesty those charms concealed,
'Till by men's envy to the world revealed;
For wits industrious to their trouble seem,
And needs will envy what they must esteem.
  Live and enjoy their spite! nor mourn that fate,
Which would, if Virgil lived, on Virgil wait;
Whose muse did once, like thine, in plains delight;
Thine shall, like his, soon take a higher flight;
So larks, which first from lowly fields arise,
Mount by degrees, and reach at last the skies.

[Pg 24]

## FR. KNAPP.[9]

## TO MR. POPE, ON HIS WINDSOR FOREST.[10]

***Killala, in the county of Mayo, in Ireland, June 7, 1715.***

Hail, sacred bard! a muse unknown before
Salutes thee from the bleak Atlantic shore.
To our dark world thy shining page is shown,
And Windsor's gay retreat becomes our own.
The Eastern pomp had just bespoke our care,
And India poured her gaudy treasures here:
A various spoil adorned our naked land,
The pride of Persia glittered on our strand,
And China's earth was cast on common sand:
Tossed up and down the glossy fragments lay,
And dressed the rocky shelves, and paved the painted bay.
Thy treasures next arrived: and now we boast
A nobler cargo on our barren coast:
From thy luxuriant Forest we receive
More lasting glories than the East can give.
  Where'er we dip in thy delightful page,
What pompous scenes our busy thoughts engage!
The pompous scenes in all their pride appear,
Fresh in the page, as in the grove they were;
Nor half so true the fair Lodona shows
The sylvan state that on her border grows,
While she the wond'ring shepherd entertains
With a new Windsor in her wat'ry plains; [Pg 25]
Thy juster lays the lucid wave surpass,

The living scene is in the muse's glass.
Nor sweeter notes the echoing forests cheer,
When Philomela sits and warbles there,
Than when you sing the greens and op'ning glades,
And give us harmony as well as shades:
A Titian's hand might draw the grove, but you
Can paint the grove, and add the music too.
With vast variety thy pages shine;
A new creation starts in ev'ry line.
How sudden trees rise to the reader's sight, }
And make a doubtful scene of shade and light, }
And give at once the day, at once the night! }
And here again what sweet confusion reigns,
In dreary deserts mixed with painted plains!
And see! the deserts cast a pleasing gloom,
And shrubby heaths rejoice in purple bloom:
Whilst fruitful crops rise by their barren side,
And bearded groves display their annual pride.
Happy the man, who strings his tuneful lyre,
Where woods, and brooks, and breathing fields inspire!
Thrice happy you! and worthy best to dwell
Amidst the rural joys you sing so well.
I in a cold, and in a barren clime, }
Cold as my thought, and barren as my rhyme, }
Here on the western beach attempt to chime. }
O joyless flood! O rough tempestuous main!
Bordered with weeds, and solitudes obscene![11]
Let me ne'er flow like thee! nor make thy stream
My sad example, or my wretched theme.
Like bombast now thy raging billows roar,
And vainly dash themselves against the shore;
About like quibbles now thy froth is thrown,
And all extremes are in a moment shown.
Snatch me, ye gods! from these Atlantic shores,
And shelter me in Windsor's fragrant bow'rs;
Or to my much loved Isis' walks convey,
And on her flow'ry banks for ever lay.
Thence let me view the venerable scene,
The awful dome, the groves' eternal green: [Pg 26]
Where sacred Hough[12] long found his famed retreat,
And brought the muses to the sylvan seat,
Reformed the wits, unlocked the classic store,
And made that music which was noise before.
There with illustrious bards I spent my days
Nor free from censure, nor unknown to praise,
Enjoyed the blessings that his reign bestowed,
Nor envied Windsor in the soft abode.
The golden minutes smoothly danced away,
And tuneful bards beguiled the tedious day:
They sung, nor sung in vain, with numbers fired
That Maro taught, or Addison inspired.
Ev'n I essayed to touch the trembling string:
Who could hear them, and not attempt to sing?
Roused from these dreams by thy commanding strain,
I rise and wander through the field or plain;
Led by thy muse, from sport to sport I run,
Mark the stretched line, or hear the thund'ring gun.
Ah! how I melt with pity, when I spy
On the cold earth the flutt'ring pheasant lie;
His gaudy robes in dazzling lines appear,
And ev'ry feather shines and varies there.
Nor can I pass the gen'rous courser by, }
But while the prancing steed allures my eye, }
He starts, he's gone! and now I see him fly }
O'er hills and dales, and now I lose the course,
Nor can the rapid sight pursue the flying horse.
O could thy Virgil from his orb look down,
He'd view a courser that might match his own!
Fired with the sport, and eager for the chase,
Lodona's murmurs stop me in the race.
Who can refuse Lodona's melting tale?
The soft complaint shall over time prevail; [Pg 27]
The tale be told, when shades forsake her shore,
The nymph be sung, when she can flow no more.

Nor shall thy song, old Thames! forbear to shine,
At once the subject and the song divine;
Peace, sung by thee, shall please ev'n Britons more
Than all their shouts for victory before.
Oh! could Britannia imitate thy stream,
The world should tremble at her awful name:
From various springs divided waters glide,
In diff'rent colours roll a diff'rent tide,
Murmur along their crooked banks awhile,
At once they murmur and enrich the isle;
A while distinct through many channels run,
But meet at last, and sweetly flow in one;
There joy to lose their long-distinguished names,
And make one glorious and immortal Thames.

## ELIJAH FENTON.

## TO MR. POPE.

## IN IMITATION OF A GREEK EPIGRAM ON HOMER.[13]

When Phœbus, and the nine harmonious maids,
Of old assembled in the Thespian shades;
What theme, they cried, what high immortal air,
Befit these harps to sound, and thee to hear?
Replied the god: "Your loftiest notes employ,
To sing young Peleus, and the fall of Troy."
The wond'rous song with rapture they rehearse;
Then ask who wrought that miracle of verse?
He answered with a frown: "I now reveal
A truth, that envy bids me not conceal:
Retiring frequent to this laureat vale,
I warbled to the lyre that fav'rite tale,
Which, unobserved, a wand'ring Greek and blind,
Heard me repeat, and treasured in his mind;
And fired with thirst of more than mortal praise,
From me, the god of wit, usurped the bays.
But let vain Greece indulge her growing fame,
Proud with celestial spoils to grace her name;
Yet when my arts shall triumph in the west,
And the white isle with female pow'r is blest;
Fame, I foresee, will make reprisals there,
And the translator's palm to me transfer.
With less regret my claim I now decline,
The world will think his English Iliad mine."

## DR. THOMAS PARNELL.

## TO MR. POPE.

To praise, and still with just respect to praise
A bard triumphant in immortal bays,
The learn'd to show, the sensible commend,
Yet still preserve the province of the friend;
What life, what vigour must the lines require?
What music tune them, what affection fire?
O might thy genius in my bosom shine,
Thou should'st not fail of numbers worthy thine:
The brightest ancients might at once agree
To sing within my lays, and sing of thee.
Horace himself would own thou dost excel
In candid arts to play the critic well.
Ovid himself might wish to sing the dame
Whom Windsor Forest sees a gliding stream;
On silver feet, with annual osier crowned,
She runs for ever through poetic ground.
How flame the glories of Belinda's hair,
Made by thy muse the envy of the fair!
Less shone the tresses Egypt's princess wore,
Which sweet Callimachus so sung before.
Here courtly trifles set the world at odds;
Belles war with beaus, and whims descend for gods.
The new machines, in names of ridicule,

Mock the grave phrenzy of the chomic fool.
But know, ye fair, a point concealed with art,
The sylphs and gnomes are but a woman's heart.
The graces stand in sight; a satire-train
Peeps o'er their head, and laughs behind the scene.
  In Fame's fair temple, o'er the boldest wits
Inshrined on high the sacred Virgil sits,
And sits in measures such as Virgil's muse
To place thee near him might be fond to choose.
How might he tune th' alternate reed with thee,
Perhaps a Strephon thou, a Daphnis he;
While some old Damon, o'er the vulgar wise,
Thinks he deserves, and thou deserv'st the prize!
Rapt with the thought, my fancy seeks the plains,
And turns me shepherd while I hear the strains.
Indulgent nurse of ev'ry tender gale,
Parent of flow'rets, old Arcadia, hail!
Here in the cool my limbs at ease I spread,
Here let thy poplars whisper o'er my head:
Still slide thy waters soft among the trees,
Thy aspens quiver in a breathing breeze!
Smile, all ye valleys, in eternal spring,
Be hushed, ye winds, while Pope and Virgil sing.
  In English lays, and all sublimely great,
Thy Homer warms with all his ancient heat;
He shines in council, thunders in the fight,
And flames with ev'ry sense of great delight.
Long has that poet reigned, and long unknown,
Like monarchs sparkling on a distant throne;
In all the majesty of Greek retired;
Himself unknown, his mighty name admired;
His language failing wrapt him round with night;
Thine, raised by thee, recalls the work to light.
So wealthy mines, that ages long before
Fed the large realms around with golden ore,
When choked by sinking banks, no more appear,
And shepherds only say, the "mines were here:"
Should some rich youth (if nature warm his heart,
And all his projects stand informed with art)
Here clear the caves, there ope the leading vein;
The mines detected flame with gold again. [Pg 30]
  How vast, how copious, are thy new designs!
How ev'ry music varies in thy lines!
Still, as I read, I feel my bosom beat,
And rise in raptures by another's heat.
Thus in the wood, when summer dressed the days,
While Windsor lent us tuneful hours of ease,
Our ears the lark, the thrush, the turtle blest,
And Philomela sweetest o'er the rest:
The shades resound with song—O softly tread,
While a whole season warbles round my head.
  This to my friend—and when a friend inspires,
My silent harp its master's hand requires;
Shakes off the dust, and makes these rocks resound;
For fortune placed me in unfertile ground;
Far from the joys that with my soul agree,
From wit, from learning—very far from thee.
Here moss-grown trees expand the smallest leaf;
Here half an acre's corn is half a sheaf;[14]
Here hills with naked heads the tempest meet,
Rocks at their sides, and torrents at their feet;
Or lazy lakes unconscious of a flood,
Whose dull, brown naiads ever sleep in mud.
Yet here content can dwell, and learned ease,
A friend delight me, and an author please;
Ev'n here I sing, when Pope supplies the theme,
Show my own love, though not increase his fame.

## THE HON. SIMON HARCOURT.[15]

## TO MR. POPE,

## ON THE PUBLISHING HIS WORKS.

He comes, he comes! bid ev'ry bard prepare
The song of triumph, and attend his car. [Pg 31]
Great Sheffield's[16] muse the long procession heads,
And throws a lustre o'er the pomp she leads;
First gives the palm she fired him to obtain,
Crowns his gay brow, and shows him how to reign.
Thus young Alcides, by old Chiron taught,
Was formed for all the miracles he wrought:
Thus Chiron did the youth he taught applaud,
Pleased to behold the earnest of a god.
But hark, what shouts, what gath'ring crowds rejoice!
Unstained their praise by any venal voice,
Such as th' ambitious vainly think their due,
When prostitutes, or needy flatt'rers sue.
And see the chief! before him laurels borne;
Trophies from undeserving temples torn;
Here Rage enchained reluctant raves, and there
Pale Envy dumb, and sick'ning with despair;
Prone to the earth she bends her loathing eye,
Weak to support the blaze of majesty.
But what are they that turn the sacred page?
Three lovely virgins, and of equal age;
Intent they read, and all enamoured seem,
As he that met his likeness in the stream:[17]
The Graces these; and see how they contend,
Who most shall praise, who best shall recommend.
The chariot now the painful steep ascends,
The pæans cease; thy glorious labour ends.
Here fixed, the bright eternal temple stands,[18]
Its prospect an unbounded view commands:
Say, wond'rous youth, what column wilt thou choose,
What laurelled arch for thy triumphant muse?
Though each great ancient court thee to his shrine,
Though ev'ry laurel through the dome be thine,
(From the proud epic,[19] down to those that shade
The gentler brow of the soft Lesbian maid) [Pg 32]
Go to the good and just, an awful train,[20]
Thy soul's delight, and glory of the fane:
While through the earth thy dear remembrance flies,
"Sweet to the world, and grateful to the skies."

## WILLIAM BROOME.

## TO MR. POPE.[21]

Let vulgar souls triumphal arches raise,
Or speaking marbles, to record their praise,
And picture (to the voice of fame unknown)
The mimic feature on the breathing stone;
Mere mortals! subject to death's total sway,
Reptiles of earth, and beings of a day!
'Tis thine, on ev'ry heart to grave thy praise,
A monument which worth alone can raise:
Sure to survive, when time shall whelm in dust
The arch, the marble, and the mimic bust:
Nor till the volumes of th' expanded sky
Blaze in one flame, shalt thou and Homer die:
Then sink together in the world's last fires,
What heav'n created, and what heav'n inspires.
If aught on earth, when once this breath is fled,
With human transport touch the mighty dead,
Shakespear, rejoice! his hand thy page refines;
Now ev'ry scene with native brightness shines;[22]
Just to thy fame, he gives thy genuine thought;
So Tully published what Lucretius wrote;
Pruned by his care, thy laurels loftier grow,
And bloom afresh on thy immortal brow.
Thus when thy draughts, O Raphael! time invades,
And the bold figure from the canvas fades, [Pg 33]
A rival hand recalls from ev'ry part
Some latent grace, and equals art with art;
Transported we survey the dubious strife,

While each fair image starts again to life.[23]
  How long, untuned, had Homer's sacred lyre
Jarred grating discord, all extinct his fire!
This you beheld; and taught by heav'n to sing,
Called the loud music from the sounding string.
Now waked from slumbers of three thousand years,
Once more Achilles in dread pomp appears,
Towers o'er the field of death; as fierce he turns,
Keen flash his arms, and all the hero burns;
With martial stalk, and more than mortal might,
He strides along, and meets the gods in fight:
Then the pale Titans, chained on burning floors,
Start at the din that rends th' infernal shores,
Tremble the tow'rs of heav'n, earth rocks her coasts,
And gloomy Pluto shakes with all his ghosts.
To ev'ry theme responds thy various lay;
Here rolls a torrent, there meanders play;
Sonorous as the storm thy numbers rise,
Toss the wild waves, and thunder in the skies;
Or softer than a yielding virgin's sigh,
The gentle breezes breathe away and die.
Thus, like the radiant god who sheds the day,
You paint the vale, or gild the azure way;
And while with ev'ry theme the verse complies,
Sink without grov'ling, without rashness rise.
  Proceed, great bard! awake th' harmonious string,
Be ours all Homer; still Ulysses sing.
How long[24] that hero, by unskilful hands,
Stripped of his robes, a beggar trod our lands!
Such as he wandered o'er his native coast,
Shrunk by the wand, and all the warrior lost;
O'er his smooth skin a bark of wrinkles spread;
Old age disgraced the honours of his head;
Nor longer in his heavy eye-ball shined
The glance divine, forth-beaming from the mind.
But you, like Pallas, ev'ry limb infold
With royal robes, and bid him shine in gold;
Touched by your hand his manly frame improves
With grace divine, and like a god he moves.
  Ev'n I, the meanest of the muses' train,
Inflamed by thee, attempt a nobler strain;
Advent'rous waken the Mæonian lyre,
Tuned by your hand, and sing as you inspire:
So armed by great Achilles for the fight,
Patroclus conquered in Achilles' right:
Like theirs, our friendship! and I boast my name
To thine united—for thy friendship's fame.
  This labour past, of heav'nly subjects sing,
While hov'ring angels listen on the wing,
To hear from earth such heart-felt raptures rise,
As, when they sing, suspended hold the skies:
Or nobly rising in fair virtue's cause,
From thy own life transcribe th' unerring laws:
Teach a bad world beneath her sway to bend:
To verse like thine fierce savages attend,
And men more fierce: when Orpheus tunes the lay,
Ev'n fiends relenting hear their rage away.

[Pg 34]

## LORD LYTTELTON.[25]

## TO MR. POPE.[26]

*From Rome, 1730.*

Immortal bard! for whom each muse has wove
The fairest garlands of th' Aonian grove;
Preserved, our drooping genius to restore,
When Addison and Congreve are no more;
After so many stars extinct in night,
The darkened age's last remaining light!
To thee from Latian realms this verse is writ,
Inspired by memory of ancient wit:
For now no more these climes their influence boast,

[Pg 35]

Fall'n is their glory, and their virtue lost:
From tyrants, and from priests, the muses fly,
Daughters of reason and of liberty.
Nor Baiæ now, nor Umbria's plain they love,
Nor on the banks of Nar, or Mincio rove;
To Thames's flow'ry borders they retire,
And kindle in thy breast the Roman fire.
So in the shades, where cheered with summer rays
Melodious linnets warbled sprightly lays,
Soon as the faded, falling leaves complain
Of gloomy winter's unauspicious reign,
No tuneful voice is heard of joy or love,
But mournful silence saddens all the grove.
  Unhappy Italy! whose altered state
Has felt the worst severity of fate:
Not that barbarian hands her fasces broke
And bowed her haughty neck beneath their yoke;
Nor that her palaces to earth are thrown,
Her cities desert, and her fields unsown;
But that her ancient spirit is decayed,
That sacred wisdom from her bounds is fled,
That there the source of science flows no more,
Whence its rich streams supplied the world before.
  Illustrious names! that once in Latium shined,
Born to instruct, and to command mankind;
Chiefs, by whose virtue mighty Rome was raised,
And poets, who those chiefs sublimely praised!
Oft I the traces you have left explore,
Your ashes visit, and your urns adore;
Oft kiss, with lips devout, some mould'ring stone,
With ivy's venerable shade o'ergrown; [Pg 36]
Those hallowed ruins better pleased to see
Than all the pomp of modern luxury.
  As late on Virgil's tomb fresh flow'rs I strowed,
While with th' inspiring muse my bosom glowed,
Crowned with eternal bays my ravished eyes
Beheld the poet's awful form arise:
Stranger, he said, whose pious hand has paid
These grateful rites to my attentive shade,
When thou shalt breathe thy happy native air,
To Pope this message from his master bear:
  "Great bard! whose numbers I myself inspire,
To whom I gave my own harmonious lyre,
If high exalted on the throne of wit,
Near me and Homer thou aspire to sit,
No more let meaner satire dim the rays,
That flow majestic from thy nobler bays;
In all the flow'ry paths of Pindus stray,
But shun that thorny, that unpleasing way;
Nor, when each soft engaging muse is thine,
Address the least attractive of the nine.
  "Of thee more worthy were the task to raise
A lasting column to thy country's praise,
To sing the land, which yet alone can boast
That liberty corrupted Rome has lost,
Where science in the arms of peace is laid,
And plants her palm beneath the olive's shade.
Such was the theme for which my lyre I strung,
Such was the people whose exploits I sung;
Brave, yet refined, for arms and arts renowned,
With diff'rent bays by Mars and Phœbus crowned,
Dauntless opposers of tyrannic sway,
But pleased, a mild Augustus to obey.
  "If these commands submissive thou receive,
Immortal and unblamed thy name shall live;
Envy to black Cocytus shall retire,
And howl with furies in tormenting fire;
Approving time shall consecrate thy lays,
And join the patriot's to the poet's praise."

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] The Recommendatory poems addressed to Pope are without exception dull, insipid productions, which never rise above mediocrity, and sometimes fall below it. Only those

are reprinted here which he himself prefixed to his works. The first seven appeared in the quarto of 1717, and the remaining two in the octavo of 1736.

[2] Legally speaking, of Buckingham*shire*; for he would not take the title of Buckingham, under a fear that there was lurking somewhere or other a claim to that title amongst the connections of the Villiers family. He was a pompous grandee, who lived in uneasy splendour, and, as a writer, most extravagantly overrated: accordingly, he is now forgotten. Such was his vanity, and his ridiculous mania for allying himself with royalty, that he first of all had the presumption to court the Princess (afterwards Queen) Anne. Being rejected, he then offered himself to the illegitimate daughter of James II. by the daughter of Sir Charles Sedley. She was as ostentatious as himself, and accepted him. —De Quincey.

Pope commenced the interchange of praise with the Duke of Buckingham by celebrating him in the Essay on Criticism. The return verses of the Duke are little better than drivelling. His Essay on Satire and Essay on Poetry are his principal works, but though one was retouched by Dryden and the other by Pope, they are very second-rate performances. The Duke died in February, 1721, aged 72.

[3] Anne, wife of Heneage, fifth Earl of Winchelsea, and daughter of Sir William Kingsmill. She died on Aug. 5, 1720.—Croker.

She wrote a tragedy called Aristomenes, or the Royal Shepherd, to which Pope may be supposed to allude in his letter to Caryll of Dec. 15, 1713, where he says, "I was invited to dinner to my Lady Winchelsea, and after dinner to hear a play read, at both which I sat in great disorder with sickness at my head and stomach." Pope omitted her rugged, bald, prosaic verses in 1736, probably because they were intrinsically worthless, and because the name of the author had ceased to carry any weight. In 1727 and 1732 they were printed with Pope's poems in Lintot's Miscellany, and doubtless with the sanction of Pope himself.

[4] These verses, with the heading, "To my friend Mr. Pope, on his Pastorals," originally appeared in 1709, in the same volume of Tonson's Miscellany which contained the Pastorals themselves. In the fifth edition of Lintot's Miscellany, 1727, and in the sixth edition, 1732, the poem of Wycherley, who was then dead, is prefixed to Pope's pieces, and bears the title, "To Mr. Pope at sixteen years old, on occasion of his Pastorals." This was untrue, and seems designed to convey a false idea of Pope's precocity. The lines were not addressed to him till he was twenty, as appears from Wycherley's letter of May 18, 1708, in which he says, "I have made a compliment in verse upon the printing your Pastorals which you shall see when you see me." Dennis, and others, accused Pope of being the author of the flattering tribute. The poet appealed in refutation of the charge to Wycherley's letters, and added that the first draught, and corrected copy of the panegyric, which were still extant in the Harley library in Wycherley's handwriting, would show "that if they received any alteration from Mr. Pope it was in the omission of some of his own praises." Documents to which nobody had access proved nothing. Mr. Croker considered that there was strong internal evidence from the smoothness of the rhythm, the antithetical style, and the nature of the commendation, that Pope must have assisted in reducing the lines to their present shape. The mannerism of both authors can be clearly traced in them. They have the stamp of Wycherley, improved by Pope.

[5] If Wycherley had been capable of anything of the kind, this, and the previous couplet, might have been written after the Essay on Criticism, but surely could not have been inspired by a perusal of the manuscript of the Pastorals.—Croker.

[6] This line was omitted by Pope in 1736.

[7] From Boileau's Art of Poetry, Chant ii. v. 1.—Warton.

[8] This triplet was omitted by Pope in the edition of 1736.

[9] Francis Knapp, of Chilton, in Berkshire, Gent. He was of St. John's College, Oxford, and afterwards demy of Magdalen College.—Cunningham.

He graduated M.A. April 30, 1695, and as he could hardly have been an M.A. before he was twenty-five, he would have been forty-five at the date of these verses. There is a rhyming "Epistle to Mr. B——, by Mr. Fr. Knapp, of Magdalen College, in Oxford," in Tonson's Fourth Miscellany.—Croker.

He died in, or before 1727; for in one of Lintot's advertisements of that year he is described as the "*late* Rev. Mr. Francis Knapp, Dean of Killala."

[10] There are several lines in this copy of verses, which could not be endured in a common magazine. So much is the public ear, and public taste improved.—Warton.

[11] The next six lines were left out by Pope in 1736.

[12] Hough was chosen president of Magdalen College in April, 1687, in defiance of the mandate sent by James II. to the fellows, requiring them to elect Farmer, a profligate and a papist. The illegal proceedings of the king in dispossessing the protestants, and filling the college with romanists, alarmed and enraged the country, and contributed largely to the Revolution of 1688. In May, 1690, Hough became Bishop of Oxford. He was translated to Lichfield and Coventry in 1699, and to Worcester in 1717, where he remained till his death in May, 1743, at the age of ninety-three.

[13] By far the most elegant, and best turned compliment of all addressed to our author, happily borrowed from a fine Greek epigram, and most gracefully applied.—Warton.

There is little merit in borrowing a compliment from the Anthology, and the felicity of its application in the present instance may be questioned, notwithstanding the emphatic praise of Warton. The mythological basis of the lines, which is appropriate in the Greek,

becomes childish when adopted by an English poet, and the point of the piece, which turns upon the assumption that Pope's translation was vastly superior to the original, is too extravagant to be pleasing. Fenton was a scholar, and could not have thought what he said.

[14] "I would add," says Dr. Johnson, in his Life of Parnell, "that the description of barrenness in his verses to Pope was borrowed from Secundus, but lately searching for the passage, which I had formerly read, I could not find it." The borrowed description is the only tolerable part of the poem, which is in a clumsy strain, unlike the usual easy style of Parnell.

[15] He was only son to the Lord Chancellor Harcourt, and died in 1720.—Roscoe.

[16] It was paying pitiful homage to rank to call an indifferent versifier, like the Duke of Buckingham, "great Sheffield," and pretend that he was the instructor and model of Pope.

[17] The comparison of the three Graces, admiring the reflection of themselves in Pope's works, to Narcissus enamoured of his own face in the stream, is a ludicrous conceit, and the execution is on a par with the idea.

[18] This paragraph refers to Pope's Temple of Fame.

[19] Pope's genius was not epic, and the only epic poem he composed was his juvenile effort, Alcander, which he burnt because it was too worthless to be preserved.

[20] This and the concluding verse are from the Temple of Fame.

[21] These lines first appeared in 1726, in the translation of the Odyssey, where they were appended by Broome to the final note. Pope inserted them in the 8vo edition of his works in 1736.

[22] This was a compliment our author could not take much pleasure in reading; for he could not value himself on his edition of Shakespeare.—Warton.

[23] The comparison on both sides is wanting in truth. The superficial researches, and meagre notes of Pope did not renovate Shakespeare, and no second Raphael has repainted the pictures of Raphael the first. Fitness of praise was a merit which the writers of commendatory verses commonly despised. Their study was to outvie each other in the grossness, and insincerity of their flattery.

[24] Odyssey, lib. xvi.—Broome.

[25] Pope inserted this tribute among the Recommendatory poems prefixed to the 8vo edition of his works, 1736. Lyttelton was not raised to the peerage till November, 1757, twenty-seven years after the date of his verses.

[26] Warton prefers Fenton's verses, but in my opinion these lines of Lord Lyttelton's are much superior to all the other recommendatory verses. They are as elegant and correct in themselves, as the sentiments they convey appear sincere, and worthy an ingenuous, cultivated, and liberal mind. There is a small inaccuracy in one or two expressions, and perhaps it would have been better if Virgil's speech, which forms the conclusion, had been compressed.—Bowles.

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# TRANSLATIONS.

[Pg 37]

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# ADVERTISEMENT.

[Pg 39]

The following Translations were selected from many others done by the author in his youth; for the most part indeed but a sort of exercises, while he was improving himself in the languages, and carried by his early bent to poetry to perform them rather in verse than prose. Mr. Dryden's Fables came out about that time,[1] which occasioned the translations from Chaucer. They were first separately printed in Miscellanies by J. Tonson and B. Lintot, and afterwards collected in the quarto edition of 1717. The Imitations of English Authors, which are added at the end, were done as early; some of them at fourteen or fifteen years old; but having also got into Miscellanies, we have put them here together to complete this juvenile volume.[2]

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] In the year 1700. They were the most popular of Dryden's works, and were in the hands of every reader when Pope was learning his art.

[2] This advertisement was first prefixed by Pope to vol. iii. of his works, 8vo, 1736. The contents of the "juvenile volume" were The Temple of Fame, Sappho to Phaon, Vertumnus and Pomona, The Fable of Dryope, The first book of Statius's Thebais, January and May, The Wife of Bath's Prologue, and the Imitations of English Poets. Pope apologises for printing the Imitations by saying that they had got into Miscellanies, which is an insinuation that the pieces had found their way to the press without his

consent. It was he himself who published them. They are inserted in the present edition among the minor poems.

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THE [Pg 41]

# FIRST BOOK OF STATIUS:

HIS

# THEBAIS.

### TRANSLATED IN THE YEAR 1703.

The translator hopes he need not apologise for his choice of this piece, which was made almost in his childhood. But finding the version better upon review than he expected from those years, he was easily prevailed on to give it some correction, the rather because no part of this author (at least that he knows of) has been tolerably turned into our language.[1]—Pope. [Pg 43]

It was in his childhood only that Pope could make choice of so injudicious a writer as Statius to translate. It were to be wished that no youth of genius were suffered ever to look into Statius, Lucan, Claudian, or Seneca the tragedian,—authors who, by their forced conceits, by their violent metaphors, by their swelling epithets, by their want of a just decorum, have a strong tendency to dazzle, and to mislead inexperienced minds, and tastes unformed, from the true relish of possibility, propriety, simplicity, and nature. Statius had undoubtedly invention, ability, and spirit; but his images are gigantic and outrageous, and his sentiments tortured and hyperbolical. One cannot forbear reflecting on the short duration of a true taste in poetry among the Romans. From the time of Lucretius to that of Statius was no more than about one hundred and forty-seven years; and if I might venture to pronounce so rigorous a sentence, I would say, that the Romans can boast of but eight poets who are unexceptionably excellent,—namely, Terence, Lucretius, Catullus, Virgil, Horace, Tibullus, Propertius, Phædrus. These only can be called legitimate models of just thinking and writing. Succeeding authors, as it happens in all countries, resolving to be original and new, and to avoid the imputation of copying, become distorted and unnatural. By endeavouring to open an unbeaten path, they deserted simplicity and truth; weary of common and obvious beauties, they must needs hunt for remote and artificial decorations.

It is plain that Pope was not blind to the faults of Statius, many of which he points out with judgment and truth, in a letter to Mr. Cromwell, written in 1708[9]. After this censure of Statius's manner, it is but justice to add, that in the Thebais there are many strokes of a strong imagination; and, indeed, the picture of Amphiaraus, swallowed up suddenly by a chasm that opened in the ground, is truly sublime.—Warton. [Pg 44]

Statius was a favourite writer with the poets of the middle ages. His bloated magnificence of description, gigantic images, and pompous diction suited their taste, and were somewhat of a piece with the romances they so much admired. They neglected the gentler and genuine graces of Virgil, which they could not relish. His pictures were too correctly and chastely drawn to take their fancies; and truth of design, elegance of expression, and the arts of composition, were not their object.—T. Warton.

In this translation there are some excellent passages, particularly those pointed out by Dr. Warton—"O father Phœbus," v. 829, and the exquisite lines descriptive of evening, "'Twas now the time," &c., 474; but some of the most striking images are omitted, some added, and some misunderstood. Let us however confess, that the versification is truly wonderful, considering the age of the author. It would be endless to point out more particularly occasional errors and inaccuracies, in a composition which can be considered no otherwise than as an extraordinary specimen of versification, before the writer's judgment and taste were matured.—Bowles.

According to the information which Pope gave to Spence, he commenced an epic poem at thirteen, and wrote four books of about a thousand verses each.[2] As his taste and judgment improved, he discovered the crudeness of his early flights, and for a while he almost relinquished his attempts at original composition, "My first taking to imitating," he said, "was not out of vanity, but humility. I saw how defective my own things were; and I endeavoured to mend my manner by copying good strokes from others."[3] "In my rambles through the poets," he said again, "when I met with a passage or story that pleased me more than ordinary, I used to endeavour to imitate it, or translate it into English; and this gave rise to my imitations published so long after."[4] In speaking of Pope's youthful efforts, Spence uses the word "imitation" as synonymous with "translation." "Some of his first exercises," he says, "were *imitations* of the stories that pleased him most in Ovid, or any other poet that he was reading. I have one of these original exercises now by me in his own hand. It is the story of Acis and Galatea, from Ovid; and was *translated* when he was but fourteen years old."[5] Pope appears to have sometimes employed the term imitation with the same latitude, and probably meant by it that he endeavoured to imitate, in the English turn of expression, the distinctive beauties of the original Latin or Greek. "In the

scattered lessons I used to set myself," he said, "I translated above a quarter of the Metamorphoses, and that part of Statius which was afterwards printed with the corrections of Walsh."[6] The notion, in which Bowles and others acquiesced, that the published translations are a true index of Pope's skill at fourteen, will not bear investigation. Of the Metamorphoses he brought out only two little fragments, which appeared many years later, when they had undergone a thorough revision. The rest of the manuscript would not have been sacrificed if the version had been fit for the public eye without the toil of recasting it. Spence, who possessed the Acis and Galatea, did not think it worth printing as a specimen of Pope's boyish abilities, even when the curiosity respecting his works was at its height. The suppression of all his early pieces, which had not been submitted to a subsequent renovation, is a plain proof of their inferiority. The first translation which he gave to the world was the "Episode of Sarpedon, from the twelfth and sixteenth books of Homer's Iliads." This, and his Pastorals, appeared together, in May, 1709, in Tonson's Sixth Miscellany, and Pope was then twenty-one. [Pg 45]

The fragment from Homer included the speech of Sarpedon to Glaucus. "It has," said the poet, "been rendered in English by Sir John Denham, after whom the translator had not the vanity to attempt it for any other reason, than that the episode must have been very imperfect without so noble a part of it." Denham at that period had a much more brilliant reputation than he afterwards retained, and though Pope adopted the language of humility, he must have felt an inward pride in the consciousness that he had distanced so famous a name. His great superiority did not admit of a question, and he must have been well aware that it was his interest to invite a comparison. The specimen was shown in manuscript to Trumbull, who, in his admiration, urged Pope to give a complete translation of the Iliad. The exhortations of Trumbull did not bear fruit till 1713. "I cannot," Pope wrote to him in the November of that year, "deny myself the pleasure of acquainting you how great a proof I have given of my deference to your opinion and judgment, which has at last moved me to undertake the translation of Homer. I can honestly say Sir William Trumbull was not only the first that put this into my thoughts, but the principal encourager I had in it, and though now almost all the distinguished names of quality or learning in the nation have subscribed to it, there is not one of which I am so proud as of yours." When the first volume of the translation appeared in 1715, Pope paid his acknowledgments in the Preface to the eminent men who had specially patronised the work. Not only does he make no mention of Trumbull, but he professes to have yielded to the counsel of a greater authority, and says, "Mr. Addison was the first whose advice determined me to undertake the task." Either the statement in the Preface, or the statement in the letter must be inaccurate, though both Addison and Trumbull may have recommended the scheme. [Pg 46]

The "Episode of Sarpedon" is now incorporated in the complete translation to which it led the way. It was not till three years after he had published the fragment from Homer that Pope brought out his translations from the Latin, of which the most ambitious is his version of the first book of the Thebais. He told Spence that in his boyhood "he liked extremely a translation of a part of Statius by some very bad hand." This work bore the title of "An Essay upon Statius, or the five first books of P. P. Statius his Thebais. Done into English verse by T[homas] S[tephens], London, 1648." The verse into which Stephens did his author was for the most part rugged and prosaic, but a few passages are happily turned, and his successor did not disdain to borrow some lines and phrases from him. The principal advantage, however, to Pope of Stephens's attempt was that it enabled him to interpret the original; for his classical education had been defective, and it is clear from his own account, that he could not, without assistance, have construed the Thebais correctly. At eight years of age he was taught his accidence by a priest.[7] He afterwards went to a couple of small schools, where "he lost what he had gained" from his first instructor.[8] "When I came," he said, "from the last of them, all the acquisition I had made was to be able to construe a little of Tully's Offices."[9] For a few months he had another priest for his tutor, and was then left, between twelve and thirteen, to his own resources.[10] The foundation was slight, and he proceeded to raise upon it a hasty superstructure. "I did not," he said, "follow the grammar, but rather hunted in the authors for a syntax of my own; and then began translating any parts that pleased me, particularly in the best Greek and Latin poets. I got the languages by hunting after the stories in the several poets I read, rather than read the books to get the language."[11] He, on another occasion, told Spence that he thought himself the better in some respects for not having had a regular education, since it caused him to read for the sense, whereas schoolboys were taught to read for words.[12] The process was fatal to scholarship. Ignorant, in a great degree, of the rules and idioms of the Latin tongue, it was impossible he should translate with ease or accuracy. But his peculiar training doubtless favoured the early development of his poetic powers. He devoted his boyish years, when the mind was most pliable, to the cultivation of his art, and this incessant practice of versification from childhood was the cause of his precocious excellence. [Pg 47]

Pope's admiration for Statius continued throughout his later boyhood, and he preferred him to "all the Latin poets, by much, next to Virgil."[13] He soon began to turn the Thebais into English, and he affirms that his version of the first book was made in 1703. In a note to his letter to Cromwell of Jan. 22, 1709, he placed it earlier still, and declares that it was "done when the author was but fourteen years old." These statements convey an erroneous impression. It appears from the correspondence with Cromwell that more than one-third of the translation was not in existence by January, 1709, when Pope was in his twenty-first year. The piece was not published till 1712, when it came out in Lintot's Miscellany, and the poet at that period was twenty-four. The portions which were not recently translated, were newly corrected, and the whole represents

the powers of the man who completed the task, and not of the boy who commenced it.

The translation of the first book of the Thebais must be more highly estimated as a specimen of versification than as an adequate representation of the original. The harmony and phraseology of particular passages are delicious, and verse and language throughout are polished in a high degree. There is one pervading exception to Pope's metrical skill. He has recourse incessantly to an unnatural order of words, and especially he produces his rhymes by placing the verb after the noun it ought to precede. Of this license Dryden says, "We were whipped at Westminster if we used it twice together. I should judge him to have little command of English whom the necessity of a rhyme should force upon this rock, though sometimes it cannot easily be avoided." Pope availed himself of the false construction with a freedom which seriously deforms and enfeebles much of his poetry. He fell into the error before he had discrimination to perceive the blemish, and when his judgment was more mature habit had reconciled him to the distortion.

Warton has not exaggerated the defects of Statius, but he has underrated his merits. The descriptions in the Thebais are vivid, and abound in picturesque circumstances, and natural traits of character. Pope's translation is more vague. His narrative is less perspicuous, less dramatic, less spirited, and less life-like than the original. "There are numberless particulars blameworthy in our author," Pope wrote to Cromwell, "which I have tried to soften in the version."[14] He was not successful in this attempt. Where he departs from his text he seldom tempers an extravagance, and has more often rejected a beauty, or smoothed it down into insipidity. His juvenile taste was for polished generalities, and he shunned circumstantial nature. He had still less relish for primitive simplicity, and he thought that some of the incidents in the Thebais were too humble to be endured. [Pg 48]

"When Statius," he says, "comes to the scene of his poem, and the prize in dispute between the brothers, he gives us a very mean opinion of it,—*pugna est de paupere regno*—very different from the conduct of his master, Virgil, who at the entrance of his poem informs the reader of the greatness of his subject."[15] Pope was led astray by the equivocal meaning of a word. There is no connection between the greatness of a kingdom, and the greatness of a theme for poetic purposes. The poverty of Scotland did not detract from the tragic grandeur of Macbeth. When the fugitive princes in the Thebais quarrel in the vestibule, where they have taken shelter from the storm, and fight with their fists, Pope confused the narrative by omitting the whole account as inconsistent with epic dignity, and sacrificed the characteristics of the original to assimilate the manners to modern usages. If his criticisms had been well founded he should yet have kept to his text. "The sense of an author," says Dryden, "is, generally speaking, to be sacred and inviolable. If the fancy of Ovid be luxuriant, it is his character to be so; and, if I retrench it, he is no longer Ovid. It will be replied that he receives advantage by this lopping of his superfluous branches; but I rejoin that a translator has no such right. When a painter copies from the life, I suppose he has no privilege to alter features and lineaments, under pretence that his picture will look better; perhaps the face which he has drawn would be more exact if the eyes or nose were altered; but it is his business to make it resemble the original." Pope has rendered a few passages with equal beauty and truth, but on the whole the antique colouring, the dramatic traits, and picturesque details are very imperfectly preserved.

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] This brief introduction is from Lintot's Miscellany. In the edition of his works in 1736 Pope omitted the final clause which follows the word "correction."

[2] Singer's Spence, p. 209, 211.

[3] Spence, p. 211.

[4] Spence, p. 146.

[5] Spence, p. 214.

[6] Spence, p. 210.

[7] Spence, p. 214.

[8] Spence, p. 146.

[9] Spence, p. 204.

[10] Spence, p. 146.

[11] Spence, p. 146, 196.

[12] Spence, p. 211.

[13] Spence, p. 209, 211.

[14] Pope to Cromwell, June 10, 1709.

[15] Pope to Cromwell, Jan. 22, 1709.

# ARGUMENT

Œdipus, King of Thebes, having by mistake slain his father Laius, and married his mother Jocasta, put out his own eyes, and resigned the realm to his sons, Eteocles and Polynices. Being neglected by them, he makes his prayer to the Fury Tisiphone, to sow debate betwixt the brothers. They agree at last to reign singly, each a year by turns, and the first lot is obtained by Eteocles. Jupiter, in a council of the gods, declares his resolution of punishing the Thebans, and Argives also, by means of a marriage betwixt Polynices and one of the daughters of Adrastus, king of Argos. Juno opposes, but to no effect, and Mercury is sent on a message to the shades, to the ghost of Laius, who is to appear to Eteocles, and provoke him to break the agreement. Polynices in the meantime departs from Thebes by night, is overtaken by a storm, and arrives at Argos, where he meets with Tydeus, who had fled from Calydon, having killed his brother. Adrastus entertains them, having received an oracle from Apollo that his daughters should be married to a boar and a lion, which he understands to be meant of these strangers, by whom the hides of those beasts were worn, and who arrived at the time when he kept an annual feast in honour of that god. The rise of this solemnity he relates to his guests, the loves of Phœbus and Psamathe, and the story of Chorœbus. He inquires, and is made acquainted with their descent and quality. The sacrifice is renewed, and the book concludes with a hymn to Apollo.

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# THE FIRST BOOK

[Pg 51]

**OF**

# STATIUS'S THEBAIS.

Fraternal rage, the guilty Thebes' alarms,
Th' alternate reign destroyed by impious arms,
Demand our song; a sacred fury fires
My ravished breast, and all the muse inspires.
O goddess, say, shall I deduce my rhymes
From the dire[1] nation in its early times,
Europa's rape, Agenor's stern decree,
And Cadmus searching round the spacious sea?
How with the serpent's teeth he sowed the soil,
And reaped an iron harvest of his toil?[2]
Or how from joining stones the city sprung,
While to his harp divine Amphion sung?[3]
Or shall I Juno's hate to Thebes resound,
Whose fatal rage th' unhappy monarch found?[4]
[Pg 52]
The sire against the son his arrows drew,
O'er the wide fields the furious mother flew,
And while her arms a second hope contain,
Sprung from the rocks and plunged into the main.
But waive whate'er to Cadmus may belong,
And fix, O muse! the barrier of thy song
At Œdipus: from his disasters trace
The long confusions of his guilty race:
Nor yet attempt to stretch thy bolder wing,
And mighty Cæsar's[5] conqu'ring eagles sing;
How twice he tamed proud Ister's rapid flood,
While Dacian mountains streamed with barb'rous blood;
Twice taught the Rhine beneath his laws to roll,
And stretched his empire to the frozen pole;
Or long before, with early valour, strove,
In youthful arms, t' assert the cause of Jove.[6]
And thou, great heir of all thy father's fame,
Increase of glory to the Latian name,
Oh! bless thy Rome with an eternal reign,
Nor let desiring worlds entreat in vain.
What though the stars contract their heav'nly space,
And crowd their shining ranks to yield thee place;
[Pg 53]
Though all the skies, ambitious of thy sway,
Conspire to court thee from our world away;
Though Phœbus longs to mix his rays with thine,
And in thy glories more serenely shine;
Though Jove himself no less content would be
To part his throne and share his heaven with thee;
Yet stay, great Cæsar! and vouchsafe to reign
O'er the wide earth, and o'er the wat'ry main;

Resign to Jove his empire of the skies,
And people heav'n with Roman deities.[7]

The time will come, when a diviner flame[8]
Shall warm my breast to sing of Cæsar's fame:
Meanwhile permit, that my preluding muse
In Theban wars an humbler theme may chuse:
Of furious hate surviving death, she sings,
A fatal throne to two contending kings,
And fun'ral flames that, parting wide in air,
Express the discord of the souls they bear:[9]
Of towns dispeopled, and the wand'ring ghosts
Of kings unburied in the wasted coasts;
When Dirce's fountain blushed with Grecian blood,[10]
And Thetis, near Ismenos'[11] swelling flood,
With dread beheld the rolling surges sweep,
In heaps, his slaughtered sons into the deep.[12] [Pg 54]
What hero, Clio! wilt thou first relate?[13]
The rage of Tydeus,[14] or the prophet's fate?[15]
Or how, with hills of slain on ev'ry side,
Hippomedon repelled the hostile tide?[16]
Or how the youth[17] with ev'ry grace adorned
Untimely fell, to be for ever mourned?
Then to fierce Capaneus thy verse extend,
And sing with horror his prodigious end.[18]
Now wretched Œdipus, deprived of sight,
Led a long death in everlasting night;
But while he dwells where not a cheerful ray
Can pierce the darkness, and abhors the day,
The clear reflecting mind presents his sin
In frightful views, and makes it day within;
Returning thoughts in endless circles roll,
And thousand furies haunt his guilty soul:
The wretch then lifted to th' unpitying skies
Those empty orbs from whence he tore his eyes, [Pg 55]
Whose wounds, yet fresh, with bloody hands he strook,[19]
While from his breast these dreadful accents broke.
"Ye gods! that o'er the gloomy regions reign,
Where guilty spirits feel eternal pain;
Thou, sable Styx! whose livid streams are rolled
Through dreary coasts, which I though blind behold:
Tisiphone,[20] that oft hast heard my pray'r,
Assist, if Œdipus deserve thy care!
If you received me from Jocasta's womb,[21]
And nursed the hope of mischiefs yet to come:
If leaving Polybus, I took my way,[22]
To Cirrha's temple[23] on that fatal day,
When by the son the trembling father died,
Where the three roads the Phocian fields divide:
If I the Sphinx's riddles durst explain,
Taught by thyself to win the promised reign:[24]
If wretched I, by baleful furies led, [Pg 56]
With monstrous mixture stained my mother's bed,
For hell and thee begot an impious brood,
And with full lust those horrid joys renewed;
Then self-condemned to shades of endless night,
Forced from these orbs the bleeding balls of sight:
Oh hear! and aid the vengeance I require,
If worthy thee, and what thou mightst inspire.
My sons their old, unhappy sire despise,
Spoiled of his kingdom, and deprived of eyes;
Guideless I wander, unregarded mourn,
Whilst these exalt their sceptres o'er my urn;
These sons, ye gods! who with flagitious pride
Insult my darkness, and my groans deride.
Art thou a father, unregarding Jove![25]
And sleeps thy thunder in the realms above?
Thou fury, then some lasting curse entail,
Which o'er their children's children shall prevail:[26]
Place on their heads that crown distained with gore,
Which these dire hands from my slain father tore;[27]

Go! and a parent's heavy curses bear;
Break all the bonds of nature, and prepare[28]
Their kindred souls to mutual hate and war.
Give them to dare, what I might wish to see
Blind as I am, some glorious villainy!
Soon shalt thou find, if thou but arm their hands,
Their ready guilt preventing[29] thy commands:
Couldst thou some great, proportioned mischief frame,
They'd prove the father from whose loins they came."
  The fury heard, while on Cocytus'[30] brink
Her snakes untied, sulphureous waters drink;
But at the summons rolled her eyes around,
And snatched the starting serpents from the ground.
Not half so swiftly shoots along in air
The gliding lightning, or descending star.
Through crowds of airy shades she winged her flight,
And dark dominions of the silent night;
Swift as she passed the flitting ghosts withdrew,[31]
And the pale spectres trembled at her view:
To th' iron gates of Tænarus[32] she flies,
There spreads her dusky pinions to the skies.
The day beheld, and sick'ning at the sight,
Veiled her fair glories in the shades of night.
Affrighted Atlas, on the distant shore,
Trembled, and shook the heav'ns and gods he bore.[33]
Now from beneath Malea's[34] airy height
Aloft she sprung, and steered to Thebes her flight;
With eager speed the well-known journey[35] took,
Nor here regrets the hell she late forsook.
A hundred snakes her gloomy visage shade,
A hundred serpents guard her horrid head,
In her sunk eye-balls dreadful meteors glow:[36]
Such rays from Phœbe's bloody circle flow,
When lab'ring with strong charms, she shoots from high
A fiery gleam, and reddens all the sky.
Blood stained her cheeks, and from her mouth there came
Blue steaming poisons, and a length of flame:
From ev'ry blast of her contagious breath
Famine and drought proceed, and plagues, and death.
A robe obscene was o'er her shoulders thrown,
A dress by fates and furies worn alone.
She tossed her meagre arms; her better hand[37]
In waving circles whirled a fun'ral brand:
A serpent from her left was seen to rear
His flaming crest, and lash the yielding air.[38]
  But when the fury took her stand on high,
Where vast Cithæron's top salutes the sky,
A hiss from all the snaky tire went round:
The dreadful signal all the rocks rebound,
And through th' Achaian cities send the sound.
Œte, with high Parnassus, heard the voice;
Eurotas' banks remurmured to the noise;
Again Leucothea shook at these alarms,
And pressed Palæmon closer in her arms.[39]
Headlong from thence the glowing fury springs,
And o'er the Theban palace spreads her wings,[40]
Once more invades the guilty dome, and shrouds
Its bright pavilions in a veil of clouds.
Straight with the rage of all their race possessed,
Stung to the soul, the brothers start from rest,
And all their furies wake within their breast.
Their tortured minds repining envy tears,
And hate, engendered by suspicious fears;
And sacred thirst of sway; and all the ties
Of nature broke;[41] and royal perjuries;
And impotent desire to reign alone,
That scorns the dull reversion of a throne;[42]
Each would the sweets of sov'reign rule devour,
While discord waits upon divided power.
  As stubborn steers by brawny plowmen broke,
And joined reluctant to the galling yoke,

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Alike disdain with servile necks to bear
Th' unwonted weight, or drag the crooked share,
But rend the reins, and bound[43] a diff'rent way,
And all the furrows in confusion lay:
Such was the discord of the royal pair,
Whom fury drove precipitate to war.
In vain the chiefs contrived a specious way,
To govern Thebes by their alternate sway:
Unjust decree! while this enjoys the state,
That mourns in exile his unequal fate,
And the short monarch of a hasty year
Foresees with anguish his returning heir.
Thus did the league their impious arms restrain,
But scarce subsisted to the second reign.
  Yet then, no proud aspiring piles were raised,
No fretted roofs with polished metals blazed;
No laboured columns in long order placed,
No Grecian stone the pompous arches graced;
No nightly bands in glitt'ring armour wait[44]
Before the sleepless tyrant's guarded gate;
No chargers[45] then were wrought in burnished gold,
Nor silver vases took the forming mold;
Nor gems on bowls embossed were seen to shine,
Blaze on the brims, and sparkle in the wine.[46]
Say, wretched rivals! what provokes your rage? [Pg 61]
Say, to what end your impious arms engage?
Not all bright Phœbus views in early morn,
Or when his ev'ning beams the west adorn,
When the south glows with his meridian ray,
And the cold north receives a fainter day;
For crimes like these, not all those realms suffice,[47]
Were all those realms the guilty victor's prize!
  But fortune now (the lots of empire thrown)
Decrees to proud Eteocles the crown:
What joys, oh tyrant! swelled thy soul that day,
When all were slaves thou couldst around survey,[48]
Pleased to behold unbounded power thy own,
And singly fill a feared and envied throne!
  But the vile vulgar, ever discontent,[49]
Their growing fears in secret murmurs vent;
Still prone to change, though still the slaves of state,
And sure the monarch whom they have, to hate;
New lords they madly make, then tamely bear,
And softly curse the tyrants whom they fear.[50]
And one of those who groan beneath the sway
Of kings imposed, and grudgingly obey,
(Whom envy to the great, and vulgar spite
With scandal armed, th' ignoble mind's delight,)
Exclaimed—"O Thebes! for thee what fates remain,
What woes attend this inauspicious reign? [Pg 62]
Must we, alas! our doubtful necks prepare, }
Each haughty master's yoke by turns to bear, }
And still to change whom changed we still must fear? }
These now control a wretched people's fate,
These can divide, and these reverse the state:
Ev'n fortune rules no more!—O servile land,
Where exiled[51] tyrants still by turns command.
Thou sire of gods and men, imperial Jove!
Is this th' eternal doom decreed above?
On thy own offspring hast thou fixed this fate,
From the first birth of our unhappy state;
When banished Cadmus, wand'ring o'er the main,
For lost Europa searched the world in vain,
And fated in Bœotian fields to found
A rising empire on a foreign ground,
First raised our walls on that ill-omened plain,
Where earth-born brothers were by brothers slain?[52]
What lofty looks th' unrivalled[53] monarch bears!
How all the tyrant in his face appears!
What sullen fury clouds his scornful brow!
Gods! how his eyes with threat'ning ardour glow!
Can this imperious lord forget to reign,

Quit all his state, descend, and serve again?
Yet, who, before, more popularly bowed?
Who more propitious to the suppliant crowd?
Patient of right, familiar in the throne?
What wonder then? he was not then alone.
O wretched we, a vile, submissive train,
Fortune's tame fools, and slaves in ev'ry reign!
As when two winds with rival force contend,
This way and that, the wav'ring sails they bend, [Pg 63]
While freezing Boreas, and black Euros blow,
Now here, now there, the reeling vessel throw:
Thus on each side, alas! our tott'ring state
Feels all the fury of resistless fate,
And doubtful still, and still distracted stands,
While that prince threatens, and while this commands."
  And now th' almighty father of the gods
Convenes a council in the blest abodes:
Far in the bright recesses of the skies,
High o'er the rolling heav'ns, a mansion lies,
Whence, far below, the gods at once survey }
The realms of rising and declining day, }
And all th' extended space of earth, and air, and sea }
Full in the midst, and on a starry throne,
The majesty of heav'n superior shone;
Serene he looked, and gave an awful nod,[54]
And all the trembling spheres confessed the god.
At Jove's assent the deities around
In solemn state the consistory crowned.[55]
Next a long order of inferior pow'rs
Ascend from hills, and plains, and shady bow'rs;
Those from whose urns the rolling rivers flow;
And those that give the wand'ring winds to blow: [Pg 64]
Here all their rage, and ev'n their murmurs cease,[56]
And sacred silence reigns, and universal peace.
A shining synod of majestic gods
Gilds with new lustre the divine abodes;
Heav'n seems improved with a superior ray,
And the bright arch reflects a double day.
The monarch then his solemn silence broke,
The still creation listened while he spoke,
Each sacred accent bears eternal weight,
And each irrevocable word is fate.
  "How long shall man the wrath of heav'n defy,
And force unwilling vengeance from the sky!
Oh race confed'rate into crimes, that prove
Triumphant o'er th' eluded rage of Jove![57]
This wearied arm can scarce the bolt sustain,
And unregarded thunder rolls in vain:
Th' o'erlaboured Cyclops from his task retires,
Th' Æolian forge exhausted of its fires.[58]
For this, I suffered Phœbus' steeds to stray,
And the mad ruler to misguide the day;
When the wide earth to heaps of ashes turned,
And heaven itself the wand'ring chariot burned.
For this, my brother of the wat'ry reign }
Released th' impetuous sluices of the main: }
But flames consumed, and billows raged in vain. } [Pg 65]
Two races now, allied to Jove, offend;
To punish these, see Jove himself descend.
The Theban kings their line from Cadmus trace,
From godlike Perseus those of Argive race.
Unhappy Cadmus' fate who does not know,
And the long series of succeeding woe?
How oft the furies, from the deeps of night,
Arose, and mixed with men in mortal fight:
Th' exulting mother, stained with filial blood;[59]
The savage hunter and the haunted wood;
The direful banquet why should I proclaim,[60]
And crimes that grieve the trembling gods to name?
Ere I recount the sins of these profane, }
The sun would sink into the western main, }
And rising, gild the radiant east again. }
Have we not seen (the blood of Laius shed)

The murd'ring son ascend his parent's bed,
Through violated nature force his way,
And stain the sacred womb where once he lay?
Yet now in darkness and despair he groans,
And for the crimes of guilty fate atones.
His sons with scorn their eyeless father view,
Insult his wounds, and make them bleed anew.
Thy curse, oh Œdipus, just heav'n alarms,
And sets th' avenging thunderer in arms.
I from the root thy guilty race will tear,
And give the nations to the waste of war.
Adrastus[61] soon, with gods averse, shall join
In dire alliance with the Theban line; [Pg 66]
Hence strife shall rise, and mortal war succeed;
The guilty realms of Tantalus shall bleed;
Fixed is their doom; this all-rememb'ring breast
Yet harbours vengeance for the tyrant's feast."[62]
He said; and thus the queen of heav'n returned;
(With sudden grief her lab'ring bosom burned)
"Must I, whose cares Phoroneus'[63] tow'rs defend,
Must I, oh Jove, in bloody wars contend?
Thou know'st those regions my protection claim,
Glorious in arms, in riches, and in fame:
Though there the fair Egyptian heifer fed,
And there deluded Argus slept, and bled;[64]
Though there the brazen tower was stormed of old,[65]
When Jove[66] descended in almighty gold:
Yet I can pardon those obscurer rapes,
Those bashful crimes disguised in borrowed shapes;
But Thebes, where shining in celestial charms
Thou cam'st triumphant to a mortal's arms,
When all my glories o'er her limbs were spread,
And blazing light'nings danced around her bed;[67]
Cursed Thebes the vengeance it deserves, may prove:
Ah why should Argos feel the rage of Jove?
Yet since thou wilt thy sister-queen control,
Since still the lust of discord fires thy soul, [Pg 67]
Go, raze my Samos, let Mycene fall,
And level with the dust the Spartan wall;[68]
No more let mortals Juno's pow'r invoke,
Her fanes no more with eastern incense smoke,
Nor victims sink beneath the sacred stroke;
But to your Isis all my rites transfer,
Let altars blaze and temples smoke for her;
For her, through Egypt's fruitful clime renowned
Let weeping Nilus hear the timbrel sound.
But if thou must reform the stubborn times,
Avenging on the sons the father's crimes,
And from the long records of distant age
Derive incitements to renew thy rage;
Say, from what period then has Jove designed
To date his vengeance; to what bounds confined?
Begin from thence, where first Alpheus hides
His wand'ring stream, and through the briny tides
Unmixed to his Sicilian river glides.[69]
Thy own Arcadians there the thunder claim,
Whose impious rites disgrace thy mighty name;[70]
Who raise thy temples where the chariot stood
Of fierce Œnomaus, defiled with blood:[71]
Where once his steeds their savage banquet found, [Pg 68]
And human bones yet whiten all the ground.
Say, can those honours please; and canst thou love
Presumptuous Crete that boasts the tomb of Jove?[72]
And shall not Tantalus's kingdoms share
Thy wife and sister's tutelary care?
Reverse, O Jove, thy too severe decree,
Nor doom to war a race derived from, thee;[73]
On impious realms and barb'rous kings impose
Thy plagues, and curse 'em with such sons[74] as those."
Thus, in reproach and pray'r, the queen expressed
The rage and grief contending in her breast;
Unmoved remained the ruler of the sky,

And from his throne returned this stern reply:
"'Twas thus I deemed thy haughty soul would bear
The dire, though just, revenge which I prepare
Against a nation thy peculiar care:
No less Dione might for Thebes contend,
Nor Bacchus less his native town defend;
Yet these in silence see the fates fulfil
Their work, and rev'rence our superior will.
For by the black infernal Styx I swear,
(That dreadful oath which binds the thunderer)
'Tis fixed; th' irrevocable doom of Jove;
No force can bend me, no persuasion move.
Haste then, Cyllenius,[75] through the liquid air;
Go, mount the winds, and to the shades repair;
Bid hell's black monarch my commands obey,
And give up Laius to the realms of day,
Whose ghost yet shiv'ring on Cocytus' sand,
Expects its passage to the further strand:
Let the pale sire revisit Thebes, and bear
These pleasing orders to the tyrant's ear;[76]
That from his exiled brother, swelled with pride
Of foreign forces, and his Argive bride,
Almighty Jove commands him to detain
The promised empire, and alternate reign:
Be this the cause of more than mortal hate:
The rest, succeeding times shall ripen into fate."
  The god obeys, and to his feet applies
Those golden wings that cut the yielding skies.
His ample hat his beamy locks o'erspread,
And veiled the starry glories of his head.
He seized the wand that causes sleep to fly,
Or in soft slumbers seals the wakeful eye;
That drives the dead to dark Tartarean coasts,
Or back to life compels the wand'ring ghosts.
Thus, through the parting clouds, the son of May
Wings on the whistling winds his rapid way;
Now smoothly steers through air his equal flight,
Now springs aloft, and tow'rs th' ethereal height;
Then wheeling down the steep of heav'n he flies,
And draws a radiant circle o'er the skies.
  Meantime the banished Polynices roves
(His Thebes abandoned) through th' Aonian groves,
While future realms his wand'ring thoughts delight,
His daily vision and his dream by night;
Forbidden Thebes appears before his eye,
From whence he sees his absent brother fly,
With transport views the airy rule his own,
And swells on an imaginary throne.
Fain would he cast a tedious age away,
And live out all in one triumphant day.[77]
He chides the lazy progress of the sun,
And bids the year with swifter motion run.
With anxious hopes his craving mind is tost,
And all his joys in length of wishes lost.
  The hero then resolves his course to bend
Where ancient Danaus' fruitful fields extend,[78]
And famed Mycene's lofty towers ascend,
(Where late the sun did Atreus' crimes detest,
And disappeared in horror of the feast.)[79]
And now by chance, by fate, or furies led,
From Bacchus' consecrated caves he fled,
Where the shrill cries of frantic matrons sound,
And Pentheus' blood enriched the rising ground.[80]
Then sees Cithæron tow'ring o'er the plain,
And thence declining gently to the main.
Next to the bounds of Nisus' realm repairs,
Where treach'rous Scylla cut the purple hairs:[81]
The hanging cliffs of Sciron's rock explores,
And hears the murmurs of the diff'rent shores:[82]
Passes the strait that parts the foaming seas,
And stately Corinth's pleasing site surveys.
  'Twas now the time when Phœbus yields to night,[83]
And rising Cynthia sheds her silver light,

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Wide o'er the world in solemn pomp she drew
Her airy chariot hung with pearly dew;[84]
All birds and beasts lie hushed; sleep steals away
The wild desires of men, and toils of day,
And brings, descending through the silent air,
A sweet forgetfulness of human care.[85]
Yet no red clouds, with golden borders gay,
Promise the skies the bright return of day;
No faint reflections of the distant light
Streak with long gleams the scatt'ring shades of night:
From the damp earth impervious vapours rise,
Encrease the darkness, and involve the skies.
At once the rushing winds with roaring sound
Burst from th' Æolian caves, and rend the ground,
With equal rage their airy quarrel[86] try,
And win by turns the kingdom of the sky:
But with a thicker night black Auster shrouds
The heav'ns, and drives on heaps the rolling clouds,
From whose dark womb a rattling tempest pours,
Which the cold north congeals to haily show'rs.
From pole to pole the thunder roars aloud,
And broken lightnings flash from ev'ry cloud.
Now smoaks with show'rs[87] the misty mountain-ground,
And floated fields lie undistinguished round. [Pg 72]
Th' Inachian streams with headlong fury run,
And Erasinus[88] rolls a deluge on:
The foaming Lerna swells above its bounds,
And spreads its ancient poisons[89] o'er the grounds:
Where late was dust, now rapid torrents play,
Rush through the mounds, and bear the dams away:
Old limbs of trees from crackling forests torn,
Are whirled in air, and on the winds are borne:
The storm the dark Lycæan groves displayed,
And first to light exposed the sacred shade.[90]
Th' intrepid Theban hears the bursting sky,
Sees yawning rocks in massy fragments fly,[91]
And views astonished, from the hills afar,
The floods descending, and the wat'ry war,[92]
That, driv'n by storms, and pouring o'er the plain,
Swept herds, and hinds, and houses to the main.[93]
Through the brown horrors of the night he fled,
Nor knows, amazed, what doubtful path to tread;
His brother's image to his mind appears,
Inflames his heart with rage, and wings his feet with fears.[94]
So fares a sailor on the stormy main, [Pg 73]
When clouds conceal Boötes' golden wain,
When not a star its friendly lustre keeps,
Nor trembling Cynthia glimmers on the deeps;
He dreads the rocks, and shoals, and seas, and skies,
While thunder roars, and lightning round him flies.
Thus strove the chief, on every side distressed,
Thus still his courage, with his toils increased;
With his broad shield opposed, he forced his way
Through thickest woods, and roused the beasts of prey,
Till he beheld, where from Larissa's[95] height
The shelving walls reflect a glancing light:
Thither with haste the Theban hero flies; }
On this side Lerna's pois'nous water lies, }
On that Prosymna's grove and temple rise:[96] }
He passed the gates, which then unguarded lay,
And to the regal palace bent his way;
On the cold marble, spent with toil, he lies,
And waits till pleasing slumbers seal his eyes.
Adrastus here his happy people sways,
Blest with calm peace in his declining days;
By both his parents of descent divine,
Great Jove and Phœbus graced his noble line:
Heaven had not crowned his wishes with a son,
But two fair daughters heired[97] his state and throne. [Pg 74]
To him Apollo (wondrous to relate!
But who can pierce into the depths of fate?)

Had sung—"Expect thy sons[98] on Argos' shore,
A yellow lion and a bristly boar."
This long revolved in his paternal breast,
Sate heavy on his heart, and broke his rest;
This, great Amphiaraus, lay hid from thee,
Though skilled in fate, and dark futurity.
The father's care and prophet's art were vain,
For thus did the predicting god ordain.[99]
  Lo hapless Tydeus, whose ill-fated hand
Had slain his brother, leaves his native land,[100]
And seized with horror in the shades of night,
Through the thick deserts headlong urged his flight:
Now by the fury of the tempest driv'n,
He seeks a shelter from th' inclement heav'n,
Till, led by fate, the Theban's steps he treads,
And to fair Argos' open court succeeds.[101]
  When thus the chiefs from diff'rent lands resort
T' Adrastus' realms, and hospitable court;
The king surveys his guests with curious eyes,
And views their arms and habit with surprise. [Pg 75]
A lion's yellow skin the Theban wears,
Horrid his mane, and rough with curling hairs;
Such once employed Alcides' youthful toils,
Ere yet adorned with Nemea's dreadful spoils.[102]
A boar's stiff hide, of Calydonian breed,
Œnides' manly shoulders overspread.
Oblique his tusks, erect his bristles stood,
Alive, the pride and terror of the wood.
  Struck with the sight, and fixed in deep amaze,
The King th' accomplished oracle surveys,
Reveres Apollo's vocal caves, and owns
The guiding godhead, and his future sons
O'er all his bosom secret transports reign,
And a glad horror[103] shoots through ev'ry vein.
To heav'n he lifts his hands, erects his sight,
And thus invokes the silent queen of night.
  "Goddess of shades, beneath whose gloomy reign
Yon spangled arch glows with the starry train:
You who the cares of heav'n and earth allay,
Till nature quickened by th' inspiring ray
Wakes to new vigour with the rising day:
Oh thou who freest me from my doubtful state,
Long lost and wildered in the maze of fate!
Be present still, oh goddess! in our aid;
Proceed, and firm[104] those omens thou hast made. [Pg 76]
We to thy name our annual rites will pay,
And on thy altars sacrifices lay;
The sable flock shall fall beneath the stroke,
And fill thy temples with a grateful smoke.
Hail, faithful Tripos! hail, ye dark abodes
Of awful Phœbus: I confess the gods!"
  Thus, seized with sacred fear, the monarch prayed;
Then to his inner court the guests conveyed;
Where yet thin fumes from dying sparks arise,
And dust yet white upon each altar lies,
The relics of a former sacrifice.
The king once more the solemn rites requires,
And bids renew the feasts, and wake the fires.[105]
His train obey, while all the courts around
With noisy care and various tumult sound.
Embroidered purple clothes the golden beds;
This slave the floor, and that the table spreads;
A third dispels the darkness of the night,
And fills depending lamps with beams of light.
Here loaves in canisters are piled on high,
And there in flames the slaughtered victims fry.[106]
Sublime in regal state Adrastus shone,
Stretched on rich carpets on his iv'ry throne;
A lofty couch receives each princely guest;
Around, at awful distance, wait the rest.
  And now the king, his royal feast to grace,
Acestis calls, the guardian[107] of his race,

Who first their youth in arts of virtue trained,
And their ripe years in modest grace maintained; [Pg 77]
Then softly whispered in her faithful ear,
And bade his daughters at the rites appear.
When from the close apartments of the night,
The royal nymphs approach divinely bright;
Such was Diana's, such Minerva's face;
Nor shine their beauties with superior grace,
But that in these a milder charm endears,
And less of terror in their looks appears.
As on the heroes first they cast their eyes,
O'er their fair cheeks the glowing blushes rise,
Their downcast looks a decent shame confessed,
Then on their father's rev'rend features rest.
The banquet done, the monarch gives the sign
To fill the goblet high with sparkling wine,
Which Danaus used in sacred rites of old,
With sculpture graced, and rough with rising gold.
Here to the clouds victorious Perseus flies,
Medusa seems to move her languid eyes,
And, ev'n in gold, turns paler as she dies.[108]
There from the chace Jove's tow'ring eagle bears,
On golden wings, the Phrygian to the stars:[109]
Still as he rises in th' ethereal height,
His native mountains lessen to his sight;
While all his sad companions upward gaze,
Fixed on the glorious scene in wild amaze;
And the swift hounds, affrighted as he flies,
Run to the shade, and bark against the skies. [Pg 78]
This golden bowl with gen'rous juice was crowned,
The first libations sprinkled on the ground,
By turns on each celestial pow'r they call;
With Phœbus' name resounds the vaulted hall.
The courtly train, the strangers, and the rest,
Crowned with chaste laurel, and with garlands dressed,
While with rich gums the fuming altars blaze,
Salute the god in num'rous hymns of praise.
Then thus the king: "Perhaps, my noble guests,
These honoured altars, and these annual feasts
To bright Apollo's awful name designed,
Unknown, with wonder may perplex your mind.
Great was the cause; our old solemnities
From no blind zeal, or fond tradition rise;
But saved from death, our Argives yearly pay
These grateful honours to the god of day.
"When by a thousand darts the Python slain
With orbs unrolled lay cov'ring all the plain,[110]
(Transfixed as o'er Castalia's streams he hung,
And sucked new poisons with his triple tongue)[111]
To Argos' realms the victor god resorts,
And enters old Crotopus' humble courts.
This rural prince one only daughter blest,
That all the charms of blooming youth possessed;
Fair was her face, and spotless was her mind,
Where filial love with virgin sweetness joined.
Happy! and happy still she might have proved,
Were she less beautiful, or less beloved!
But Phœbus loved, and on the flow'ry side
Of Nemea's stream, the yielding fair enjoyed: [Pg 79]
Now, ere ten moons their orb with light adorn,
Th' illustrious offspring of the god was born;
The nymph, her father's anger to evade,
Retires from Argos to the sylvan shade;
To woods and wilds the pleasing burden bears,
And trusts her infant to a shepherd's cares.
"How mean a fate, unhappy child! is thine?
Ah how unworthy those of race divine?
On flow'ry herbs in some green covert laid,
His bed the ground, his canopy the shade,[112]
He mixes with the bleating lambs his cries,
While the rude swain his rural music tries
To call soft slumbers on his infant eyes.
Yet ev'n in those obscure abodes to live,
Was more, alas! than cruel fate would give,

For on the grassy verdure as he lay,
And breathed the freshness of the early day,
Devouring dogs the helpless infant tore,
Fed on his trembling limbs, and lapped the gore.
Th' astonished mother, when the rumour came,
Forgets her father, and neglects her fame;
With loud complaints she fills the yielding air,
And beats her breast, and rends her flowing hair;
Then wild with anguish to her sire she flies:
Demands the sentence, and contented dies.
"But touched with sorrow for the dead too late,
The raging god prepares t' avenge her fate.
He sends a monster, horrible and fell,[113]
Begot by furies in the depths of hell.[114]
The pest a virgin's face and bosom bears; } [Pg 80]
High on a crown a rising snake appears, }
Guards her black front, and hisses in her hairs: }
About the realm she walks her dreadful round,
When night with sable wings o'erspreads the ground,
Devours young babes before their parents' eyes,
And feeds and thrives on public miseries.[115]
"But gen'rous rage the bold Chorœbus warms,
Chorœbus, famed for virtue, as for arms;
Some few like him, inspired with martial flame,
Thought a short life well lost for endless fame.
These, where two ways in equal parts divide, }
The direful monster from afar descried; }
Two bleeding babes depending at her side; }
Whose panting vitals, warm with life, she draws,
And in their hearts embrues her cruel claws.
The youths surround her with extended spears;
But brave Chorœbus in the front appears,
Deep in her breast he plunged his shining sword,
And hell's dire monster back to hell restored.
Th' Inachians[116] view the slain with vast surprize,
Her twisting volumes and her rolling eyes,
Her spotted breast, and gaping womb embrued
With livid poison, and our children's blood.
The crowd in stupid wonder fixed appear,
Pale ev'n in joy, nor yet forget to fear.
Some with vast beams the squalid corpse engage,
And weary all the wild efforts of rage.
The birds obscene, that nightly flocked to taste,
With hollow screeches fled the dire repast;
And rav'nous dogs, allured by scented blood,
And starving wolves ran howling to the wood. [Pg 81]
"But fired with rage, from cleft Parnassus' brow }
Avenging Phœbus bent his deadly bow, }
And hissing flew the feathered fates below: }
A night of sultry clouds involved around
The tow'rs, the fields, and the devoted ground:
And now a thousand lives together fled, }
Death with his scythe cut off the fatal thread,[117] }
And a whole province in his triumph led. }
"But Phœbus, asked why noxious fires appear,
And raging Sirius blasts the sickly year,
Demands their lives by whom his monster fell,
And dooms a dreadful sacrifice to hell.
"Blest be thy dust, and let eternal fame
Attend thy manes, and preserve thy name,
Undaunted hero![118] who divinely brave,
In such a cause disdained thy life to save;
But viewed the shrine with a superior look,
And its upbraided godhead thus bespoke:
"With piety, the soul's securest guard,
And conscious virtue, still its own reward,
Willing I come, unknowing how to fear;
Nor shalt thou, Phœbus, find a suppliant here.
Thy monster's death to me was owed alone,
And 'tis a deed too glorious to disown.
Behold him here, for whom, so many days,
Impervious clouds concealed thy sullen rays;
For whom, as man no longer claimed thy care,

Such numbers fell by pestilential air!
But if th' abandoned race of human kind
From gods above no more compassion find;
If such inclemency in heav'n can dwell, }
Yet why must unoffending Argos feel } 770
The vengeance due to this unlucky steel? } [Pg 82]
On me, on me, let all thy fury fall,
Nor err from me, since I deserve it all:
Unless our desert cities please thy sight,
Or fun'ral flames reflect a grateful light. 775
Discharge thy shafts, this ready bosom rend,
And to the shades a ghost triumphant send;
But for my country let my fate atone,
Be mine the vengeance, as the crime my own.
"Merit distressed, impartial heav'n relieves: 780
Unwelcome life relenting Phœbus gives;
For not the vengeful pow'r, that glowed with rage,
With such amazing virtue durst engage.
The clouds dispersed, Apollo's wrath expired,
And from the wond'ring god th' unwilling[119] youth retired. 785
Thence we these altars in his temple raise,
And offer annual honours, feasts, and praise;
These solemn feasts propitious Phœbus please;
These honours, still renewed, his ancient wrath appease."
"But say, illustrious guest," adjoined the king, 790
"What name you bear, from what high race you spring?
The noble Tydeus stands confessed, and known
Our neighbour prince, and heir of Calydon.
Relate your fortunes, while the friendly night
And silent hours to various talk invite." 795
The Theban bends on earth his gloomy eyes,
Confused, and sadly thus at length replies:
"Before these altars how shall I proclaim,
O gen'rous prince! my nation, or my name,
Or through what ancient veins our blood has rolled? 800
Let the sad tale for ever rest untold! [Pg 83]
Yet if propitious to a wretch unknown,
You seek to share in sorrows not your own;
Know, then, from Cadmus I derive my race,
Jocasta's son, and Thebes my native place." 805
To whom the king (who felt his gen'rous breast
Touched with concern for his unhappy guest)
Replies: "Ah! why forbears the son to name
His wretched father, known too well by fame?
Fame, that delights around the world to stray, 810
Scorns not to take our Argos in her way.
Ev'n those who dwell where suns at distance roll,
In northern wilds, and freeze beneath the pole;
And those who tread the burning Lybian lands,
The faithless Syrtes and the moving sands; 815
Who view the western sea's extremest bounds,
Or drink of Ganges in their eastern grounds;
All these the woes of Œdipus have known,
Your fates, your furies, and your haunted town.
If on the sons the parents' crimes descend, 820
What prince from those his lineage can defend?
Be this thy comfort, that 'tis thine t' efface, }
With virtuous acts, thy ancestor's disgrace, }
And be thyself the honour of thy race. }
But see! the stars begin to steal away, 825
And shine more faintly at approaching day;
Now pour the wine; and in your tuneful lays
Once more resound the great Apollo's praise."
"O father Phœbus![120] whether Lycia's coast[121]
And snowy mountain, thy bright presence boast; 830
Whether to sweet Castalia[122] thou repair,
And bathe in silver dews thy yellow hair;
Or pleased to find fair Delos float no more,
Delight in Cynthus,[123] and the shady shore; [Pg 84]
Or choose thy seat in Ilion's proud abodes, 835
The shining structures raised by lab'ring gods;[124]
By thee the bow and mortal shafts are borne;
Eternal charms thy blooming youth adorn:
Skilled in the laws of secret fate above,

And the dark counsels of almighty Jove,
'Tis thine the seeds of future war to know,[125]
The change of sceptres, and impending woe,
When direful meteors spread, through glowing air,
Long trails of light, and shake their blazing hair.
Thy rage the Phrygian felt, who durst aspire
T' excel the music of thy heav'nly lyre;[126]
Thy shafts avenged lewd Tityus' guilty flame,
Th' immortal victim of thy mother's fame;[127]
Thy hand slew Python, and the dame who lost
Her num'rous offspring for a fatal boast.[128]
In Phlegyas' doom thy just revenge appears,
Condemned to furies and eternal fears;
He views his food, but dreads, with lifted eye,
The mould'ring rock that trembles from on high.[129]
"Propitious hear our prayer, O pow'r divine! [Pg 85]
And on thy hospitable Argos shine;
Whether the style of Titan[130] please thee more,
Whose purple rays th' Achæmenes adore;
Or great Osiris,[131] who first taught the swain
In Pharian fields to sow the golden grain;
Or Mitra, to whose beams the Persian bows,
And pays, in hollow rocks, his awful vows;
Mitra, whose head the blaze of light adorns,
Who grasps the struggling heifer's lunar horns."[132]

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] "Dire," in the Latin sense of ill-omened.

[2] When Jupiter had carried off Europa, her father, Agenor, sent her brother Cadmus to seek her, and commanded him not to return without his sister. Unable to find her he settled at Thebes, and built the city. He slew the dragon, which guarded a neighbouring well, and a portion of the armed men, who sprung up from its teeth, were reputed to be the ancestors of the Thebans.

[3] A second legend ascribed the building of the city to the wonder-working music of Amphion, which caused the stones to pile themselves together. Both legends were subsequently blended, and Cadmus had the credit of the upper part of the city, and Amphion of the lower.

[4] Juno visited Athamas, king of Thebes, with madness, and in his frenzy he shot his own son, Learchus, whom he took for a young lion. Upon this his wife, Ino, who was a daughter of Cadmus, fled with her second son, Melicertes, and threw herself and her boy into the sea.

[5] Domitian. The panegyric on this timid and cruel tyrant was disgraceful flattery. The boasted victories over the Dacian's were in reality defeats. They compelled the emperor to sue for an inglorious peace which was only purchased by the promise of an immediate ransom and an annual tribute. Most of his pretended triumphs were of a similar character, and led Pliny the younger to remark, that they were always the token of some advantage obtained by the enemies of Rome.

[6] During the contest between Vespasian and Vitellius for the empire, Domitian, at the age of eighteen, took refuge in the temple of the Capitol to escape from the fury of the soldiers opposed to his father. It was self-preservation and not daring which impelled him, and when the temple of Jupiter was set on fire he again fled, and hid himself until the party of Vespasian prevailed.

[7] This line is very obscure. There is nothing corresponding to it in the Latin.

[8] From the translation of Stephens:

> The time may come when a divinor rage.

[9] Pope is closer to Stephens than to the original:

> funeral flames
> Divided, like the souls they carry.

The rival brothers ultimately engaged in single combat, and both fell. The body of Polynices was placed by mistake upon the funeral pile of Eteocles, and the flames rose upwards in diverging currents.

[10] Stephens's translation:

> When Dirce blushed, being stained with Grecian blood.

[11] The dirce ran on one side of Thebes, the Ismenus on the other, and they afterwards united in a common stream. Both were mere watercourses, which were only filled by the rains of winter.

[12] The Thebans are subsequently represented by Statius as driven into the Ismenus by the Greeks, and the hosts which were killed or drowned were carried by the river into the sea.

[13] What hero, that is, of the famous seven who went up against Thebes to dispossess Eteocles for violating the compact to reign alternately with Polynices. The five persons whom Statius enumerates as joining with Polynices and Adrastus, king of Argos, are Tydeus, Amphiaraus, Hippomedon, Parthenopæus, and Capaneus.

[14] When Tydeus had received his death-wound from a javelin hurled by Menalippus, he gathered up his failing strength, and flung a dart by which he mortally wounded Menalippus in turn. Full of revengeful spite Tydeus begged that the head of Menalippus might be brought to him. He grasped it with his dying hand, gazed at it with malignant joy, gnawed it in his frenzy, and refused to relinquish his hold. This was "the rage of Tydeus," which Statius says the Greeks themselves condemned as exceeding the recognised latitude of hate.

[15] The prophet was Amphiaraus, who predicted that all who took part in the expedition, except Adrastus, would be destroyed. The earth opened while Amphiaraus was fighting, and swallowed up him and his chariot. Statius paints him sinking calmly into the yawning gulf, without dropping his weapons or the reins, and with his eyes fixed on the heavens.

[16] Hippomedon is made by Statius the hero of the conflict in the river Ismenus, where he at last succumbs to the god of the river. The piles of dead formed a dike, which turned back the waters.

[17] Parthenopæus.—Pope.

[18] He declared that Jupiter himself should not keep him from ascending the walls of Thebes. Jupiter punished his defiance by setting him on fire with lightning on the scaling ladder, and he was burnt to death.

[19] Œdipus did not strike his wounds. He struck the ground, which was the usage in invoking the infernal deities, since their kingdom was in the bowels of the earth.

[20] One of the three principal furies or avengers of crime, who inhabited the world of condemned spirits.

[21] The great difference between raising horror and terror is perceived and felt from the reserved manner in which Sophocles speaks of the dreadful incest of Œdipus, and from the manner in which Statius has enlarged and dwelt upon it, in which he has been very unnaturally and injudiciously imitated by Dryden and Lee, who introduce this most unfortunate prince not only describing but arguing on the dreadful crime he had committed.—Warton.

[22] Laius, king of Thebes, warned by the oracle that he would be killed by his own offspring, exposed his son Œdipus on Mount Cithæron. The infant was found by a shepherd, and carried to Polybus, king of Corinth, who adopted him. Arrived at man's estate, he too was informed by the oracle that he would take the life of his father, and commit incest with his mother. Believing that the king and queen who brought him up were his parents, he determined not to go back to Corinth, and in attempting to avert his destiny, he fulfilled it. As he journeyed towards Thebes he met his real father, Laius, and slew him in a conflict which grew out of a dispute with his charioteer.

[23] Or the temple at Delphi, where Œdipus went to consult the oracle.

[24] The Sphinx sat upon a rock near Thebes propounding a riddle to every one who passed by, and destroying all who were unable to explain it. The Thebans proclaimed that whoever would rid the kingdom of this scourge should marry the widow of Laius, and succeed to the vacant throne. Œdipus, by solving the riddle, drove the Sphinx to commit suicide, and in accepting the reward, he unconsciously verified the remainder of the oracle.

[25] Œdipus behaves with the fury of a blustering bully, instead of that patient submission and pathetic remorse which are so suited to his condition.—Warton.

[26] In the first edition he had written

> Which shall o'er long posterity prevail.

The more forcible phrase which he substituted for "long posterity," was from Dryden's Virg. Æn. iii. 132:

> And children's children shall the crown sustain.

[27] This couplet follows closely the translation of Stephens:

> Put on that diadem besmeared with gore
> Which from my father's head these fingers tore.

[28] Dryden's Virg. Æn. iii. 78:

> Broke ev'ry bond of nature and of truth

[29] Pope uses "preventing" in the then common but now obsolete sense of "anticipating."

[30] A river in the lower world.

[31] Great is the force and the spirit of these lines down to verse 183; and indeed they are a

surprising effort in a writer so young as when he translated them. See particularly lines 150 to 160.—Warton.

[32] The entrance to the infernal regions was said to be through a cave in the Tænarian promontory, which formed the southern extremity of Greece.

[33] Pope has judiciously tamed the bombast image "caligantes animarum examine campos," "the plains darkened with a swarm of ghosts." "Lucentes equos," he translates, "fair glories," omitting the image entirely. To mount Atlas he has added an idea which makes the passage more ridiculous than sublime. It is poorly expressed in the original; in the translation it is ludicrous; "and shook the heavens *and gods he bore*." There are many images which if indistinctly seen are sublime; if particularised they become quite the contrary. However, the translation is certainly wonderful, when the age of the author is considered. It shows his powers of metrical language, at so early a period of his poetical studies, though it is very unfaithful in particular passages.—Bowles.

[34] Pope's acquaintance with Latin prosody, from his confined education, was probably very small, or he would not have used Malēa, instead of Maleă, with the line of Statius before him.—Bowles.

[35] "Well-known," because the Fury had before visited the Theban palace to instigate the crimes and passions of which it had been the scene. The haste with which she goes, and her preference for the terrestrial journey, even over the haunts of her own Tartarus, indicate the signal malevolence of the mission. Hence the delight she takes in it.

[36] The original is more forcible and less extravagant. The sunken eyes of the Fury glared with a light like that of red-hot iron—*ferrea lux*.

[37] This expression, which is not in Statius, is common with Dryden, as in his Virg. Æn. x. 582:

> And from Strymonius hewed his better hand.

[38] Statius depicts the frenzied virulence of the Fury, by saying that she lashed the air with the serpent. Pope has marred the description by representing the lashing of the air as the act of the serpent itself.

[39] After Ino had drowned herself and her son Melicertes, they became marine divinities, and their names were changed to Leucothea and Palæmon. Statius is more picturesque than Pope. When the apparition of the Fury announced terrible evils to come, the sea was stirred to its depths. On the outburst of the tempest, Palæmon was sailing about on the back of a dolphin, and it was then that his mother snatched him up in her alarm, and pressed him to her bosom. To convey an idea of the tremendous nature of the storm, Statius says that the Corinthian isthmus could hardly resist the violence of the waves which dashed against each of its shores. This circumstance is justly styled by Pope "most extravagantly hyperbolical," but a translator should not have omitted it.

[40] A great image, and highly improved from the original, "assueta nube."—Warton.

The first edition had a feeble prosaic line in place of the image which Warton admired:

> Headlong from thence the fury urged her flight,
> And at the Theban palace did alight.

[41] "Ruptæque vices" in the original, which Pope translates, "and all the ties of nature broke," but by *vices* is indicated the alternate reign of the two brothers, as ratified by mutual oaths, and subsequently violated by Eteocles.—De Quincey.

[42] The felicities of this translation are at times perfectly astonishing, and it would be scarcely possible to express more nervously or amply the words,—

> jurisque secundi
> Ambitus impatiens, et summo dulcius unum
> Stare loco,—

than by Pope's couplet, which most judiciously, by reversing the two clauses, gains the power of fusing them into connection.—De Quincey.

[43] "Bound" is an improper verb as applied to "steers"; besides the simile is not exactly understood. There is nothing about "reins" or "bounding" in the original. What is meant is that the steers do not draw even. Pope confounded the image of the young bullocks with that of a horse, and he therefore introduces "reins" and "bounding."—Bowles.

[44] For "armour wait," the first edition had "arms did wait."

[45] "Charger" is used in its old sense of a dish.

[46] Statius, to point the folly of the criminal ambition, goes on to represent, that the contest was only for naked unadorned dominion in a poverty-stricken kingdom,—a battle for which should cultivate the barren territory on the banks of a petty stream,—and for this empty privilege the brothers sacrificed everything which was of good report in life or death. Pope weakened the moral of Statius, and the lines which follow to the end of the paragraph are also very inferior in force to the original.

[47] In the first edition,

> Not all those realms could for such crimes suffice.

Pope might have done more to improve this prosaic couplet.

[48] Pope borrowed from the translation of Stephens:

> How wast thou lost
> In thine own joys, proud tyrant then, when all
> About thee were thy slaves.

[49] It should be "discontented."—Warton.

[50] This couplet was interpolated by Pope and seems to have been suggested by his hostility to the revolution of 1688. Nor does Statius call the populace "vile," or say that they are always "discontented," or that they are "still prone to change, though still the slaves of state." Neither does he say that they "are sure to hate the monarch, they have," but he says that their custom is to love his successor, which is a sentiment more in accordance with experience.

[51] "Exiled" because the king who was not reigning had to leave the country during his brother's year of power.

[52] The warriors who were the produce of the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus fought among themselves till only five were left.

[53] "Unrivalled," as the context shows, is not here a term of commendation, but merely signifies that the monarch had no equal in rank or power.

[54] "Placido quatiens tamen omnia vultu," is the common reading. I believe it should be "nutu," with reference to the word "quatiens."—Pope.

[55] Pope was manifestly unable to extract any sense from the original. It is there said that Jupiter at his first entrance seats himself upon his starry throne, but that the other gods did not presume to sit down "protinus," that is, in immediate succession to Jupiter, and interpreting his example as a tacit license to do so, until, by a gentle wave of his hand, the supreme father signifies his express permission to take their seats. In Pope's translation, the whole picturesque solemnity of the celestial ritual melts into the vaguest generalities.—De Quincey.

De Quincey was mistaken in his inference that Pope was unable to understand the passage, for he had the assistance of the translation of Stephens, which gives the meaning correctly:

> Anon
> He sets him down on his bespangled throne.
> The rest stand and expect: not one presumed
> To sit till leave was beckoned.

[56] The winds would have been inconvenient members of a deliberative assembly if they had taken to howling, whistling, and sighing. Nevertheless their propensity to blow was so inveterate that, in Statius, they are only kept quiet by their fear of Jove.

[57] Our author is perpetually grasping at the wonderful and the vast, but most frequently falls gradually from the terrible to the contemptible.—Warton.

By "our author" Warton meant Statius, and the expression, he criticised as hyberbolical was the "eluded rage of Jove,"—an exaggeration for which Pope alone was responsible.

[58] Hiera, one of the Æolian islands in the neighbourhood of Sicily, was supposed to be the workshop of Vulcan. The island was volcanic, and the underground noises were ascribed to Vulcan, and his assistants, the Cyclopes, as they plied their trade. The circumstance that the fires of the Æolian forge were exhausted was doubtless introduced by Statius because in his day the eruptions had ceased in Hiera.

[59] Agave, the daughter of Cadmus. Her son Pentheus appeared among the women who were celebrating the Bacchic revelries on Mount Cithæron, and his mother, mistaking him in her frenzy for a wild beast, like a wild beast tore him to pieces.

[60] There is no mention of "the direful banquet" in the original. "The savage hunter" alludes to Athamas chasing and slaying his son under the delusion that he was a lion.

[61] The king of Argos.

[62] Tantalus, king of Argos, invited the gods to a banquet, and served up the boiled flesh of his own son, Pelops.

[63] Phoroneus was commonly reputed to have been the founder of the city of Argos.

[64] Juno employed Argus to keep guard over Io, transformed by Jupiter into a cow. Mercury, being sent by Jupiter to rescue Io, lulled Argus to sleep by melodious airs on the flute, and then cut off his head.

[65] An oracle announced to Acrisius, king of Argos, that he would die by the hands of his grandson. The king endeavoured to escape his fate by imprisoning his daughter, Danae, in a brazen tower, but Jupiter obtained access to her in the shape of a shower of gold, and she became the mother of Perseus, who fulfilled the prediction, according to the established legendary usage.

[66] The force of this taunt is weakened in Pope's translation by the change from the second person to the third, as though the invectives of Juno had not been addressed to Jupiter himself.

[67] Jupiter visited Semele, the daughter of Cadmus, in all the majesty of the thunderer, and she was consumed by the lightning.

[68] Homer makes Juno say that there are three cities pre-eminently dear to her—Argos, Sparta, and Mycenæ. Samos had no less title to the distinction. It was one of the localities which contended for the renown of having given her birth, and was, with Argos, the principal seat of her worship. Virgil ranks Samos second among the places she delighted to honour.

[69] The river Alpheus, which takes its rise in Arcadia, loses itself underground in parts of its course, and again reappears. This suggested the fiction that it ran in a subterranean channel, below the bottom of the sea, to the fountain of Arethusa in Sicily, where it once more emerged to day. Pope had less regard to the text of Statius than to Dryden's translation of Virgil's lines on the same legend in Ecl. x. 5:

> So may thy silver streams beneath the tide,
> Unmixed with briny seas, securely glide.

[70] The Arcadians celebrated the worship of Jupiter with human sacrifices.

[71] He was king of Pisa in Elis, where was the celebrated Olympia, with its temple of Jupiter. Œnomaus had ascertained from an oracle that he would perish by the agency of his son-in-law, and he was anxious, in self-defence, to keep his daughter, Hippodamia, from marrying. As he possessed the swiftest horses in the world he required her suitors to contend with him in a chariot-race, which allowed them no chance of success. The prize of victory was to be his daughter; the penalty of defeat was death, and the bones which laid unburied in the neighbourhood of Jupiter's temple were those of the lovers of Hippodamia.

[72] The Cretans claimed to possess both the birth-place and burial-place of Jupiter.

[73] "Derived from Jove," inasmuch as Perseus, one of the kings of Argos, was the son of Jupiter and Danae.

[74] Eteocles and Polynices.—Pope.

[75] Mercury, so called because he was born upon Mount Cyllene.

[76] Eteocles.

[77] Stephens's translation:

> This were such a day
> He'd spend an age to see 't.

[78] To Argos, of which Danaus had been king, whence the Argives were also called Danai.

[79] Atreus, king of Mycenæ, murdered the two sons of his brother Thyestes, and feasted their father with dishes made of their flesh.

[80] Bacchus forced the Theban women to assemble, and give loose to the wild rites by which he was celebrated. It was on this occasion that Pentheus was massacred by his mother.

[81] Nisus was king of Megara when it was besieged by Minos. The king's daughter, Scylla, conceived a passion for Minos, and to ensure him the victory she plucked from her father's head a purple hair upon which depended the preservation of himself and the city.

[82] Statius says that when Polynices was in the middle of the isthmus of Corinth he could hear the waves beat against both its shores. "This," remarked Pope, "could hardly be; for the isthmus of Corinth is full five miles over," and he calls the introduction of the circumstance "a geographical error." It was his own geography that was at fault. The width of the isthmus is only three miles and a half. Pope spoilt the incident when he transferred it to the Scironian rock. Sciron was a robber and murderer, who compelled his victims to wash his feet upon the cliff, and while they were engaged in the operation he kicked them over into the sea.

[83] "We have scarcely in our language eight more beautiful lines than these, down to human care," ver. 481.—Warton.

[84] Pope owed some happy expressions to the translation of Stephens:

> The silent world does view
> Her airy chariot pearled with drops of dew.

[85] He again borrowed from Stephens:

> And nodding through the air brings down in haste
> A sweet forgetfulness of labour passed.

[86] A very faulty expression; as also below, verse 501,—"rolls a deluge on."—Warton.

He copied Dryden's Virg. Æn. iv. 638:

> As when the winds their airy quarrel try.

He was indebted to a second couplet in the same translation, Æn. ii. 565:

> Thus, when the rival winds their quarrel try,
> Contending for the kingdom of the sky.

[87] "Showers" is an inappropriate word to denote the deluge of rain which flooded the earth, and "swept herds, and hinds, and houses to the main."

[88] The Inachus, and the Erasinus were rivers in the plain of Argos.

[89] The waters of the Lerna were infected by the venom from the serpent Hydra, which Hercules slew.

[90] The storm, by blowing down trees or branches, made an opening in the dense foliage through which the sun had never penetrated.

[91] In the first edition:

> The prince with wonder did the waste behold,
> While from torn rocks the massy fragments rolled.

[92] Dryden's Virg. Æn. ii. 413:

> The shepherd climbs the cliff, and sees from far
> The wasteful ravage of the wat'ry war.

[93] Dryden's Virg. Geor. i. 652:

> Bore houses, herds, and lab'ring hinds away.

[94] Statius represents Polynices as terrified by the tempest. Pope appears to have thought that this was derogatory to the character of the fugitive king, and he calls him, when gazing on the ravages caused by the storm, "the intrepid Theban," which conveys the impression that he was undaunted by the spectacle. In the same spirit Pope at ver. 527, has the line, "Thus still his *courage* with his toils increased," where the original says that the stimulus which urged him on was fear. But while Pope has obliterated the alarm which was generated by the tempest he has introduced in its place an alarm which had no existence. In the midst of the havoc worked by the elements the recollection of his brother "wings the feet" of the intrepid Theban "with fears," though he is beyond his brother's reach, and has no suspicion at present that he designs to break the compact to reign alternately. The influence which the remembrance of Eteocles exercised over the mind of the wanderer is expressly distinguished by Statius from the fear, and means no more than that since Polynices was an exile from Thebes, he was compelled to proceed onwards till he could find an asylum in another state.

[95] A mountain on which stood the citadel of Argos.

[96] The temple at Prosymna was dedicated to Juno.

[97] Pope took the expression from Dryden, Virg. Æn. vii. 79:

> One only daughter heired the royal state.

And ver. 367:

> Only one daughter heirs my crown and state.

[98] Strictly his sons-in-law.

[99] That is, he ordained that the oracles should be incapable of interpretation before it was fulfilled.

[100] Calydon, of which his father Œneus was king.

[101] The mode in which the two fugitives became known to the king and gained admission to the palace, is not told by Pope, who has left upwards of seventy lines untranslated, and by the mutilation rendered the incidents improbable. Polynices reaches the palace first and lies down, worn out, on the pavement of the vestibule. Tydeus arrives at the same spot, and Polynices is unwilling that he should share the shelter. A quarrel ensues, and from words they proceed to blows. The king is disturbed by the uproar; he issues forth from the palace with attendants and torches to ascertain the cause; explanations follow, and these result in Tydeus and Polynices becoming the guests of Adrastus. "There is an odd account," Pope says to Cromwell, "of an unmannerly battle at fisty-cuffs between the two Princes on a very slight occasion, and at a time when, one would think, the fatigue of their journey, in so tempestuous a night, might have rendered them very unfit for such a scuffle. This I had actually translated, but was very ill satisfied with it, even in my own words, to which an author cannot but be partial enough of conscience."

[102] Before the victory of Hercules over the Nemean lion, he is said by Statius to have worn the skin of a lion which he slew in the neighbourhood of Mount Temessus.

[103] "Horror" at the thought of the dreadful forebodings which had been suggested by the literal language of the oracle; "glad" because of the manner in which the prediction was verified. Jortin, in a note on another passage of the Thebais, says, "Statius could not help falling into his beloved fault of joining contraries together. He is too apt to seek this opposition in his words. He never indeed misses this favourite figure when he can bring it in."

[104] "Firm" for confirm was sanctioned by the frequent example of Dryden, from whose translation of Virg. Æn. viii. 107, Pope has borrowed the entire couplet:

> But oh! be present to thy people's aid,
> And firm the gracious promise thou hast made.

[105] In the first edition this verse was an Alexandrine, ending with "and wake the sleeping fires," which Pope took from Dryden, Virg. Æn. viii, 720:

> And on his altars waked the sleeping fires.

[106] "Fry" was the reading of all the editions till that of 1736, when "fly" was substituted by an evident error of the press, and has been retained ever since.

[107] "Tutress" in the first edition. Acestis had been the nurse, and was now the duenna of the two daughters of Adrastus.

[108] The gorgon, Medusa, changed every one who saw her to stone. Perseus avoided the penalty by only looking at her reflection in a mirror as he cut off her head while she slept. Being the grandson of a king of Argos he was an Argive hero, whence his triumph was engraved upon the royal goblet. The artist had selected the moment when Perseus is darting into the air with the head of the gorgon, which, newly separated from the body, still retained the traces of expiring life.

[109] On account of the beauty of Ganymede, Jove sent an eagle to convey him from the earth to the habitations of the gods. There he was appointed cup-bearer, which rendered the incident appropriate to a drinking-vessel.

[110] He has omitted some forcible expressions of the original: Septem—atris—terentem—nigro—centum per jugera,—all of them picturesque epithets.—WARTON.

Statius says, that the huge serpent while alive encircled Delphi seven times with its dark coils, and that when dead and barely unrolled, its body spread over a hundred acres.

[111] The water was not itself poisonous, but it turned to venom in the serpent.

[112] Stephens is more literal, and at the same time more poetical:

> earth prepares thy room
> Garnished with flow'ry beds, and thatched above
> With oaken leaves close woven; whilst the grove
> Lends bark to make thy garments.

[113] Much superior to the original.—WARTON.

[114] Sandy's translation of Ovid's Met. bk. vi.

> And calls the furies from the depth of hell.

[115] Pope copied Stephens:

> devouring some
> With rav'nous jaws before their parents' eyes,
> And fats herself with public miseries.

[116] Inachus, according to one tradition, built the city of Argos. After his descendants had reigned for some generations, the throne was seized by Danaus.

[117] Death cutting off the fatal thread with a scythe, is not a very sublime or congruous image. Pope has blended modern ideas with classical: in the original it is "ense metit;"—"*mows* with his *sword*." Pope has introduced a "*scythe*," to preserve more accurately the metaphor, but it has a bad effect.—BOWLES.

[118] Chorœbus.

[119] Statius states that Chorœbus withdrew, having obtained his end, and says nothing of his being "unwilling," by which Pope seems to mean that he was unwilling to accept his life. This deviation from the original destroys the generous heroism of Chorœbus, for if he was weary of his existence there was no merit in his braving death. Statius, indeed, had previously said that Apollo granted Chorœbus the "sad boon of life" out of admiration for his magnanimity; but this phrase only signifies that life is sorrowful, and not that Chorœbus would have preferred to die.

[120] Some of the most finished lines he has ever written, down to verse 854.—WARTON.

[121] Apollo was specially worshipped by the Lycians.

[122] The celebrated fountain sacred to Apollo on Parnassus.

[123] Apollo was surnamed the Cynthian, from Mount Cynthus in the island of Delos, which was the place of his birth, and the most revered of all the localities set apart for his worship. The island, which had previously floated over the ocean, was, according to one version of the legend, rendered stationary by Jupiter when Apollo was born; according to another version, it was subsequently fixed by Apollo himself.

[124] The walls of Troy were the work of Apollo and Neptune.

[125] In the first edition it was

> Thou dost the seeds of future wars foreknow.

[126] The Phrygian was Marsyas, who contended on the flute against Apollo with his lyre. When the umpires decided in favour of the god, he flayed Marsyas for his presumption.

[127] Tityus assaulted the mother of Apollo, and her son shot the offender.

[128] Niobe, because she had seven sons and seven daughters, thought herself superior to Latona, who had only one son, and one daughter,—Apollo and Diana. These divinities, in revenge, destroyed the fourteen children of Niobe.

[129] In the first edition:

> He views his food, would taste, yet dares not try,

But dreads the mould'ring rock that trembles from on high.

Apollo intrigued with Coronis, the daughter of Phlegyas. Her enraged father retaliated by firing the temple of Apollo, and was consigned for his rebellion to perpetual torture in the infernal regions. His terror lest the impending rock should crush him is a circumstance interpolated by Pope from Virgil's description of the punishment of Pirithous and Ixion, and the expression "mould'ring rock" is taken from Dryden's translation of the passage, Æn. vi. 816:

> High o'er their heads a mould'ring rock is placed
> That promises a fall, and shakes at ev'ry blast.

The revolting nature of the food itself is the reason assigned by Statius why Phlegyas forebore to partake of it, and preferred to endure the pangs of hunger.

[130] After Apollo, in the later mythology, had been identified with the sun, all the names personifying the sun, of which Titan was one, became applicable to Apollo.

[131] Diodorus maintained that the Osiris of the Egyptians was their god of the sun, and Statius has adopted this erroneous view. According to the statement of Herodotus, Osiris answered to the Grecian Bacchus, and there is little doubt that the old historian was right.

[132] Mithras was the Persian god of the sun. He was worshipped in caves, or, as Pope has it, in "hollow rocks," because the spherical form of the cave symbolised the universe, of which Mithras was the maker. The "blaze of light which adorns his head" in Pope's version, makes no part of the description in the original. The final line is explained by several ancient works of art, in which a man, wearing a Phrygian cap, is depicted cutting the throat of a bull he has flung to the ground. The man is said by an old scholiast on Statius to typify the sun, the bull the moon, and the intention, he states, is to represent the superiority of the sun over the moon. Statius speaks of the bull as indignant at being compelled to follow Mithras,—an idea which suits ill with the tranquil aspect of the moon as it floats through the heavens.

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# TRANSLATIONS

[Pg 87]

### FROM

# OVID.

Great is the change in passing from Statius to Ovid; from force to facility of style; from thoughts and images which are too much studied and unnatural to such as are obvious, careless, and familiar. Ovid seems to have had the merit of inventing this beautiful species of writing epistles under feigned names. It is a high improvement on the Greek elegy, to which its dramatic form renders it much superior. The judgment of the writer must chiefly appear by opening the complaint of the person introduced, just at such a period of time, as will give occasion for the most tender sentiments, and the most sudden, and violent turns of passion to be displayed. Ovid may perhaps be blamed for a sameness of subjects in these epistles of his heroines; and his epistles are likewise too long, which circumstance has forced him into a repetition and languor in the sentiments. On the whole the epistle before us is translated by Pope with faithfulness and with elegance, and much excels any Dryden translated in the volume he published, several of which were done by some "of the mob of gentlemen that wrote with ease,"—that is, Sir C. Scrope, Caryll, Pooly, Wright, Tate, Buckingham, Cooper, and other careless rhymers. Lord Somers translated Dido to Æneas, and Ariadne to Theseus. Though I regret the hours our poet spent in translating Ovid and Statius, yet it has given us an opportunity of admiring his good sense and judgment, in not suffering his taste and style, in his succeeding works, to be infected with the faults of these two writers.—WARTON.

[Pg 89]

Warton says, "The judgment of the writer must chiefly appear by opening the complaint of the person introduced at such a period of time as will give occasion for the most tender sentiments." How beautifully is this displayed in Pope's Epistle to Abelard, a poem that has another most interesting circumstance, which Ovid appears, as well as our Drayton, to have neglected,—I mean the introduction of appropriate and descriptive imagery, which relieves and recreates the fancy by the pictures, and by the landscapes which accompany the characters. Ovid, in this Epistle, seems not insensible to the effect of the introduction of such scenes; and the Leucadian rock, the *antra nemusque*, the aquatic lotus, the sacred pellucid fountain, and particularly the genius of the place, the Naiad, addressing the despairing Sappho (which circumstance Pope has beautifully imitated and improved in Eloisa), are in the genuine spirit of poetical taste. Dr. Warton observes that this translation is superior to any of Dryden's. If, indeed, we compare Pope's translations with those of any other writer, their superiority must be strikingly apparent. There is a finish in them, a correctness, a natural flow, and a tone of originality, added to a wonderful propriety and beauty of expression and language. If he ever fails, it is where he generalises too much. This is particularly objectionable, where in the original there is any marked, distinct, and beautiful picture. So, ver. 253, Pope only says,

[Pg 90]

Cupid for thee shall spread the swelling sail;

whereas in Ovid, Cupid appears before us in the very act of guiding the vessel, seated as the pilot, and with his *tender* hand (*tenerâ manu*) contracting, or letting flow the sail. I need not point out another beauty in the original,—the repetition of the word *Ipse*.—BOWLES.

Richardson has appended this note to the Epistle of Sappho to Phaon in his copy of the quarto of 1717: "Corrected by the first copy, written out elegantly (as all his MSS.) to show friends, with their remarks in the margin; the present reading for the most part the effect of them." The remarks in the margin are mere exclamations, such as "pulchre," "bene," "optime," "recte," "bella paraphrasis," "longe præstas Scrope meo judicio," "minus placet," &c. They are doubtless from the pen of Cromwell, since it appeals from Pope's letter to him on June 10, 1709, that he had jotted down the same phrases on the margin of the translation of Statius. Bowles having quoted the observation of Warton, "that he had seen compositions of youths of sixteen years old far beyond the Pastorals in point of genius and imagination," adds, "I fear not to assert that he never could have seen any compositions of boys of that age so perfect in versification, so copious, yet so nice in expression, so correct, so spirited, and so finished," as the translation of the Epistle of Sappho to Phaon. The remark was made by Bowles in the belief that the version was the production of the poet's fourteenth year. Pope himself records on his manuscript that it was "written first 1707." He was then nineteen, and when the Epistle was published in 1712, in Tonson's Ovid, he was twenty-four.

"Ovid," says Dryden, "often writ too pointedly for his subject, and made his persons speak more eloquently than the violence of their passions would admit." Passion is sometimes highly eloquent; feeling strongly it expresses itself forcibly, and Dryden meant that the characters in Ovid, by their numerous strokes of studied brilliancy, seemed to be carried away less by their emotions than by the ambition to shine. These glittering artifices were formerly called wit, and Dryden complains that Ovid "is frequently witty out of season," but they are not wit in our present sense of the word. Occasionally they are the far-fetched or affected prettinesses which are properly called conceits; and more commonly they consist in terse antithesis, and a sparkle of [Pg 91] words produced by the balanced repetition of a phrase. They are often as appropriate as they are showy, and if they are among the blemishes they are conspicuous among the beauties of Ovid. His writings are marked by opposite qualities. He is sometimes too artificial in his expression of the passions, and sometimes he is natural, glowing, and pathetic. He abounds in pointed sentences, and is not less distinguished for the easy, spontaneous flow of his language. He is at once prolix and concise, indulging in a single vein of thought till the monotony becomes tedious, and yet enunciating his ideas with sententious brevity. The condensation of the Latin in many places cannot be preserved in the diffuser idioms of our English tongue, but, if we overlook a few weak couplets, Pope has translated the Epistle of Sappho to Phaon with rare felicity, and notwithstanding the inevitable loss of some happy turns of expression, he has managed to retain both the passion and the poetry. Effusions of sentiment were better adapted to his genius than the heroic narrative of the Thebais; and his limpid measure, which neither resembled the numerous and robuster verse of Statius, nor was suited to an epic theme, accorded with the sweetness and uniformity of Ovid's verse, and with the outpourings of grief and tenderness which are the staple of these epistolary strains. There is no ground for the regret of Warton that Pope should have spent a little time in translating portions of Ovid and Statius. It would be as reasonable to lament that he stooped to the preliminary discipline which made him a poet. He has related that he did not take to translation till he found himself unequal to original composition, and, like all who excel in any department, he learnt, by copying his predecessors, to rival them.

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## SAPPHO TO PHAON.[1] [Pg 93]

Say, lovely youth,[2] that dost my heart command,
Can Phaon's eyes forget his Sappho's hand?
Must then her name the wretched writer prove,
To thy remembrance lost, as to thy love?
Ask not the cause that I new numbers choose,
The lute neglected, and the lyric muse;[3]
Love taught my tears in sadder notes to flow.
And tuned my heart to elegies of woe.
I burn, I burn, as when through ripened corn
By driving winds the spreading flames are borne![4]
Phaon to Ætna's scorching fields retires,
While I consume with more than Ætna's fires![5]
No more my soul a charm in music finds;
Music has charms alone for peaceful minds.[6]
Soft scenes of solitude no more can please, [Pg 94]
Love enters there, and I'm my own disease.
No more the Lesbian dames my passion move,
Once the dear objects of my guilty love;

All other loves are lost in only thine,
Ah youth ungrateful to a flame like mine!
Whom would not all those blooming charms surprise,
Those heav'nly looks, and dear deluding eyes?
The harp and bow would you like Phœbus bear,
A brighter Phœbus Phaon might appear;
Would you with ivy wreathe your flowing hair,
Not Bacchus' self with Phaon could compare:
Yet Phœbus loved, and Bacchus felt the flame,
One Daphne warmed, and one the Cretan dame;[7]
Nymphs that in verse no more could rival me,
Than ev'n those gods contend in charms with thee.[8]
The muses teach me all their softest lays,
And the wide world resounds with Sappho's praise.
Though great Alcæus more sublimely sings,
And strikes with bolder rage the sounding strings,
No less renown attends the moving lyre,
Which Venus tunes, and all her loves inspire;
To me what nature has in charms denied,
Is well by wit's more lasting flames supplied.
Though short my stature, yet my name extends
To heav'n itself, and earth's remotest ends.
Brown as I am, an Ethiopian dame[9]
Inspired young Perseus with a gen'rous flame; [Pg 95]
Turtles and doves of diff'ring hues unite,
And glossy jet is paired with shining white.
If to no charms thou wilt thy heart resign,
But such as merit, such as equal thine,
By none, alas! by none thou can'st be moved,
Phaon alone by Phaon must be loved!
Yet once thy Sappho could thy cares employ,
Once in her arms you centered all your joy:
No time the dear remembrance can remove,
For oh! how vast a memory has love?[10]
My music, then, you could for ever hear,
And all my words were music to your ear.
You stopped with kisses my enchanting tongue,
And found my kisses sweeter than my song.[11]
In all I pleased, but most in what was best;
And the last joy was dearer than the rest.[12]
Then with each word, each glance, each motion fired,
You still enjoyed, and yet you still desired,
Till all dissolving in the trance we lay,
And in tumultuous raptures died away.
The fair Sicilians now thy soul inflame;
Why was I born, ye gods, a Lesbian dame?
But ah! beware, Sicilian nymphs! nor boast
That wand'ring heart which I so lately lost;
Nor be with all those tempting words abused,
Those tempting words were all to Sappho used. [Pg 96]
And you that rule Sicilia's happy plains,
Have pity, Venus,[13] on your poet's pains!
Shall fortune still in one sad tenor run,
And still increase the woes so soon begun?
Inured to sorrow from my tender years,
My parent's ashes drank my early tears;
My brother next, neglecting wealth and fame,
Ignobly burned in a destructive flame:[14]
An infant daughter late my griefs increased,
And all a mother's cares distract my breast.[15]
Alas! what more could fate itself impose,
But thee, the last and greatest of my woes?
No more my robes in waving purple flow,
Nor on my hand the sparkling diamonds glow;
No more my locks in ringlets curled diffuse
The costly sweetness of Arabian dews,
Nor braids of gold the varied tresses bind,
That fly disordered with the wanton wind:
For whom should Sappho use such arts as these?
He's gone, whom only she desired to please!
Cupid's light darts my tender bosom move,
Still is there cause for Sappho still to love:
So from my birth the sisters fixed my doom,

And gave to Venus all my life to come;
Or, while my muse in melting notes complains,
My yielding heart keeps measure to my strains.
By charms like thine which all my soul have won,
Who might not—ah! who would not be undone?
[Pg 97]
For those Aurora Cephalus[16] might scorn,
And with fresh blushes paint the conscious morn.
For those might Cynthia lengthen Phaon's sleep,
And bid Endymion[17] nightly tend his sheep.
Venus for those had rapt thee to the skies,
But Mars on thee might look with Venus' eyes.
O scarce a youth, yet scarce a tender boy!
O useful time for lovers to employ!
Pride of thy age, and glory of thy race,
Come to these arms, and melt in this embrace!
The vows you never will return, receive;
And take at least the love you will not give.[18]
See, while I write, my words are lost in tears![19]
The less my sense, the more my love appears.
Sure 'twas not much to bid one kind adieu,
(At least to feign was never hard to you,)[20]
Farewell, my Lesbian love, you might have said;
Or coldly thus, "Farewell, O Lesbian maid!"
[Pg 98]
No tear did you, no parting kiss receive,
Nor knew I then how much I was to grieve.
No lover's gift your Sappho could confer,[21]
And wrongs and woes were all you left with her.
No charge I gave you, and no charge could give,
But this, "Be mindful of our loves, and live."
Now by the Nine, those pow'rs adored by me,
And Love, the god that ever waits on thee,
When first I heard (from whom I hardly knew)
That you were fled, and all my joys with you,
Like some sad statue[22], speechless, pale I stood,
Grief chilled my breast, and stopped my freezing blood;
No sigh to rise, no tear had pow'r to flow,
Fixed in a stupid lethargy of woe:
But when its way th' impetuous passion found,
I rend my tresses, and my breast I wound;
I rave, then weep; I curse, and then complain;
Now swell to rage, now melt in tears again.
Not fiercer pangs distract the mournful dame,
Whose first-born infant feeds the fun'ral flame.
My scornful brother with a smile appears,
Insults my woes, and triumphs in my tears;
His hated image ever haunts my eyes;
"And why this grief? thy daughter lives," he cries.
Stung with my love, and furious with despair,[23]
All torn my garments, and my bosom bare,
My woes, thy crimes, I to the world proclaim;
Such inconsistent things are love and shame!
[Pg 99]
'Tis thou art all my care and my delight,
My daily longing, and my dream by night:[24]
Oh night more pleasing than the brightest day,
When fancy gives what absence takes away,
And, dressed in all its visionary charms,
Restores my fair deserter to my arms!
Then round your neck in wanton wreaths I twine,
Then you, methinks, as fondly circle mine:
A thousand tender words I hear and speak;
A thousand melting kisses give, and take:[25]
Then fiercer joys, I blush to mention these,
Yet, while I blush, confess how much they please.
But when, with day, the sweet delusions fly,
And all things wake to life and joy, but I,
As if once more forsaken, I complain,
And close my eyes to dream of you again:[26]
Then frantic rise, and like some fury rove
Through lonely plains,[27] and through the silent grove,
As if the silent grove, and lonely plains,
That knew my pleasures, could relieve my pains.
I view the grotto, once the scene of love,

The rocks around, the hanging roofs above,
That charmed me more, with native moss o'ergrown,
Than Phrygian marble, or the Parian stone;
I find the shades that veiled our joys before;
But, Phaon gone, those shades delight no more.[28]
Here the pressed herbs with bending tops betray [Pg 100]
Where oft entwined in am'rous folds we lay;
I kiss that earth which once was pressed by you,
And all with tears the with'ring herbs bedew.
For thee the fading trees appear to mourn,
And birds defer their songs till thy return:
Night shades the groves, and all in silence lie,
All but the mournful Philomel and I:
With mournful Philomel I join my strain,
Of Tereus she, of Phaon I complain.[29]
A spring there is, whose silver waters show,
Clear as a glass, the shining sands below:
A flow'ry lotos spreads its arms above,
Shades all the banks, and seems itself a grove;
Eternal greens the mossy margin grace,
Watched by the sylvan genius of the place:
Here as I lay, and swelled with tears the flood,[30]
Before my sight a wat'ry virgin stood:
She stood and cried, "O you that love in vain!
Fly hence, and seek the fair Leucadian main;
There stands a rock, from whose impending steep
Apollo's fane surveys the rolling deep;
There injured lovers, leaping from above,
Their flames extinguish, and forget to love.[31]
Deucalion once with hopeless fury burned, [Pg 101]
In vain he loved, relentless Pyrrha scorned:
But when from hence he plunged into the main,
Deucalion scorned, and Pyrrha loved in vain.
Haste, Sappho, haste, from high Leucadia throw
Thy wretched weight, nor dread the deeps below!"[32]
She spoke, and vanished with the voice—I rise,
And silent tears fall trickling from my eyes.
I go, ye nymphs! those rocks and seas to prove;
How much I fear, but ah, how much I love!
I go, ye nymphs, where furious love inspires;
Let female fears submit to female fires.
To rocks and seas I fly from Phaon's hate,
And hope from seas and rocks a milder fate.
Ye gentle gales, beneath my body blow,
And softly lay me on the waves below![33]
And thou, kind Love, my sinking limbs sustain, }
Spread thy soft wings, and waft me o'er the main, }
Nor let a lover's death the guiltless flood profane! }
On Phœbus' shrine my harp I'll then bestow,
And this inscription shall be placed below,
"Here she who sung, to him that did inspire,
Sappho to Phœbus consecrates her lyre;
What suits with Sappho, Phœbus, suits with thee;
The gift, the giver, and the god agree." [Pg 102]
But why, alas, relentless youth, ah! why
To distant seas must tender Sappho fly?[34]
Thy charms than those may far more pow'rful be,
And Phœbus' self is less a god to me.[35]
Ah! canst thou doom me to the rocks and sea,
Oh! far more faithless and more hard than they?
Ah! canst thou rather see this tender breast
Dashed on these rocks, than to thy bosom pressed?
This breast which once, in vain! you liked so well;[36]
Where the loves played, and where the muses dwell.
Alas! the muses now no more inspire,
Untuned my lute, and silent is my lyre.
My languid numbers have forgot to flow,
And fancy sinks beneath a weight of woe.
Ye Lesbian virgins, and ye Lesbian dames,
Themes of my verse, and objects of my flames,
No more your groves with my glad songs shall ring,
No more these hands shall touch the trembling string:
My Phaon's fled, and I those arts resign:

(Wretch that I am, to call that Phaon mine!)[37]
Return, fair youth, return, and bring along
Joy to my soul, and vigour to my song: [Pg 103]
Absent from thee, the poet's flame expires;
But ah! how fiercely burn the lover's fires!
Gods! can no prayers, no sighs, no numbers move
One savage heart, or teach it how to love?
The winds my prayers, my sighs, my numbers bear,[38]
The flying winds have lost them all in air!
Oh when, alas! shall more auspicious gales
To these fond eyes restore thy welcome sails![39]
If you return—ah why these long delays?
Poor Sappho dies, while careless Phaon stays.
O launch the bark, nor fear the wat'ry plain;
Venus for thee shall smooth her native main.
O launch thy bark, secure of prosp'rous gales;
Cupid for thee shall spread the swelling sails.[40]
If you will fly—(yet ah! what cause can be,
Too cruel youth, that you should fly from me?)
If not from Phaon I must hope for ease,
Ah let me seek it from the raging seas:
To raging seas unpitied I'll remove,
And either cease to live or cease to love!

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] The ancients have left us little further account of Phaon than that he was an old mariner, whom Venus transformed into a very beautiful youth, whom Sappho and several other Lesbian ladies, fell passionately in love with.—Fenton.

[2] Mrs. Behn's translation:

> Say, lovely youth, why would'st thou thus betray.—Wakefield.

[3] In the MS.:

> These mournful numbers suit a mournful muse.

[4] Our poet has not varied much here from the couplet of his predecessor, Sir Carr Scrope:

> I burn, I burn, like kindled fields of corn,
> When by the driving winds the flames are borne.—Wakefield.

The first version in Pope's manuscript, though not so closely copied from Scrope, is decidedly inferior to the text:

> I burn, I burn, as when fierce whirlwinds raise
> The spreading flames, and crackling harvests blaze.

[5] A childish, false thought.—Warton.

[6] Scrope's couplet exceeds this in simplicity, and to my taste, on the whole, is preferable:

> My muse, and lute can now no longer please;
> These are th' employments of a mind at ease.—Wakefield.

[7] As Ovid tells the story in his Metamorphoses, Apollo fell in love with Daphne and pursued her. When he was gaining upon her in the race she was transformed, at her own request, into a laurel. The Cretan dame was Ariadne. Bacchus was smitten with her extraordinary beauty, and married her.

[8] This happy line, which is not too extravagant for a lover, belongs to Pope.

[9] Andromeda, the daughter of Cepheus, an Æthiopian king. Her mother thought herself superior in beauty to the Nereids, which excited their jealousy, and through their influence a sea-monster was sent to prey upon man and beast in the dominions of Cepheus. To atone for her mother's vanity, and rid the land of the scourge, Cepheus agreed to offer up Andromeda to the monster. She was chained to a rock on the coast, where Perseus saw her at the critical moment when she was about to be devoured. Captivated by her charms he engaged and slew the monster, and made Andromeda his wife.

[10] This is very inferior to the conciseness, and simplicity of the original, "memini (meminerunt omnia amantes)." Sir Carr Scrope's translation is nearer the original, and more natural as well as elegant:

> For they who truly love remember all.—Bowles.

[11] This line is another of the embellishments which Pope engrafted on the original.

[12] The first line of this couplet is faulty in point of versification, and, to use our bard's own remark, ten low words creep in one dull line. As to the last line, it is wholly redundant,

and has no place in the original.—Ruffhead.

[13] In the original, Erycina, which was a surname of Venus from Mount Eryx, in Sicily, where a celebrated temple was dedicated to her.

[14] He has here left four lines untranslated, which are thus rendered in the MS.:

> My ruined brother trades from shore to shore,
> And gains as basely as he lost before:
> Me too he hates, advised by me in vain,
> So fatal 'tis to be sincere and plain.

Of the last couplet the MS. contains a second version:

> He hates his sister for a sister's care,
> So unsuccessful 'tis to be sincere.

[15] In the MS.:

> An infant now my hapless fortunes shares,
> And this sad breast feels all a mother's cares.

[16] Cephalus tells the story poetically in Sandys' translation of Ovid's Met. vii. 701. He was a hunter, who was setting his nets in early dawn,

> When grey Aurora, having vanquished night,
> Beheld me on the ever-fragrant hill
> Of steep Hymettus, and against my will,
> As I my toils extended, bare me thence.

[17] Cynthia prolonged the sleep of Endymion, a shepherd of singular beauty, that she might kiss him without his knowledge.

[18] Scrope is pleasing here:

> Oh! let me once more see those eyes of thine!
> Thy love I ask not; do but suffer mine.—Wakefield.

Pope's couplet was as follows in the MS.:

> Thy love I ask not to forsaken me,
> All that I ask is but to doat on thee.

"Scrope melius hic," wrote Cromwell, and though Pope altered the lines the remark of Cromwell remains true.

[19] Ruffhead observes, that this line is superior to the original,

> Aspice, quam sit in hoc multa litura loco;

which he thinks flat and languid: but the simplicity of the appeal to the blot on her paper is admirable, and should be only mentioned as a fact. The imitator has destroyed the whole beauty of the line, by a quaint antithesis, and a laboured arrangement of words, which are not natural in affliction. Scrope's translation again excels Pope's:

> My constant falling tears the paper stain,
> And my weak hand, etc.—Bowles.

[20] "The parenthesis is an interpolation," says a note transcribed by Richardson from Pope's manuscript, and the remark is equally applicable to the next line.

[21] In the first edition,

> No gift on thee thy Sappho could confer.

The original couplet in the MS. was

> No pledge you left me, faithless and unkind!
> Nothing with me but wrongs was left behind.

"Jejune, flat, and ill expressed," is written against the last line in the manuscript, and Pope profited by the criticism.

[22] This image is not in the original, but it is very pleasingly introduced.—Bowles.

[23] The ten next verses are much superior to the original.—Warton.

[24] From Dryden's Ovid, Epist. vii.:

> Their daily longing, and their nightly dream.

It was at first thus in Pope's MS.:

> Thou art at once my anguish and delight,
> Care of my day, and phantom of my night.

[25] In the MS.:

> Thy kisses then, thy words my soul endear.
> Glow on my lips, and murmur in my ear.

[26] Of this couplet there are two other versions in the MS.:

> The charming phantom flies, and I complain,
> As if thyself forsook me once again.

And,

> I dread the light of cruel heav'n to view,
> And close my eyes once more to dream of you.

[27] "Antra nemusque" are not well rendered by "through lonely plains." Ovid is concise and specific, Pope general. Better rendered by Scrope:

> Soon as I rise I haunt the caves and groves.—Bowles.

[28] In the first edition:

> I find the shades that did our joys conceal,
> Not him who made me love those shades so well.

[29] Scrope's translation:

> Of Tereus she complains, and I of thee.—Wakefield.

Tereus married Progne, and afterwards fell in love with her sister Philomela. Both sisters conspired to revenge themselves upon him. They killed Itys, his son by Progne, gave him some of the flesh to eat. When, with savage exultation, they revealed the truth to him, and he was about to slay them, Progne was changed into a swallow, and Philomela into a nightingale.

[30] The Sappho of Ovid only says that she laid down upon the bank worn out with weeping. Pope is answerable for the extravagant conceit of "her swelling the flood with her tears." In the next verse Pope calls the Naiad "a watery virgin,"—an expression which borders on the ludicrous.

[31] There was a promontory in Acarnania called Leucate, on the top of which was a little temple dedicated to Apollo. In this temple it was usual for despairing lovers to make their vows in secret, and afterwards to fling themselves from the top of the precipice into the sea; for it was an established opinion that all those who were taken up alive would be cured of their former passion. Sappho tried the remedy, but perished in the experiment. —Fawkes.

[32] Aleæus arrived at the promontory of Leucate that very evening, in order to take the leap on her account; but hearing that her body could not be found, he very generously lamented her fall, and is said to have written his 215th ode on that occasion.—Warton.

The entire story was probably a legend.

[33] These two lines have been quoted as the most smooth and mellifluous in our language; and they are supposed to derive their sweetness and harmony from the mixture of so many iambics. Pope himself preferred the following line to all he had written, with respect to harmony:

> Lo, where Mæotis sleeps, and hardly flows.—Warton.

Dryden in his Annus Mirabilis:

> A constant trade-wind will securely blow,
> And gently lay us on the spicy shore.—Wakefield.

[34] In the MS.:

> To those steep cliffs, that ocean must I fly.

[35] In the place of this couplet, there were four lines in the MS.:

> If thou return thy Sappho too shall stay,
> Not all the gods shall force me then away;
> Nor Love, nor Phœbus, then invoked shall be,
> For thou alone art all the gods to me.

Another version ran thus:

> Wouldst thou return, oh more than Phœbus, fair
> No god like thee could ease thy Sappho's care.

[36] "Liked" seems a very unsuitable expression in the present day. It was a word, however, among our early writers of greater force and significance:

> What I that loved, and you that *liked*,
> Shall we begin to wrangle?
> No, no, no; my heart is fixed,
> And cannot disentangle.
>
> *Old Ballad.*—Bowles.

[37] In the MS.:

> Phaon—*my* Phaon I almost had said—

Is fled, with Phaon your delights are fled.

Cromwell wrote against the last line "recte, non pulchre," and Pope tried three variations of it before he cast them aside for the version in the text:

Is gone, and with him all your pleasures fled.
Is gone, and all that's pleasing with him fled.
Is gone, and with him your delights are fled.

[38] Of ver. 242 and v. 244, Pope says in the MS., "So at first as printed, but objected [against] as tautological. *Sic recte* as [in the] margin, but carried afterwards as at first." "Sighs" was thought to be too nearly synonymous with "prayers," and Pope altered the lines by erasing the expressions "no sighs" and "my sighs," and affixing the epithet "tender" in both verses to numbers.

[39] In the MS.:

Oh, when shall kinder, more auspicious gales,
Waft to these eyes thy long-expected sails.

"Pleonasm," says a note on the manuscript. "*Kinder*, and *more auspicious*, too much."

[40] This image is very inferior to the original, as it is more vague and general: the picture in the original is strikingly beautiful. The circumstances which make it so, are omitted by Pope:

Ipse gubernabit residens in puppe Cupido,
Ipse dabit tenera vela legetque manu.—BOWLES.

The objection of Bowles would not have applied to the manuscript, where this admirable couplet, which Pope unwisely omitted, follows the lines in the text:

Shall take the rudder in his tender hand,
And steer thee safe to this forsaken land.

There is a second, but inferior rendering:

Shall sit presiding on the painted prore,
And steer thy ship to this forsaken shore.

Cromwell applied the words of Horace, "quæ desperat nitescere posse, relinquit," which seems intended to intimate that it was impossible to give a poetical translation of the original. Pope deferred to the mistaken criticism.

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# THE FABLE OF DRYOPE.[1]

[Pg 104]

## FROM THE NINTH BOOK OF OVID'S METAMORPHOSES.

She[2] said, and for her lost Galanthis sighs,
When the fair consort of her son[3] replies:
Since you a servant's ravished form bemoan,[4]
And kindly sigh for sorrows not your own,
Let me (if tears and grief permit) relate
A nearer woe, a sister's stranger fate.
No nymph of all Œchalia could compare
For beauteous form with Dryope the fair,[5]
Her tender mother's only hope and pride,
(Myself the offspring of a second bride.)
This nymph compressed by him who rules the day,
Whom Delphi and the Delian isle obey,
Andræmon loved; and, blessed in all those charms
That pleased a god, succeeded to her arms.[6]
A lake there was, with shelving banks around,
Whose verdant summit fragrant myrtles crowned. [Pg 105]
These shades, unknowing of the fates, she sought,
And to the naiads flow'ry garlands brought;
Her smiling babe (a pleasing charge) she pressed
Within her arms, and nourished at her breast.
Nor distant far a wat'ry lotos grows,
The spring was new, and all the verdant boughs,
Adorned with blossoms, promised fruits that vie
In glowing colours with the Tyrian dye:
Of these she cropped to please her infant son,
And I myself the same rash act had done:
But lo! I saw (as near her side I stood,)
The violated blossoms[7] drop with blood;

Upon the tree I cast a frightful look;
The trembling tree with sudden horror shook.
Lotis the nymph (if rural tales be true)
As from Priapus' lawless lust she flew,
Forsook her form; and fixing here, became
A flow'ry plant, which still preserves her name.
  This change unknown, astonished at the sight,
My trembling sister strove to urge her flight:
And first the pardon of the nymphs implored,
And those offended sylvan pow'rs adored:
But when she backward would have fled, she found
Her stiff'ning feet were rooted in the ground:
In vain to free her fastened feet she strove,
And, as she struggles, only moves above;
She feels th' encroaching bark around her grow
By quick degrees, and cover all below:
Surprized at this, her trembling hand she heaves
To rend her hair; her hand is filled with leaves:
Where late was hair the shooting leaves are seen
To rise, and shade her with a sudden green.
The child Amphissus, to her bosom pressed,
Perceived a colder and a harder breast, [Pg 106]
And found the springs, that ne'er till then denied
Their milky moisture, on a sudden dried.
I saw, unhappy! what I now relate,
And stood the helpless witness of thy fate,
Embraced thy boughs, thy rising bark delayed,
There wished to grow, and mingle shade with shade.
  Behold Andræmon and th' unhappy sire
Appear, and for their Dryope inquire:
A springing tree for Dryope they find,
And print warm kisses on the panting rind;
Prostrate, with tears their kindred plant bedew,
And close embrace, as[8] to the roots they grew.
The face was all that now remained of thee,
No more a woman, nor yet quite a tree;[9]
Thy branches hung with humid pearls appear,[10]
From ev'ry leaf distils a trickling tear,
And straight a voice, while yet a voice remains,
Thus through the trembling boughs in sighs complains.
  If to the wretched any faith be giv'n,
I swear by all th' unpitying pow'rs of heav'n,[11]
No wilful crime this heavy vengeance bred;
In mutual innocence[12] our lives we led:
If this be false, let these new greens decay, }
Let sounding axes lop my limbs away, }
And crackling flames on all my honours prey.[13] } [Pg 107]
But from my branching arms this infant bear,
Let some kind nurse supply a mother's care:
And to his mother let him oft be led,
Sport in her shades, and in her shades be fed;
Teach him, when first his infant voice shall frame
Imperfect words, and lisp his mother's name,
To hail this tree, and say with weeping eyes,
Within this plant my helpless parent lies;
And when in youth he seeks the shady woods,
Oh! let him fly the crystal lakes and floods,
Nor touch the fatal flow'rs; but, warned by me,
Believe a goddess shrined in ev'ry tree.
My sire, my sister, and my spouse, farewell![14]
If in your breasts or love or pity dwell,
Protect your plant, nor let my branches feel
The browzing cattle or the piercing steel.
Farewell! and since I cannot bend to join
My lips to yours, advance at least to mine.
My son, thy mother's parting kiss receive,
While yet thy mother has a kiss to give.
I can no more; the creeping rind invades
My closing lips,[15] and hides my head in shades;
Remove your hands, the bark shall soon suffice
Without their aid to seal these dying eyes.
  She ceased at once to speak, and ceased to be;
And all the nymph was lost within the tree;

Yet latent life through her new branches reigned,
And long the plant a human heat retained.

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] Upon occasion of the death of Hercules, his mother Alcmena recounts her misfortunes to Iole, who answers with a relation of those of her own family, in particular the transformation of her sister Dryope, which is the subject of the ensuing fable.—POPE.

[2] Alcmena. Galanthis was one of her female servants.

[3] Iole was not the consort of Alcmena's son, Hercules, but of her grandson, Hyllus.

[4] Out of jealousy that Alcmena should bear a child to Jupiter, Juno employed Lucina to hinder the birth of Hercules. The malevolence of the goddess was defeated through the ingenuity of Galanthis, who was straightway turned into a weasel by the baffled and irritated Lucina.

[5] Sandys' translation:

Of all the Œchalides
For form few might with Dryope compare.

[6] This flowing couplet he has transferred into more places than one of his version of Homer.—WAKEFIELD.

[7] Dryden, Æn. iii. 54:

The violated myrtle ran with gore.—WAKEFIELD.

[8] "As" is put for "as though."

[9] Cowley's transformation of Lot's wife, Davideis, iii. 254:

No more a woman, nor yet quite a stone.—WAKEFIELD.

[10] Dryden's Virg. Ecl. x. 20:

And hung with humid pearls the lowly shrub appears.—WAKEFIELD.

[11] Sandys' translation:

If credit to the wretched may be giv'n,
I swear by all the pow'rs embowered in heav'n.

[12] This translation is faulty. "Patior sine crimine, et viximus innocuæ," is but one and the same person,—a testimony of her own innocence, but not of the mutual concord between her relations.—BOWYER.

[13] "New greens," from its equivocal meaning, is a burlesque expression. "Sounding" is a feeble epithet to be applied to the axe by Dryope, who was thinking of the wounds it would inflict upon her; and it is still more inappropriate to make her call her transformation, "my honours," when she regarded the metamorphose with dismay. How superior to Pope's diluted version is the brief and simple language of the original,—"et cæsa securibus urar." Sandys is better than Pope in the same proportion that he is more literal:

Or if I lie, may my green branches fade;
And felled with axes on the fire be laid.

[14] It is worth quoting the parallel line of Sandys, to show how much more touching are the household words "husband" and "father" than the "sire" and "spouse" substituted by Pope:

Dear husband, sister, father, all farewell.

[15] Dryden's version of Ovid, Met. viii.:

At once th' encroaching rinds their closing lips
invade.—WAKEFIELD.

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# VERTUMNUS AND POMONA.[1]

[Pg 108]

## FROM THE FOURTEENTH BOOK OF OVID'S METAMORPHOSES.

The fair Pomona flourished in his reign;[2]
Of all the virgins of the sylvan train,
None taught the trees a nobler race to bear,
Or more improved the vegetable care.[3]
To her the shady grove, the flow'ry field,

The streams and fountains no delights could yield;
'Twas all her joy the ripening fruits to tend,
And see the boughs with happy burthens bend.
The hook she bore instead of Cynthia's spear,
To lop the growth of the luxuriant year,
To decent form the lawless shoots to bring,
And teach th' obedient branches where to spring.
Now the cleft rind inserted graffs receives,
And yields an offspring more than nature gives;
Now sliding streams[4] the thirsty plants renew,
And feed their fibres with reviving dew.
These cares alone her virgin breast employ,
Averse from Venus and the nuptial joy. [Pg 109]
Her private orchards, walled on ev'ry side,
To lawless sylvans all access denied.
How oft the satyrs and the wanton fauns,
Who haunt the forests, or frequent the lawns,
The god[5] whose ensign scares the birds of prey,
And old Silenus, youthful in decay,
Employed their wiles, and unavailing care,
To pass the fences, and surprise the fair?
Like these, Vertumnus owned his faithful flame,
Like these, rejected by the scornful dame.
To gain her sight a thousand forms he wears;
And first a reaper from the field appears;
Sweating he walks, while loads of golden grain
O'ercharge the shoulders of the seeming swain.
Oft o'er his back a crooked scythe is laid,
And wreaths of hay his sun-burnt temples shade:
Oft in his hardened hand a goad he bears,
Like one who late unyoked the sweating steers.
Sometimes his pruning-hook corrects the vines,
And the loose stragglers to their ranks confines.
Now gath'ring what the bounteous year allows,
He pulls ripe apples from the bending boughs.
A soldier now, he with his sword appears;
A fisher next, his trembling angle bears;
Each shape he varies, and each art he tries,
On her bright charms to feast his longing eyes.
A female form at last Vertumnus wears, }
With all the marks of rev'rend age appears, }
His temples thinly spread with silver hairs; }
Propped on his staff, and stooping as he goes,
A painted mitre[6] shades his furrowed brows.
The god in this decrepid form arrayed, }
The gardens entered, and the fruit surveyed; }
And "Happy you!" (he thus addressed the maid) } [Pg 110]
"Whose charms as far all other nymphs outshine,
As other gardens are excelled by thine!"
Then kissed the fair; (his kisses warmer grow
Than such as women on their sex bestow[7]);
Then placed beside her on the flow'ry ground,
Beheld the trees with autumn's bounty crowned.
An elm was near, to whose embraces led,
The curling vine her swelling clusters spread:
He viewed her twining branches with delight,
And praised the beauty of the pleasing sight.
Yet this tall elm, but for his vine (he said)
Had stood neglected, and a barren shade;
And this fair vine, but that her arms surround
Her married elm, had crept along the ground.
Ah! beauteous maid, let this example move
Your mind, averse from all the joys of love.
Deign to be loved, and ev'ry heart subdue!
What nymph could e'er attract such crowds as you?
Not she whose beauty urged the Centaur's arms,[8]
Ulysses' queen, nor Helen's fatal charms.
Ev'n now, when silent scorn is all they gain,
A thousand court you, though they court in vain,
A thousand sylvans, demigods, and gods,
That haunt our mountains and our Alban woods.
But if you'll prosper, mark what I advise,
Whom age and long experience render wise,
And one whose tender care is far above

All that these lovers ever felt of love,
(Far more than e'er can by yourself be guessed)
Fix on Vertumnus, and reject the rest.
For his firm faith I dare engage my own;
Scarce to himself, himself is better known. [Pg 111]
To distant lands Vertumnus never roves;
Like you, contented with his native groves:
Nor at first sight, like most, admires the fair; }
For you he lives; and you alone shall share }
His last affection, as his early care. }
Besides, he's lovely far above the rest,
With youth immortal, and with beauty blest.
Add, that he varies ev'ry shape with ease,
And tries all forms that may Pomona please.
But what should most excite a mutual flame,
Your rural cares and pleasures are the same:
To him your orchards' early fruits are due,
(A pleasing off'ring when 'tis made by you;)
He values these; but yet, alas! complains,
That still the best and dearest gift remains.
Not the fair fruit that on yon branches glows
With that ripe red th' autumnal sun bestows;
Nor tasteful herbs that in these gardens rise,
Which the kind soil with milky sap supplies;
You, only you, can move the god's desire:
Oh crown so constant and so pure a fire!
Let soft compassion touch your gentle mind;
Think, 'tis Vertumnus begs you to be kind!
So may no frost, when early buds appear,
Destroy the promise of the youthful year;
Nor winds, when first your florid orchard blows,
Shake the light blossoms from their blasted boughs!
This, when the various god had urged in vain,
He straight assumed his native form again;
Such, and so bright an aspect now he bears,
As when through clouds th' emerging sun appears,
And thence exerting his refulgent ray,
Dispels the darkness and reveals the day.
Force he prepared, but checked the rash design;
For when, appearing in a form divine, [Pg 112]
The nymph surveys him, and beholds the grace
Of charming features, and a youthful face,
In her soft breast consenting passions move,
And the warm maid confessed a mutual love.

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] This fragment was first published in 1712, in Lintot's Miscellany.

[2] The reign of Procas, one of the fabulous kings of Alba Longa.

[3] Pope, in his youth, was not averse to affected phrases; but it is surprising that he could bring himself to call a garden "the vegetable care."

[4] "Sliding" is a very happy expression.—Bowles.

Pope borrowed it from the corresponding passage of Sandys—"Soft-sliding springs."

[5] Priapus.

[6] A broad band of cloth worn by women round the head.

[7] Sandys' Ovid, book ii.:

—his kisses too intemperate grow,
Not such as maids on maidens do bestow.

[8] Hippodameia. According to the fable, a Centaur carried her off at her marriage feast. This occasioned the battle between the Lapithæ, over whom her husband ruled, and the Centaurs.

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# JANUARY AND MAY: [Pg 113]

**OR,**

# THE MERCHANT'S TALE.

## FROM CHAUCER.

This translation was done at sixteen or seventeen years of age.—Pope. [Pg 115]

The story of January and May now before us is of the comic kind; and the character of a fond old dotard betrayed into disgrace by an unsuitable match is supported in a lively manner. Pope has nowhere copied the free and easy versification, and the narrative style of Dryden's Fables, so happily as in this pleasant tale. He has endeavoured suitably to familiarise the stateliness of our heroic measure; but, after all his pains, this measure is not adapted to such subjects so well as the lines of four feet, or the French numbers of Fontaine. Fontaine is, in truth, the capital and unrivalled writer of comic tales. He generally took his subjects from Boccacio, Poggius, and Ariosto; but adorned them with so many natural strokes, with such quaintness in his reflections, and such a dryness and archness of humour, as cannot fail to excite laughter. Our Prior has happily caught his manner in many of his lighter tales, particularly in Hans Carvel. Of the tale before us, Mr. Tyrwhitt gives the following account:—"The scene of the Merchant's Tale is laid in Italy; but none of the names, except Damian and Justin, seem to be Italian, but rather made at pleasure; so that I doubt whether the story be really of Italian growth. The adventure of the pear-tree I find in a small collection of Latin fables, written by one Adolphus, in elegiac verses of his fashion, in the year 1315. This fable has never been printed but once, and in a book not commonly to be met with. Whatever was the real original of this tale, the machinery of the fairies, which Chaucer has used so happily, was probably added by himself; and indeed I cannot help thinking that his Pluto and Proserpine were the true progenitors of Oberon and Titania, or rather that they themselves have, once at least, deigned to revisit our poetical system under the latter names. In the History of English Poetry, this is said to be an old Lombard story. But many passages in it are evidently taken from the Polycraticon of John of Salisbury: De molestiis et oneribus conjugiorum secundum Hieronymum et alios philosophos—Et de pernicie libidinis—Et de mulieris Ephesinæ et similium fide. And, by the way, about forty verses belonging to this argument are translated from the same chapter of the Polycraticon, in the Wife of Bath's prologue. In the meantime, it is not improbable that this tale might have originally been oriental. A Persian tale is just published which it extremely resembles; and it has much of the allegory of [Pg 116] an eastern apologue."—Warton.

In the art of telling a story in verse, Pope is peculiarly happy; we almost forget the grossness of the subject of this tale, while we are struck by the uncommon ease and readiness of the verse, the suitableness of the expressions, and the spirit and happiness of the whole. I think Dr. Warton injudiciously censures the verse, which appears to me to be very suitably employed. Pope has introduced triplets in many places, no doubt for greater effect, which they certainly have. There is generally two together, ended with an Alexandrine. This is common in Dryden's fables, on which Pope evidently formed his style in these narrative pieces. When I say that Dr. Warton injudiciously objects to the verse, it should be remembered that there is a mock-elevation in the speeches, descriptions, &c., of this story, and even poetry in the fairy revels, for which the versification Pope has chosen is more proper, than it would be for Prior's burlesque, and less poetical, ribaldry. The mixture of classical and gothic imagery, such as Chaucer uses, in making Pluto and Proserpine, instead of spirits, like Oberon and Titania, the king and queen of the "yellow-skirted fays," is very common in our early poets, who derived the combination from the old romances, and Ovid.—Bowles.

When Dryden published his version of some of Chaucer's Tales he gave, in his preface, an excellent account of the characteristics of the original. "As Chaucer," he said, "is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil. He is a perpetual fountain of good sense,—learned in all sciences, and therefore speaks properly on all subjects. He must have been a man of a most wonderful comprehensive nature, because, as it has been truly observed of him, he has taken into the compass of his Canterbury Tales the various manners, and humours, as we now call them, of the whole English nation in his age. Not a single character has escaped him. All his pilgrims are severally distinguished from each other, and not only in their inclinations, but in their very physiognomies and persons. I see them as perfectly before me,—their humours, their features, and their very dress—as distinctly as if I had supped with them at the Tabard in Southwark. The matter and manner of their tales, and of their telling, are so suited to their different educations, humours, and callings, that each of them would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and serious characters are distinguished by their several sorts of gravity. Their discourses are such as belong to their age, their calling, and their breeding,—such as are becoming of them, and of them only. Some of his persons are vicious, and some virtuous; some are unlearned, or, as Chaucer calls them, lewd, and some are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low characters is [Pg 117] different. The reeve, the miller, and the cook are several men, and distinguished from each other as much as the mincing lady prioress, and the broad-speaking, gap-toothed wife of Bath. We have our forefathers, and great grand-dames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days. Their general characters are still remaining in mankind, and even in England, though they are called by other names than those of monks and friars, and canons, and lady abesses, and nuns: for mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of nature, though everything is altered." There were two classes of readers who exclaimed against the attempt to renovate the original,—those who held that it was too bad to be reproduced, and those who considered it too excellent to be remodelled without being spoiled. "I find," writes Dryden, "some people are offended that I have

turned these tales into modern English, because they think them unworthy of my pains, and look on Chaucer as a dry, old-fashioned wit, not worth reviving. I have often heard the late Earl of Leicester say that Mr. Cowley himself was of that opinion, who having read him over at my lord's request, declared he had no taste of him. Being shocked perhaps with his old style, he never examined into the depth of his good sense. Chaucer, I confess, is a rough diamond, and must first be polished ere he shines. But there are other judges who think I ought not to have translated him into English out of a quite contrary notion. They suppose there is a certain veneration due to his old language, and that it is little less than profanation and sacrilege to alter it. They are further of opinion that somewhat of his good sense will suffer in the transfusion, and much of the beauty of his thoughts will infallibly be lost, which appear with more grace in their old habit. Of this opinion was the Earl of Leicester, who valued Chaucer as much as Mr. Cowley despised him." Dryden replied that his version was only intended for those to whom the original was unintelligible, and while allowing that the original was superior to the copy, he contended that the copy was to be preferred to a blank. If he had confined himself simply to modernising his author there would have been little force in his plea. The phraseology of Chaucer is readily mastered, and any departure from his words destroys a large part of the charm. There is a native simplicity in the mediæval works of genius which pleases like the artless manners of children, but which would be as ridiculous in a modern dress as the manners of the child in a grown-up person. Nor must we overlook the superior interest which attaches to the notions, usages, and characters of our ancestors when the picture is painted by themselves. A copy in which costumes and colouring have been completely changed is but an adulterate representation. The antique peculiarities and primitive freshness are gone. The real justification of Dryden's undertaking was [Pg 118] not that his version was a substitute for the original, but that it was a glorious supplement. Little as he scrupled to assert his own merits he could not press this argument to its full extent, though he was evidently conscious of the truth. He states that as the old poet was occasionally diffuse, and more often undignified, he had curtailed the redundancies, and rejected the trivialities. He did not stop at the easy office of omission. "I dare," he says, "to add that what beauties I lose in some places I give to others which had them not originally. If I have altered Chaucer anywhere for the better I must at the same time acknowledge that I could have done nothing without him. *Facile est inventis addere*, is no great commendation, and I am not so vain to think I have deserved a greater." In dramatic power and pathos, which are Chaucer's strongest points, Dryden has not improved upon him; but upon the whole he has narrated the tales in a higher strain of poetry, in richer and more felicitous language, and with the addition of many new and happy ideas. A few short examples will show the nature of the changes he introduced into numerous passages in the process of recasting them. The Wife of Bath's Tale commences with these lines:

> In olde dayes of the King Arthour
> Of which that Britains speken great honour,
> All was this land fulfillèd of fairie;
> The elf-queen with her jolly company,
> Dancèd full oft in many a greene mead;
> This was the old opinion, as I read;
> I speak of many hundred year ago;
> But now can no man see none elves mo.
> For now the greate charity and prayers
> Of limitours, and other holy freres,
> That seeken every land, and every stream,
> As thick as motes in the sunne-beam,
> Blessing halls, chambers, kitchenes, and bowers,
> Cities, and boroughs, castles high, and towers,
> Thorpes and barnes, sheepnes, and daieries,
> That maketh that there be no faieries.

This is one of the prettiest pieces of verse in the Canterbury Tales. Dryden has expanded and excelled it.

> In days of old when Arthur filled the throne,
> Whose acts and fame to foreign lands were blown,
> The king of elfs, and little fairy queen,
> Gambolled on heaths, and danced on every green,
> And where the jolly troop had led the round
> The grass unbidden rose, and marked the ground:
> Nor darkling did they dance; the silver light }
> Of Phœbe served to guide their steps aright, }
> And, with their tripping pleased, prolonged the night. }
> Her beams they followed where at full she played, }
> Nor longer than she shed her horns they stayed, }
> From thence with airy flight to foreign lands conveyed. } [Pg 119]
> Above the rest our Britain held they dear, }
> More solemnly they kept their sabbaths here, }
> And made more spacious rings, and revelled half the year. }
> I speak of ancient times, for now the swain, }
> Returning late, may pass the woods in vain, }
> And never hope to see the nightly train. }

* * * * * * * * * *

For priests with prayers and other godly gear,
Have made the merry goblins disappear;
And where they played their merry pranks before
Have sprinkled holy water on the floor;
And friars that through the wealthy regions run
Thick as the motes that twinkle in the sun,
Resort to farmers rich, and bless their halls,
And exorcise the beds, and cross the walls:
This makes the fairy choirs forsake the place
When once 'tis hallowed with the rites of grace.

He sometimes carries his innovations further, and the splendour of his paraphrase entirely eclipses the primitive idea. Chaucer says, in the tale of the Nun's Priest, that

Swevens be but vanities and japes.
Men dream all day of owles and of apes,
And eke of many a mase therewithall;
Men dream of thinges that never be shall.

Chaucer's hint, which is scarcely more than if the speaker had said in plain prose, "I have no faith in dreams, for they are wild visions which never come true," is transformed by Dryden into this exquisite passage:

Dreams are but interludes, which fancy makes;
When monarch-reason sleeps this mimic wakes;
Compounds a medley of disjointed things,
A mob of cobblers, and a court of kings:
Light fumes are merry, grosser fumes are sad;
Both are the reasonable soul run mad;
And many monstrous forms in sleep we see,
That neither were, nor are, nor e'er can be.
Sometimes forgotten things long cast behind
Rush forward in the brain, and come to mind;
The nurse's legends are for truths received,
And the man dreams but what the boy believed.
Sometimes we but rehearse a former play; }
The night restores our actions done by day, }
As hounds in sleep will open for their prey. }

Among the characteristics of the "poor parson" Chaucer mentions that

He was a shepherd, and no mercenary,

which is the only warrant the text afforded for these beautiful lines in the paraphrase of Dryden:

The prelate for his holy life he prized;
The worldly pomp of prelacy despised. [Pg 120]
His Saviour came not with a gaudy show,
Nor was his kingdom of the world below.
Patience in want, and poverty of mind, }
These marks of church and churchmen he designed, }
And living taught, and dying left behind. }
The crown he wore was of the pointed thorn;
In purple he was crucified, not born.
They who contend for place and high degree,
Are not his sons, but those of Zebedee.

Having gained so much from the masculine and buoyant genius of Dryden, the newly fashioned tales took their rank as independent works, and were rather valued for their want of resemblance to Chaucer than because they were a true reflection of him. There are defects in the modern version. The language is sometimes too colloquial, and there are many careless lines; but in the main the verse bounds and dances along with equal strength, facility, and grace, exhibiting one of the most wonderful specimens in literature of the power, spirit, and abundance of the simplest English when moulded by a master. The Flower and the Leaf, which might have been written in the fairy land it describes, is pre-eminent above the rest for its bright unceasing flow of delicious poetry, for its chaste yet luxuriant diction, for its sustained and various melody, for its lovely pictures both earthly and ethereal, for its pure, refined, and elevating sentiment.

"By Dryden's Fables," says Johnson, "which had then been not long published, and were much in the hands of poetical readers, Pope was tempted to try his own skill in giving Chaucer a more fashionable appearance, and put January and May, and the Prologue of the Wife of Bath into modern English." January and May, which the poet says was translated when he was sixteen or seventeen, was not published till he was nearly twenty-one, having first appeared on May 2, 1709, in the sixth volume of Tonson's Miscellany. He imitated Dryden in abridging Chaucer, but his only addition of any moment to the Merchant's Tale is in the description of the fairies, which

was borrowed from Dryden himself. His attempt was substantially limited to epitomising the original in refined language, and musical numbers. In this he succeeded, and more could not be expected of a youth. If he had aspired higher he could not at twenty have competed with his mighty predecessor. Dryden's tales are the productions of a great poetic genius. The January of Pope is the production of a clever versifier. The relative position which their respective translations of Chaucer occupy in their works accords with the difference in their execution. The adaptations of Dryden are commonly numbered among his choicest effusions. The versions of Pope hold a subordinate place among his writings, and are hardly taken into account in the estimate of his powers. The result vindicates the opinion of Lord Leicester, that in the conversion of Chaucer into modern English the loss exceeds the gain. Pope was not insensible to the [Pg 121] dramatic qualities of his author. "I read him still," he said to Spence, "with as much pleasure as almost any of our poets. He is a master of manners, of description, and the first tale-teller in the true enlivened natural way." But in polishing him, something of the nature and liveliness was inevitably obliterated. He was, in many of his stories, an admirable novelist in verse, and he adopted a familiar style which permitted him to relate in rhyme, with the freedom of prose, the common talk of common men. His traits are in the highest degree colloquial, individual, and life-like, and his strong strokes are weakened, and his dramatic vivacity tamed down, when he is turned into smooth, harmonious, elegant poetry. The refinement in the form is not a compensation for the sacrifices in the substance, especially when the antique form is itself essential to teach us how our forefathers spoke, thought, and acted five hundred years ago. Every touch which renders the picture more modern, makes it less true. The translation of Pope is skilfully executed, but it is inferior in raciness and interest to an original which can be read by any educated Englishman. A few gratuitous defects have been imported into the modernised January and May. "Chaucer," says Dryden, "followed nature everywhere, but was never so bold to go beyond her." Pope has sometimes overstepped the limits. He has here and there exaggerated his original, and the truth and keeping of the characters are invariably injured by the change.

"I have confined my choice," said Dryden, "to such tales of Chaucer as savour nothing of immodesty. If I had desired more to please than to instruct, the Reeve, the Miller, the Shipman, the Merchant, the Sumner, and above all the Wife of Bath, in the prologue to her tale, would have procured me as many friends and readers, as there are beaus and ladies of pleasure in town. But I will no more offend against good manners. I am sensible as I ought to be of the scandal I have given by my loose writings, and make what reparation I am able by this public acknowledgment." Both the pieces which Pope selected were among the number which Dryden put under a ban, and the younger poet, perhaps, considered that when he had purified them from part of their coarseness, the objection would no longer apply. The apology which Chaucer urged for his plain speaking was that in telling a tale he must repeat it correctly, and not surrender truth to delicacy. "Yet if a man," replies Dryden, "should have enquired of him what need he had of introducing such characters where obscene words were proper in their mouths, but very indecent to be heard, I know not what answer he could have made." None was possible. The offence, nevertheless, was not what Dryden assumes. The same Chaucer who, in his carefulness to keep to nature, will have all his *dramatis personæ* talk according to their rank and callings, [Pg 122] assuredly did not violate nature when he represented the religious and refined prioress, together with the other high-bred and decorous members of the party, as willing auditors of the broad and uncompromising language of their ruder companions. The presence of ladies and ecclesiastics was not the slightest check upon the tongues of the pilgrims, and it is evident that in ordinary social life, there was hardly any limit to the freedom of expression. But in every age a latitude is allowed in conversation which would be condemned in books, and Chaucer merely excused himself for recording in poetry the common colloquial terms of his day. Usage had rendered them inoffensive, and in themselves they argued no more impurity of thought than the equivalent circumlocutions of our own generation. The greater or less plainness of speech which has prevailed at different eras is often rather a question of manners than of morality. If Pope or Dryden had retained, in this particular, the phraseology of Chaucer, the adherence to the letter of the original would have completely falsified its spirit, just as words which are uttered with innocence by rustics in a cottage would be an evidence of the utmost depravity when spoken by a man of education in a drawing-room. The intention influences the effect, and the grossness of our early writers has not the taint to a reader of the present day which would attach to similar language when employed by corrupt minds in civilized times. All the expurgations of Pope were insufficient to make his version as little exceptionable in the eighteenth century as was the original of Chaucer to the world of the fourteenth century. A merchant in the reign of Queen Anne would not have ventured to recite the modernised story in a mixed company, where ladies like the prioress and the nuns were present. The tone of the work is even lowered in places. In the looser literature of Pope's youth, and especially in comedies, adultery in a wife only furnished food for laughter against the husband. This is the aspect which is imparted to the translation of January and May, and it cannot be denied that Chaucer himself in some of his other stories, is open to the charge of treating vice as a jest. But he did not fall into the error in the Merchant's Tale, where the supposed narrator, in accordance with his character, reprobates the criminal conduct of the treacherous squire and the faithless wife, at the same time that he exposes the doating folly of the amorous knight.

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## JANUARY AND MAY: [Pg 123]

**OR, THE**

## MERCHANT'S TALE.

There lived in Lombardy, as authors write,
In days of old, a wise and worthy knight;
Of gentle manners, as of gen'rous race,
Blest with much sense,[1] more riches, and some grace.
Yet led astray by Venus' soft delights
He scarce could rule some idle appetites:
For long ago, let priests say what they could,
Weak sinful laymen were but flesh and blood. [Pg 124]
But in due time, when sixty years were o'er,
He vowed to lead this vicious life no more;
Whether pure holiness inspired his mind,
Or dotage turned his brain, is hard to find;
But his high courage[2] pricked him forth to wed,
And try the pleasures of a lawful bed.
This was his nightly dream, his daily care,
And to the heav'nly pow'rs his constant prayer,
Once, ere he died, to taste the blissful life
Of a kind husband and a loving wife.[3]
These thoughts he fortified with reasons still,
For none want reasons to confirm their will.
Grave authors say, and witty poets sing,
That honest wedlock is a glorious thing:
But depth of judgment most in him appears,
Who wisely weds in his maturer years.[4]
Then let him chuse a damsel young and fair,
To bless his age, and bring a worthy heir;
To sooth his cares, and free from noise and strife,
Conduct him gently to the verge of life.
Let sinful bachelors their woes deplore,
Full well they merit all they feel, and more: [Pg 125]
Unawed by precepts, human or divine,
Like birds and beasts, promiscuously they join:
Nor know to make the present blessing last,
To hope the future, or esteem the past:
But vainly boast the joys they never tried,
And find divulged the secrets they would hide.
The married man may bear his yoke with ease,
Secure at once himself and heav'n to please;
And pass his inoffensive hours away,
In bliss all night, and innocence all day:
Though fortune change, his constant spouse remains,
Augments his joys, or mitigates his pains.
But what so pure, which envious tongues will spare?
Some wicked wits have libelled all the fair.
With matchless impudence they style a wife
The dear-bought curse, and lawful plague of life;
A bosom serpent, a domestic evil,
A night invasion, and a mid-day devil.
Let not the wise these sland'rous words regard,
But curse the bones of ev'ry lying bard.[5]
All other goods by fortune's hand are giv'n,
A wife is the peculiar gift of heav'n.
Vain fortune's favours, never at a stay,
Like empty shadows, pass, and glide away;
One solid comfort, our eternal wife,
Abundantly supplies us all our life;
This blessing lasts, if those who try, say true,
As long as heart can wish—and longer too.
Our grandsire Adam, ere of Eve possessed,
Alone, and ev'n in Paradise unblessed, [Pg 126]
With mournful looks the blissful scenes surveyed,
And wandered in the solitary shade.
The Maker saw, took pity, and bestowed
Woman, the last, the best reserve of God.
A wife! ah gentle deities,[6] can he,
That has a wife, e'er feel adversity?
Would men but follow what the sex advise,
All things would prosper, all the world grow wise.
'Twas by Rebecca's aid that Jacob won

His father's blessing from an elder son:[7]
Abusive Nabal owed his forfeit life
To the wise conduct of a prudent wife:
Heroic Judith, as old Hebrews show,
Preserved the Jews, and slew th' Assyrian foe:[8]
At Hester's suit, the persecuting sword [Pg 127]
Was sheathed, and Israel lived to bless the Lord.
  These weighty motives, January the sage
Maturely pondered in his riper age;
And charmed with virtuous joys, and sober life,
Would try that christian comfort, called a wife.
His friends were summoned on a point so nice,[9]
To pass their judgment, and to give advice;
But fixed before, and well resolved was he,
As men that ask advice are wont to be.
  My friends, he cried (and cast a mournful look
Around the room, and sighed before he spoke):
Beneath the weight of threescore years I bend,
And, worn with cares, am hast'ning to my end;
How I have lived, alas! you know too well,
In worldly follies, which I blush to tell;
But gracious heav'n has ope'd my eyes at last,
With due regret I view my vices past,
And, as the precept of the church decrees,
Will take a wife, and live in holy ease.
But since by counsel all things should be done,
And many heads are wiser still than one,
Chuse you for me,[10] who best shall be content
When my desire's approved by your consent.
  One caution yet is needful to be told,
To guide your choice; this wife must not be old:[11] [Pg 128]
There goes a saying, and 'twas shrewdly said,
Old fish at table, but young flesh in bed.
My soul abhors the tasteless, dry embrace
Of a stale virgin with a winter face:
In that cold season love but treats his guest
With bean-straw, and tough forage at the best
No crafty widows shall approach my bed;
Those are too wise for bachelors to wed.
As subtle clerks by many schools are made,
Twice married dames are mistresses o' th' trade:
But young and tender virgins ruled with ease,
We form like wax, and mould them as we please.
  Conceive me, sirs, nor take my sense amiss;
'Tis what concerns my soul's eternal bliss;
Since if I found no pleasure in my spouse,
As flesh is frail, and who, God help me, knows?
Then should I live in lewd adultery,
And sink downright to Satan when I die.
Or were I cursed with an unfruitful bed,
The righteous end were lost for which I wed;
To raise up seed to bless the pow'rs above,
And not for pleasure only, or for love.[12]
Think not I doat; 'tis time to take a wife,
When vig'rous blood forbids a chaster life:
Those that are blest with store of grace divine,
May live like saints, by heav'n's consent, and mine.[13]
  And since I speak of wedlock, let me say, [Pg 129]
(As, thank my stars, in modest truth I may,)
My limbs are active, still I'm sound at heart,
And a new vigour springs in ev'ry part.
Think not my virtue lost, though time has shed
These rev'rend honours on my hoary head:
Thus trees are crowned with blossoms white as snow,
The vital sap then rising from below.[14]
Old as I am, my lusty limbs appear
Like winter greens, that flourish all the year.
Now, sirs, you know, to what I stand inclined,
Let ev'ry friend with freedom speak his mind.[15]
  He said; the rest in diff'rent parts divide;
The knotty point was urged on either side:
Marriage, the theme on which they all declaimed,
Some praised with wit, and some with reason blamed,

Till, what with proofs, objections, and replies,
Each wond'rous positive, and wond'rous wise,
There fell between his brothers a debate,
Placebo this was called, and Justin that. [Pg 130]
  First to the knight Placebo thus begun,
(Mild were his looks, and pleasing was his tone,)
Such prudence, sir, in all your words appears,
As plainly proves, experience dwells with years;
Yet you pursue sage Solomon's advice,
To work by counsel when affairs are nice:
But, with the wise man's leave, I must protest, }
So may my soul arrive at ease and rest, }
As still I hold your own advice the best. }
  Sir, I have lived a courtier all my days,
And studied men, their manners, and their ways;
And have observed this useful maxim still,
To let my betters always have their will.
Nay, if my lord affirmed that black was white,
My word was this, "Your honour's in the right."
Th' assuming wit, who deems himself so wise,
As his mistaken patron to advise,
Let Tirm not dare to vent his dang'rous thought,
A noble fool was never in a fault.[16]
This, sir, affects not you, whose ev'ry word
Is weighed with judgment, and befits a lord:
Your will is mine; and is, I will maintain,
Pleasing to God, and should be so to man;
At least your courage all the world must praise,
Who dare to wed in your declining days.
Indulge the vigour of your mounting blood,
And let grey fools be indolently good,
Who, past all pleasure, damn the joys of sense,
With rev'rend dulness and grave impotence.[17] [Pg 131]
  Justin, who silent sat, and heard the man,
Thus, with a philosophic frown, began:
  A heathen author,[18] of the first degree,
Who, though not faith, had sense as well as we,
Bids us be certain our concerns to trust
To those of gen'rous principles, and just.
The venture's greater, I'll presume to say,
To give your person, than your goods away:
And therefore, sir, as you regard your rest,
First learn your lady's qualities at least:
Whether she's chaste or rampant, proud or civil;
Meek as a saint, or haughty as the devil;
Whether an easy, fond, familiar fool,
Or such a wit as no man e'er can rule.[19]
'Tis true, perfection none must hope to find
In all this world, much less in woman-kind;
But if her virtues prove the larger share,
Bless the kind fates, and think your fortune rare.
Ah, gentle sir, take warning of a friend,
Who knows too well the state you thus commend;
And spite of all its praises must declare,
All he can find is bondage, cost, and care.
Heav'n knows, I shed full many a private tear,
And sigh in silence, lest the world should hear:
While all my friends applaud my blissful life,
And swear no mortal's happier in a wife;
Demure and chaste as any vestal nun,
The meekest creature that beholds the sun! [Pg 132]
But, by th' immortal powers, I feel the pain,
And he that smarts has reason to complain.
Do what you list, for me; you must be sage,
And cautious sure; for wisdom is in age:
But at these years to venture on the fair![20]
By him, who made the ocean, earth, and air,
To please a wife, when her occasions call,
Would busy the most vig'rous of us all.
And trust me, sir, the chastest you can chuse
Will ask observance, and exact her dues.
If what I speak my noble lord offend,
My tedious sermon here is at an end.[21]

'Tis well, 'tis wond'rous well, the knight replies,
Most worthy kinsman, faith you're mighty wise!
We, sirs, are fools; and must resign the cause
To heath'nish authors, proverbs, and old saws.
He spoke with scorn, and turned another way:—
What does my friend, my dear Placebo, say?
I say, quoth he, by heav'n the man's to blame,
To slander wives, and wedlock's holy name.
At this the council rose, without delay;
Each, in his own opinion, went his way;
With full consent, that, all disputes appeased,
The knight should marry, when and where he pleased.
Who now but January exults with joy?
The charms of wedlock all his soul employ:
Each nymph by turns his wav'ring mind possessed,
And reigned the short-lived tyrant of his breast;
Whilst fancy pictured ev'ry lively part,
And each bright image wandered o'er his heart.
Thus, in some public forum fixed on high,
A mirror shows the figures moving by; [Pg 133]
Still one by one, in swift succession, pass
The gliding shadows o'er the polished glass.
This lady's charms the nicest could not blame,
But vile suspicions had aspersed her fame;
That was with sense, but not with virtue, blest:
And one had grace, that wanted all the rest.
Thus doubting long what nymph he should obey,
He fixed at last upon the youthful May.
Her faults he knew not, love is always blind,
But ev'ry charm revolved within his mind:
Her tender age, her form divinely fair,
Her easy motion, her attractive air,
Her sweet behaviour, her enchanting face,
Her moving softness, and majestic grace.[22]
Much in his prudence did our knight rejoice,
And thought no mortal could dispute his choice:[23]
Once more in haste he summoned ev'ry friend,
And told them all, their pains were at an end.[24]
Heav'n, that (said he) inspired me first to wed,
Provides a consort worthy of my bed:
Let none oppose th' election, since on this
Depends my quiet, and my future bliss.[25]
A dame there is, the darling of my eyes,
Young, beauteous, artless, innocent, and wise;
Chaste, though not rich; and though not nobly born,
Of honest parents, and may serve my turn.[26]
Her will I wed, if gracious heav'n so please; [Pg 134]
To pass my age in sanctity and ease;
And thank the pow'rs, I may possess alone
The lovely prize, and share my bliss with none!
If you, my friends, this virgin can procure,
My joys are full, my happiness is sure.
One only doubt remains: Full oft, I've heard,
By casuists grave, and deep divines averred;
That 'tis too much for human race to know
The bliss of heav'n above, and earth below.
Now should the nuptial pleasures prove so great,
To match the blessings of the future state,
Those endless joys were ill exchanged for these;
Then clear this doubt, and set my mind at ease.[27]
This Justin heard, nor could his spleen controul,
Touched to the quick, and tickled at the soul.
Sir knight, he cried, if this be all your dread,
Heav'n put it past your doubt, whene'er you wed;
And to my fervent prayers so far consent,
That ere the rites are o'er, you may repent!
Good heav'n, no doubt, the nuptial state approves,
Since it chastises still what best it loves.
Then be not, sir, abandoned to despair; }
Seek, and perhaps you'll find among the fair, }
One, that may do your business to a hair; }
Not ev'n in wish, your happiness delay,
But prove the scourge to lash you on your way: [Pg 135]

Then to the skies your mounting soul shall go,
Swift as an arrow soaring from the bow!
Provided still, you moderate your joy,
Nor in your pleasures all your might employ;
Let reason's rule your strong desires abate,
Nor please too lavishly your gentle mate.
Old wives there are, of judgment most acute,
Who solve these questions beyond all dispute;
Consult with those, and be of better cheer;
Marry, do penance, and dismiss your fear.
So said, they rose, no more the work delayed;[28]
The match was offered, the proposals made
The parents, you may think, would soon comply;
The old have int'rest ever in their eye.
Nor was it hard to move the lady's mind;
When fortune favours, still the fair are kind.[29]
I pass each previous settlement and deed,
Too long for me to write, or you to read;
Nor will with quaint impertinence display
The pomp, the pageantry, the proud array.[30]
The time approached, to church the parties went,
At once with carnal and devout intent:[31]
Forth came the priest, and bade th' obedient wife
Like Sarah or Rebecca lead her life:
Then prayed the pow'rs the fruitful bed to bless,
And made all sure enough with holiness.
And now the palace-gates are opened wide,
The guests appear in order, side by side,
And placed in state, the bridegroom and the bride.[32]
[Pg 136]
The breathing flute's soft notes are heard around,
And the shrill trumpets mix their silver sound;
The vaulted roofs with echoing music ring,
These touch the vocal stops, and those the trembling string.
Not thus Amphion tuned the warbling lyre,
Nor Joab the sounding clarion could inspire,
Nor fierce Theodomas,[33] whose sprightly strain
Could swell the soul to rage, and fire the martial train.
Bacchus himself, the nuptial feast to grace,
(So poets sing) was present on the place:
And lovely Venus, goddess of delight,
Shook high her flaming torch in open sight,
And danced around, and smiled on ev'ry knight:
Pleased her best servant would his courage try,
No less in wedlock, than in liberty.
Full many an age old Hymen had not spied
So kind a bridegroom, or so bright a bride.
Ye bards! renowned among the tuneful throng
For gentle lays, and joyous nuptial song,
Think not your softest numbers can display
The matchless glories of this blissful day;
The joys are such, as far transcend your rage,
When tender youth has wedded stooping age.
The beauteous dame sate smiling at the board,
And darted am'rous glances at her lord.
Not Hester's self, whose charms the Hebrews sing,
E'er looked so lovely on her Persian king:
Bright as the rising sun, in summer's day,
And fresh and blooming as the month of May!
The joyful knight surveyed her by his side,
Nor envied Paris with his Spartan bride;
[Pg 137]
Still as his mind revolved with vast delight
Th' entrancing raptures of th' approaching night,
Restless he sate, invoking ev'ry pow'r
To speed his bliss, and haste the happy hour.
Mean time the vig'rous dancers beat the ground,
And songs were sung, and flowing bowls went round.
With od'rous spices they perfumed the place,
And mirth and pleasure shone in ev'ry face.
Damian alone, of all the menial train,
Sad in the midst of triumphs, sighed for pain;
Damian alone, the knight's obsequious squire,
Consumed at heart, and fed a secret fire.
His lovely mistress all his soul possest,

He looked, he languished, and could take no rest:
His task performed, he sadly went his way,
Fell on his bed, and loathed the light of day.
There let him lie; till his relenting dame
Weep in her turn, and waste in equal flame.
  The weary sun, as learned poets write,
Forsook th' horizon, and rolled down the light;
While glitt'ring stars his absent beams supply,
And night's dark mantle overspread the sky.
Then rose the guests; and as the time required,
Each paid his thanks, and decently retired.
  The foe once gone, our knight prepared t' undress,
So keen he was, and eager to possess:
But first thought fit th' assistance to receive,
Which grave physicians scruple not to give;
Satyrion near, with hot eringos stood,
Cantharides, to fire the lazy blood,
Whose use old bards describe in luscious rhymes,
And critics learn'd explain to modern times.
  By this the sheets were spread, the bride undressed,
The room was sprinkled, and the bed was blessed.[34]
What next ensued beseems not me to say;[35] [Pg 138]
'Tis sung, he laboured till the dawning day,
Then briskly sprung from bed, with heart so light, }
As all were nothing he had done by night; }
And sipped his cordial as he sat upright. }
He kissed his balmy spouse with wanton play,
And feebly sung a lusty roundelay;[36]
Then on the couch his weary limbs he cast;
For ev'ry labour must have rest at last.
  But anxious cares the pensive squire oppressed,
Sleep fled his eyes, and peace forsook his breast;
The raging flames that in his bosom dwell,
He wanted art to hide, and means to tell.
Yet hoping time th' occasion might betray,
Composed a sonnet to the lovely May;
Which writ and folded with the nicest art,
He wrapped in silk, and laid upon his heart.
  When now the fourth revolving day was run,
('Twas June, and Cancer had received the sun)
Forth from her chamber came the beauteous bride,
The good old knight moved slowly by her side.
High mass was sung; they feasted in the hall;[37]
The servants round stood ready at their call.
The squire alone was absent from the board,
And much his sickness grieved his worthy lord,
Who prayed his spouse, attended with her train,
To visit Damian, and divert his pain.[38]
Th' obliging dames obeyed with one consent; [Pg 139]
They left the hall, and to his lodging went.
The female tribe surround him as he lay,
And close beside him sat the gentle May:
Where, as she tried his pulse, he softly drew
A heaving sigh,[39] and cast a mournful view!
Then gave his bill, and bribed the pow'rs divine,
With secret vows, to favour his design.[40]
  Who studies now but discontented May?
On her soft couch uneasily she lay:
The lumpish husband snored away the night,
Till coughs awaked him near the morning light.
What then he did, I'll not presume to tell,
Nor if she thought herself in heav'n or hell:
Honest and dull in nuptial bed they lay,
Till the bell tolled, and all arose to pray.
  Were it by forceful destiny decreed,
Or did from chance, or nature's power proceed;
Or that some star, with aspect kind to love,
Shed its selectest influence from above;
Whatever was the cause, the tender dame
Felt the first motions of an infant flame;
Received th' impressions of the love-sick squire,
And wasted in the soft infectious fire.
Ye fair, draw near, let May's example move

Your gentle minds to pity those who love!
Had some fierce tyrant in her stead been found,
The poor adorer sure had hanged, or drowned:
But she, your sex's mirrour, free from pride,
Was much too meek to prove a homicide.[41]
  But to my tale: Some sages[42] have defined
Pleasure the sov'reign bliss of human-kind:
Our knight (who studied much, we may suppose)
Derived his high philosophy from those;
For, like a prince, he bore the vast expense
Of lavish pomp, and proud magnificence:
His house was stately, his retinue gay,
Large was his train, and gorgeous his array.
His spacious garden made to yield to none,
Was compassed round with walls of solid stone;
Priapus could not half describe the grace
(Though god of gardens) of this charming place:
A place to tire the rambling wits of France
In long descriptions, and exceed romance:
Enough to shame the gentlest bard that sings
Of painted meadows, and of purling springs.[43]
  Full in the centre of the flow'ry ground,
A crystal fountain spread its streams around,
The fruitful banks with verdant laurels crowned:
About this spring, if ancient fame say true,
The dapper elves their moonlight sports pursue:
Their pigmy king, and little fairy queen,[44]
In circling dances gambolled on the green,
While tuneful sprites a merry concert made,
And airy music warbled through the shade.
  Hither the noble knight would oft repair,
(His scene of pleasure, and peculiar care)
For this he held it dear, and always bore
The silver key that locked the garden door.
To this sweet place in summer's sultry heat,
He used from noise and bus'ness to retreat;
And here in dalliance spend the live-long day,
*Solus cum sola*, with his sprightly May.
For whate'er work was undischarged a-bed,
The duteous knight in this fair garden sped.
  [45]But ah! what mortal lives of bliss secure,
How short a space our worldly joys endure!
O Fortune, fair, like all thy treach'rous kind,
But faithless still, and way'ring as the wind!
O painted monster, formed mankind to cheat,
With pleasing poison, and with soft deceit!
This rich, this am'rous, venerable knight,
Amidst his ease, his solace, and delight,
Struck blind by thee, resigns his days to grief,
And calls on death, the wretch's last relief.[46]
  The rage of jealousy then seized his mind,
For much he feared the faith of woman-kind.[47]
His wife, not suffered from his side to stray,
Was captive kept, he watched her night and day,
Abridged her pleasures, and confined her sway.
Full oft in tears did hapless May complain,
And sighed full oft; but sighed and wept in vain;
She looked on Damian with a lover's eye;
For oh, 'twas fixed, she must possess or die!
Nor less impatience vexed her am'rous squire,
Wild with delay, and burning with desire.
Watched as she was, yet could he not refrain
By secret writing to disclose his pain;
The dame by signs revealed her kind intent,
Till both were conscious what each other meant.
  Ah, gentle knight, what would thy eyes avail,
Though they could see as far as ships can sail?
'Tis better, sure, when blind, deceived to be,
Than be deluded when a man can see![48]
  Argus himself, so cautious and so wise,
Was over-watched, for all his hundred eyes:
So many an honest husband may, 'tis known,
Who, wisely, never thinks the case his own.

The dame at last, by diligence and care,
Procured the key her knight was wont to bear;
She took the wards in wax before the fire,
And gave th' impression to the trusty squire.
By means of this, some wonder shall appear,
Which, in due place and season, you may hear.
Well sung sweet Ovid, in the days of yore,
What sleight is that, which love will not explore?
And Pyramus and Thisbe plainly show [Pg 143]
The feats true lovers, when they list, can do:
Though watched and captive, yet in spite of all,
They found the art of kissing[49] through a wall.
But now no longer from our tale to stray;
It happed that once upon a summer's day,
Our rev'rend knight was urged to am'rous play:
He raised his spouse ere matin-bell was rung,
And thus his morning canticle he sung.
Awake, my love, disclose thy radiant eyes;
Arise, my wife, my beauteous lady, rise!
Hear how the doves with pensive notes complain,
And in soft murmurs tell the trees their pain:[50]
The winter's past; the clouds and tempests fly;
The sun adorns the fields, and brightens all the sky.
Fair without spot, whose ev'ry charming part
My bosom wounds, and captivates my heart;
Come, and in mutual pleasures let's engage,
Joy of my life, and comfort of my age.
This heard, to Damian straight a sign she made,
To haste before; the gentle squire obeyed:
Secret and undescried he took his way,
And, ambushed close, behind an arbour lay,
It was not long ere January came,
And, hand in hand with him his lovely dame;
Blind as he was, not doubting all was sure,
He turned the key, and made the gate secure.
Here let us walk, he said, observed by none,
Conscious of pleasures to the world unknown: [Pg 144]
So may my soul have joy, as thou my wife
Art far the dearest solace of my life;
And rather would I chuse, by heav'n above,
To die this instant, than to lose thy love.[51]
Reflect what truth was in my passion shown,
When, unendowed, I took thee for my own,
And sought no treasure but thy heart alone.
Old as I am, and now deprived of sight,
Whilst thou art faithful to thy own true knight,
Nor age, nor blindness, rob me of delight.
Each other loss with patience I can bear,
The loss of thee is what I only fear.
Consider then, my lady and my wife,
The solid comforts of a virtuous life.
As first, the love of Christ himself you gain;
Next, your own honour undefiled maintain;
And lastly, that which sure your mind must move,[52]
My whole estate shall gratify your love:
Make your own terms, and ere to-morrow's sun
Displays his light, by heav'n it shall be done.
I seal the contract with a holy kiss,
And will perform, by this—my dear, and this.[53]
Have comfort, spouse, nor think thy lord unkind;
'Tis love, not jealousy, that fires my mind.
For when thy charms my sober thoughts engage,
And joined to them my own unequal age,[54] [Pg 145]
From thy dear side I have no pow'r to part,
Such secret transports warm my melting heart.
For who that once possessed those heav'nly charms,
Could live one moment absent from thy arms?
He ceased, and May with modest grace replied;
(Weak was her voice, as while she spoke she cried;)
Heav'n knows (with that a tender sigh she drew)
I have a soul to save as well as you;
And, what no less you to my charge commend,
My dearest honour, will to death defend.

To you in holy church I gave my hand,
And joined my heart in wedlock's sacred band:
Yet, after this, if you distrust my care,
Then hear, my lord, and witness what I swear:
  First may the yawning earth her bosom rend,
And let me hence to hell alive descend;[55]
Or die the death I dread no less than hell,
Sewed in a sack, and plunged into a well,[56]
Ere I my fame by one lewd act disgrace,
Or once renounce the honour of my race.
For know, sir knight, of gentle blood I came,
I loath a whore, and startle at the name.
But jealous men on their own crimes reflect,
And learn from thence their ladies to suspect: [Pg 146]
Else why these needless cautions, sir, to me?
These doubts and fears of female constancy!
This chime still rings in ev'ry lady's ear,
The only strain a wife must hope to hear.
  Thus while she spoke, a sidelong glance she cast
Where Damian, kneeling, worshipped as she passed:[57]
She saw him watch the motions of her eye,
And singled out a pear-tree planted nigh:[58]
'Twas charged with fruit that made a goodly show,
And hung with dangling pears was ev'ry bough.
Thither th' obsequious squire addressed his pace,
And climbing, in the summit took his place;
The knight and lady walked beneath in view,
Where let us leave them, and our tale pursue.
  'Twas now the season when the glorious sun
His heav'nly progress through the Twins had run;
And Jove, exalted, his mild influence yields,
To glad the glebe, and paint the flow'ry fields:
Clear was the day, and Phœbus rising bright,
Had streaked the azure firmament with light;
He pierced the glitt'ring clouds with golden streams,
And warmed the womb of earth with genial beams.
  It so befel, in that fair morning tide, }
The fairies sported on the garden side, }
And in the midst their monarch and his bride. }
So featly tripped the light-foot ladies round, }
The knights so nimbly o'er the green-sward bound, }
That scarce they bent the flow'rs, or touched the ground.[59] } [Pg 147]
The dances ended, all the fairy train
For pinks and daisies searched the flow'ry plain;
While on a bank reclined of rising green,
Thus, with a frown, the king bespoke his queen:
  'Tis too apparent, argue what you can,
The treachery you women use to man:
A thousand authors have this truth made out,
And sad experience leaves no room for doubt.
  Heav'n rest thy spirit, noble Solomon,
A wiser monarch never saw the sun:
All wealth, all honours, the supreme degree
Of earthly bliss, was well bestowed on thee!
For sagely hast thou said: Of all mankind,
One only just, and righteous, hope to find:
But should'st thou search the spacious world around,
Yet one good woman is not to be found.
  Thus says the king who knew your wickedness;
The son of Sirach[60] testifies no less.
So may some wildfire on your bodies fall,
Or some devouring plague consume you all;
As well you view the lecher in the tree,
And well this honourable knight you see:
But since he's blind and old (a helpless case)
His squire shall cuckold him before your face.
  Now by my own dread majesty I swear,
And by this awful sceptre which I bear,
No impious wretch shall 'scape unpunished long,
That in my presence offers such a wrong.
I will this instant undeceive the knight,
And, in the very act, restore his sight: [Pg 148]
And set the strumpet here in open view, }

A warning to these ladies,[61] and to you,
And all the faithless sex, for ever to be true.
  And will you so, replied the queen, indeed?
Now, by my mother's soul it is decreed,
She shall not want an answer at her need.
For her, and for her daughters, I'll engage,
And all the sex in each succeeding age;
Art shall be theirs to varnish an offence,
And fortify their crimes with confidence.
Nay, were they taken in a strict embrace,
Seen with both eyes, and pinioned on the place;
All they shall need is to protest and swear,
Breathe a soft sigh, and drop a tender tear;[62]
Till their wise husbands, gulled by arts like these,
Grow gentle, tractable, and tame as geese.
  What though this sland'rous Jew, this Solomon,
Called women fools, and knew full many a one;
The wiser wits of later times declare,
How constant, chaste, and virtuous women are:
Witness the martyrs, who resigned their breath,
Serene in torments, unconcerned in death;[63]
And witness next what Roman authors tell,
How Arria, Portia, and Lucretia fell.
  But since the sacred leaves to all are free,
And men interpret texts, why should not we?
By this no more was meant, than to have shown,
That sov'reign goodness dwells in him alone
Who only Is, and is but only One.[64]
But grant the worst; shall women then be weighed
By ev'ry word that Solomon has said?
What though this king (as ancient story boasts)
Built a fair temple to the Lord of Hosts;
He ceased at last his Maker to adore,
And did as much for idol gods, or more.
Beware what lavish praises you confer
On a rank lecher and idolater;
Whose reign indulgent God, says Holy Writ,
Did but for David's righteous sake permit;
David, the monarch after heav'n's own mind,
Who loved our sex, and honoured all our kind.
  Well, I'm a woman, and as such must speak;
Silence would swell me, and my heart would break.
Know then, I scorn your dull authorities,
Your idle wits, and all their learned lies.
By heav'n, those authors are our sex's foes,
Whom, in our right, I must and will oppose.
  Nay, quoth the king, dear madam, be not wroth:
I yield it up; but since I gave my oath,
That this much injured knight again should see,
It must be done—I am a king, said he,
And one whose faith has ever sacred been.
  And so has mine, she said, I am a queen:
Her answer she shall have, I undertake;
And thus an end of all dispute I make.
Try when you list; and you shall find, my lord,
It is not in our sex to break our word.[65]
  We leave them here in this heroic strain,
And to the knight our story turns again;
Who in the garden, with his lovely May,
Sung merrier than the cuckoo or the jay:
This was his song; "Oh kind and constant be,
Constant and kind I'll ever prove to thee."
  Thus singing as he went, at last he drew
By easy steps, to where the pear-tree grew:
The longing dame looked up, and spied her love,
Full fairly perched among the boughs above.
She stopped, and sighing: Oh, good gods, she cried,
What pangs, what sudden shoots distend my side?
Oh for that tempting fruit, so fresh, so green;
Help, for the love of heav'n's immortal queen;
Help, dearest lord, and save at once the life
Of thy poor infant, and thy longing wife![66]
  Sore sighed the knight to hear his lady's cry,

[Pg 149]
[Pg 150]

But could not climb, and had no servant nigh:
Old as he was, and void of eye-sight too,
What could, alas! a helpless husband do?
And must I languish then, she said, and die,
Yet view the lovely fruit before my eye?
At least, kind sir, for charity's sweet sake,
Vouchsafe the trunk between your arms to take;
Then from your back I might ascend the tree;
Do you but stoop, and leave the rest to me. [Pg 151]
With all my soul, he thus replied again,
I'd spend my dearest blood to ease thy pain.
With that, his back against the trunk he bent,
She seized a twig, and up the tree she went.
Now prove your patience, gentle ladies all!
Nor let on me your heavy anger fall:
'Tis truth I tell, though not in phrase refined,
Though blunt my tale, yet honest is my mind.
What feats the lady in the tree might do,
I pass as gambols never known to you;
But sure it was a merrier fit, she swore,
Than in her life she ever felt before.
In that nice moment, lo! the wond'ring knight
Looked out, and stood restored to sudden sight.
Straight on the tree his eager eyes he bent,
As one whose thoughts were on his spouse intent;
But when he saw his bosom-wife so dressed,
His rage was such as cannot be expressed:
Not frantic mothers when their infants die,
With louder clamours rend the vaulted sky:
He cried, he roared, he stormed, he tore his hair;
Death! hell! and furies! what dost thou do there!
What ails my lord? the trembling dame replied;
I thought your patience had been better tried;
Is this your love, ungrateful, and unkind,
This my reward for having cured the blind?
Why was I taught to make my husband see,
By struggling with a man upon a tree?
Did I for this the pow'r of magic prove?
Unhappy wife, whose crime was too much love!
If this be struggling, by this holy light,
'Tis struggling with a vengeance, quoth the knight;
So heav'n preserve the sight it has restored,
As with these eyes I plainly saw thee whored;
Whored by my slave—perfidious wretch! may hell
As surely seize thee, as I saw too well. [Pg 152]
Guard me, good angels! cried the gentle May,
Pray heav'n this magic work the proper way!
Alas, my love! 'tis certain, could you see,
You ne'er had used these killing words to me:
So help me, fates, as 'tis no perfect sight,
But some faint glimm'ring of a doubtful light.
What I have said, quoth he, I must maintain,
For by th' immortal pow'rs it seemed too plain.
By all those pow'rs, some frenzy seized your mind}
Replied the dame, are these the thanks I find? }
Wretch that I am, that e'er I was so kind! }
She said; a rising sigh expressed her woe,
The ready tears apace began to flow,
And as they fell she wiped from either eye
The drops; for women, when they list, can cry.
The knight was touched; and in his looks appeared
Signs of remorse, while thus his spouse he cheered:
Madam, 'tis past, and my short anger o'er!
Come down, and vex your tender heart no more;
Excuse me, dear, if aught amiss was said,
For, on my soul, amends shall soon be made:
Let my repentance your forgiveness draw,
By heav'n, I swore but what I thought I saw.
Ah, my loved lord! 'twas much unkind, she cried,
On bare suspicion thus to treat your bride.
But till your sight's established, for awhile,
Imperfect objects may your sense beguile.
Thus when from sleep we first our eyes display, }
The balls are wounded with the piercing ray, }
And dusky vapours rise, and intercept the day: }

So just recov'ring from the shades of night, }
Your swimming eyes are drunk with sudden light, }
Strange phantoms dance around, and skim before your sight.
Then, sir, be cautious, nor too rashly deem;
Heav'n knows how seldom things are what they seem! [Pg 153]
Consult your reason, and you soon shall find
'Twas you were jealous, not your wife unkind:
Jove ne'er spoke oracle more true than this,
None judge so wrong as those who think amiss.
With that she leaped into her lord's embrace
With well-dissembled virtue in her face.
He hugged her close, and kissed her o'er and o'er,
Disturbed with doubts and jealousies no more:
Both, pleased and blessed, renewed their mutual vows,
A fruitful wife and a believing spouse.
Thus ends our tale, whose moral next to make,
Let all wise husbands hence example take;
And pray, to crown the pleasure of their lives,
To be so well deluded by their wives.[67]

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] Pope in this particular has not followed Chaucer. The story is told by the merchant, who announces in the prologue, that he has been two months married, and that in this brief space he has endured more misery from the fiendishness of his wife than a bachelor could undergo in an entire lifetime from the enmity of the world. He lays it down for a general maxim, that

> We wedded men live in sorwe and care;
> Assay it whoso will, and he shall find
> That I say sooth, by Saint Thomas of Inde,
> As for the more part; I say not all;
> God shielde that it shoulde so befall.

The host begs that since the merchant knows so much of the trials of matrimony, he will instruct the company in some of them.

> Gladly, quoth he, but of mine owne sore
> For sorry heart I telle may no more.

He accordingly relates the adventures of January and May in illustration of the misfortunes of the wedded state, and commences with the panegyric of January upon its unmixed blessings. The merchant then adds,

> Thus said this olde knight that was so wise,

which is an ironical comment on what the narrator of the tale considers a delusive dream, and a proof of the credulous folly of the speaker. The idea of ascribing genuine sense and wisdom to the knight, notwithstanding that he was weak enough, at the age of sixty, to marry a girl, is confined to the version of Pope, and is not in itself unnatural; but the character, upon the whole, is better preserved in Chaucer, since the entire talk and conduct of January indicate a feeble mind.

[2] "Courage" in the original is not used in the modern sense, but signifies a hearty desire.

[3]
> And when that he was passed sixty year,
> Were it for holiness or for dotage,
> I cannot say, but such a great courage
> Hadde this knight to be a wedded man,
> That day and night he doth all that he can
> Taspye where that he might wedded be;
> Praying our Lord to grante him that he
> Might ones knowen of that blissful life,
> That is betwixt a husband and his wife.

[4] In the original,

> And certainly, as sooth as God is king,
> To take a wife it is a glorious thing;
> And namely when a man is old and hoar,
> Then is a wife the fruit of his tresor.

This is another instance that the merchant's remarks are sarcastic; for no rational person would gravely assert that to wed was especially wise in old age, when a man was married for his money alone. The whole purport of the tale was to prove that such an alliance ended in discomfiture. The vein of satire is continued through the subsequent reflections. The merchant represents January as imagining wives to be models of obedience and fidelity, who will cleave to a husband through weal and woe, and will never be weary of loving and serving him, though he is bed-ridden all his days. The example of May, to which the description is a preface, shows that the praises are meant to be interpreted in an adverse sense.

[5] In the original the merchant is quoting an invective against wives from the Liber Aureolus of Theophrastus, who had long been dead. Hence the narrator calls down a curse upon his *bones* in the name of the advocates of matrimony:

> This entent and an hundred sithe worse
> Writeth this man; there God his bones curse.

"Sithe" signifies "times." Pope has generalised the imprecation, and extended it to all bards, living or deceased, whereby the fitness of invoking a curse upon their bones is destroyed.

[6] Chaucer would have thought it an anomaly for a Christian knight to invoke the heathen deities. The original is,

> A wife! ah! Sainte Mary, *benedicite*,
> How might a man have any adversite
> That hath a wife? certes I cannot say.

The requirements of the metre in this and other passages of Chaucer, show that *benedicite* was sometimes contracted, in the pronunciation, to *ben'cite*.

[7] The merchant, in his account of the motives which actuated the knight, dilates more largely in the original, and in more enthusiastic language, upon the felicity of marriage. A wife helps her husband in his work, is the careful guardian of his property, and is perfect in her submission.

> She saith nought ones nay when he saith ye;
> Do this, saith he; all ready, sir, saith she.

Consequently the married man

> Upon his bare knees ought all his life
> Thanken his God that him hath sent a wife;

and if he is not yet possessed of the treasure, he ought to pray without ceasing that it may be vouchsafed him, for then he is established in safety, and

> May not be deceived as I guess.

From the praise of wives, the merchant, speaking the views of the knight, proceeds to extol the trustworthy advice of women in general, and his first instance is Rebecca, who instructed Jacob how to supplant Esau. The reasoning is purposely rendered inconsistent, and the assertion that a married man was secured against deception is immediately followed by an example in which the husband was deluded by the stratagem of the wife.

[8]

> Lo Judith, as the story telle can,
> By wise counsel she Goddes people kept
> And slew him Holofernes while he slept.
> Lo Abigail by good counsel how she
> Saved her husband Nabal, when that he
> Should have been slain.

The respite that Abigail obtained for Nabal was very short. He died by a judgment from heaven in about ten days from the time that she went forth to meet David, and with presents and persuasions diverted him from his purpose, as he was advancing to take vengeance on her husband. The striking narrative in the apocryphal book of Judith is undoubtedly fabulous. The pretended Judith was a widow. The deceptions by which she is said to have got the captain of the Assyrian army into her power are abhorrent to our purer morality, but they would have been considered legitimate stratagems of war in the East.

[9] Dryden, Juvenal, vi. 640.

> The rest are summoned on a point so nice.

[10] In Chaucer the knight does not ask his friends to choose for him because many heads are wiser than one, but because with several people on the look out there is more likelihood that a suitable wife will be found quickly than if he was unassisted in the search.

[11] In the original,

> But one thing warn I you, my friendes dear,
> I will none old wife have in no manere.

Marriages seem to have taken place in those days at a very early age. The wife of Bath married at twelve, and the knight's notion of an "old wife" it appears, five lines further on, was a woman of twenty. He insists that he will marry nobody that is above sixteen:

> She shall not passe sixteene year certain.
> Old fish, and young flesh, that would I have full fain.
> Bet is, quoth he, a pike than a pikerel,
> And bet than old beef is the tender veal.

"Bet" is for "better."

[12] Chaucer's knight assigns it as a motive to wedlock that he may have

Children to thonour of God above,
And not only for paramour, and for love.

But a little before he had given a more worldly reason for his desire to have a son and heir, and said that he would rather be eaten by dogs than that his inheritance should go to a stranger.

[13] The flippancy of this couplet, which departs from the original, is at variance with the tone of the knight, whose speech commenced with the words,

Friendes I am hoar and old,
And almost, God wot, at my pittes brink
Upon my soule somewhat must I think.
I have my body folily dispended
Blessed be God that it shall be amended.

In the passage, for which Pope's lines are the substitute, the knight is enumerating the causes why men should marry, and one reason, he says, is that each person ought to

Helpen other
In meschief, as a sister shall the brother,
And live in chastity full holily.
But, sires, by your leave that am not I,
For, God be thankèd, I dare make avaunt,
I feel my limbes stark and suffisaunt.

The meaning is, that when a husband is "in meschief," or, in other words, in a state of helpless decrepitude, his wife ought to live in holy chastity, and nurse him as a sister would a brother. But, adds the knight, thank God I am not decrepit myself, and feel my limbs to be still stout; which is a very different sentiment from sneering at the saintly life he had just commended.

[14] This verse, which has no counterpart in the original, is altered from a line in Dryden's Flower and Leaf:

Ev'n when the vital sap retreats below,
Ev'n when the hoary head is hid in snow.

[15] The infatuation of the knight is more strongly marked in the original. He summons his friends to hear his fixed resolution, and to beg their assistance. He wants no advice, and instead of inviting them to speak their minds with freedom, he concludes his address with the words

And synnes ye have heard all mine intent,
I pray you to my wille ye assent.

They do, indeed, offer him counsel where he solicited help, which is a true stroke of nature on both sides.

[16] Pope gives the real character of Placebo, but sets probability at defiance in making him parade with boastful effrontery his own systematic fawning and flattery. Chaucer has not committed the extravagance. With him Placebo justifies his assentation on the ground that lords are better informed than their inferiors.

A full great fool is any counsellor
That serveth any lord of high honour,
That dare presume, or once thinken it,
That his counsel should pass his lordes wit.
Nay lordes be no fooles by my fay.
Ye have yourself y-spoken here to-day
So high sentence, so holy, and so well,
That I consent, and confirm every dole
Your wordes all, and your opinion.

[17] The last four lines are interpolated by Pope, and are again inconsistant with the tenor of Chaucer's narrative. The knight had notoriously been a dissolute man, and the coarse reflection would be out of place when the avowed object of his projected marriage was that he might live more soberly than he had hitherto done.

[18] Seneca.

[19] The qualities specified by Chaucer are whether she is wise, sober or given to drink, proud or in any other respect unamiable, a scold or wasteful, rich or poor. "And all this," says Justinus, "asketh leisure to enquire," which he urges in reply to the announcement of January that he was determined not to wait.

[20] In Chaucer Justinus does not pronounce decisively against marriage, but recommends January to consider well before he enters upon it, and especially before he marries "a young wife and a fair."

[21] This couplet is an addition by Pope. The manly Justinus says nothing in the original about "offending his noble lord."

[22] Chaucer is more particular in his description:

He portrayed in his heart, and in his thought
Her fresche beauty, and her age tender,
Her middle small, her armes long and slender,

Her wise governance, her gentilnesse
Her womanly bearing, and her sadnesse.—BOWLES.

[23] For when that he himself concluded had,
He thought each other mannes wit so bad,
That impossible it were to replie
Against his choice; this was his fantasie.

[24] In seeking a wife for him.

[25] Placebo came, and eke his friendes soon,
And althirfirst he bad them all a boon,
That none of them no argumentes make
Against the purpose which that he had take;
Which purpose was pleasaunt to God said he,
And very ground of his prosperite.

[26] "And may serve my turn" is one of Dryden's familiar colloquial terms, happily used. Dryden among other excellencies of a varied style was happy in the use of such terms. —WARTON.

The phrase fails to convey the conception of Chaucer, that the knight too much smitten by the charms of May to consider anything else of the slightest importance.

All were it so she were of small degree,
Sufficeth him her youth and her beaute.

[27] The humour is brought out by Chaucer with increased force from his dwelling with greater detail on the fond conviction of January that the only risk he runs in marriage is from the excess of the felicity. He says he stands aghast when he contemplates passing his life in that perfect peace, and blessedness,

As alle wedded men do with their wives,

and trembles to think that he shall have his heaven upon earth.

This is my dread, and ye my brethren twey
Assoileth me this question I you pray.

[28] And when they saw that it must needis be,
They wroughten so by sleight and wise treate,
That she, this maiden, which that Maybus hight,
As hastily as ever that she might,
Shall wedded be unto this January.

[29] Dryden's Palamon and Arcite:

For women to the brave an easy prey,
Still follow fortune where she leads the way.

[30] Dryden's Palamon and Arcite:

I pass their warlike pomp, their proud array.

[31] This line has no warrant from Chaucer.

[32] Here followed a bad couplet, which Pope afterwards omitted:

Expensive dainties load the plenteous boards,
The best luxurious Italy affords.

[33] Joab, the leader of the Israelites in battle, blew the trumpet, as is recorded in the Bible, to gather them together. Theodomas is thought by Tyrwhitt to be a character in some fictitious history which was popular in the days of Chaucer.

[34] Chaucer says that the bed was blessed by the priest, and the form used on these occasions may be seen in the old Latin service books.

[35] Dryden's Sigismonda and Guiscardo:

What thoughts he had beseems me not to say.

[36] A circumstance is added by Chaucer which brings vividly before the reader the advanced age of the knight:

The slacke skin about his necke shaketh
While that he sung.

[37] Chaucer had previously mentioned that it was the usage for newly married wives to keep their chambers till the fourth day, and he repeats the fact here:

As custom is unto these nobles all,
A bride shall not eaten in the hall,
Till dayes four, or three days atte least
I-passed be; then let her go to the feast.
The fourthe day complete from noon to noon,
When that the highe masse was i-doon,
In halle sit this January and May,

As fresh as is the brighte summer's day.

[38] In the original January passes a warm panegyric upon the excellent qualities of Damian, which is meant to display in broader contrast the treachery and infamy of the squire. The merchant in his own person denounces the villany of Damian's conduct, and prays that all persons may be protected from the machinations of those deceitful vipers, who, when fostered in a family, employ their opportunities to injure their benefactors. Pope has omitted every allusion of the kind, and has treated the baseness of the squire as if he regarded it in the light of a joke.

[39] It was at first "speaking sigh," which was distinctive. "Heaving" is the accompaniment of all sighs, and, as the sigh of Damian was soft, did not mark his in an especial degree.

[40] There is not a word, as may be supposed, in Chaucer of the squire asking for divine assistance in his wicked schemes.

[41] May, on her return from the visit which, at her husband's desire, she paid to Damian in his chamber, that she might cheer him in his illness, read the billet that he had given her covertly, and the result is thus told by Chaucer in a passage which has not been versified by Pope:

This gentle May fulfillèd of pite,
Right of her hand a letter makèd she;
In which she granteth him her very grace;
There lacked nought but only day and place.
And when she saw her time upon a day
To visite this Damian goeth May,
And subtilely this letter down she thrust
Under his pillow; read it if him lust.
She taketh him by the hand, and hard him twist
So secretly, that no wight of it wist,
And bade him be all whole; and forth she went
To January, when that he for her sent.
Up riseth Damian the nexte morrow;
All passed was his sickness and his sorrow.

[42] The Epicurean philosophers.

[43] Addison's Letter from Italy:

My humbler verse demands a softer theme,
A painted meadow, or a purling stream.

[44] Pope has here shown his judgment in adopting the lighter fairy race of Shakespeare and Milton. Chaucer has king Pluto and his queen Proserpina.—Bowles.

There was not much judgment required. They are fairies in Chaucer, but, as was not unusual in his day, he called them by names taken from the heathen mythology. Pope merely dropped the classical appellations, which would have been an incongruity when he wrote. In the details of his description he did not copy Shakespeare or Milton, but Dryden's version of Chaucer's Wife of Bath:

The king of elfs, and little fairy queen
Gambolled on heaths, and danced on ev'ry green.

[45] Another couplet preceded this in the first edition:

Thus many a day with ease and plenty blessed
Our gen'rous knight his gentle dame possessed.

[46] Dryden's Palamon and Arcite:

Nor art, nor nature's band can ease my grief,
Nothing but death, the wretch's last relief.

[47] There is a natural trait in the original which is not preserved by Pope. The knight weeps piteously at his sudden calamity:

But atte last, after a month or tweye,
His sorrow gan assuage sooth to say;
For when he wist it may not other be
He patiently took his adversitie.

This is one of the deeper and more solemn touches which Pope systematically rejected. Although the old man gets reconciled to the loss of his sight, his jealousy remains unabated.

[48] Oh! January, what might it thee avail
If thou might see as far as shippes sail?
For as good is blind deceivèd be,
As to be deceivèd when a man may see.

[49] Chaucer only says that they whispered through the crevice they discovered in the wall which divided the houses of their parents. All their kisses were bestowed upon the wall itself, or as Sandys puts it in his translation of Ovid,

Their kisses greet
The senseless stones, with lips that could not meet.

[50] This couplet, which is not in the original, is in the style of the pastorals which were common in Pope's youth.

[51]
Thou art the creature that I best love;
For by the Lord that sit in heaven above,
Lever I had to dyen on a knife.
Than thee offende, deare, trewe wife.

[52] By the injudicious interpolation of this parenthesis Pope makes the knight express his belief to May that she is more likely to be kept faithful by her love of money than by her sense of honour and religion. It is undeniable that covetousness would be the predominant motive with a depraved woman, such as was poor old January's wife, but this is not his settled conviction, and he would have shrunk from openly admitting the idea.

[53] The knight's promise was to be performed the next morning. His doubt was whether May, on her side, would fulfil the pledge of perpetual fidelity. The ceremony is, therefore, reversed in the original, and January asks *her* to kiss *him* in token of her adhesion to the covenant.

[54] In the original the knight avows the jealousy, which in Pope's version he denies, and excuses his misgivings on the ground of May's beauty, and his own age. Having disclaimed all jealousy, there is no longer any meaning in representing him as pleading the inequality of his years to justify his conduct.

[55] May in the original is the same wicked, shameless woman that she is described by Pope, but Chaucer is content to put into her mouth the wish that she may die a foul death if she breaks her marriage vows. There is not a hint of the more frightful imprecation she invokes on herself in expressing the hope that she may descend alive into hell when she commits the crime she is meditating at the moment.

[56] "Infidelity in women is a subject of the severest crimination among the Turks. When any of these miserable girls are apprehended, for the first time they are put to hard labor, &c.; but for the second, they are recommitted, and many at a time tied up in sacks, and taken in a boat to the Seraglio-Point, where they are thrown into the tide." Dallaway's Constantinople.—BOWLES.

[57] The squire kneeling to worship May as she passed by is an exaggerated trait supplied by Pope.

[58] At the conclusion of the hypocritical rejoinder of May, in which she speaks the language of indignant innocence, the narrative goes on thus in the original:

And with that word she saw where Damyan
Sat in the bush, and coughing, she began;
And with her fingers signes made she,
That Damyan should climb upon a tree,
That chargèd was with fruit, and up he went,
For verily he knew all her intent;
For in a letter she had told him all
Of this mattier, how he worke shall.

[59] These lines, which have no counterpart in Chaucer, owe their beauty to Dryden's Wife of Bath's Tale:

He saw a choir of ladies in a round,
That featly footing seemed to skim the ground:
Thus dancing hand in hand, so light they were,
He knew not where they trod, on earth or air.

[60] The author of the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus. Chaucer says that he seldom speaks of women with reverence, which is correct. The statement of Pope that the son of Sirach asserted, like Solomon, that there was no such thing as a good woman, is in direct contradiction to various passages among his precepts.

[61] There is no specification of "these ladies" in Chaucer.

[62]
Now by my mother Ceres' soul, I swear
That I shall give her suffisaunt answere,
And alle women after for her sake;
That though they be in any guilt i-take,
With face bold they shall themselves excuse,
And bear them down that woulde them accuse.
For lack of answer none of them shall dyen.
All had ye seen a thing with both your eyen,
Yet shall we women visage it hardily,
And weep, and swear, and chide subtilely.

[63]
I wot well that this Jew, this Solomon,
Found of us women fooles many one;
But though he be founde no good woman,
Yet hath there founde many another man
Women full true, full good, and vertuous;
Witness on them that dwell in Christes house;
With martyrdom they proved their constaunce.

[64] Pluto and Proserpine each select that portion of the meaning which is convenient. Both

senses are included in the words of Solomon, who at once asserts the general wickedness of mankind, and the comparative worthlessness of women.

[65] The queen has just been boasting that she will endow the sex with the art of ingenious lying to cover the violation of their most solemn vows, and now she tauntingly tells her husband that it is not in woman to break her word. This contradiction is imported into the story by Pope. The original is as follows:—

> Dame, quoth this Pluto, be no longer wroth,
> I give it up; but since I swore mine oath,
> That I will grante him his sight again,
> My word shall stand, I warne you certain;
> I am a king it sit me not to lie.
> And I, quoth she, am queen of faierie.
> Her answer shall she have I undertake,
> Let us no more wordes hereof make.

[66] The allusion is to the common longing of pregnant women for particular articles of diet. May cries out that she shall expire unless she has some of the "small green pears" to eat, and then exclaims anew,

> I tell you well, a woman in my plight
> May have to fruit so great an appetite,
> That she may dyen, but she it have.

[67] The moral is Pope's own, and is in the dissolute spirit which had descended from the reign of Charles II. The comment on the story, in Chaucer, is put into the mouth of the host, who begs that he may be preserved from such a wife, and inveighs against the craft and misdoings of women.

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# THE WIFE OF BATH. [Pg 155]

## HER PROLOGUE.

### FROM CHAUCER.

The Wife of Bath is the other piece of Chaucer which Pope selected to imitate. One cannot but [Pg 157] wonder at his choice, which perhaps nothing but his youth could excuse. Dryden, who is known not to be nicely scrupulous, informs us, that he would not versify it on account of its indecency. Pope, however, has omitted or softened the grosser and more offensive passages. Chaucer afforded him many subjects of a more sublime and serious species; and it were to be wished Pope had exercised his pencil on the pathetic story of the patience of Griselda, or Troilus and Cressida, or the complaint of the Black Knight; or, above all, on Cambuscan and Canace. From the accidental circumstance of Dryden and Pope having copied the gay and ludicrous parts of Chaucer, the common notion seems to have arisen, that Chaucer's vein of poetry was chiefly turned to the light and the ridiculous. But they who look into Chaucer will soon be convinced of this prevailing prejudice, and will find his comic vein, like that of Shakespeare, to be only like one of mercury, imperceptibly mingled with a mine of gold. Mr. Hughes withdrew his contributions to a volume of Miscellaneous Poems, published by Steele, because this Prologue was to be inserted in it, which he thought too obscene for the gravity of his character. "The extraordinary length," says Mr. Tyrwhitt, "of the Wife of Bath's Prologue, as well as the vein of pleasantry that runs through it, is very suitable to the character of the speaker. The greatest part must have been of Chaucer's own invention, though one may plainly see that he had been reading the popular invectives against marriage, and women in general, such as the Roman de la Rose, Valerius ad Rufinum de non ducendâ uxore, and particularly Hieronymus contra Jovinianum. The holy Father, by way of recommending celibacy, has exerted all his learning and eloquence, and he certainly was not deficient in either, to collect together and aggravate whatever he could find to the prejudice of the female sex. Among other things he has inserted his own translation (probably) of a long extract from what he calls, Liber Aureolus Theophrasti de Nuptiis. Next to him in order of time was the treatise entitled, Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum de non ducendâ uxore. It has been printed, for the similarity of its sentiments I suppose, among the works of St. Jerome, though it is evidently of a much later date. Tanner, from Wood's MSS. Collection, attributes it to Walter Mapes. I should not believe it to be older; as John of Salisbury, who has treated of the same [Pg 158] subject in his Polycrat. l. viii. c. xl. does not appear to have seen it. To these two books Jean de Meun has been obliged for some of the severest strokes in his Roman de la Rose; and Chaucer has transfused the quintessence of all the three works upon the subject of matrimony, into his Wife of Bath's Prologue and Merchant's Tale."

The lines of Pope in the piece before us are spirited and easy and have, properly enough, a free colloquial air. The tale, to which this is the prologue, has been versified by Dryden, and is supposed to have been of Chaucer's own invention; as is the exquisite vision of the Flower and the Leaf, which has received a thousand new graces from the spirited and harmonious Dryden. It is to his Fables, (next to his Music Ode,) written when he was above seventy years old, that Dryden will chiefly owe his immortality; and among these, particularly to the well-conducted tale

of Palamon and Arcite, the pathetic picture of Sigismunda, the wild and terrible graces of Theodore and Honoria, and the sportive pleasantry of Cymon and Iphigenia. The warmth and melody of these pieces has never been excelled in our language; I mean in rhyme. It is mortifying and surprising to see the cold and contemptuous manner in which Dr. Johnson speaks of these capital pieces, which he says "require little criticism, and seem hardly worth the rejuvenescence, as he affectedly calls it, which Dryden has bestowed upon them." It is remarkable, that in his criticisms he has not even mentioned the Flower and Leaf.

These pieces of Chaucer were not the only ones that were versified by Pope. Mr. Harte assured me, that he was convinced by some circumstances which Fenton, his friend, communicated to him, that Pope wrote the characters, that make the introduction to the Canterbury Tales, published under the name of Betterton.—Warton.

Dr. Warton thinks, "one cannot but wonder at Pope's choice from Chaucer of these stories, when so many more are to be found in him more poetical." His observation on Chaucer's poems is very just, but the fact is, Pope by this very selection showed the bent of his mind,—that it was rather turned to satire and ridicule, than to the more elevated strains of poetry.—Bowles.

The imitations of Chaucer's January and May, and Wife of Bath's Prologue, are executed with a degree of freedom, ease, and spirit, and at the same time with a judgment and delicacy which not only far exceeds what might have been expected from so young a writer, but which leave nothing to be wished for in the mind of the reader. The humour of Chaucer is translated into the lines of Pope, almost without suffering any evaporation.—Roscoe.

Pope's version of the Prologue of the Wife of Bath first appeared in a volume of Poetical Miscellanies, published by Steele, in 1714. The portrait of this repulsive woman is drawn by [Pg 159]
Chaucer with a vigorous hand. She is a wealthy cloth manufacturer, with a bold countenance, and more than masculine freedom of speech. She dresses ostentatiously, rides with spurs, and, glorying in her shame, openly boasts of the vices which less impudent women would carefully conceal. Her two predominant characteristics are an inordinate self-will which makes her resolve to rule her husbands with an absolute despotism, and an inordinate sensuality which has completely absorbed every finer sentiment. She not only avows her propensities, but exults in the deceit, the tricks, and the violence which she has employed to gratify them as so many testimonies to her cleverness and power. She has no compunctious visitings for the frauds she has practised, and the misery she has inflicted upon her deceased husbands. She speaks of the dead as of the living with brutal insensibility, and would think it a weakness to be swayed by a human feeling. The impersonation of domineering, heartless selfishness, her pride is to prevail by tyranny instead of by the gentle graces of feminine tenderness, and her pleasure is to indulge in worldly gaiety, and the gross gratifications of sense. Even her jovial good humour is hardly a redeeming feature in her character, for it mainly proceeds from her keen relish for physical enjoyments, and turns to temper the instant she is thwarted. It is difficult to conceive that anybody could be injured by reading her confessions, which have nothing alluring, but with Warton, we must condemn the taste which could select the story as a ground-work for the embellishments of modern verse. The character may exist in every generation. The unblushing candour with which it displays itself belonged to more outspoken times than our own. Chaucer painted from the life, and this portrait of a coarse, voluptuous, defiant woman of the citizen class, finds a place in his gallery, because she had a prominent place in the society of the middle ages. There was no rational motive for tricking her out in the newest fashion of a period to which she did not belong, and she might with advantage have been allowed to remain in her primitive place and garb. The indelicacy of the pieces he translated from Chaucer was, however, one of their recommendations to Pope, and they may have had a further attraction for him from the fact, that they held wives up to odium. His deformed and insignificant person was an antidote to love, and the court he paid to women met with a cold return. He retaliated with his pen for the mortification to which they exposed him, and he almost always represented them in a frivolous or degrading light. He may not improbably have had a pleasure in reproducing from Chaucer the caustic sentiments which were congenial to his own, and may have found some satisfaction for his wounded spirit in revenging indifference by satire. [Pg 160]

Warton says that Pope has softened the more offensive passages in the Wife of Bath's Prologue, but his version, on the other hand, is often less decorous than the original. He has not justified his choice of the subject by his skill in the treatment of it. The adaptation is much inferior to the companion piece of January and May, and appears to have been thrown off in haste. There are a few, a very few, happy lines and expressions, but the bulk of the versification is not much above mediocrity, and is frequently below it. He has failed in the substance still more than in the form. Roscoe was of opinion that the humour of Chaucer had hardly suffered any evaporation. The admirers of the original have arrived at a different conclusion, and have contended, with almost one voice, that hardly any of the humour has been preserved. The genuine Prologue is alive with manners, passions, idiomatic conversations, and natural incidents. The copy is by comparison a dead, insipid dissertation. The mode in which Pope has abridged the narrative is one of many proofs that he only cared for characters in their broad outline, and had either no perception of the subtler workings of the mind, or no appreciation of them. If ever a reader masters the full sense of an author it must be when he translates him, and yet Pope has overlooked or rejected many of the happiest traits in Chaucer, and has falsified others, to the invariable injury of the story, and sometimes with a total disregard to consistency. Particular deficiencies are of little moment in the midst of general excellence, but in the present instance there is nothing to redeem the blots, and the narrative from first to last is a pale and feeble reflection of the original.

Warton asserts, on the authority of Harte, that Fenton believed that the version of the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, which appeared in Lintot's Miscellany under the name of Betterton, was the work of Pope, and Johnson adds that "Fenton made Pope a gay offer of five pounds if he would show the characters in Betterton's hand." The celebrated actor certainly left some literary papers behind him, if we may assume that a letter from Caryll to Pope, and which was published by the poet himself, is a genuine production. "I am very glad," Caryll writes, May 23, 1712, "for the sake of the widow, and for the credit of the deceased, that Betterton's remains are fallen into such hands, as may render them reputable to the one, and beneficial to the other." In a note Pope states that the remains were the modernised portions of Chaucer contained in the Miscellany of Lintot. There was no apparent motive for deception on the subject, and the internal evidence supports the conclusion that Betterton composed the translation, and that Pope merely revised it. It is a bald, worthless production, with a few lines or couplets which seem to have proceeded from a more practised versifier than the novice who put together the bulk of the work. The choicest parts are very little better than bad; for Pope was a provident poet, and he did not [Pg 161] decorate Betterton with feathers which would have shone with lustre in his own plumage. The great actor, on his side, has signally failed in the point where his art might have been expected to teach him better. He who had such a deep insight into the characters he personated, and who gave voice, action, and gesture to all the passions with such fidelity and power, has pared away the dramatic vivacity of Chaucer and left only a vapid, hybrid compound which is neither modern nor mediæval. The sketch of the good parson is omitted altogether, doubtless because Dryden had already tried his hand upon it, and it was thought imprudent to provoke a comparison with his masterly paraphrase.

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# THE WIFE OF BATH. [Pg 163]

## HER PROLOGUE.

Behold the woes of matrimonial life,
And hear with rev'rence an experienced wife;
To dear-bought wisdom[1] give the credit due,
And think for once, a woman tells you true.
In all these trials I have borne a part,
I was myself the scourge that caused the smart;
For, since fifteen,[2] in triumph have I led
Five captive husbands from the church to bed.

Christ saw a wedding once, the Scripture says,
And saw but one, 'tis thought, in all his days;
Whence some infer, whose conscience is too nice,
No pious Christian ought to marry twice.

But let them read, and solve me, if they can,
The words addressed to the Samaritan:[3]
Five times in lawful wedlock she was joined; [Pg 164]
And sure the certain stint was ne'er defined.

"Encrease and multiply," was heav'n's command,
And that's a text I clearly understand.
This too, "Let men their sires and mothers leave,
And to their dearer wives for ever cleave."
More wives than one by Solomon were tried,
Or else the wisest of mankind's belied.
I've had myself full many a merry fit;
And trust in heav'n I may have many yet.
For when my transitory spouse, unkind, }
Shall die, and leave his woeful wife behind, }
I'll take the next good Christian I can find. }

Paul, knowing one could never serve our turn,
Declared 'twas better far to wed than burn.
There's danger in assembling fire and tow;
I grant 'em that, and what it means you know.
The same apostle too has elsewhere owned,
No precept for virginity he found:
'Tis but a counsel, and we women still
Take which we like, the counsel, or our will.

I envy not their bliss, if he or she
Think fit to live in perfect chastity;
Pure let them be, and free from taint or vice;
I, for a few slight spots, am not so nice.

Heav'n calls us diff'rent ways, on these bestows
One proper gift, another grants to those:
Not ev'ry man's obliged to sell his store,
And give up all his substance to the poor; [Pg 165]
Such as are perfect, may, I can't deny;
But, by your leaves, divines, so am not I.
  Full many a saint, since first the world began,
Lived an unspotted maid, in spite of man:
Let such (a God's name) with fine wheat be fed,
And let us honest wives eat barley bread.
For me, I'll keep the post assigned by heav'n,
And use the copious talent it has giv'n:
Let my good spouse pay tribute, do me right,
And keep an equal reck'ning ev'ry night:
His proper body is not his, but mine;
For so said Paul, and Paul's a sound divine.[4]
  Know then, of those five husbands I have had,
Three were just tolerable, two were bad.[5]
The three were old, but rich and fond beside,
And toiled most piteously to please their bride: [Pg 166]
But since their wealth, the best they had, was mine,
The rest, without much loss, I could resign.
Sure to be loved, I took no pains to please,[6]
Yet had more pleasure far than they had ease.
Presents flowed in apace: with show'rs of gold,
They made their court, like Jupiter of old.
If I but smiled, a sudden youth they found,
And a new palsy seized them when I frowned.
  Ye sov'reign wives! give ear, and understand,
Thus shall ye speak, and exercise command.[7]
For never was it giv'n to mortal man,
To lie so boldly as we women can:
Forswear the fact, though seen with both his eyes,
And call your maids to witness how he lies.
  Hark, old Sir Paul, 'twas thus I us'd to say,
Whence is our neighbour's wife so rich and gay?
Treated, caressed, where'er she's pleased to roam—
I sit in tatters, and immured at home.
Why to her house dost thou so oft repair?
Art thou so am'rous? and is she so fair?
If I but see a cousin or a friend,
Lord! how you swell, and rage like any fiend!
But you reel home, a drunken beastly bear,
Then preach till midnight in your easy chair; [Pg 167]
Cry, wives are false, and ev'ry woman evil,
And give up all that's female to the devil.
  If poor, you say she drains her husband's purse;
If rich, she keeps her priest, or something worse;
If highly born, intolerably vain,
Vapours and pride by turns possess her brain,
Now gayly mad, now sourly splenetic,
Freakish when well, and fretful when she's sick.
If fair, then chaste she cannot long abide,
By pressing youth attacked on ev'ry side:
If foul, her wealth the lusty lover lures,
Or else her wit some fool-gallant procures,
Or else she dances with becoming grace,
Or shape excuses the defects of face.
There swims no goose so grey, but soon or late,
She finds some honest gander for her mate.
  Horses, thou say'st, and asses men may try,
And ring suspected vessels ere they buy:
But wives, a random choice, untried they take,
They dream in courtship, but in wedlock wake;
Then, nor till then, the veil's removed away,
And all the woman glares in open day.
  You tell me, to preserve your wife's good grace,
Your eyes must always languish on my face,
Your tongue with constant flatt'ries feed my ear,
And tag each sentence with, My life! my dear!
If, by strange chance, a modest blush be raised,
Be sure my fine complexion must be praised.
My garments always must be new and gay,
And feasts still kept upon my wedding-day.

Then must my nurse be pleased, and fav'rite maid:
And endless treats, and endless visits paid,
To a long train of kindred, friends, allies;
All this thou say'st, and all thou say'st, are lies.
  On Jenkin too you cast a squinting eye:
What! can your 'prentice raise your jealousy? [Pg 168]
Fresh are his ruddy cheeks, his forehead fair;
And like the burnished gold his curling hair.
But clear thy wrinkled brow, and quit thy sorrow,
I'd scorn your 'prentice, should you die to-morrow.
  Why are thy chests all locked? on what design?
Are not thy worldly goods and treasures mine?
Sir, I'm no fool; nor shall you, by St. John,
Have goods and body to yourself alone.
One you shall quit, in spite of both your eyes;
I heed not, I, the bolts, the locks, the spies.
If you had wit, you'd say, "Go where you will,
Dear spouse, I credit not the tales they tell;
Take all the freedoms of a married life;
I know thee for a virtuous, faithful wife."
  Lord! when you have enough, what need you care
How merrily soever others fare?
Though all the day I give and take delight,
Doubt not, sufficient will be left at night.
'Tis but a just and rational desire,
To light a taper at a neighbour's fire.
  There's danger too, you think, in rich array,
And none can long be modest that are gay:
The cat, if you but singe her tabby skin,
The chimney keeps, and sits content within;
But once grown sleek, will from her corner run,
Sport with her tail, and wanton in the sun;
She licks her fair round face, and frisks abroad,
To show her fur, and to be catterwawed.[8]
  Lo thus, my friends, I wrought to my desires [Pg 169]
These three right ancient venerable sires.
I told 'em, Thus you say, and thus you do,
And told 'em false, but Jenkin swore 'twas true.
I, like a dog, could bite as well as whine,
And first complained, whene'er the guilt was mine.[9]
I taxed them oft with wenching and amours,
When their weak legs scarce dragged 'em out of doors;
And swore the rambles that I took by night,
Were all to spy what damsels they bedight.
That colour brought me many hours of mirth;[10]
For all this wit is given us from our birth; [Pg 170]
Heav'n gave to woman the peculiar grace,
To spin, to weep, and cully human race.
By this nice conduct, and this prudent course,
By murm'ring, wheedling, stratagem, and force,
I still prevailed, and would be in the right,
Or curtain lectures made a restless night.
If once my husband's arm was o'er my side,
What! so familiar with your spouse? I cried:
I levied first a tax upon his need:
Then let him—'twas a nicety indeed!
Let all mankind this certain maxim hold,
Marry who will, our sex is to be sold.
With empty hands no tassels you can lure,[11]
But fulsome love for gain we can endure;
For gold we love the impotent and old,
And heave, and pant, and kiss, and cling, for gold.
Yet with embraces, curses oft I've mixed,
Then kissed again, and chid, and railed betwixt.
Well, I may make my will in peace, and die,
For not one word in man's arrears am I.
To drop a dear dispute I was unable,
Ev'n though the Pope himself had sat at table.[12]
But when my point was gained, then thus I spoke, [Pg 171]
"Billy, my dear, how sheepishly you look?
Approach, my spouse, and let me kiss thy cheek;
Thou should'st be always thus resigned and meek!
Of Job's great patience since so oft you preach,
Well should you practise, who so well can teach.

'Tis difficult to do, I must allow,
But I, my dearest, will instruct you how.
Great is the blessing of a prudent wife,
Who puts a period to domestic strife.
One of us two must rule, and one obey; }
And since in man right reason bears the sway, }
Let that frail thing, weak woman, have her way. }
The wives of all my family have ruled
Their tender husbands, and their passions cooled.
Fye, 'tis unmanly thus to sigh and groan;
What! would you have me to yourself alone?
Why take me, love! take all and ev'ry part!
Here's your revenge! you love it at your heart.
Would I vouchsafe to sell what nature gave,
You little think what custom I could have.
But see! I'm all your own—nay hold—for shame!
What means my dear—indeed—you are to blame."
  Thus with my first three lords I passed my life;
A very woman, and a very wife.
What sums from these old spouses I could raise,
Procured young husbands in my riper days.
Though past my bloom,[13] not yet decayed was I,
Wanton and wild, and chattered like a pye. [Pg 172]
In country dances still I bore the bell.
And sung as sweet as ev'ning Philomel.
To clear my quail-pipe, and refresh my soul,
Full oft I drained the spicy nut-brown bowl;
Rich luscious wines, that youthful blood improve,
And warm the swelling veins to feats of love:
For 'tis as sure as cold ingenders hail,
A liqu'rish mouth must have a lech'rous tail;
Wine lets no lover unrewarded go,
As all true gamesters by experience know.
  But oh, good gods! whene'er a thought I cast
On all the joys of youth and beauty past,
To find in pleasures I have had my part,
Still warms me to the bottom of my heart.
This wicked world was once my dear delight;
Now all my conquests, all my charms, good night!
The flour consumed, the best that now I can,
Is e'en to make my market of the bran.[14]
  My fourth dear spouse was not exceeding true!
He kept, 'twas thought, a private miss or two:
But all that score I paid—as how? you'll say,
Not with my body, in a filthy way:
But I so dressed, and danced, and drank, and dined;
And viewed a friend, with eyes so very kind,
As stung his heart, and made his marrow fry,[15]
With burning rage, and frantic jealousy. [Pg 173]
His soul, I hope, enjoys eternal glory,
For here on earth I was his purgatory.
Oft, when his shoe the most severely wrung,
He put on careless airs, and sat and sung.
How sore I galled him, only heav'n could know,
And he that felt, and I that caused the woe.
He died, when last from pilgrimage I came,
With other gossips, from Jerusalem;[16]
And now lies buried underneath a rood,[17]
Fair to be seen, and reared of honest wood.
A tomb indeed, with fewer sculptures graced,
Than that Mausolus' pious widow placed,[18]
Or where inshrined the great Darius lay;
But cost on graves is merely thrown away.
The pit filled up, with turf we covered o'er;
So bless the good man's soul, I say no more.
  Now for my fifth loved lord, the last and best;
(Kind heav'n afford him everlasting rest)
Full hearty was his love, and I can shew
The tokens on my ribs in black and blue; [Pg 174]
Yet, with a knack, my heart he could have won,
While yet the smart was shooting in the bone.
How quaint an appetite in woman reigns!
Free gifts we scorn, and love what costs us pains:

Let men avoid us, and on them we leap;
A glutted market makes provision cheap.[19]
In pure good will I took this jovial spark,
Of Oxford he, a most egregious clerk.
He boarded with a widow in the town,[20]
A trusty gossip, one dame Alison.
Full well the secrets of my soul she knew,
Better than e'er our parish priest could do.
To her I told whatever could befall:
Had but my husband pissed against a wall,
Or done a thing that might have cost his life,
She, and my niece, and one more worthy wife, [Pg 175]
Had known it all: what most he would conceal,
To these I made no scruple to reveal.
Oft has he blushed from ear to ear for shame,
That e'er he told a secret to his dame.

It so befel, in holy time of Lent,
That oft a day I to this gossip went;
(My husband, thank my stars, was out of town)
From house to house we rambled up and down,
This clerk, myself, and my good neighbour Alse,
To see, be seen, to tell, and gather tales.[21]
Visits to ev'ry church we daily paid,
And marched in every holy masquerade,
The stations duly,[22] and the vigils kept;
Not much we fasted, but scarce ever slept.
At sermons too I shone in scarlet gay,
The wasting moth ne'er spoiled my best array;
The cause was this, I wore it ev'ry day.

'Twas when fresh May her early blossoms yields,
This clerk and I were walking in the fields.
We grew so intimate, I can't tell how,[23]
I pawned my honour, and engaged my vow, [Pg 176]
If e'er I laid my husband in his urn,[24]
That he, and only he, should serve my turn.
We straight struck hands, the bargain was agreed;
I still have shifts against a time of need:
The mouse that always trusts to one poor hole,
Can never be a mouse of any soul.

I vowed, I scarce could sleep since first I knew him,
And durst be sworn he had bewitched me to him;
If e'er I slept, I dreamed of him alone,
And dreams foretell, as learned men have shown:
All this I said; but dreams, sirs, I had none:
I followed but my crafty crony's lore,
Who bid me tell this lie, and twenty more.[25]

Thus day by day, and month by month we passed;
It pleased the Lord to take my spouse at last.
I tore my gown, I soiled my locks with dust,
And beat my breasts, as wretched widows must.[26]
Before my face my handkerchief I spread,
To hide the flood of tears I did not shed. [Pg 177]
The good man's coffin to the church was borne;
Around, the neighbours, and my clerk too, mourn.
But as he marched, good gods! he showed a pair
Of legs and feet, so clean, so strong, so fair!
Of twenty winters' age he seemed to be;
I, to say truth, was twenty more than he;
But vig'rous still, a lively buxom dame;
And had a wond'rous gift to quench a flame.
A conj'ror once, that deeply could divine,
Assured me, Mars in Taurus was my sign.
As the stars ordered, such my life has been:
Alas, alas, that ever love was sin!
Fair Venus gave me fire, and sprightly grace,
And Mars assurance, and a dauntless face.
By virtue of this pow'rful constellation,
I followed, always, my own inclination.

But to my tale: A month scarce passed away,

With dance and song, we kept the nuptial day.
All I possessed I gave to his command,
My goods and chattels, money, house, and land:
But oft repented, and repent it still;[27]
He proved a rebel to my sov'reign will:
Nay, once, by heav'n! he struck me on the face;
Hear but the fact, and judge, yourselves, the case.

Stubborn as any lioness was I,
And knew full well to raise my voice on high;
As true a rambler as I was before,
And would be so, in spite of all he swore.
He, against this, right sagely would advise,
And old examples set before my eyes;
Tell, how the Roman matrons led their life,
Of Gracchus' mother, and Duilius' wife; [Pg 178]
And close the sermon, as beseemed his wit,
With some grave sentence out of Holy Writ.[28]
Oft would he say, who builds his house on sands,
Pricks his blind horse across the fallow lands,
Or lets his wife abroad with pilgrims roam,
Deserves a fool's-cap, and long ears at home.
All this availed not; for, whoe'er he be
That tells my faults, I hate him mortally:
And so do numbers more, I'll boldly say,
Men, women, clergy, regular and lay.
  My spouse, who was, you know, to learning bred,
A certain treatise, oft, at evening,[29] read,
Where divers authors, whom the devil confound
For all their lies, were in one volume bound. [Pg 179]
Valerius, whole; and of St. Jerome, part;[30]
Chrysippus and Tertullian; Ovid's Art,
Solomon's Proverbs, Eloïsa's loves,[31]
And many more than sure the church approves.[32]
More legends were there, here, of wicked wives,
Than good,[33] in all the Bible and saints' lives.
Who drew the lion vanquished? 'Twas a man.[34]
But could we women write as scholars can, [Pg 180]
Men should stand marked with far more wickedness
Than all the sons of Adam could redress.
Love seldom haunts the breast where learning lies,
And Venus sets, ere Mercury can rise.[35]
Those play the scholars who can't play the men,
And use that weapon which they have, their pen;
When old and past the relish of delight,
Then down they sit, and in their dotage write,
That not one woman keeps her marriage vow.
This by the way, but to my purpose now.
  It chanced my husband, on a winter's night,
Read in this book, aloud, with strange delight,
How the first female, as the Scriptures show,
Brought her own spouse and all his race to woe:[36]
How Sampson fell; and he, whom Dejanire
Wrapp'd in th' envenomed shirt, and set on fire:
How cursed Eryphile her lord betrayed,
And the dire ambush Clytemnestra laid:[37]
But what most pleased him was the Cretan dame, [Pg 181]
And husband-bull—oh monstrous! fie for shame!
  He had by heart, the whole detail of woe,
Xantippe made her good man undergo;
How oft she scolded in a day, he knew,
How many piss-pots on the sage she threw;
Who took it patiently, and wiped his head;
"Rain follows thunder," that was all he said.
  He read how Arius to his friend complained,
A fatal tree was growing in his land,
On which three wives successively had twined
A sliding noose, and wavered in the wind.
Where grows this plant, replied the friend, oh! where?
For better fruit did never orchard bear;
Give me some slip of this most blissful tree,
And, in my garden, planted shall it be.

Then, how two wives their lords' destruction prove,
Through hatred one, and one through too much love;
That for her husband mixed a pois'nous draught,
And this, for lust, an am'rous philtre bought:
The nimble juice soon seized his giddy head,
Frantic at night, and in the morning dead.[38]
How some, with swords, their sleeping lords have slain,
And some have hammered nails into their brain,
And some have drenched them with a deadly potion;
All this he read, and read with great devotion.
Long time I heard, and swelled, and blushed,[39] and frowned;
But when no end of these vile tales I found,
When still he read, and laughed, and read again,
And half the night was thus consumed in vain;
Provoked to vengeance, three large leaves I tore,
And, with one buffet, felled him on the floor. [Pg 182]
With that, my husband in a fury rose,
And down he settled me, with hearty blows.
I groaned, and lay extended on my side;
Oh! thou hast slain me for my wealth, I cried,[40]
Yet I forgive thee—take my last embrace—
He wept, kind soul! and stooped to kiss my face;
I took him such a box as turned him blue,
Then sighed and cried, Adieu, my dear, adieu![41]
But, after many a hearty struggle past,
I condescended to be pleased at last. [Pg 183]
Soon as he said, My mistress and my wife,
Do what you list, the term of all your life,
I took to heart the merits of the cause,
And stood content to rule by wholesome laws;
Received the reins of absolute command, }
With all the government of house and land, }
And empire o'er his tongue, and o'er his hand. }
As for the volume that reviled the dames,
'Twas torn to fragments, and condemned to flames.
Now heav'n, on all my husbands gone, bestow
Pleasures above, for tortures felt below:
That rest they wished for, grant them in the grave,
And bless those souls my conduct helped to save!

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] Pope has departed at the outset from the conception of Chaucer. The purpose of the tale which the wife of Bath tells is to show that women love, above all things, to govern; and her personal history, which she relates in the prologue, is an account of the means by which she reduced her husbands to submission. It was not her own matrimonial woes, which had been slight enough, that she was about to set forth, but the miseries of those whom it is her boast to have worried into obedience to her will. As Pope correctly renders the original, she states that the pains referred to the smart she had inflicted on her husbands; and, far from alleging that "dear-bought wisdom" had taught her that matrimony to a woman was a life of suffering, she thanks God that she has been married five times already, and declares that directly her fifth mate is dead, she will marry a sixth.

> When my husband is from the world i-gone,
> Some Christian man shall wedde me anon.

[2] "Twelve" in the original.

[3]
> Beside a welle Jesus, God and man,
> Spake in reproof of the Samaritan:
> "Thou hast i-had five husbandes," quoth he,
> "And that ilk-man, which that now hath thee
> Is not thine husband." Thus he said certain;
> What that he meant thereby I cannot sayn,
> But that I axe why the fithe man
> Was not husband to the Samaritan?

The question is addressed to those who deny the validity of second marriages, and she asks them to explain upon their theory why the fifth man was not properly the husband of the Samaritan woman, when there is the authoritative declaration of Scripture that he was.

[4] Pope alone is responsible for the second half of this line, which in its present application has an unbecoming levity. There was a pardoner in the company, a person who got his living by selling indulgences, and by displaying the pretended relics of saints, who says that he was about to marry, but that he shall abandon his intention now that he learns

what despotic authority wives exercise over husbands. The wife of Bath, unabashed, informs him that what she has told is nothing in comparison with that which is to follow:

> Abide, quoth she, my tale is not begun.
> Nay, thou shalt drinke of another tun
> Ere that I go, shall savour worse than ale.
> And when that I have told thee forth my tale
> Of tribulation in marriage,
> Of which I am expert in all my age,
> That is to say, myself hath been the whip,
> Then might thou choose whether thou wilt sip
> Of thilke tunne that I shall abroach:
> Beware of it ere thou too nigh approach.

These dramatic touches omitted by Pope give life to the piece, and individuality to the characters.

[5] In the original,

> I shall say sooth of husbands that I had,
> As three of them were good, and two were bad.

She meant that the two were rebellious in comparison with the three who were her slaves; for in speaking of the entire five, at the commencement of the prologue, she added,

> And all were worthy men in their degree.

Pope has fallen into an inconsistency. He states that the three old husbands were those who "were just tolerable." Yet when he comes to describe the youngest of the two, whom he here calls "bad," he makes the wife of Bath exclaim,

> Now for my fifth loved lord, the last and *best*,

In Chaucer she distinctly denies that he was the best, but says she *loved* him best, and proceeds to explain the reason, which is that women always value those most who treat them with harshness or indifference.

[6] This trait in the wife of Bath's character is brought out more distinctly by Chaucer:

> Me needeth not no longer doon diligence
> To win their love, or do them reverence.
> They loved me so well, high God above!
> That I tolde no deynte of their love.
> A wise woman will busy her ever in one
> To gete her love, there she hath none.
> But synnes I had them wholly in my hand
> And synnes they had me given all their land,
> What should I take keep them for to please
> But it were for my profit or mine ease?

"I tolde no deynte of their love," means I set no store by it; "ever in one" is always; and "take keep" is take care.

[7] The wife of Bath's first lesson in the art of domestic government is a panegyric upon the advantages of sturdy lying, in which Pope has not gone beyond the original:

> Ye wise wives that can understand
> Thus should ye speak, and bear them wrong in hand;
> For half so boldely can there no man
> Swere and lie as a woman can.

"To bear them wrong in hand" is to affirm wrongfully or falsely. The phrase "to bear in hand" for "to asseverate," was still frequently used in the reign of Charles II.

[8] The wife of Bath accuses her old husbands to their faces of having delivered this kind of railing lecture to her when they had come home at night "as drunk as mice." The drunkenness and the railing are alike inventions of her own, but she appeals to her niece, and Jenkin, the apprentice, to bear witness to the truth of her assertions. The version of Pope is not so vivid, so lively, or so close to nature as the original, and he has nearly passed over one of the most prominent characteristics of the speech. When the wife of Bath taunts her husband with the reproaches she pretended he had heaped upon her, she intersperses her repetition of his objurgations with abusive and disdainful names by way of comment upon his monstrous sentiments. Old caynard or villain, Sir old lecher, thou very knave, lorel or worthless fellow, old dotard schrewe or sinner, old barrel full of lies, Sir old fool, are some of the appellations by which she marks her opinion of the doctrines she fathers upon him. After reciting his alleged complaint, that women concealed their vices till they were married, she adds that the maxim is worthy of "a schrewe," or scoundrel. When she imputes to him the declaration that no man would wed who was wise, or who desired to go to heaven, she follows it up with the wish that thunder and lightning would break his wicked neck. When he is charged with having said that there were three things that troubled earth, and that a wife was one of them, she hopes that the life of such a villain will be cut short. When she taxes him with quoting the proverb that a house not water-tight, a smoky chimney, and a scolding wife drove men from home, she retorts upon him that he is himself a scold, and intimates that his years are an aggravation of the vice. This is not only natural as the sort of scurrilous language which the wife of Bath would have used if the drunken invectives had been

real, but was part of her plan for bringing her husbands into subjection. Her indignant recriminations were intended to browbeat them into meekness.

[9] She enlarges in the original upon this device, which was one of her capital resources. She quotes the proverb, that he first grinds who comes first to the mill, and upon this principle, when she had done wrong, she began by attacking her husband;

> Or elles I had often time been spilt.

The poor man thus suddenly assailed stood upon the defensive, endeavoured to vindicate his innocence, and was heartily glad to hold his tongue on condition of receiving forgiveness for faults he had never committed.

[10] By pretending that she went out to watch her husbands she got the opportunity for indulging in freaks and jollity with her youthful friends.

> Under that colour had I many a mirth.
> For all such wit is given us of birth;
> Deceipt, weeping, spinning, God hath give
> To women kindely while they may live.
> And thus of one thing I avaunte me,
> At th' end I had the bet in each degree,
> By sleight or force, or of some maner thing,
> As by continual murmur or chiding.

"Kindely" is by nature.

[11] In the original,

> With empty hand men may no hawkes lure.

When the falconer had let fly his hawks, and wanted them to return, he was commonly obliged to entice them by some bait. The tassel, or tercel, was the male of the peregrine falcon, and was noted for its docility and gentleness. It would seem as if this species would obey the summons of the trainer without any other inducement, for when Juliet calls after Romeo, and he does not instantly reappear, she says,

> O for a falconer's voice
> To lure this tassel-gentle back again.

[12] In Chaucer she states that her husbands would grant all her demands to soothe her into good humour:

> That made me that ever I would them chide.
> For though the pope had seten them beside,
> I nold not spare them at their owne board,
> For, by my troth, I quit them word for word.
> As help me very God omnipotent,
> Though I right now should make my testament,
> I owe them nought a word, that it nis quit;
> I brought it so aboute by my wit,
> That they must give it up, as for the best,
> Or elles had we never been in rest.
> For though he looked as a grim lion,
> Yet should he fail of his conclusion.

Pope has omitted the latter half of the lines and thus obliterated one of those nicer traits of nature with which the original abounds. Men put on the grimness of the lion, and think to prevail by strength, but women conquer by pertinacity. The majority of men grow weary of perpetual conflict, and purchase peace by concession; but women of the stamp of the wife of Bath wilt wrangle for ever, and prefer endless discord to the subjugation of self-will. Dryden, adding to Virgil's thought, has expressed the idea, Æn. v. 1024:

> Ev'n Jove is thwarted by his haughty wife,
> Still vanquished yet she still renews the strife.

[13] Chaucer represents her as still youthful:

> And I was young, and full of ragerie,
> Stubborn and strong and jolly as a pye.

[14] > The flour is gone, there nis no more to tell,
> The bran as I best can, now must I sell.

[15] In the original she does not say that she set his marrow frying, but that she fried him in his own grease, by stirring up in him the tormenting jealousy which his faithlessness had first engendered in herself.

> I made him of the same wood a cross.
> Not of my body in no foul manere;
> But certainly I made folk such cheer,
> That in his owne grease I made him fry
> For anger and for very jealousy.
> By God, in earth I was his purgatory,
> For which I hope his soule be in glory.
> For God it wot, he sat full still and sung,

When that his shoe full bitterly him wrung.
There was no wight save God and he that wist
In many wyse how sore I him twist.

This is a life-like portrait of a man tortured by inward pangs, and affecting an air of indifference while he did not dare to complain, from the consciousness that his greater offence would expose him to a crushing retort.

[16] In the character which Chaucer gives of the wife of Bath he says,

And thrice had she been at Jerusalem;
She hadde passed many a strange stream;
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boulogne,
In Galice at Saint Jame, and at Cologne.

The reputed tomb of Saint James was at Compostella, in Galicia, and was a favourite resort of pilgrims. The wife of Bath may be supposed to have joined these expeditions quite as much from a love of roving and novelty as from superstitious motives.

[17] Chaucer says he was buried under the rood-beam, or as it is usually called the rood-loft, which was placed on the top of the screen that separated the chancel from the nave. The name was derived from the rood or cross that stood in the centre with the effigy of our crucified Lord, and having on one side an image of the Virgin, and on the other of the apostle John. Pope buries the deceased husband in the churchyard, and the root is a wooden cross which has been erected upon his grave.

[18] Artemisia, wife of Mausolus, king of Caria. On the death of her husband, 352 B.C., she erected a monument to him at Halicarnassus, which, from the beauty of its architecture and sculpture, was considered one of the seven wonders of the world. The Romans, says Pausanias, called all their most magnificent tombs *mausolea* after this monument to Mausolua, and hence our modern term mausoleum. There is no mention of the tomb of Mausolus in Chaucer.

[19] I trow I loved him beste for that he
Was of his love daungerous to me.
We women have, if that I shall not lie,
In this matter a queynte fantasy.
Wayte, what thing we may not lightly have,
Thereafter will we soonest cry and crave.
Forbid us thing, and that desire we;
Press on us fast, and thenne will we flee.
With danger outen alle we our ware;
Great press at market maketh dear chaffare.

"Daungerous" in the second line means sparing, and in the last line but one, "with danger" signifies with a scarcity. Then, says the wife of Bath, we must produce all our own wares to give in exchange. At the date of her fifth marriage she was forty and the bridegroom was only twenty. Everything is now reversed. Her first husbands had endowed her with all their property that they might buy a young wife in their old age. She, in turn, that she may procure a young husband, gives him

all the land and fee
That ever was me give therebefore;
But afterward repented me full sore.

Her aged mates had worshipped her, and she repaid them with disdain. In her mature years she is infatuated by a youth, and he, who has no relish for the homage of a matron of forty, slights her just as she had done her early husbands under similar circumstances.

[20] It would seem from Chaucer that the youth was a native of Bath, and had returned there when he had completed his education at Oxford:

He some time was a clerk of Oxenford,
And had left school, and went at home to board,
With my gossib, duelling in our town:
God have her soul, her name was Alisoun.

"My gossib" is my godmother, and the wife of Bath, whose christian name was also Alisoun, had been named after her. Pope, by turning "*my* gossip" into "*a* gossip," has done away with the special relationship, and employed the word in its modern sense of a lover of tittle-tattle.

[21] In Chaucer she adds a more powerful motive:

what wist I where my grace
Was shapen for to be, or in what place?

In other words, as she explains shortly afterwards, she was in search of a lover who might succeed the fourth husband whenever he died.

[22] "To perform a station," says Richelet, in his French Dictionary, "consists in visiting with devotion one or several churches a certain number of days and times, and praying there in order to propitiate the wrath of God, and obtain some favour from his mercy." The wife of Bath in the original says, that she attended vigils, processions, preachings, miracle-plays, and marriages, besides making pilgrimages, but "stations" are not included in her list. The Roman Catholicism of Pope had rendered the word familiar to

him.

[23] The expression "I can't tell how" implies that the intimacy on the part of the wife of Bath was accidental, whereas it appears from Pope's context, and still more from the original, that it was a deliberate design:

> Now will I telle forth what happed me.
> I say that in the fieldes walked we
> Till truely we had such dalliance
> This clerk and I, that of my purveyance
> I spake to him, and saide how that he
> If I were widdow, shoulde wedde me.
> For certainly I say for no bobaunce,
> Yet was I never withouten purveyance
> Of mariage, ne or no thinges eke;
> I hold a mouse's heart not worth a leek,
> That hath but oon hole to sterte to,
> And if that faile then is all i-do.

The acknowledgment that while married to one man she is always engaged to a second, seems to the wife of Bath to have nothing discreditable in it, and she only fears lest she should expose herself to the charge of vanity in asserting that she can command a succession of admirers.

[24] No Englishwoman would talk of laying her husband in his urn, not to mention that the phrase is a mixture of incongruous ideas, the "laid" being applicable to burial, and the "urn" to burning. When the wife of Bath speaks of her departed husband she says,

> He is now in his grave and in his chest.

[25] This couplet is an exaggeration of the original:

> I followed ay my dames lore,
> As well of that as of other thinges more.

[26] Tearing garments, and throwing dust upon the head was a custom with some ancient nations, but was not an English habit, and there is no allusion to it in the text of Chaucer:

> When that my fourthe husband was on bier,
> I wept algate, and made a sorry cheer,
> As wives musten for it is usage;
> And with my kerchief covered my visage;
> But, for that I was purveyed of a mate,
> I wept but small, and that I undertake.

The hard-hearted selfishness which does not bestow a thought upon the dead, being solely intent upon enjoying existence with the living, comes out in a yet more odious light when she narrates her feelings at the funeral. Her mind is entirely taken up with the young clerk, and mainly with admiration of his figure:

> When that I saw him go
> After the bier, methought he had a pair
> Of legges and of feet so clean and fair
> That all my heart I gave unto his hold.

[27] She does not in the original profess "to repent it still," and for the excellent reason that, after a period of rebellion on the part of the clerk, he had become a puppet in her hands, and had rendered up both himself and his chattels to her undisputed management.

[28] The wife of Bath says she insisted upon going from house to house, according to her former custom, and the clerk set his face against the practice. His instances from Roman story were directed against this special failing, and were not general declamations on the virtue of Roman matrons and Gracchus' mother. The clerk told the gossiping, intriguing dame that Simplicius Gallus left his wife for ever, merely because he caught her looking out of the door with her head uncovered. He told her of another Roman that in the same manner deserted his wife because she one day went to see a game without his knowledge. His quotation from Holy Writ is not "some grave sentence," but the particular sentence of Ecclesiasticus which says, "Give the water no passage; neither a wicked woman liberty to gad abroad." When the context has been generalised the lines which follow have not the accumulative sting of the original, where they are an additional example of the evil consequences of suffering women to rove about. Pope has further weakened their force by supposing them to have no higher authority than the opinion of the clerk. In Chaucer they are given as a proverb, and the husband urges them with triumph because they convey the general experience of mankind. The language is stronger than in Pope. Instead of mildly pronouncing that the man who suffers his wife to visit "halwes" or the shrines of saints "deserves a fool's cap," the proverb declares that he "is worthy to be hanged on the galwes."

[29] The clerk in the original reads with greater assiduity than "oft at evening."

> He had a book that gladly night and day,
> For his desport he woulde read alway.

After describing the contents of the book the wife of Bath adds,

> And alle these were bound in one volume;

And every night and day was his custume,
When he had leisure and vacatioun
From other worldes occupation,
To reden in this book of wicked wives.

This portion of the narrative in Chaucer is exceedingly pleasant and natural. The wife says that she paid no regard to the clerk's Roman precedents, his quotations from Scripture, his old saws and proverbs.

Ne I would not of him corrected be;
I hate him that my vices telleth me.

The contempt with which she treated his exhortations drove him utterly mad, and it was then that he betook himself to reading all the literature he could find that bore upon the vices and frailties of women. The evidence of their general perversity with which his studies supplied him consoled him for the ungovernable disposition of his own wife, and he used "to laugh away full fast" over the record of their obstinacy and evil doings. He had the sweeter satisfaction of revenge. His mirth galled his imperious, froward wife, and when he read aloud the endless detail of female iniquities, backed up by the authority of great names, she could restrain her rage no longer, and the storm burst forth under which the wretched clerk succumbed.

[30] Pope has omitted a stroke of humour; for in the original, she naturally mistakes the rank and age of St. Jerome.

And eke there was a clerk sometime in Rome
A *cardinal,* that highten St. Jerome.—WARTON.

[31] This passage acquaints us with the writers who were popular in the days of Chaucer. —WARTON.

Warton takes no account of the fact that Chaucer was only enumerating the authors which furnished arguments against women. Valerius is a tract by Walter Mapes, which bears the title "Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum." St. Jerome's denunciations of matrimony are in his treatise "Contra Jovinianum." Tertullian wrote strongly against second marriages; and severe animadversions upon female vices or weaknesses have a large place in his works. "Who is meant by Chrysippus," says Tyrwhitt, "I cannot guess." Ovid's Art of Love, and the Letters of Eloisa and Abelard are known by name to all the world.

[32] This line is not in Chaucer.

[33] If Pope intended to follow the original, "good" means "good legends."

[34] The wife of Bath, having laid down the maxim that it is impossible for any clerk to speak well of women, except it be of the saints, indignantly inquires,

Who painted the lion, tell me, who?

and with an oath she adds,

If women hadde written stories,
As clerkes have within their oratories,
They would have writ of men more wickedness,
Than all the mark of Adam may redress.

"Than all the mark" is than all that bear the mark or image of Adam. Pope's version, in which the wife asks the question and tamely answers it, is flat in comparison with the scornful repetition of the emphatic "who?" Yet he has employed this reduplication of a predominant word at ver. 397, where it has much less effect. Judiciously used, there is force and beauty in the turn, as in the couplet from Addison's translation of Ovid:

Her sisters often, as 'tis said, would cry
Fie, Salmacis, what always idle, fie:

[35] Pope, misapplying the original, has adopted an image which is astronomically false. Chaucer spoke the language of astrology, and said that each of these planets fell in the exaltation of the other; for a planet was in its exaltation when it was in the sign of the zodiac, where it was supposed to exercise its greatest influence, and fell, or was in its dejection, in the sign where it exercised the least. Mercury, the god of science, was in his exaltation in Virgo, where Venus, the goddess of love, had no sway. Venus was in her exaltation in Pisces, and there Mercury was in his dejection. A man could not be under the government of incompatible planetary powers, and since scholars served Mercury,

Therefore no woman is of clerkes praised.

[36] This line was followed by a poor couplet, which Pope afterwards omitted:

How Sampson's heart false Delilah did move,
His strength, his sight, his life were lost for love.
Then how Aleides died whom Dejanire, &c.

[37] Eryphile, bribed by a necklace, prevailed upon her husband Amphiaraus to join the expedition against Thebes, although he assured her it would be fatal to him. Clytemnestra lived in adultery during the absence of her husband, Agamemnon, at the siege of Troy, and, on his return, she and her paramour entrapped and murdered him.

[38] Some writers have pretended that Lucilia, the wife of Lucretius, the poet, gave him a love potion which drove him mad.

[39] Chaucer says nothing of the blushes of the wife of Bath, which were not at all in her character.

[40] Who, exclaims the wife of Bath, could imagine

> The woe that in mine hearte was and pine?
> And when I saw he nolde never fine
> To reden on this cursed book all night,
> All suddenly three leaves have I plight
> Out of this booke that he had, and eke
> I with my fist so took him on the cheek,
> That in our fire he fell backward adown.
> And he upstert as doth a wood leoun,
> And with his fist he smote me on the head
> That in the floor I lay as I were dead.
> And when he saw so stille that I lay
> He was aghast, and would have fled away.
> Till atte last out of my swoon I braide;
> O hastow slain me, false thief I said,
> And for my land thus hastow murdered me?
> Ere I be dead, yet will I kisse thee.

"Pine" is pain; "fine" is cease; "plight" is plucked; "wood" is mad; and "braide" is awoke. Pope has dropped the natural circumstance of the clerk's terror when he fancies he has killed his wife. This alarm brings out more strongly the hypocrisy of his virulent dame in pretending that the blow he gave her on the head, after she had torn the leaves out of his book and knocked him backwards into the fire, was with the deliberate design of murdering her to get possession of her property.

[41] Pope's translation is mawkish, and his "adieu, my dear, adieu!" destroys the point of the story. The wife of Bath seconds the blow with reproaches instead of with terms of endearment, nor does she consent to be pacified until the clerk surrenders at discretion. Had she relaxed before her conquest was complete, she would have lost the opportunity of establishing her dominion. After the line, "Ere I be dead, yet will I kisse thee," Chaucer thus continues:

> And near he came, and kneeleth fairadown,
> And saide, Deare sister Alisoun,
> As help me God, I shall thee never smite;
> That I have done it is thyself to wite;
> Forgive it me, and that I thee beseke;
> And yet oftsoon I hit him on the cheek,
> And saide, Thief thus muchel I me wreke
> Now will I die, I may no longer speak.
> But atte last, with muchel care and woe
> We fell accorded by ourselven two;
> He gave me all the bridle in mine hand
> To have the governance of house and land,
> And of his tongue, and of his hand also,
> And made him burn his book anon right tho.

"To wite" is to blame; "I me wreke" is "I revenge myself;" and "tho" is then. As soon as the poor clerk consented to have no will of his own, and to be governed like a school-boy by his master, the dame declares,

> God help me so, I was to him as kind
> As any wife from Denmark unto Inde.

It must have been holiday time with him, notwithstanding, when the wife of Bath set out on one of her pilgrimages, and left him in peace at home.

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# THE TEMPLE OF FAME

[Pg 185]

## WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1711.

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# THE TEMPLE OF FAME: A VISION.

[Pg 186]

### By Mr. Pope.

**8vo.**

London: Printed for Bernard Lintott, betwixt the two Temple Gates in Fleet Street. 1715.

This is the first edition. A second edition, which I have not seen, is advertised by Lintot in some of the lists of his publications. Dennis, in the Observations he put forth on the poem in 1717, asks

Pope if there are no women who are worthy to appear in the Temple of Fame, and immediately adds, "Divers, he says, but he thought he should affront the modesty of the sex in showing them there." The remark does not occur in the first edition, nor in the reprints of the poem in Pope's collected works, and it may, perhaps, have been taken from the second edition. As the production disappointed the expectations raised by the name of the author the sale was probably not large. The piece was included in the quarto of 1717, and in the editions of Lintot's Miscellanies which came out in 1727 and 1732, but was not in the editions of 1720 and 1722. Lintot paid 32*l.* 5*s.* for the copyright on Feb. 1, 1715.

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## ADVERTISEMENT

[Pg 187]

The hint of the following piece was taken from Chaucer's House of Fame. The design is in a manner entirely altered, the descriptions and most of the particular thoughts my own: yet I could not suffer it to be printed without this acknowledgment,[1] or think a concealment of this nature the less unfair for being common. The reader who would compare this with Chaucer, may begin with his third Book of Fame, there being nothing in the two first books that answers to their title. [2] Whenever any hint is taken from him, the passage itself is set down in the marginal notes.[3]

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Some modern critics, from a pretended refinement of taste, have declared themselves unable to relish allegorical poems.[4] It is not easy to penetrate into the meaning of this criticism; for if fable be allowed one of the chief beauties, or, as Aristotle calls it, the very soul of poetry, it is hard to comprehend how that fable should be the less valuable for having a moral. The ancients constantly made use of allegories. My Lord Bacon has composed an express treatise in proof of this, entitled, The Wisdom of the Ancients; where the reader may see several particular fictions exemplified and explained with great clearness, judgment, and learning. The incidents, indeed, by which the allegory is conveyed, must be varied according to the different genius or manners of different times; and they should never be spun too long, or too much clogged with trivial circumstances, or little particularities. We find an uncommon charm in truth, when it is conveyed by this sideway to our understanding: and it is observable, that even in the most ignorant ages this way of writing has found reception. Almost all the poems in the old Provençal had this turn; and from these it was that Petrarch took the idea of his poetry. We have his Trionfi in this kind; and Boccace pursued in the same track. Soon after, Chaucer introduced it here, whose Romaunt of the Rose, Court of Love, Flower and the Leaf, House of Fame, and some others of his writings, are masterpieces of this sort. In epic poetry, it is true, too nice and exact a pursuit of the allegory is justly esteemed a fault; and Chaucer had the discernment to avoid it in his Knight's Tale, which was an attempt towards an epic poem. Ariosto, with less judgment, gave entirely into it in his Orlando; which, though carried to an excess, had yet so much reputation in Italy, that Tasso (who reduced heroic poetry to the juster standard of the ancients) was forced to prefix to his work a scrupulous explanation of the allegory of it, to which the fable itself could scarce have directed his readers. Our countryman, Spenser, followed, whose poem is almost entirely allegorical, and imitates the manner of Ariosto rather than that of Tasso. Upon the whole, one may observe this sort of writing, however discontinued of late, was in all times, so far from being rejected by the best poets, that some of them have rather erred by insisting on it too closely, and carrying it too far; and that to infer from thence that the allegory itself is vicious, is a presumptuous contradiction to the judgment and practice of the greatest geniuses, both ancient and modern. —Pope.

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Pope, as he tells Steele in their correspondence (Nov. 16, 1712), had written the Temple of Fame two years before, that is, when he was only twenty-two years old, an early time of life for so much learning and so much observation as that work exhibits. It has, as Steele warmly declared, a "thousand beauties." Every part is splendid; there is great luxuriance of ornaments; the original vision of Chaucer was never denied to be much improved; the allegory is very skilfully continued, the imagery is properly selected and learnedly displayed; yet with all this comprehension of excellence, as its scene is laid in remote ages, and its sentiments, if the concluding paragraph be excepted, have little relation to general manners or common life, it never obtained much notice, but is turned silently over and seldom quoted or mentioned with either praise or blame.—Johnson.

It was, to the Italians we owed anything that could be called poetry, from whom Chaucer, imitated by Pope in this vision, copied largely, as *they* are said to have done from the bards of Provence. But whatever Chaucer might copy from the Italians, yet the artful and entertaining plan of his Canterbury Tales was purely original and his own. This admirable piece, even exclusive of its poetry, is highly valuable, as it preserves to us the liveliest and exactest picture of the manners, customs, characters, and habits, of our forefathers, whom he has brought before our eyes acting as on a stage, suitably to their different orders and employments. With these portraits the driest antiquary must be delighted. By this plan, he has more judiciously connected these stories which the guests relate, than Boccace has done his novels, whom he has imitated, if not excelled, in the variety of the subjects of his tales. It is a common mistake, that Chaucer's excellence lay in his manner of treating light and ridiculous subjects; for whoever will attentively consider the noble poem of Palamon and Arcite, will be convinced that he equally excels in the pathetic and the sublime. The House of Fame, as being merely descriptive, is of an inferior rank to those in Chaucer of the narrative kind, and which paint life and manners. The design is improved and heightened by the masterly hand of Pope. It is not improbable that this subject was

suggested to our author, not only by Dryden's translations of Chaucer, of which Pope was so fond, but likewise by that celebrated paper of Addison, in the Tatler, called the Table of Fame, to which the great worthies of antiquity are introduced, and seated according to their respective merits and characters, and which was published some years before this poem was written. The six persons Pope thought proper to select as worthy to be placed on the highest seats of honour are Homer, Virgil, Pindar, Horace, Aristotle, Tully. It is observable that our author has omitted [Pg 191] the great dramatic poets of Greece. Sophocles and Euripides deserved certainly an honourable niche in the Temple of Fame, as much as Pindar and Horace. But the truth is it was not fashionable in Pope's time, nor among his acquaintance, attentively to study these poets. I own I have some particular reasons for thinking that he was not very conversant in this sort of composition, having no inclination to the drama. In a note on the third book of his Homer, where Helen points out to Priam the names and characters of the Grecian leaders from the walls of Troy, he observes, that several great poets have been engaged by the beauty of this passage to an imitation of it. But who are the poets he enumerates on this occasion? Only Statius and Tasso; the former of whom, in his seventh book, and the latter in his third, shows the forces and the commanders that invested the cities of Thebes and Jerusalem. Not a syllable is mentioned of that capital scene in the Phœnissæ of Euripides, from the hundred and twentieth to the two hundredth line, where the old man, standing with Antigone on the walls of Thebes, marks out to her the various figures, habits, armour, and qualifications of each different warrior, in the most lively and picturesque manner, as they appear in the camp beneath them. In conclusion, we may observe that Pope's alterations of Chaucer are introduced with judgment and art, and that these alterations are more in number, and more important in conduct, than any Dryden has made of the same author.

The Temple of Fame was communicated to Steele, who entertained a high opinion of its beauties, and who conveyed it to Addison. Pope had ornamented the poem with the machinery of guardian angels, which he afterwards omitted. He speaks of his work with a diffidence uncommon in a young poet, and which does him credit. "No errors," he says to Steele, "are so trivial but they deserve to be mended. I could point you to several; but it is my business to be informed of those faults I do not know, and as for those I do, not to talk of them but to correct them. You speak of that poem in a style I neither merit nor expect, but, I assure you, if you freely mark or dash out, I shall look upon your blots to be its greatest beauties,—I mean, if Mr. Addison and yourself should like it in the whole. I am afraid of nothing so much as to impose anything on the world which is unworthy its acceptance."—Warton.

Chaucer's poem contains great strokes of Gothic imagination, yet bordering often on the most ideal and capricious extravagance. Pope has imitated this piece with his usual elegance of diction and harmony of versification; but, in the mean time, he has not only misrepresented the story, but marred the character of the poem. He has endeavoured to correct its extravagancies by new refinements and additions of another cast; but he did not consider that extravagancies are [Pg 192] essential to a poem of such a structure, and even constitute its beauties. An attempt to unite order and exactness of imagery with a subject formed on principles so professedly romantic and anomalous, is like giving Corinthian pillars to a Gothic palace. When I read Pope's elegant imitation of this piece, I think I am walking among the modern monuments unsuitably placed in Westminster Abbey.—T. Warton.

Little can be added to T. Warton's masterly appreciation of the characteristic merit of this poem. May I be just allowed to mention, that there is less harmony of versification in this poem, than in most of the preceding, particularly the Rape of the Lock, Elegy to an Unfortunate Lady, and, above all, the Epistle of Eloisa. The pause is too generally at the end of the line, and on the fourth and fifth syllable. Pope bids

> The Muses raise
> The golden trumpet of eternal praise.

Chaucer with a bolder personification sends for Eolus, "that king of Thrace," from "his cave of stone," to sound his "trump of gold." These circumstances may designate in some measure the character of either poem. I must confess I think there can be no comparison between the bold trump of Eolus which he set

> To his mouth
> And blew it east, and west, and south,
> And north, as loud as any thunder,

and the delicate but less animated tone of the Muses in Pope.—Bowles.

If Chaucer was indebted to any of the Italian poets for the idea of his House of Fame, it was to Petrarca, who in his Trionfo della Fama has introduced many of the most eminent characters of ancient times. It must however be observed, that the poem of Petrarca is extremely simple and inartificial, and consists only in supposing that the most celebrated men of ancient Greece and Rome pass in review before him; whilst that of Chaucer is the work of a powerful imagination, abounding with beautiful and lively descriptions, and forming a connected and consistent whole. Pope's Temple of Fame is one of the noblest, though earliest, productions of the author, displaying a fertile invention and an uncommon grandeur and facility of style. It is confessedly founded on Chaucer's House of Fame; but the design is greatly altered and improved, and many of the thoughts and descriptions are entirely his own; yet such is the coincidence and happy union of the work with its prototype, that it is almost impossible to distinguish those portions for

which he is indebted to Chaucer from those of his own invention. The conclusion, as descriptive of his own feelings at an early period of his own life, is particularly interesting.—Roscoe. [Pg 193]

Chaucer's House of Fame is adorned with statues

> Of all manner of minstrales,
> And gestours that tellen tales
> Both of weeping and of game.

Just such a gestour, or narrative poet, was Chaucer himself; for, as Warton has remarked, he excelled alike in the pathetic and the gay, and, if he was more admirable in one than in the other, his "tales of weeping" were superior to his "tales of game." None of our poets, except Shakespeare, can compete with him in versatility of genius. His numerous characters are conceived with equal truth and distinctness; his dialogue is lively and natural; his humour is sometimes broad, sometimes subtle, and always racy; his tenderness is unrivalled in its mingled depth, simplicity and refinement; his descriptions, whether serious or comic, have never been surpassed in ease and vividness. His pre-eminence appears the more conspicuous when we contrast his living strains with the feeble diffuse monotony of his successors and predecessors. He may be compared, says Thomas Warton, to a premature summer's day in an English spring. The autobiographical passages in his works afford a glimpse of the varied tastes and pursuits which rendered him one of the most comprehensive writers in the world. His keen observation of mankind was blended with the plodding of a student. He tells us that he lived the life of a hermit, and was entirely ignorant of what was passing among the neighbours who "dwelt almost at his door." His custom when the duties of the day were over was to withdraw to his house, and sit down "as dumb as any stone" to his books, till he was "dazed" with reading. His love of nature could alone compete in intensity with his love of literature. The single thing which had power to entice him from the studies he held "in reverence" was the singing of birds and the blooming of flowers. The month of May had a peculiar fascination for him. "Then," he exclaims, "farewell my book," and transported by the opening beauties of the year he gave himself up to the exhilarating effects of renovated nature. The "flower of flowers," in his eyes, was the daisy, and there was never a morning that he was not out at dawn in the meadows, kneeling on the "soft, sweet grass," and watching his little favourite unclose its petals to the sun. In the evening he returned to see the daisies "go to rest," and no sooner were they shut up than he hastened home to bed, that he might be awake in time to witness the renewal of the scene. The sight was to him so "blissful" that it "softened all his sorrow," nor did the commonness of the occurrence abate the charm. He protests that he still feels within him the fire which impelled him to rise with glad devotion before [Pg 194] break of day that he might behold the resurrection of his cherished flower, and do it reverence; for the friendly daisy was—

> Ever alike fair and fresh of hue,
> And I love it, and ever alike new,
> And ever shall till that mine hearte die.

These traits present a charming picture of the man, and they are enhanced by the modesty which accompanied his greatness. He always speaks of his writings with unaffected humility, as those of a person who from taste was a diligent cultivator of poetry without possessing the faculty to become a worthy poet.

The House of Fame cannot be ranked with Chaucer's best productions. The incidents are supposed to pass in a dream, which was his ordinary plan for avoiding the infringement of probability when he exchanged terrestrial realities for the visions of fancy. He repeatedly in his works does homage to the happy influence of love. He maintained that it was the parent of the choicest qualities among mankind, though he sometimes adulterates his loftier sentiments by intermingling voluptuous passion with the pure affections of the heart,—a defect which was usual with the mediæval "gestours." He reverts in the House of Fame to his favourite theme, and the first book is taken up with a description of the temple of Venus. The entire edifice was of glass that was radiant with paintings representing subjects from Ovid and Virgil. Chaucer flourished in the finest period of Gothic architecture, when the "storied windows richly dight" were the delight of the age, and his detailed enumeration of the pictured incidents were not, to his contemporaries, the dry catalogue they may appear to us. After examining the marvellous gallery, he walks out of the building to seek for some one to inform him in what country he may be. He finds that the surrounding district is a desert as far as the eye can reach, without house, tree, herbage, or living creature, till gazing upwards he beholds an eagle aloft in the sky.

> It was of gold, and shone so bright
> That never saw men such a sight,
> But if the heaven had ywon
> All new of God another sun.

The book concludes with the announcement that the gorgeous eagle began somewhat to descend, and this is followed in the second book by the bird catching sight of Chaucer, and stooping upon him with the rapidity of lightning. In an instant it catches him up in its claws, and "as lightly as if he was a lark" soars with him into the clouds. He swoons with fright, and is restored to consciousness by the eagle calling him by name, and rebuking him for his fears. Having calmed [Pg 195] him, the bird informs him why he has been sent to fetch him, and bear him aloft into the skies. Chaucer more than once confesses that he was not framed to win affection. He says he did "not

dare to love for his unlikeliness," and that he might "go in the dance" with those whom it had not been Cupid's pleasure to prosper. Yet his quick and glowing sympathies had led him to employ his genius in celebrating a blessing of which he had tasted so sparingly, and he is now told that his disinterested service to Venus and Cupid, in devoting the hours of night to composing poems on the histories of lovers till his head aches, has attracted the notice of Jupiter, who intends to reward him by admitting him to a view of the palace of Fame. The eagle continues rising upwards with his burthen, and expounds to Chaucer as they go the situation of the building, and the means by which everything said and done on earth is known in the distant sanctuary of the goddess. Arrived there, the winged messenger of Jupiter sets the poet down, and bidding him farewell, expresses a hope that the God of heaven will send him grace to learn some good from the scenes which are about to be unveiled to him. The third book contains the account of the House of Fame, and the House of Rumour, and despite the previous announcement of the extraordinary disclosures which await him, Chaucer has copied several of his leading ideas from Ovid and Virgil. In the House of Fame he witnesses the caprice with which the goddess dispenses reputation and disgrace; and in the House of Rumour he learns that nothing can exceed the lying and deception which are practised by mercenary ecclesiastics for the sake of lucre. His honest nature and penetrating understanding repudiated the impostures of the Romish church, and it was the main lesson which he seemed to wish to inculcate in his poem.

It is stated by Pope in his prefatory advertisement that the House of Fame had only supplied him with the "hint" for the Temple of Fame, that "the design was entirely altered," and that "the descriptions, and most of the particular thoughts, were his own." Bowles says that "Pope seems unwilling to confess all he owes to Chaucer," and that his language would "lead us to conclude that the chief merit of the arrangement and imagination belonged to himself," whereas he is indebted to his predecessor for "what is most poetical in the whole composition." Pope cannot be accused of concealing his obligations to the House of Fame, for he has fairly specified them in his notes, but he extremely underrated the extent to which he borrowed from it when he fancied that his general outline was different, and "most of the particular thoughts entirely new." The fertility of invention ascribed to him by Roscoe, and which he, in some degree, challenges for himself, is the last praise he can claim. Every portion of the conception which has a touch of creative power is found in Chaucer, together with the largest part of what is good in the filling up. High [Pg 196] authorities differ as to the effect of Pope's additions and variations. Thomas Warton pronounced that "the character of the poem was marred," and Bowles endorsed the criticism. Johnson, on the other hand, asserts that "the original vision was never denied to be much improved," and he had Joseph Warton, Roscoe, and Campbell on his side. "Much of Chaucer's fantastic matter," says Campbell, "has been judiciously omitted by Pope, who at the same time has clothed the best ideas of the old poem in spirited numbers and expression. Chaucer supposes himself to be snatched up to heaven by a large eagle, who addresses him in the name of St. James and the Virgin Mary. In Pope, the philosophy of fame comes with much more propriety from the poet himself than from the beak of a talkative eagle."[5] The introduction of the majestic eagle, its tremendous swoop when it pounces on the lonely wanderer, the terror produced by the first stage of the flight, and the animated dialogue in the second stage, is the most striking portion of Chaucer's vision. The philosophic discourse of the bird is not inconsistent with the wild imaginings of a dream. "Fantastic matter" is here the most natural, and keeps up an illusion which disappears in the formal composition of Pope. The advantage of modern language and versification would have rendered it easy for a man less gifted than him to improve on isolated passages, but the free fancy and picturesqueness of Chaucer are wanting. The romance which constitutes the truth and charm of the original dream is replaced by a scene of frigid tameness; and Johnson, while declaring that every part of the remodelled piece was splendid, is compelled to admit that it is turned silently over and takes no hold on the mind. Dullness is a fatal innovation which is poorly compensated by the greater polish of the style, and harmony of the verse.

The Temple of Fame suffered from a cause which deteriorated much of Pope's early poetry,—the notion that the noblest exercise of mind was to magnify the ancients, and reproduce their ideas. The epic poem he commenced at thirteen was naturally a school-boy's "slavish imitation" of Greek and Latin authors.[6] A magnificent modern literature, marked by the strongest lines of native vigour and masculine independence, might have been expected, as he grew acquainted with it, to expand his taste. This effect did not ensue. Led astray by the false conventional canons of hacknied criticism, he clung to his early prejudices, and, regardless of the splendid names which gave the lie to his theory, he could say, at the age of thirty, in the preface to his works, "All that is left us is to recommend our productions by the imitation of the ancients." He told Spence that he should certainly have tried his hand upon a second epic if he had not translated the Iliad, [Pg 197] and this epic, in its main characteristics, would not have differed much from his translation. "I should have sat down to it," he said, "with this advantage, that I had been nursed up in Homer and Virgil."[7] He once intended to take the Corinthian Timoleon for his hero; and scene, manners, personages, machinery, and sentiments would all have been as Greek as they could be made by an imitator who had not entered deeply into the spirit of classic writers and times. The everlasting interest attached to the Iliad,—to a poem original and national, reflecting the institutions, customs, feelings, and beliefs of its era,—would, he thought, be extended to a modern duplicate, in which every one of these qualities would have been reversed. "The less we copy the ancients," said Dr. Young, "we shall resemble them the more." The undue exaltation of antiquity is complete in the Temple of Fame. No English king, warrior, statesman, or patriot; no Christian martyr or evangeliser; no poet or philosopher was deemed worthy to be ranked with the men of old. The fictitious phantoms of heathen mythology, the heroes of decayed empires, and the authors whose works are in dead languages, are the sole immortals of Pope. Within the

limits of his narrow world several of his names appear to have been selected at random, and others are applauded upon mistaken principles. He extols the virtue of Brutus, whose chief glory was to have plotted the death of his preserver, patron, and friend. Nations do not need, and virtue disowns the patriotism which manifests itself in ingratitude, treachery, and murder. Pope's admiration of tyrannicides even led him to celebrate Timoleon for killing his brother, notwithstanding that Timoleon had forfeited his claim to the panegyric by bitterly repenting his crime. To consecrate political assassinations is to put the lives of rulers at the mercy of any individual who conceives their policy to be mischievous. In short, the portion of the Temple of Fame which was not directly borrowed from Chaucer is merely a school-boy's theme in verse. The manner in which Pope sets forth his worthies is not, for him, felicitous. His portraits are nearly all faint and feeble sketches, without distinctness of outline, individuality of feature, or brilliancy of colouring.

The contemporary literature of the middle ages could not compete with the classical masterpieces, and Chaucer might have been justified in peopling his House of Fame with ancients alone. But he does not believe that genius and grandeur expired with the Romans. He has faith in authors whose light has long since been dimmed or extinguished, and confidently ranks such writers as Guido de Columpnis and Geoffrey of Monmouth with the loftiest Greek and Latin names. The statues of minstrel bards, musicians, and professors of magic adorn the exterior [Pg 198] of the palace; the wall within is crowded with heralds, and on their coats are embroidered the armorial ensigns of all the persons who had been famous in Europe, Asia, and Africa since chivalry began. Everywhere we have the true reflection of the world in which Chaucer lived. His narrative represents the fourteenth century, its actual pursuits and genuine tastes, while the modernised version of Pope is stripped of circumstantial realities, and exhibits only an impassive, artificial pedantry.

The architecture of Pope's Temple and Chaucer's House presents the same difference which distinguishes the respective poems throughout. The House is in the magnificent Gothic of the time, with its multiplied buttresses, niches, images, pinnacles, and traceried windows. The Temple is a building which resembles nothing that ever existed. One face is Grecian architecture, a second Eastern, a third Egyptian, and a fourth Northern. Warton, in a note to the poem, says that Pope's "knowledge and taste in the fine arts were unquestionable." Had he possessed the crudest ideas of architecture he could not have affirmed that so hideous, and indeed so impossible a combination, surpassed in beauty whatever had been "beheld in proud Rome, or artful Greece, or elder Babylon." The details are worthy of the general conception. The northern side is said to be "of Gothic structure,"—not the glorious style which commonly bears the name, a style for which Pope had no eyes, since with Chaucer's description before him he ignores the mediæval Gothic altogether, but a structure lustrous as glass, and "overwrought with ornaments of barbarous pride." "Huge colosses rise" upon its face, and around the statues are "engraved Runic characters." This part of the design appears to be an importation from the south. In the Egyptian temples colossal figures are often attached to the piers, and at the top, bottom, and sides of the piers there is a border of hieroglyphics. With his statues Pope has conjoined "rude iron columns smeared with blood" upon which stand the "horrid forms of Scythian heroes," and in a note he gravely asserts that this medley "is agreeable to the architecture of the northern part of the world." In the text he has ventured upon the no less extraordinary statement that all the façades were of "equal grace" or in other words that his barbarous and chimerical northern side was of equal grace with the architecture of Greece.

Johnson remarks that the learning and observation exhibited in the Temple of Fame were uncommon for a youth of twenty-two. The authority for Pope's age was an expression in his letter to Steele, Nov. 16, 1712, where he says of his work, "I was so diffident of it as to let it lie by me these two years just as you now see it;" and he adds in a note, "hence it appears this poem was writ before the author was twenty-two years old." With the discrepancy usual with him when the [Pg 199] dates of his compositions were in question, he stated on the title-page of the various reprints of the Temple of Fame, that it was "written in the year 1711," the first day of which found him nearer twenty-three than twenty-two. He did not publish it till 1715, and between his twenty-fifth year when he showed it to Steele, and his twenty-seventh year when it appeared, he subjected the poem to an extensive revision. "I have read over your Temple of Fame twice," wrote Steele, Nov. 12, 1712, "and cannot find anything amiss of weight enough to call a fault, but see in it a thousand, thousand beauties." "Since you say," Pope replied, "you see nothing that may be called a fault, can you not think it so that I have confined the attendance of guardian spirits to heaven's favourites only?" He remedied the defect by getting rid of the guardian spirits; and with his own testimony to the changes which the plan underwent, the learning can only be considered as displaying the compass of his knowledge when he was upwards of twenty-six. It is surprising that Johnson should have thought that a very small amount of classical mythology, and an acquaintance with the broad characteristics of a few celebrities of antiquity, was an unusual acquisition even for a man of twenty-two. Warton has pointed out that the narrow range of Pope's reading was more remarkable than its extent. He has not alluded to the Greek tragedians, and had probably never looked into a single play of Æschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides. The observation of life, which Johnson thought as precocious as the learning, is not of the recondite kind, and belongs exclusively to Chaucer. In whatever light we view the Temple of Fame it must be ranked at best with the secondary class of Pope's productions, and the indifference with which it was regarded up to Johnson's time has continued unabated up to ours. The eight lines on the rocks of Zembla are fine, and there is an occasional good line in other portions of the piece, but the poem seldom rises above a cold, and somewhat languid elegance, and like the "pale suns" which the author describes, it "rolls away unfelt."

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] The remainder of this sentence was omitted by Pope in the later editions of his poem.

[2] Pope forgot that he had transferred portions of the second book to his own imitation.

[3] The parallel passages from Chaucer were not given by Pope till 1736, and he then added the last sentence to the original advertisement.

[4] These remarks of Pope appeared in the form of a note to the first edition.

[5] Specimens of the British Poets, ed. Cunningham, p. 5.

[6] Singer's Spence, p. 211.

[7] Spence, p. 214.

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# THE TEMPLE OF FAME.

[Pg 201]

In that soft season,[1] when descending show'rs[2]
Call forth the greens, and wake the rising flow'rs;[3]
When opening buds salute the welcome day,[4]
And earth relenting[5] feels the genial ray;
As balmy sleep had charmed my cares to rest,
And love itself was banished from my breast,[6]
(What time the morn mysterious visions brings,[7]
While purer slumbers spread their golden wings)
A train of phantoms in wild order rose,
And joined, this intellectual scene[8] compose. [Pg 202]
I stood, methought, betwixt earth, seas, and skies;[9]
The whole creation open to my eyes:
In air self-balanced hung the globe below,[10]
Where mountains rise, and circling oceans flow;
Here naked rocks, and empty wastes were seen,
There tow'ry cities, and the forests green;
Here sailing ships delight the wand'ring eyes;
There trees, and intermingled temples rise:[11]
Now a clear sun the shining scene displays;[12]
The transient landscape now in clouds decays.
O'er the wide prospect as I gazed around,
Sudden I heard a wild promiscuous sound,
Like broken thunders that at distance roar,
Or billows murm'ring on the hollow shore:[13]
Then, gazing up, a glorious pile beheld, [Pg 203]
Whose tow'ring summit ambient clouds concealed.
High on a rock of ice the structure lay,[14]
Steep its ascent, and slipp'ry was the way;[15]
The wondrous rock like Parian marble shone,
And seemed, to distant sight, of solid stone.
Inscriptions here of various names I viewed,[16]
The greater part by hostile time subdued;
Yet wide was spread their fame in ages past,
And poets once had promised they should last.
Some fresh engraved appeared of wits renowned;
I looked again, nor could their trace be found. [Pg 204]
Critics I saw, that other names deface,
And fix their own, with labour, in their place:
Their own, like others, soon their place resigned,
Or disappeared, and left the first behind.
Nor was the work impaired by storms alone,[17]
But felt th' approaches of too warm a sun;
For Fame, impatient of extremes, decays
Not more by envy than excess of praise.[18]
Yet part no injuries of heav'n could feel,[19]
Like crystal faithful to the graving steel:
The rock's high summit, in the temple's shade,
Nor heat could melt, nor beating storm invade.
Their names inscribed unnumbered ages past
From time's first birth, with time itself shall last;

These ever new, nor subject to decays,
Spread, and grow brighter with the length of days. [Pg 205]
So Zembla's rocks (the beauteous work of frost)[20]
Rise white in air, and glitter o'er the coast;
Pale suns, unfelt, at distance roll away,
And on th' impassive ice the lightnings play;
Eternal snows the growing mass supply,
Till the bright mountains prop th' incumbent sky[21]:
As Atlas fixed, each hoary pile appears,[22]
The gathered winter of a thousand years.[23]
On this foundation Fame's high temple stands;
Stupendous pile! not reared by mortal hands.[24]
Whate'er proud Rome or artful Greece beheld,
Or elder Babylon, its frame excelled.
Four faces had the dome,[25] and ev'ry face
Of various structure, but of equal grace: [Pg 206]
Four brazen gates, on columns lifted high,[26]
Salute the diff'rent quarters of the sky.[27]
Here fabled chiefs in darker ages born,
Or worthies old, whom arms or arts adorn,[28]
Who cities raised, or tamed a monstrous race,
The walls in venerable order grace.[29]
Heroes in animated marble frown,[30]
And legislators seem to think in stone.
Westward, a sumptuous frontispiece appeared,
On Doric pillars of white marble reared,[31]
Crowned with an architrave of antique mold,
And sculpture rising on the roughened gold,[32]
In shaggy spoils here Theseus was beheld,[33]
And Perseus dreadful with Minerva's shield:[34]
There great Alcides stooping with his toil, [Pg 207]
Rests on his club, and holds th' Hesperian spoil.[35]
Here Orpheus sings; trees moving to the sound
Start from their roots, and form a shade around:
Amphion there the loud-creating lyre
Strikes,[36] and beholds a sudden Thebes aspire!
Cithæron's echoes answer to his call,
And half the mountain rolls into a wall:
There might you see the length'ning spires ascend,
The domes swell up, the widening arches bend,
The growing tow'rs like exhalations rise,[37]
And the huge columns heave into the skies.[38]
The Eastern front was glorious to behold,
With di'mond flaming and barbaric gold.[39]
There Ninus shone, who spread th' Assyrian fame, [Pg 208]
And the great founder of the Persian name:[40]
There in long robes the royal Magi stand,
Grave Zoroaster waves the circling wand,
The sage Chaldæans, robed in white, appeared,[41]
And Brachmans, deep in desert woods revered.[42]
These stopped the moon, and called th' unbodied shades
To midnight banquets in the glimm'ring glades;
Made visionary fabrics round them rise,
And airy spectres skim before their eyes;[43]
Of talismans and sigils knew the pow'r, [Pg 209]
And careful watched the planetary hour.[44]
Superior, and alone, Confucius stood,[45]
Who taught that useful science, to be good.
But on the South, a long majestic race
Of Egypt's priests the gilded niches grace,
Who measured earth, described the starry spheres,
And traced the long records of lunar years.[46]
High on his car, Sesostris struck my view,
Whom sceptered slaves in golden harness drew:
His hands a bow and pointed jav'lin hold;[47]
His giant limbs are armed in scales of gold.[48]
Between the statues obelisks were placed,
And the learn'd walls with hieroglyphics graced.[49]

Of Gothic structure was the Northern side,[50]
O'erwrought with ornaments of barb'rous pride:
There huge Colosses rose, with trophies crowned,
And Runic characters were graved around.
There sat Zamolxis with erected eyes,[51]
And Odin here in mimic trances dies.[52] [Pg 210]
There on rude iron columns, smeared with blood,[53]
The horrid forms of Scythian heroes stood,
Druids and bards[54] (their once loud harps unstrung),
And youths that died to be by poets sung.
These, and a thousand more, of doubtful fame,
To whom old fables gave a lasting name,
In ranks adorned the temple's outward face;
The wall in lustre and effect like glass,
Which o'er each object casting various dyes,
Enlarges some, and others multiplies:[55]
Nor void of emblem was the mystic wall,
For thus romantic Fame increases all.
The temple shakes, the sounding gates unfold,[56]
Wide vaults appear, and roofs of fretted gold:[57]
Raised on a thousand pillars, wreathed around [Pg 211]
With laurel-foliage, and with eagles crowned:
Of bright transparent beryl were the walls,[58]
The friezes gold, and gold the capitals:
As heav'n with stars, the roof with jewels glows,
And ever-living lamps depend in rows.[59]
Full in the passage of each spacious gate,
The sage historians in white garments wait;[60]
Graved o'er their seats the form of Time was found,
His scythe reversed, and both his pinions bound.
Within stood heroes, who through loud alarms
In bloody fields pursued renown in arms.
High on a throne with trophies charged, I viewed
The youth that all things but himself subdued;[61]
His feet on sceptres and tiaras trod,
And his horned head belied the Libyan god.[62]
There Cæsar, graced with both Minervas,[63] shone;
Cæsar, the world's great master, and his own;[64]
Unmoved, superior still in ev'ry state,
And scarce detested in his country's fate.[65]
But chief were those, who not for empire fought, [Pg 212]
But with their toils their people's safety bought:
High o'er the rest Epaminondas stood;[66]
Timoleon, glorious in his brother's blood;[67]
Bold Scipio, saviour of the Roman state;
Great in his triumphs, in retirement great;
And wise Aurelius, in whose well-taught mind, }
With boundless pow'r, unbounded virtue joined, }
His own strict judge, and patron of mankind,[68] }
Much-suff'ring heroes next their honours claim,
Those of less noisy, and less guilty fame,[69]
Fair Virtue's silent train:[70] supreme of these [Pg 213]
Here ever shines the godlike Socrates:
He whom ungrateful Athens could expel,
At all times just, but when he signed the shell:[71]
Here his abode the martyred Phocion claims,[72]
With Agis, not the last of Spartan names:[73]
Unconquered Cato shows the wound he tore,[74]
And Brutus his ill Genius meets no more.[75]
But in the centre of the hallowed choir,[76] [Pg 214]
Six pompous columns o'er the rest aspire;[77]
Around the shrine itself of Fame they stand,
Hold the chief honours, and the fane command.
High on the first, the mighty Homer shone;[78]
Eternal adamant composed his throne;
Father of verse! in holy fillets drest,
His silver beard waved gently o'er his breast;
Though blind, a boldness in his looks appears;

In years he seemed, but not impaired by years.
The wars of Troy were round the pillar seen:
Here fierce Tydides wounds the Cyprian queen;
Here Hector, glorious from Patroclus' fall,
Here dragged in triumph round the Trojan wall:[79]
Motion and life did ev'ry part inspire,
Bold was the work, and proved the master's fire; [Pg 215]
A strong expression most he seemed t' affect,
And here and there disclosed a brave neglect.
A golden column next in rank appear'd,
On which a shrine of purest gold was rear'd;
Finished the whole, and laboured ev'ry part,
With patient touches of unwearied art:
The Mantuan there in sober triumph sate,
Composed his posture, and his looks sedate;[80]
On Homer still he fixed a rev'rent eye,
Great without pride, in modest majesty.[81]
In living sculpture[82] on the sides were spread
The Latian wars, and haughty Turnus dead;
Eliza stretched upon the fun'ral pyre,
Æneas bending with his aged sire:
Troy flamed in burning gold, and o'er the throne
"Arms and the man" in golden ciphers shone.
Four swans sustain a car of silver bright,[83]
With heads advanced, and pinions stretched for flight:[84]
Here, like some furious prophet, Pindar rode, [Pg 216]
And seem'd to labour with th' inspiring god.
Across the harp a careless hand he flings,
And boldly sinks into the sounding strings.[85]
The figured games of Greece the column grace,
Neptune and Jove survey the rapid race.
The youths hang o'er the chariots as they run;
The fiery steeds seem starting from the stone;
The champions in distorted postures threat,[86]
And all appeared irregularly great.
Here happy Horace tuned th' Ausonian lyre
To sweeter sounds, and tempered Pindar's fire:
Pleased with Aleæus' manly rage t'infuse
The softer spirit of the Sapphic muse.[87]
The polished pillar diff'rent sculptures grace;
A work outlasting monumental brass. [Pg 217]
Here smiling loves and bacchanals appear,
The Julian star,[88] and great Augustus here.
The doves that round the infant poet spread
Myrtles and bays, hung hov'ring o'er his head.
Here in a shrine that cast a dazzling light,
Sat fixed in thought the mighty Stagirite;
His sacred head a radiant zodiac crowned,[89]
And various animals his sides surround;[90]
His piercing eyes, erect, appear to view
Superior worlds,[91] and look all nature through.
With equal rays immortal Tully shone,
The Roman rostra decked the consul's throne:
Gath'ring his flowing robe, he seemed to stand
In act to speak, and graceful stretched his hand.[92]
Behind, Rome's genius waits with civic crowns,
And the great father of his country owns.
These massy columns in a circle rise,
O'er which a pompous dome invades the skies:[93]
Scarce to the top I stretched my aching sight,
So large it spread, and swelled to such a height.
Full in the midst proud Fame's imperial seat[94]
With jewels blazed, magnificently great; [Pg 218]
The vivid em'ralds there revive the eye,
The flaming rubies show their sanguine dye,
Bright azure rays from lively sapphires stream,
And lucid amber casts a golden gleam.
With various-coloured light the pavement shone,
And all on fire appeared the glowing throne;
The dome's high arch reflects the mingled blaze,
And forms a rainbow of alternate rays.

When on the goddess first I cast my sight,
Scarce seemed her stature of a cubit's height;[95]
But swelled to larger size, the more I gazed,
Till to the roof her tow'ring front she raised.
With her, the temple ev'ry moment grew,
And ampler vistas opened to my view:
Upward the columns shoot, the roofs ascend,
And arches widen, and long aisles extend.[96]
Such was her form, as ancient bards have told,
Wings raise her arms, and wings her feet infold;
A thousand busy tongues the goddess bears,
And thousand open eyes, and thousand list'ning ears.[97]
Beneath, in order ranged, the tuneful Nine
(Her virgin handmaids) still attend the shrine.[98]
With eyes on Fame for ever fixed, they sing;
For Fame they raise the voice, and tune the string; [Pg 219]
With time's first birth began the heav'nly lays,
And last, eternal, through the length of days.
  Around these wonders as I cast a look,
The trumpet sounded, and the temple shook,
And all the nations, summoned at the call,
From diff'rent quarters fill the crowded hall:
Of various tongues the mingled sounds were heard;
In various garbs promiscuous throngs appeared;[99]
Thick as the bees that with the spring renew
Their flow'ry toils, and sip the fragrant dew,
When the winged colonies first tempt the sky,
O'er dusky fields and shaded waters fly,
Or settling, seize the sweets the blossoms yield,
And a low murmur runs along the field.[100]
Millions of suppliant crowds the shrine attend,
And all degrees before the goddess bend;[101]
The poor, the rich, the valiant, and the sage,
And boasting youth, and narrative old age.[102]
Their pleas were diff'rent, their request the same:
For good and bad alike are fond of fame.
Some she disgraced, and some with honours crowned;[103]
Unlike successes equal merits found.[104] [Pg 220]
Thus her blind sister, fickle Fortune, reigns,
And, undiscerning, scatters crowns and chains.
  First at the shrine the learned world appear,
And to the goddess thus prefer their prayer.
Long have we sought t' instruct and please mankind,
With studies pale, with midnight vigils blind;
But thanked by few, rewarded yet by none,
We here appeal to thy superior throne:
On wit and learning the just prize bestow,
For fame is all we must expect below.
  The goddess heard, and bade the muses raise
The golden trumpet of eternal praise:[105]
From pole to pole the winds diffuse the sound,
That fills the circuit of the world around;
Not all at once, as thunder breaks the cloud;
The notes at first were rather sweet than loud:
By just degrees they ev'ry moment rise,
Fill the wide earth, and gain upon the skies,
At ev'ry breath were balmy odours shed,
Which still grew sweeter as they wider spread;[106] [Pg 221]
Less fragrant scents th' unfolding rose exhales,
Or spices breathing in Arabian gales.
  Next these the good and just, an awful train,
Thus on their knees address the sacred fane.
Since living virtue is with envy cursed,
And the best men are treated like the worst,
Do thou, just goddess, call our merits forth,
And give each deed th' exact intrinsic worth.[107]
Not with bare justice shall your act be crowned,
(Said Fame,) but high above desert renowned:[108]
Let fuller notes th' applauding world amaze,
And the loud clarion labour in your praise.
  This band dismissed, behold another crowd
Preferred the same request, and lowly bowed;

The constant tenour of whose well spent days
No less deserved a just return of praise.
But straight the direful trump of slander sounds;
Through the big dome the doubling thunder bounds;
Loud as the burst of cannon rends the skies,
The dire report through ev'ry region flies,
In ev'ry ear incessant rumours rung,
And gath'ring scandals grew on ev'ry tongue.
From the black trumpet's rusty concave broke
Sulphureous flames, and clouds of rolling smoke:[109]
The pois'nous vapour blots the purple skies, [Pg 222]
And withers all before it as it flies.
A troop came next, who crowns and armour wore,
And proud defiance in their looks they bore:
For thee, (they cried,) amidst alarms and strife,
We sailed in tempests down the stream of life;
For thee whole nations filled with flames and blood,
And swam to empire through the purple flood.
Those ills we dared, thy inspiration own,
What virtue seemed, was done for thee alone.
Ambitious fools! (the queen replied, and frowned)
Be all your acts in dark oblivion drowned;
There sleep forgot, with mighty tyrants gone,
Your statues mouldered, and your names unknown![110]
A sudden cloud straight snatched them from my sight,
And each majestic phantom sunk in night.
Then came the smallest tribe I yet had seen;
Plain was their dress, and modest was their mien.
Great idol of mankind! we neither claim
The praise of merit, nor aspire to fame!
But safe in deserts from th' applause of men,
Would die unheard of, as we lived unseen;
'Tis all we beg thee, to conceal from sight
Those acts of goodness, which themselves requite.
O let us still the secret joy partake,
To follow virtue ev'n for virtue's sake.[111] [Pg 223]
And live there men, who slight immortal fame?
Who then with incense shall adore our name?
But, mortals! know, 'tis still our greatest pride
To blaze those virtues, which the good would hide.
Rise! muses, rise! add all your tuneful breath,
These must not sleep in darkness and in death.
She said: in air the trembling music floats,
And on the winds triumphant swell the notes:[112]
So soft, though high, so loud, and yet so clear,[113]
Ev'n list'ning angels leaned from heav'n to hear:
To farthest shores th' ambrosial spirit flies,
Sweet to the world, and grateful to the skies.
Next these, a youthful train their vows expressed,[114]
With feathers crowned, with gay embroid'ry dress'd,
Hither, they cried, direct your eyes, and see
The men of pleasure, dress, and gallantry;
Ours is the place at banquets, balls, and plays,
Sprightly our nights, polite are all our days;
Courts we frequent, where 'tis our pleasing care
To pay due visits, and address the fair: [Pg 224]
In fact, 'tis true, no nymph we could persuade,
But still in fancy vanquished ev'ry maid;
Of unknown duchesses lewd tales we tell,
Yet, would the world believe us, all were well.
The joy let others have, and we the name,
And what we want in pleasure, grant in fame.[115]
The queen assents, the trumpet rends the skies,
And at each blast a lady's honour dies.[116]
Pleased with the strange success, vast numbers pressed
Around the shrine, and made the same request:
What! you (she cried) unlearn'd in arts to please,
Slaves to yourselves, and ev'n fatigued with ease,[117]
Who lose a length of undeserving days,
Would you usurp the lover's dear-bought praise?
To just contempt, ye vain pretenders, fall,
The people's fable, and the scorn of all.
Straight the black clarion sends a horrid sound,

Loud laughs burst out, and bitter scoffs fly round,
Whispers are heard, with taunts reviling loud,
And scornful hisses run through all the crowd. [Pg 225]
  Last, those who boast of mighty mischiefs done,
Enslave their country, or usurp a throne;[118]
Or who their glory's dire foundation laid
On sov'reigns ruined, or on friends betrayed;[119]
Calm, thinking villains, whom no faith could fix,
Of crooked counsels and dark politics;
Of these a gloomy tribe surround the throne,
And beg to make th' immortal treasons known.
The trumpet roars, long flaky flames expire,
With sparks, that seemed to set the world on fire.
At the dread sound, pale mortals stood aghast,
And startled nature trembled with the blast.
  This having heard and seen, some pow'r unknown
Straight changed the scene, and snatched me from the throne.[120]
  Before my view appeared a structure fair,
Its site uncertain, if in earth or air;
With rapid motion turned the mansion round;
With ceaseless noise the ringing walls resound;
Not less in number were the spacious doors,
Than leaves on trees, or sands upon the shores;
Which still unfolded stand, by night, by day,
Pervious to winds, and open ev'ry way. [Pg 226]
As flames by nature to the skies ascend,[121]
As weighty bodies to the centre tend,
As to the sea returning rivers roll,
And the touched needle trembles to the pole;
Hither, as to their proper place, arise
All various sounds from earth, and seas, and skies,
Or spoke aloud, or whispered in the ear;
Nor ever silence, rest, or peace is here.
As on the smooth expanse of crystal lakes
The sinking stone at first a circle makes;
The trembling surface, by the motion stirred,
Spreads in a second circle, then a third;
Wide, and more wide, the floating rings advance,
Fill all the wat'ry plain, and to the margin dance:
Thus ev'ry voice and sound, when first they break,
On neighb'ring air a soft impression make;
Another ambient circle then they move;
That, in its turn, impels the next above;[122]
Through undulating[123] air the sounds are sent,
And spread o'er all the fluid element.
  There, various news I heard of love and strife,
Of peace and war, health, sickness, death, and life,
Of loss and gain, of famine, and of store,
Of storms at sea, and travels on the shore, [Pg 227]
Of prodigies, and portents seen in air,
Of fires and plagues, and stars with blazing hair,
Of turns of fortune, changes in the state,
The falls of fav'rites, projects of the great,
Of old mismanagements, taxations new:[124]
All neither wholly false, nor wholly true.
  Above, below, without, within, around,
Confused, unnumbered, multitudes are found,
Who pass, repass, advance, and glide away;
Hosts raised by fear, and phantoms of a day:
Astrologers, that future fates foreshew,
Projectors, quacks, and lawyers not a few;
And priests, and party-zealots, num'rous bands
With home-born lies, or tales from foreign lands;
Each talked aloud, or in some secret place,
And wild impatience stared in ev'ry face.[125]
The flying rumours gathered as they rolled,
Scarce any tale was sooner heard than told;
And all who told it added something new, }
And all who heard it, made enlargements too; }
In ev'ry ear it spread, on ev'ry tongue it grew. }
Thus flying east and west, and north and south,
News travelled with increase from mouth to mouth. [Pg 228]
So from a spark, that kindled first by chance,

With gath'ring force the quick'ning flames advance;[126]
Till to the clouds their curling heads aspire,
And tow'rs and temples sink in floods of fire.
  When thus ripe lies are to perfection sprung,
Full grown, and fit to grace a mortal tongue,
Through thousand vents, impatient, forth they flow,
And rush in millions on the world below.
Fame sits aloft,[127] and points them out their course,
Their date determines, and prescribes their force;
Some to remain, and some to perish soon;
Or wane and wax, alternate, like the moon.
Around, a thousand winged wonders fly,
Borne by the trumpet's blast, and scattered through the sky.
  There, at one passage, oft you might survey,
A lie and truth contending for the way;
And long 'twas doubtful, both so closely pent,
Which first should issue through the narrow vent:
At last agreed, together out they fly,
Inseparable now, the truth and lie;[128]
The strict companions are for ever joined,
And this or that unmixed, no mortal e'er shall find.
  While thus I stood, intent to see and hear,
One came, methought, and whisper'd in my ear:[129]
What could thus high thy rash ambition raise?
Art thou, fond youth, a candidate for praise? [Pg 229]
  'Tis true, said I, not void of hopes I came,
For who so fond as youthful bards of fame?
But few, alas! the casual blessing boast,
So hard to gain, so easy to be lost.[130]
How vain that second life in others' breath,
Th' estate which wits inherit after death![131]
Ease, health, and life, for this they must resign;
Unsure the tenure, but how vast the fine! [Pg 230]
The great man's curse, without the gains, endure,
Be envied, wretched, and be flattered, poor;
All luckless wits their enemies professed,
And all successful, jealous friends at best.
Nor fame I slight, nor for her favours call;
She comes unlooked for, if she comes at all.
But if the purchase cost so dear a price,
As soothing folly, or exalting vice;
Oh! if the muse must flatter lawless sway,
And follow still where fortune leads the way;[132]
Or if no basis bear my rising name,
But the fall'n ruins of another's fame;
Then teach me, heav'n! to scorn the guilty bays;
Drive from my breast that wretched lust of praise;
Unblemished let me live, or die unknown;
Oh! grant an honest fame, or grant me none!

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] This poem is introduced in the manner of the Provençal poets, whose works were for the most part visions, or pieces of imagination, and constantly descriptive. From these, Petrarch and Chaucer frequently borrow the idea of their poems. See the Trionfi of the former, and the Dream, Flower and the Leaf, &c. of the latter. The author of this therefore chose the same sort of exordium.—Pope.

[2] Dryden, Virg. Geor. ii. 456:

> And boldly trust their buds in open air.
> In this soft season.—Wakefield.

Dryden's Flower and Leaf:

> Where Venus from her orb descends in show'rs
> To glad the ground, and paint the fields with flow'rs.

[3] Dryden, Geor. iii. 500:

> But when the western winds with vital pow'r
> Call forth the tender grass, and budding flow'r.—Wakefield.

[4] Dryden's Flower and Leaf:

> Salute the welcome sun and entertain the day.

[5] That admirable term "relenting" might probably be furnished by Ogilby at the beginning of the first Georgic:

> And harder glebe relents with vernal winds.—WAKEFIELD.

[6] Dryden's Flower and Leaf:

> Cares I had none to keep me from my rest,
> For love had never entered in my breast.

[7] Morning dreams were thought the most significant. Thus Dryden, in his version of the Tale of the Nun's Priest:

> Believe me, madam, morning dreams foreshow
> Th' events of things, and future weal or woe.

[8] Cowley, in his Complaint:

> In a deep vision's intellectual scene;

and Mrs. Singer's Vision:

> No wild uncouth chimeras intervene
> To break the perfect intellectual scene.—WAKEFIELD.

[9] Dryden, Ovid, Met. xii.:

> Full in the midst of this created space,
> Betwixt heav'n, earth, and skies, there stands a place
> Confining on all three.—WAKEFIELD.

[10] This verse was formed from a very fine one in Paradise Lost, vii. 242:

> And earth self-balanced on her center hung.—WAKEFIELD.

[11] Addison's translation of a passage from Ausonius:

> And intermingled temples rise between.

[12] These verses are hinted from the following of Chaucer, book ii.:

> Tho beheld I fields and plains,
> And now hills, and now mountains,
> Now valeys, and now forestes,
> And now unnethes great bestes,
> Now riveres, now citees,
> Now townes, and now great trees,
> Now shippes sayling in the sea.—POPE.

Dennis objected to Pope's version that "if the whole creation was open to his eyes" he must be too high "to discern such minute objects as ships and trees." But the imagination in dreams conjures up appearances which are beyond the compass of the waking powers, and it is therefore strictly natural to represent events as passing in visions, which would be unnatural in actual life. Added to this, Pope had before him Ovid's description of the house of Fame, which is endued with the property of enabling the beholder to distinguish the smallest objects however remote:

> Unde quod est usquam, quamvis regionibus absit,
> Inspicitur.

Or as Sandys translates it,

> Where all that's done, though far removed, appears.

[13] Dryden's translation of Ovid's Met. book xii.:

> Confused and chiding, like the hollow roar
> Of tides, receding from th' insulted shore;
> Or like the broken thunder heard from far
> When Jove at distance drives the rolling war.

This is more poetically expressed than the same image in our author. Dryden's lines are superior to the original.—WARTON.

Pope copied Dryden's translation of Ovid, and for this reason did not quote the parallel passage from Chaucer's second book of the House of Fame, where the eagle, when they come within hearing of the swell of indistinct voices, holds a colloquy with the poet on the phenomenon:

> "And what sound is it like?" quoth he.
> "Peter! beating of the sea,"
> Quoth I, "against the rockes hollow,
> When tempest doth the shippes swallow,
> Or elles like the last humbling
> After the clap of a thundring."

"Peter" is an exclamation; and the sense is, "By St. Peter it is like the beating of the sea against the hollow rocks." In Pope's poem no cause is assigned for the "wild promiscuous

sound." In Chaucer it is produced by the confluence of the talk upon earth, every word of which is conveyed to the House of Fame.

[14] Chaucer's third book of Fame:

> It stood upon so high a rock,
> Higher standeth none in Spayne—
> What manner stone this rock was,
> For it was like a lymed glass,
> But that it shone full more clere;
> But of what congeled matere
> It was, I niste redily;
> But at the last espied I,
> And found that it was every dele,
> A rock of ice and not of stele.—Pope.

The temple of Fame is represented on a foundation of ice, to signify the brittle nature and precarious tenure, as well as the difficult attainment of that possession, according to the poet himself below, ver. 504:

> So hard to gain, so easy to be lost.—Wakefield.

Having complained that it was contrary to the laws of sight to suppose that a prospect in sleep could be extended beyond the ordinary range of mortal vision, Dennis proceeds to contend that for a rock to be sustained in the air was contrary to the eternal laws of gravitation, "which," says Pope sarcastically, in a manuscript note, "no dream ought to be." The cavil of Dennis was as false in science as in criticism, for it is not more contrary to the laws of gravitation for a rock to be suspended in space than for the earth itself.

[15] Dryden, Æneis, vi. 193:

> Smooth the descent, and easy is the way.

[16]
> Tho saw I all the hill y-grave
> With famous folkes names fele.
> That had been in muchel wele
> And her fames wide y-blow;
> But well unneth might I know
> Any letters for to rede
> Their names by, for, out of drede,
> They weren almost off-thawen so,
> That of the letters one or two
> Were molte away of every name,
> So unfamous was woxe their fame;
> But men said what may ever last.—Pope.

[17]
> Tho gan I in myne harte cast,
> That they were molte away for heate,
> And not away with stormes beate.—Pope.

[18] Does not this use of the heat of the sun appear to be a puerile and far-fetched conceit? What connection is there betwixt the two sorts of excesses here mentioned? My purpose in animadverting so frequently as I have done on this species of false thoughts is to guard the reader, especially of the younger sort, from being betrayed by the authority of so correct a writer as Pope into such specious and false refinements of style.—Warton.

Not only is the comparison defective, but the fundamental idea is unfounded, for though excess of admiration may produce a temporary reaction, the opinion of the world oscillates back to the middle line, and no instance can be quoted of an author who has finally lost his due reputation because he had once been overpraised. Chaucer makes a different use of the image. In his poem the north side of the icy mountain bears the names of the ancients which were safe from injury. The sunny side bears the names of the moderns, and he perhaps intended to intimate his opinion that the reason why their fame was less durable than that of the Greeks and Romans was that they were a more luxurious race, and did not in the same degree "scorn delights, and live laborious days" for the sake of producing immortal works.

[19]
> For on that other side I sey
> Of that hill which northward ley,
> How it was written full of names
> Of folke, that had afore great fames,
> Of olde time, and yet they were
> As fresh as men had written hem there
> The self day, right or that houre
> That I upon hem gan to poure:
> But well I wiste what it made;
> It was conserved with the shade
> (All the writing that I sye)
> Of the castle that stoode on high,
> And stood eke in so cold a place,
> That heate might it not deface.—Pope.

[20] Though a strict verisimilitude be not required in the descriptions of this visionary and allegorical kind of poetry, which admits of every wild object that fancy may present in a dream, and where it is sufficient if the moral meaning atone for the improbability, yet men are naturally so desirous of truth that a reader is generally pleased, in such a case,

with some excuse or allusion that seems to reconcile the description to probability and nature. The simile here is of that sort, and renders it not wholly unlikely that a rock of ice should remain for ever by mentioning something like it in our northern regions agreeing with the accounts of our modern travellers.—POPE.

[21] "Mountains *propping* the sky" was one of those vicious common-places of poetry which falsify natural appearances.

[22] A real lover of painting will not be contented with a single view and examination of this beautiful winter-piece; but will return to it again and again with fresh delight. The images are distinct, and the epithets lively and appropriate, especially the words "pale," "unfelt," "impassive," "incumbent," "gathered."—WARTON.

[23] This excellent line was perhaps suggested by a fine couplet in Addison's translation of an extract from Silius Italicus:

> Stiff with eternal ice, and hid in snow,
> That fell a thousand centuries ago.

[24] Dryden's Hind and Panther:

> Eternal house not built with mortal hands.

[25] The temple is described to be square, the four fronts with open gates facing the different quarters of the world, as an intimation that all nations of the earth may alike be received into it. The western front is of Grecian architecture: the Doric order was peculiarly sacred to heroes and worthies. Those whose statues are after mentioned, were the first names of old Greece in arms and arts.—POPE.

The exterior of the Doric temples abounded in sculptured figures, which may be the reason that Pope supposes the order to have been "peculiarly sacred to heroes and worthies," but it may be doubted whether he had any good grounds for his assertion.

[26] The expression literally interpreted would signify that the gates were placed on the top of columns. Pope could not have had such a preposterous notion in his mind, and the meaning must be that the lofty gates were hung upon columns. He copied a couplet in Dryden's Æneis, vi. 744, where the translation misrepresents the original:

> Wide is the fronting gate, and raised on high
> With adamantine columns, threats the sky.

[27] Addison's Vision of the Table of Fame, in the Tatler: "In the midst there stood a palace of a very glorious structure; it had four great folding doors that faced the four several quarters of the world."

Charles Dryden's translation of the seventh Satire of Juvenal, ver. 245:

> Behold how raised on high
> A banquet house salutes the southern sky.

[28] Dryden, Juvenal, Sat. iii. 142:

> No Thracian born,
> But in that town which arms and arts adorn.

[29] In the early editions:

> The fourfold walls in breathing statues grace.

Addison in his Letter from Italy had called the Roman statues "breathing rocks."

[30] Addison's Letter from Italy:

> Or teach their animated rocks to live.
> And emperors in Parian marble frown.

[31] Milton, Par. Lost, i. 714:

> Doric pillars overlaid
> With golden architrave, nor did there want
> Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven.—WAKEFIELD.

[32] Dryden, Ovid's Met. book xii.:

> An ample goblet stood of antique mould
> And rough with figures of the rising gold.

Dryden, Æn. viii. 830:

> And Roman triumphs rising on the gold.

Addison's Letter from Italy:

> And pillars rough with sculpture pierce the skies.

[33] This legendary hero was an Athenian knight-errant who, in imitation of Hercules, went about doing battle with the scourges of mankind, both human and animal.

[34] Minerva presented Perseus with her shield when he undertook to kill the Gorgon, Medusa.

[35] This figure of Hercules is drawn with an eye to the position of the famous statue of Farnese.—Pope.

It were to be wished that our author, whose knowledge and taste of the fine arts were unquestionable, had taken more pains in describing so famous a statue as that of the Farnesian Hercules; for he has omitted the characteristical excellencies of this famous piece of Grecian workmanship; namely, the uncommon breadth of the shoulders, the knottiness and spaciousness of the chest, the firmness and protuberance of the muscles in each limb, particularly the legs, and the majestic vastness of the whole figure, undoubtedly designed by the artist to give a full idea of strength, as the Venus de Medicis of beauty. To mention the Hesperian apples, which the artist flung backwards, and almost concealed as an inconsiderable object, and which therefore scarcely appear in the statue, was below the notice of Pope.—Warton.

Addison's Vision: "At the upper end sat Hercules, leaning an arm upon his club."

[36] The pause at the word "strikes" renders the verse finely descriptive of the circumstance. Milton, in Par. Lost, xi. 491, has attempted this beauty with success:

> And over them triumphant Death his dart
> Shook, but delayed to strike.—Wakefield.

[37] Milton, Par. Lost, i. 710:

> a fabric huge
> Rose like an exhalation.—Bowles.

[38] "Trees," says Dennis, "starting from their roots, a mountain rolling into a wall, and a town rising like an exhalation are things that are not to be shown in sculpture." This objection, that "motion is represented as exhibited by sculpture," is said by Johnson, "to be the most reasonable of Dennis' remarks," but Dennis neutralised his own criticism when he added, that "sculpture can indeed show posture and position, and from posture and position we may conclude that the objects are in motion."

[39] Wakefield quotes from Milton (Par. Lost, ii. 4), the expression, "barbaric pearl and gold," and from Addison's translation of the second book of Ovid's Met. the line in which it is said that the palace of the sun

> With burnished gold and flaming jewels blazed.

[40] Cyrus was the beginning of the Persian, as Ninus was of the Assyrian monarchy.—Pope.

[41] The Magi and Chaldæans (the chief of whom was Zoroaster) employed their studies upon magic and astrology, which was, in a manner, almost all the learning of the ancient Asian people. We have scarce any account of a moral philosopher, except Confucius, the great law-giver of the Chinese, who lived about two thousand years ago.—Pope.

There are several mistakes in Pope's note. Zoroaster was not a magician who "waved the circling wand" of the necromancer. "The Magians," says Plato, "teach the magic of Zoroaster, but this is the worship of the Gods." His creed was theological, and had no connexion with sorcery. Some of his nominal followers subsequently professed to be fortune-tellers. Astrology was not a general characteristic of the diverse nations who constituted the "ancient Asian people," and their learning was by no means limited to it. The Hindoos, for instance, were the precursors of Aristotle in logic, and the earliest metaphysicians whose doctrines have come down to us. "The Indian philosophy," says M. Cousin, "is so vast that all the philosophical systems are represented there, and we may literally affirm that it is an abridgment of the entire history of philosophy." Nor was Confucius the only oriental "law-giver who taught the useful science to be good." The Hindoo body of laws, which bears the name of Menu, was compiled centuries before Confucius was born, and it is eminently a moral and religious, as well as a political code.

[42] It was often erroneously stated that the Brahmins dwelt always in groves. By the laws of Menu the life of a Brahmin was divided into four portions, and it was during the third portion only that he was commanded to become an anchorite in the woods, to sleep on the bare ground, to feed on roots and fruit, to go clad in bark or the skin of the black antelope, and to expose himself to the drenching rain and scorching sun. The caste have ceased to conform to the primitive discipline, and the old asceticism is now confined to individual devotees. The functions which Pope ascribes to the Brahmins formed no part of their practices. They did not pretend to "stop the moon," and summon spirits to "midnight banquets." Pope copied Oldham's version of Virgil's eighth Eclogue:

> Charms in her wonted course can stop the moon.

[43] Addison's translation of a passage in Claudian:

> Thin airy shapes, that o'er the furrows rise,
> A dreadful scene! and skim before his eyes.

[44] Dryden's Palamon and Arcite:

> And sigils framed in planetary hours.

Dryden's Virgil, Æn. vii. 25:

> That watched the moon and planetary hour.

[45] Confucius flourished about two thousand three hundred years ago, just before Pythagoras. He taught justice, obedience to parents, humility, and universal

benevolence: and he practised these virtues when he was a first minister, and when he was reduced to poverty and exile.—Warton.

[46] The learning of the old Egyptian priests consisted for the most part in geometry and astronomy: they also preserved the history of their nation. Their greatest hero upon record is Sesostris, whose actions and conquests may be seen at large in Diodorus, &c. He is said to have caused the kings he vanquished to draw him in his chariot. The posture of his statue, in these verses, is correspondent to the description which Herodotus gives of one of them, remaining in his own time.—Pope.

[47] The colossal statue of the celebrated Eastern tyrant is not very strongly imagined. The word "hold" is particularly feeble.—Warton.

[48] Virgil's giant Bitias, *Æn.* ix. 958, has in Dryden's translation, quoted by Wakefield, "a coat of double mail with scales of gold."

[49] Two flatter lines upon such a subject cannot well be imagined.—Bowles.

[50] The architecture is agreeable to that part of the world.—Pope.

[51] The learning of the northern nations lay more obscure than that of the rest. Zamolxis was the disciple of Pythagoras, who taught the immortality of the soul to the Scythians. —Pope.

They worshipped Zamolxis, and thought they should go to him when they died. He was said by the Greeks who dwelt on the shores of the Hellespont, to have been the slave of Pythagoras before he became the instructor of his countrymen, but Herodotus believed that if Zamolxis ever existed, he was long anterior to the Greek philosopher.

[52] Odin, or Woden, was the great legislator and hero of the Goths. They tell us of him, that, being subject to fits, he persuaded his followers, that during those trances he received inspirations, from whence he dictated his laws. He is said to have been the inventor of the Runic characters.—Pope.

[53] Pope borrowed this idea from the passage he quotes at ver. 179, where Chaucer describes Statius as standing

> Upon an iron pillar strong
> That painted was, all endelong,
> With tigers' blood in every place.

[54] These were the priests and poets of those people, so celebrated for their savage virtue. Those heroic barbarians accounted it a dishonour to die in their beds, and rushed on to certain death in the prospect of an after-life, and for the glory of a song from their bards in praise of their actions.—Pope.

The opinion was general among the Goths that men who died natural deaths went into vast caves underground, all dark and miry, full of noisome creatures, and there for ever grovelled in stench and misery. On the contrary, all who died in battle went to the hall of Odin, their god of war, where they were entertained at infinite tables in perpetual feasts, carousing in bowls made of the skulls of the enemies they had slain.—Sir W. Temple.

[55]
> It shone lighter than a glass,
> And made well more than it was,
> To semen every thing, ywis,
> As kind of thinge Fames is.—Pope.

[56] Addison's Vision: "On a sudden the trumpet sounded; the whole fabric shook, and the doors flew open."

[57] Milton, Par. Lost, i. 717:

> The roof was fretted gold.—Wakefield.

[58] The exterior of Chaucer's House of Fame,

> Both the castle, and the tower
> And eke the hall, and every bower

was of beryl, which Pope transfers to the inside of the building. Chaucer says of the interior that

> Every wall
> Of it, and floor, and roof, and all
> Was plated half a foote thick
> Of gold.

This gold was covered, as grass clothes a meadow, with jewelled ornaments

> Fine, of the finest stones fair
> That men read in the Lapidaire.

[59] Milton, Par. Lost, i. 726:

> From the arched roof
> Pendent by subtle magic many a row
> Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
> With Naptha and Asphaltus, yielded light
> As from a sky.—Wakefield.

[60] Addison's Vision: "A band of historians took their station at each door."

[61] Alexander the Great. The tiara was the crown peculiar to the Asian princes. His desire to be thought the son of Jupiter Ammon, caused him to wear the horns of that god, and to represent the same upon his coins, which was continued by several of his successors. —Pope.

[62] Dryden, Ode to St. Cecilia:

> A dragon's fiery form belied the god.—Bowles.

[63] As a warrior and a man of letters; for skill in both capacities was supposed to be due to Minerva.

[64] Prior, in his Carmen Seculare, says of William III.,

> How o'er himself as o'er the world he reigns.

[65] A concise and masterly stroke, which at once sets before us the mixture of character, which appears in that extraordinary man, Julius Cæsar.—Bowles.

[66] "In other illustrious men you will observe that each possessed some one shining quality, which was the foundation of his fame: in Epaminondas all the virtues are found united; force of body, eloquence of expression, vigour of mind, contempt of riches, gentleness of disposition, and, what is chiefly to be regarded, courage and conduct in war."—Diodorus Siculus, lib. xv.—Warton.

[67] Timoleon had saved the life of his brother Timophanes in the battle between the Argives and Corinthians; but afterwards killed him when he affected the tyranny, preferring his duty to his country to all the obligations of blood.—Pope.

Pope followed the narrative of Diodorus. Plutarch says that Timoleon did not strike the blow, but stood by weeping, and giving his passive countenance to the assassins. Some of the Corinthians applauded, and some execrated his conduct. He was soon overtaken with remorse, and shunning the haunts of men he passed years in anguish of mind.

[68] This triplet was not in the first edition.

[69] In the first edition,

> Here too the wise and good their honours claim,
> Much-suff'ring heroes of less noisy fame.

Pope did not perceive that in the attempt to improve the poetry he had introduced an inconsistency. He winds up the preceding group of patriots with the "wise Aurelius," whom he celebrates as an example of "unbounded virtue," and the "much-suffering heroes" could not be instances of "less guilty fame" than a man whose virtue was unbounded. The classification was probably suggested by Addison's Vision in the Tatler of the Three Roads of Life, and having his original in his mind when he composed his poem, Pope avoided the inconsistency which he subsequently imported into the passage. "The persons," says Addison, "who travelled up this great path, were such whose thoughts were bent upon doing eminent services to mankind, or promoting the good of their country. On each side of this great road were several paths. These were most of them covered walks, and received into them men of retired virtue, who proposed to themselves the same end of their journey, though they chose to make it in shade and obscurity."

[70] The names which follow are inappropriate examples of "fair virtue's *silent* train." The first on the list spent his days in promulgating his philosophy, and they were all energetic public characters who made a stir in the world. When Pope originated the expression, he must have been thinking of the unobtrusive virtues of private life, and he probably added the illustrations later without observing the incongruity.

[71] Aristides, who for his great integrity was distinguished by the appellation of the Just. When his countrymen would have banished him by the ostracism, where it was the custom for every man to sign the name of the person he voted to exile in an oyster-shell, a peasant, who could not write, came to Aristides to do it for him, who readily signed his own name.—Pope.

[72] Who, when he was about to drink the hemlock, charged his son to forgive his enemies, and not to revenge his death on those Athenians who had decreed it.—Warton.

He was condemned to death B. C. 317, at the age of 85, on the charge of treason to his country. Mistrusting the ability of Athens to maintain its independence, he connived at the dominion of the Macedonian kings. Many of those who admit his integrity contend that his policy was mistaken and unpatriotic. His party regained the ascendancy after his death, honoured his remains with a public funeral, and erected a statue of brass to his memory.

[73] Very unpoetically designated. Agis might as well have been left out, if all that could be said of him was that he was "not the last of Spartan names."—Bowles.

Agis, king of Sparta, was celebrated for his attempt to restore the ancient Spartan regulations. Especially he was anxious to resume the excess of land possessed by the rich and divide it among the poor. He failed in his design, and was dethroned, and beheaded. At his execution one of the officers of justice shed tears. "Lament me not," said Agis; "I am happier than my murderers."

[74] In the civil war between Cæsar and Pompey, Cato sided with Pompey, and when the cause was lost, he stabbed himself in the bowels to avoid being captured. He was found

by his friends insensible, but alive, and a physician began to sew up the wound. Cato recovered his consciousness, pushed away the physician, tore open the wound, and expired.

[75] A horrible spectre appeared to Brutus while he sat meditating in his tent at night. "What art thou?" said Brutus, "and what is thy business with me?" "I am thy evil genius," replied the spectre; "thou wilt see me at Philippi." At Philippi the spectre rose up again before him on the night preceding the battle in which he suffered a total defeat. He destroyed himself in the night which followed.

[76] In the midst of the Temple, nearest the throne of Fame, are placed the greatest names in learning of all antiquity. These are described in such attitudes as express their different characters. The columns on which they are raised are adorned with sculptures, taken from the most striking subjects of their works, which sculpture bears a resemblance, in its manner and character, to the manner and character of their writings.—Pope.

This was a trite device, and is poorly applied in the present instance. "The manner and character of the writings" of Homer, Virgil, Pindar, Horace, Aristotle, and Cicero could hardly have been described in a vaguer and more common-place way.

[77]
From the dees many a pillere,
Of metal that shone not full clere, &c.
Upon a pillere saw I stonde
That was of lede and iron fine,
Him of the sect Saturnine,
The Ebraike Josephus the old, &c.
Upon an iron piller strong,
That painted was all endelong,
With tigers' blood in every place,
The Tholosan that highte Stace,
That bare of Thebes up the fame, &c.—Pope.

[78]
Full wonder hye on a pillere
Of iron, he the great Omer,
And with him Dares and Titus, &c.—Pope.

[79] Pope has selected from Homer only three subjects as the most interesting: Diomed wounding Venus, Hector slaying Patroclus, and the same Hector dragged along at the wheels of Achilles' chariot. Are these the most affecting and striking incidents of the Iliad? But it is highly worth remarking, that this very incident of dragging the body of Hector thrice round the walls of Troy, is absolutely not mentioned by Homer. Heyne thinks that Virgil, for he first mentioned it, adopted the circumstance from some Greek tragedy on the subject.—Warton.

[80]
There saw I stand on a pillere
That was of tinned iron cleere,
The Latin poete Virgyle,
That hath bore up of a great while
The fame of pious Æneas.
And next him on a pillere was
Of copper, Venus' clerk Ovide,
That hath y-sowen wondrous wide
The great God of Love's name—
Tho saw I on a pillere by
Of iron wrought full sternely,
The greate poet Dan Lucan,
That on his shoulders bore up than
As high as that I mighte see,
The fame of Julius and Pompee.
And next him on a pillere stoode
Of sulphur, like as he were woode,
Dan Claudian, sothe for to tell,
That bare up all the fame of hell, &c.—Pope.

Since Homer is placed by Chaucer upon a pillar of iron, he places Virgil upon iron tinned over, to indicate that the Æneis was based upon the Iliad and was both more polished and less vigorous. The sulphur upon which Claudian stands, is typical of the hell he described in his poem on the Rape of Proserpine. Ovid, the poet of love, is put upon a pillar of copper, because copper was the metal of Venus; and Lucan, like Homer, has a pillar of iron allotted to him because he celebrated in his Pharsalia the wars of Cæsar and Pompey, and, as Chaucer says,

> Iron Martes metal is,
> Which that god is of battaile.

[81] Wakefield supposes that "modest majesty" was suggested by Milton's phrase, "modest pride," in Par. Lost, iv. 310.

[82] For this expression Wakefield quotes Dryden, Æn. vi. 33.

> There too in living sculpture might be seen
> The mad affection of the Cretan queen.

[83] The rhyme is dearly purchased by such an inexcusable inversion as "silver blight."

[84] Pindar being seated in a chariot, alludes to the chariot races he celebrated in the Grecian games. The swans are emblems of poetry, their soaring posture intimates the

sublimity and activity of his genius. Neptune presided over the Isthmian, and Jupiter over the Olympian games.—POPE.

[85] A. Philips, Past. v. 95.

> He sinks into the cords with solemn pace,
> To give the swelling tones a bolder grace.—WAKEFIELD.

[86] "Distorted," which is always used in an unfavourable sense, is a disparaging epithet by which to characterise the vehement eagerness of the champions. It is not clear who or what they "threaten," whether the horses or each other, and in either case there is nothing "great" in the image of a person uttering threats in a "distorted posture."

[87] This expresses the mixed character of the odes of Horace: the second of these verses alludes to that line of his,

> Spiritum Graiæ tenuem camœnæ,

as another which follows, to

> Exegi monumentum ære perennius.

The action of the doves hints at a passage in the fourth ode of his third book:

> Me fabulosæ Vulture in Apulo
> Altricis extra limen Apuliæ,
> Ludo fatigatumque somno,
> Fronde nova puerum palumbes
> Texêre; mirum quod foret omnibus—
> Ut tuto ab atris corpore viperis
> Dormirem et ursis; ut premerer sacra
> Lauroque, collataque myrto,
> Non sine Dîs animosus infans.

Which may be thus Englished:

> While yet a child, I chanced to stray,
> And in a desert sleeping lay;
> The savage race withdrew, nor dared
> To touch the muses' future bard;
> But Cytherea's gentle dove
> Myrtles and bays around me spread,
> And crowned your infant poet's head
> Sacred to music and to love.—POPE.

In addition to these passages, he had in his mind Hor. Epist. lib. i. 19, quoted by Wakefield:

> Temperat Archilochi Musam pede mascula Sappho,
> Temperat Alcæus.

[88] Horace speaking, in his ode to Augustus, of the relative glory of different families, says that the Julian star shone among all the rest as the moon shines among the lesser lights. The star referred to the comet which appeared for seven days the year after the death of Julius Cæsar, and which was supposed to indicate that he had become a deity in the heavens. A star was sculptured in consequence on his statue in the forum.

[89] Surely he might have selected for the basso rilievos about the statue of Horace ornaments more manly and characteristical of his genius.—WARTON.

[90] A very tame and lifeless verse indeed, alluding to the treatise of Aristotle "concerning animals."—WAKEFIELD.

[91] Pope here refers to Aristotle's treatise on the Heavens.

[92] This beautiful attitude is copied from a statue in the collection which Lady Pomfret presented to the University of Oxford.—WARTON.

[93] Addison's translation of some lines from Sannazarius:

> And thou whose rival tow'rs invade the skies.

[94] Chaucer in a passage, not quoted by Pope, represents Fame as enthroned upon "a seat imperial," which was formed of rubies.

[95]
> Methoughte that she was so lite
> That the length of a cubite
> Was longer than she seemed to be;
> But thus soon in a while she,
> Herself tho wonderly straight,
> That with her feet she carthe reight,
> And with her head she touched heaven.—POPE.

[96] This notion of the enlargement of the temple is also from Chaucer, who says that it became in length, breadth, and height, a thousand times bigger than it was at first.

[97] The corresponding passage in Chaucer is not quoted by Pope, who translated from their common original, Virg. Æn. iv. 181:

Cui quot sunt corpore plumæ,
Tot vigiles oculi subter, mirabile dictu,
Tot lunguæ, totidem ora sonant, tot subrigit auris.

[98] I heard about her throne y-sung
That all the palays walles rung;
So sung the mighty Muse, she
That cleped is Calliope,
And her eighte sisters eke.—Pope.

Pope should have continued the extract; for his next four lines were prompted by the succeeding four in Chaucer:

And evermore eternally
They sing of Fame as tho heard I;
"Heried be thou and thy name
Goddess of renown or fame."

"Heried" means praised.

[99] I heard a noise approchen blive,
That fared as bees done in a hive,
Against their time of out flying;
Right such a manere murmering,
For all the world it seemed me.
Tho gan I look about and see
That there came entring into th' hall,
A right great company withal;
And that of sundry regions,
Of all kind of conditions, &c.—Pope.

[100] This description is varied with improvements from Dryden, Æneis, vi. 958.

About the boughs an airy nation flew
Thick as the humming bees that hunt the golden dew:
The winged army roams the field around,
The rivers and the rocks remurmer to the sound.—Wakefield.

He was assisted by another passage in Dryden's Flower and Leaf:

Thick as the college of the bees in May,
When swarming o'er the dusky fields they fly,
Now to the flow'rs, and intercept the sky.

[101] So in Chaucer all degrees, "poor and rich" fall down on their knees before Fame and beg her to grant them their petition.

[102] "The tattling quality of age which, as Sir William Davenant says, is always narrative." Dryden's Dedication of Juvenal.—Wakefield.

[103] And some of them she granted sone,
And some she warned well and fair,
And some she granted the contrair—
Right as her sister dame Fortune
Is wont to serven in commune.—Pope.

Chaucer and Pope describe Fame as bestowing reputation upon some, and traducing others, when their deserts were equal, but neither Pope nor Chaucer touch upon the truth that the same person is commonly both lauded and denounced. This is finely expressed by Milton, Samson Agonistes, ver. 971:—

Fame if not double-faced is double-mouthed,
And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds;
On both his wings, one black, the other white,
Bears greatest names in his wild aery flight.

[104] The idea is from Chaucer:

They hadde good fame each deserved
Although they were diversely served.

Besides the passage in Chaucer, Pope evidently recalled Creech's translation of Juvenal, Sat. xiii. 132.

ev'ry age relates
That equal crimes have met unequal fates;
That sins alike, unlike rewards have found,
And whilst this villain's crucified the other's crowned.

[105] In Chaucer, Fame sends for Eolus, who comes with two trumpets, a golden trumpet, from which he gives forth praises, and a black trumpet of brass, from which he sends forth blasts of slander. In Pope the golden trumpet is blown by the muses, and the trump of slander sounds without the mention of any agent.

[106] Tho came the thirde companye,
And gan up to the dees to hye,
And down on knees they fell anone,

And saiden: We ben everichone
Folke that han full truely
Deserved fame rightfully,
And prayen you it might be knowe
Right as it is, and forthe blowe.
I grant, quoth she, for now me list
That your good works shall be wist.
And yet ye shall have better loos,
Right in despite of all your foos,
Than worthy is, and that anone.
Let now (quoth she) thy trumpe gone—
And certes all the breath that went
Out of his trumpes mouthe smel'd
As men a pot of baume held
Among a basket full of roses.—POPE.

[107] Prior, Carmen Seculare:

In comely rank call ev'ry merit forth,
Imprint on ev'ry act its standard worth.

[108] The whole tribe of the "good and just," who obtain any fame at all, are said by Pope to get more than they deserve. For this notion there is certainly no foundation, unless he meant that the fact of desiring reputation deprived virtue of the title to it.

[109] Therewithal there came anone
Another huge companye,
Of good folke—
What did this Eolus, but he
Took out his black trump of brass,
That fouler than the devil was:
And gan this trumpe for to blowe,
As all the world should overthrowe.
Throughout every regione
Went this foule trumpes soune,
As swift as pellet out of gunne,
When fire is in the powder runne.
And such a smoke gan oute wende,
Out of the foule trumpes ende, &c.—POPE.

[110] In his account of the reception given by Fame to her various suppliants, Pope is detailing the manner in which praise and blame are dispensed in this world, and it is a departure from reality to consign the entire race of conquerors to oblivion. However little they may deserve fame, they at least obtain it. The inconsistency is the more glaring that when he describes the temple in the opening of the poem, he tells us that,

Within stood heroes, who through loud alarms,
In bloody fields pursued renown in arms.

[111] I saw anone the fifth route,
That to this lady gan loute,
And down on knees anone to fall,
And to her they besoughten all,
To hiden their good workes eke,
And said, they yeven not a leke
For no fame ne such renowne;
For they for contemplacyoune,
And Goddes love hadde ywrought,
Ne of fame would they ought.—POPE.

[112] What, quoth she, and be ye wood?
And wene ye for to do good,
And for to have of it no fame?
Have ye despite to have my name?
Nay, ye shall lien everichone:
Blowe they trump, and that anone
(Quoth she) thou Eolus yhote,
And ring these folkes works be note,
That all the world may of it hear;
And he gan blow their loos so cleare,
In his golden clarioune,
Through the world went the soune,
All so kenely, and eke so soft,
That their fame was blowen aloft.—POPE.

Pope makes everybody obtain fame who seeks to avoid it, which is absurd. Chaucer keeps to truth. The first company came,

And saiden, Certes, lady bright,
We have done well with all out might,
But we ne kepen have for fame,
Hide our workes and our name.

"I grant you all your asking," she replies; "let your works be dead." The second company arrive immediately afterwards, and prefer the same request in the lines versified by

Pope, when Fame, with her usual capriciousness, refuses their prayer, and orders Eolus to sound their praises.

[113] An obvious imitation of a well-known verse in Denham:

> Though deep yet clear, though gentle yet not dull.—Wakefield.

[114] The reader might compare these twenty-eight lines following, which contain the same matter, with eighty-four of Chaucer, beginning thus:

> Tho came the sixthe companye,
> And gan faste to Fame cry, &c.,

being too prolix to be here inserted.—Pope.

[115] "A pretty fame," says Dennis, "when the very smartest of these coxcombs is sure to have his name rotten before his carcase. When the author introduced these fellows into the temple of Fame, he ought to have made the chocolate-house, and the side-box, part of it." The criticism was just. The contemptible creatures who buzzed their profligate falsehoods for the hour, and were heard of no more, should have been introduced, if at all, into the Temple of Rumour, and not into the Temple of Fame. Pope followed Chaucer.

[116] Strokes of pleasantry and humour, and satirical reflections on the foibles of common life, are unsuited to so grave and majestic a poem. They appear as unnatural and out of place as one of the burlesque scenes of Heemskirk would do in a solemn landscape of Poussin. When I see such a line as

> And at each blast a lady's honour dies

in the Temple of Fame, I lament as much to find it placed there as to see shops and sheds and cottages erected among the ruins of Diocletian's baths.—Warton.

[117] Pope places the temple of Fame on a precipitous rock of ice, and Dennis charges him with departing from his allegory when he describes the self-indulgent multitude, who are "even fatigued with ease," as having toiled up the "steep and slippery ascent" to present themselves before the goddess. There is the same defect in Chaucer.

[118]
> Tho come another companye
> That Lad ydone the treachery, &c.—Pope.

Pope in this paragraph had not only Chaucer in view, but the passage of Virgil where he describes the criminals in the infernal regions. The second line of Pope's opening couplet was suggested by Dryden's translation, Æneis, vi. 825:

> Expel their parents and usurp the throne.

[119] A glance at the Revolution of 1688.—Croker.

[120] The scene here changes from the Temple of Fame to that of Rumour, which is almost entirely Chaucer's. The particulars follow:

> Tho saw I stonde in a valey,
> Under the castle faste by
> A house, that Domus Dedali
> That Labyrinthus cleped is,
> Nas made so wonderly I wis,
> Ne half so queintly ywrought;
> And evermo, as swift as thought,
> This queinte house aboute went,
> That never more stille it stent—
> And eke this house hath of entrees
> As fele of leaves as ben on trees
> In summer, when they grene ben;
> And in the roof yet men may sene
> A thousand holes, and well mo
> To letten well the soune out go;
> And by day in every tide
> Ben all the doores open wide,
> And by night each one unshet;
> No porter is there one to let
> No manner tydings in to pace:
> Ne never rest is in that place.—Pope.

[121] This thought is transferred thither out of the second book of Fame, where it takes up no less than one hundred and twenty verses, beginning thus:

> Geffray, thou wottost well this, &c.—Pope.

[122] From Chaucer:

> If that thou
> Throw on water now a stone,
> Well wost thou it will make anon
> A little roundel as a circle,
> Paraunture broad as a covercle,
> And right anon thou shalt see wele,
> That circle will cause another wheel,
> And that the third, and so forth, brother,

Every circle causing other,
And multiplying evermoe,
Till that it so far ygo
That it at bothe brinkes be.

* * * * * * * * * *

And right thus every word, ywis,
That loud or privy y-spoken is,
Moveth first an air about,
And of this moving, out of doubt,
Another air anon is moved,
As I have of the water proved
That every circle causeth other.

A "covercle" was the cover or lid of a pot.

[123] Dryden's version of Ovid, Met. xii.:

Whence all things, though remote, are viewed around
And hither bring their undulating sound.—WAKEFIELD.

[124] Of werres, of peace, of marriages,
Of rest, of labour, of voyages,
Of abode, of dethe, of life,
Of love and hate, accord and strife,
Of loss, of lore, and of winnings,
Of hele, of sickness, and lessings,
Of divers transmutations
Of estates and eke of regions,
Of trust, of drede, of jealousy,
Of wit, of winning, of folly,
Of good, or bad governement,
Of fire, and of divers accident.—POPE.

The dismissal of Lord Oxford, the death of Queen Anne immediately afterwards, on August 1, 1714, and the overthrow of Bolingbroke, were events which had recently happened when Pope published his poem, and there never was a time when "changes in the state," "the falls of favourites," and "old mismanagements" were a more universal topic of conversation.

[125] But such a grete congregation
Of folke as I saw roame about,
Some within, and some without.
Was never seen, ne shall be eft—
And every wight that I saw there
Rowned everich in others ear
A newe tyding privily,
Or elles he told it openly
Right thus, and said, Knowst not thou
That is betide to night now?
No, quoth he, tell me what
And then he told him this and that, &c.—POPE.

[126] Thus north and south
Went every tiding fro mouth to mouth,
And that encreasing evermo,
As fire is wont to quicken and go
From a sparkle sprong amiss,
Till all the citee brent up is.—POPE.

[127] Dryden, Ovid, Met. xii.:

Fame sits aloft.

In Ovid the scene is laid in the house of Fame. Pope lays it in the house of Rumour, and having left Fame enthroned in her own temple, he now represents her as permanently "sitting aloft" in a totally different edifice.

[128] And sometime I saw there at once,
A lesing and a sad sooth saw
That gonnen at adventure draw
Out of a window forth to pace—
And no man be he ever so wrothe,
Shall have one of these two, but bothe, &c.—POPE.

[129] The hint is taken from a passage in another part of the third book, but here more naturally made the conclusion, with the addition of a moral to the whole. In Chaucer, he only answers, "he came to see the place;" and the book ends abruptly, with his being surprized at the sight of a man of great authority, and awaking in a fright.—POPE.

This is an imperfect representation. While Chaucer is standing in the House of Fame, a person goes up to him,

And saide, Friend, what is thy name,
Artow come hither to have fame?

The poet disclaims any such intention, and protests that he has no desire that his name should be known to a single soul. He is then asked what he does there, and he replies that he who brought him to the place promised him that he should learn new and wonderful things, in which, he says, he has been disappointed, for he was aware before that people coveted fame, though he was not hitherto acquainted with the dwelling of the goddess, nor with her appearance and condition. His interrogator answers that he perceives what it is he desires to know, and conducts him to the house of Rumour. There he has revealed to him the falsehood of the world, and especially of pilgrims and pardoners, which was an important doctrine to be inculcated in those days. When the scene has been fully disclosed, "a man of great authority" appears, and the poet starts up from his sleep, by which he seems to intimate that the wise and serious frown upon those who listen to idle tales. His awaking "half afraid," is the result of his

> Remembring well what I had seen,
> And how high and far I had been
> In my ghost.

Pope, by reserving the inquiry addressed to him for the end of the poem, represents himself as being asked in the temple of Rumour whether he has come there for fame, which, is not more, but much less natural than the arrangement of Chaucer, who supposes the question to be put in the temple of Fame itself. Nor would it have been congenial to Chaucer's modest disposition to make himself the climax of the piece.

[130] Garth, in the preface to his Dispensary: "Reputation of this sort is very hard to be got, and very easy to be lost."—WAKEFIELD.

[131] Cowley's Complaint:

> Thou who rewardest but with popular breath
> And that too after death.—WAKEFIELD.

Pope's moral is inconsistent with the previous tone of his poem. He has not treated the "second life in others' breath" as "vain," but speaks of the position of Homer, Aristotle, &c. in the temple of Fame as though it were a substantial triumph, a real dignity, and a glorious reward. The purport of his piece is to enforce, and not to depreciate, the value of literary renown. His whole life attests that this was his genuine opinion. He was not endowed with the equanimity which neither covets nor despises reputation, and it was pure affectation when he pretended, in the concluding paragraph, that he did not "call for the favours of fame," and that he held posthumous fame, in particular, to be a worthless possession.

[132] Dryden, in Palamon and Arcite, says of women that they

> Still follow fortune where she leads the way.

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# PASTORALS,

### WITH A

# DISCOURSE ON PASTORAL.

### WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1704.

> Rura mihi et rigui placeant in vallibus amnes,
> Flumina amem, sylvasque, inglorius!—VIRG.

[Pg 233]

These Pastorals were written at the age of sixteen, and then passed through the hands of Mr. Walsh, Mr. Wycherley, G. Granville, afterwards Lord Lansdowne, Sir William Trumbull, Dr. Garth, Lord Halifax, Lord Somers, Mr. Mainwaring, and others. All these gave our author the greatest encouragement, and particularly Mr. Walsh, whom Mr. Dryden, in his postscript to Virgil, calls the best critic of his age. "The author," says he, "seems to have a particular genius for this kind of poetry, and a judgment that much exceeds his years. He has taken very freely from the ancients. But what he has mixed of his own with theirs is no way inferior to what he has taken from them. It is not flattery at all to say that Virgil had written nothing so good at his age. His preface is very judicious and learned." Letter to Mr. Wycherley, Ap. 1705. The Lord Lansdowne, about the same time, mentioning the youth of our poet, says, in a printed letter of the character of Mr. Wycherley, that "if he goes on as he hath begun in the pastoral way, as Virgil first tried his strength, we may hope to see English poetry vie with the Roman." Notwithstanding the early time of their production, the author esteemed these as the most correct in the versification, and musical in the numbers, of all his works. The reason for his labouring them into so much softness, was, doubtless, that this sort of poetry derives almost its whole beauty from a natural ease of thought and smoothness of verse: whereas that of most other kinds consist in the strength and fulness of both. In a letter of his to Mr. Walsh about this time, we find an enumeration of several niceties in versification, which perhaps have never been strictly observed in any English poem, except in these Pastorals. They were not printed till 1709.—POPE.

The sycophancy of A. Philips, who had prejudiced Mr. Addison against Pope, occasioned those

papers[1] in the Guardian, written by the latter, in which there is an ironical preference given to the Pastorals of Philips above his own, in order to support the profound judgment of those who could not distinguish between the rural and the rustic, and on that account condemned the Pastorals of Pope for wanting simplicity. These papers were sent by an unknown hand to Steele, [Pg 234] and the irony escaping him, he communicated them to Mr. Pope, declaring he would never publish any paper where one of the club was complimented at the expense of another. Pope told him he was too delicate, and insisted that the papers should be published in the Guardian. They were so. And the pleasantry escaped all but Addison, who, taking Pope aside,[2] said to him in his agreeable manner, "You have put your friends here in a very ridiculous light, as will be seen when it is understood, as it soon must be, that you were only laughing at the admirers of Philips." But this ill conduct of Philips occasioned a more open ridicule of his Pastorals in the mock poem called the Shepherd's Week, written by Gay. But though more open, the object of it was ill understood[3] by those who were strangers to the quarrel. These mistook the Shepherd's Week for a burlesque of Virgil's Pastorals. How far this goes towards a vindication of Philips's simple painting, let others judge.—Warburton.

In 1704 Pope wrote his Pastorals, which were shown to the poets and critics of that time. As they well deserved, they were read with admiration, and many praises were bestowed upon them and upon the preface, which is both elegant and learned in a high degree. They were, however, not published till five years afterwards. Cowley, Milton, and Pope are distinguished among the English poets by the early exertion of their powers; but the works of Cowley alone were published in his childhood, and, therefore, of him only can it be certain that his juvenile performances received no improvement from his maturer studies. The Pastorals were at last printed [1709] in Tonson's Miscellany, in a volume which began with the Pastorals of Philips, and ended with those of Pope. It seems natural for a young poet to initiate himself by pastorals, which, not professing to imitate real life, require no experience, and exhibiting only the simple operation of unmingled passions, admit no subtle reasoning or deep inquiry. Pope's Pastorals are not, however, composed but with close thought; they have reference to the time of the day, the seasons of the year, and the periods of human life. The last, that which turns the attention upon age and death, was the author's favourite. To tell of disappointment and misery, to thicken the darkness of futurity, and perplex the labyrinth of uncertainty, has been always a delicious [Pg 235] employment of the poets. His preference was probably just. I wish, however, that his fondness had not overlooked the line in which the *Zephyrs* are made *to lament in silence*. To charge these pastorals with want of invention is to require what was never intended. The imitations are so ambitiously frequent that the writer evidently means rather to show his literature than his wit. It is surely sufficient for an author of sixteen, not only to be able to copy the poems of antiquity with judicious selection, but to have obtained sufficient power of language and skill in metre to exhibit a series of versification which had in English poetry no precedent, nor has since had an imitation. —Johnson.

It is somewhat strange that in the pastorals of a young poet there should not be found a single rural image that is new; but this, I am afraid, is the case in the Pastorals before us. The ideas of Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenser are, indeed, here exhibited in language equally mellifluous and pure; but the descriptions and sentiments are trite and common. To this assertion, formerly made, Dr. Johnson answered, "that no invention was intended." He, therefore, allows the fact and the charge. It is a confession of the very fault imputed to them. There *ought* to have been invention. It has been my fortune from my way of life,[4] to have seen many compositions of youths of sixteen years old, far beyond these Pastorals in point of genius and imagination, though not perhaps of correctness. Their excellence, indeed, might be owing to having had such a predecessor as Pope.[5] A mixture of British and Grecian ideas may justly be deemed a blemish in these Pastorals, and propriety is certainly violated when he couples Pactolus with Thames, and Windsor with Hybla.[6] Complaints of immoderate heat, and wishes to be conveyed to cooling caverns, when uttered by the inhabitants of Greece, have a decorum and consistency, which they totally lose in the character of a British Shepherd,[7] and, Theocrites, during the ardors of Sirius, must have heard the murmurings of a brook, and the whispers of a pine, with more home-felt [Pg 236] pleasure than Pope could possibly experience upon the same occasion. Pope himself informs us, in a note, that he judiciously omitted the following verse:

> And list'ning wolves grow milder as they hear

on account of the absurdity, which Spenser overlooked, of introducing wolves into England. But on this principle, which is certainly a just one, may it not be asked, why he should speak, the scene lying in Windsor Forest, of the "sultry Sirius," of the "grateful clusters of grapes," of "a pipe of reeds," the antique fistula, of "thanking Ceres for a plentiful harvest," of "the sacrifice of lambs," with many other instances that might be adduced to this purpose? That Pope, however, was sensible of the importance of adapting images to the scene of action, is obvious from the following example of his judgment; for in translating

> Audiit Eurotas, jussitque ediscere lauros,

he has dexterously dropped the laurels appropriated to Eurotas, as he is speaking of the river Thames, and has rendered it

> Thames heard the numbers as he flowed along,
> And bade his willows learn the moving song.

In the passages which Pope has imitated from Theocritus, and his Latin translator, Virgil, he has merited but little applause. Upon the whole, the principal merit of these Pastorals consists in their correct and musical versification, musical to a degree of which rhyme could hardly be thought capable, and in giving the truest specimen of that harmony in English verse, which is now become indispensably necessary, and which has so forcibly and universally influenced the public ear as to have obliged every moderate rhymer to be at least melodious. Pope lengthened the abruptness of Waller, and at the same time contracted the exuberance of Dryden.—WARTON.

Dr. Johnson does not appear sufficiently attentive to the true character and nature of pastoral poetry. No doubt it is natural for a young poet to initiate himself by pastorals; for what youthful heart does not glow at the descriptions of rural nature, and scenes that accord with its own innocency and cheerfulness; but although pastorals do not, in the sense of Dr. Johnson, imitate real life, nor require any great insight into human passions and characters, yet there are many things necessary in this species of composition, more than Dr. Johnson seems to require. The chief thing is an eye for picturesque and rural scenery, and an intimate acquaintance with those minute and particular appearances of nature, which alone can give a lively and original colour to the painting of pastoral poetry. To copy the common descriptions of spring or summer, morning or evening, or to iterate from Virgil the same complaints of the same shepherds, is not surely to [Pg 237] write pastoral poetry. It is also difficult to conceive where is "the close thought" with which Johnson says Pope's Pastorals are composed. They are pleasing as copies of "the poems of antiquity," although they exhibit no striking taste in the "selection," and they certainly exhibit a series of musical versification, which, till their appearance, had no precedent in English poetry. If in particular passages, I have ventured to remark that Pope has introduced false thoughts and conceits, let us remember that we ought not so much to wonder that he admitted any, as that they were not more. Dryden's earlier poems are infinitely more vitiated in this respect.

Warton's observations are very just, but he does not seem sufficiently to discriminate between the softness of individual lines, which is the chief merit of these Pastorals, and the general harmony of poetic numbers. Let it, however, be always remembered, that Pope gave the first idea of mellifluence, and produced a softer and sweeter cadence than before belonged to the English couplet. Dr. Johnson thinks it will be in vain, after Pope, to endeavour to improve the English versification, and that it is now carried to the *ne plus ultra* of excellence.[8] This is an opinion the validity of which I must be permitted to doubt. Pope certainly gave a more correct and finished tone to the English versification, but he sometimes wanted a variety of pause, and his nice precision of every line prevented, in a few instances, a more musical flow of modulated passages. But we are to consider what he did, not what might be done, and surely there cannot be two opinions respecting his improvement of the couplet though it does not follow that his general rhythm has no imperfection. Johnson seems to have depreciated, or to have been ignorant of, the metrical powers of some writers prior to Pope. His ear seems to have been caught chiefly by Dryden, and as Pope's versification was more equably (couplet with couplet being considered, not passage with passage) connected than Dryden's, he thought therefore that nothing could be added to Pope's versification. I should think it the extreme of arrogance and folly to make my own ear the criterion of music; but I cannot help thinking that Dryden, and of later days, Cowper, are much more harmonious in their general versification than Pope. I ought also to mention a neglected poem, not neglected on account of its versification, but on account of its title and subject—Prior's Solomon. Whoever candidly compares these writers together, unless his ear be habituated to a certain recurrence of pauses precisely at the end of a line, will not (though he will [Pg 238] give the highest praise for compactness, skill, precision, and force, to the undivided couplets of Pope, separately considered)—will not, I think, assent to the position, that in versification "what he found brickwork he left marble." I am not afraid to own, that with the exception of the Epistle to Abelard, as musical as it is pathetic, the verses of Pope want variety, and on this account in some instances they want both force and harmony. In variety, and variety only, let it be remembered, I think Pope deficient. It has been doubted whether couplet verses ought ever to be broken. I will appeal to Pope himself. Whenever he has done so, is there a judge of poetical cadence who will not say it is harmonious? The instances are few; but where they occur, are they not beautiful? If they had been too often repeated the effect would be destroyed. But in long compositions might not a greater variety of pauses have effect? Does not the ear feel a lassitude at times? An idea has been started by some critics that "you might as well have unequal columns to your house, as unequal couplets in verse." This comparison, however, if it proves anything, proves too much; for no one will say that every two verses in a long poem should in quantity be exactly the same, the syllables the same, the pause the same. This will not hold a moment in versification. If it did, then Johnson's assertion falls to the ground; for then Dr. Darwin is a far better versifier than Pope, and a very little pains would make a much more consummate versificator than Dr. Darwin.—BOWLES.

Of all Pope's various and very freely-censured writings, there are none that appear to have met with a harsher or more fastidious reception at the hands of his commentators and critics than his Pastorals. Without regarding them with a sufficient reference, either to the time of life of the author, or the objects he had in view in their composition, they have considered them as deficient in originality and strength of thought, because they do not more greatly abound in new and striking images. But to say nothing of the unreasonableness of requiring "new and striking images," on a subject which has been obvious from the earliest ages to all mankind, and has been the general theme of poetry in every country, period, and language, it must be observed, that it was not the intention of Pope to rely upon the strength of his own powers, or to attempt an original style of pastoral composition. On the contrary, he informs us at the close of his discourse,

that if those pastorals have any merit, it is to be attributed to some good old authors, "whose works," says he, "as I have had leisure to study, so I hope I have not wanted care to imitate." In conceding then to Pope, that he has exhibited "the ideas of Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenser, in language equally mellifluous and pure," Dr. Warton has granted every thing which Pope [Pg 239] endeavoured to accomplish; and the observation of Johnson, "that no invention was intended," is, as far as the remark of Warton affects the genius and character of Pope, a decisive answer. Nor although the scene be laid in Windsor Forest, does there appear to be any impropriety in referring to a pipe of reeds, the clusters of grapes, the bounty of Ceres, and other objects connected with pastoral life, and for which the poet has himself assigned a sufficient reason in the following discourse. "If," he observes, "we would copy nature, it would be useful to carry this idea along with us, that pastoral is an image of what they call the golden age; so that we are not to describe our shepherds as shepherds at this day really are, but as they may be conceived then to have been when the best of men followed the employment;" to which he adds, that "an air of piety to the gods should shine through the poem, which so visibly appears in all the works of antiquity, and it ought to preserve some relish of the old way of writing."—Roscoe.

The manuscript of Pope's Pastorals is still preserved among the Richardson papers. It was lent by Mr. T. B. Hollis to Wakefield, who has noted the variations from the published text with minute fidelity. Richardson has done the same in his copy of the quarto of 1717, and gives this correct description of the handwriting of the original:—"The manuscript title of the Discourse on Pastoral Poetry, viz., An Essay on Pastoral, and the title of the Pastorals, are written by Mr. Pope in printing capitals so perfectly beautiful, and so exactly imitated, that one can hardly believe they are not really from the press; the same of all the words which would have been printed in italics throughout the whole, which are in common printing character, the general being in italics, beautifully formed, so as in all to imitate a printed book, but in a fine taste of type, and form of the page and margin." Pope has written upon the manuscript, "Mem. This copy is that which passed through the hands of Mr. Walsh, Mr. Congreve, Mr. Mainwaring, Dr. Garth, Mr. Granville, Mr. Southern, Sir H. Sheers, Sir William Trumbull, Lord Halifax, Lord Wharton, Marquis of Dorchester, Duke of Bucks, &c. Only the third Eclogue was written since some of these saw the other three, which were written as they here stand with the Essay, anno 1704. Ætatis meæ 16. The alterations from this copy were upon the objections of some of these, or my own." In his published list of the persons who had read the Pastorals in manuscript, Pope has added the names of Wycherley and Lord Somers, and omitted the names of Congreve, Southern, Sir H. Sheers, Lord Wharton, the Marquis of Dorchester, and the Duke of Buckingham. His chief adviser seems to have been Walsh, who, of all his admiring friends, gave him, he says, the greatest encouragement. "I cannot," Pope wrote to him July 2, 1706, "omit the first opportunity of making [Pg 240] you my acknowledgments for reviewing these papers of mine. You have no less right to correct me than the same hand that raised a tree has to prune it." The Richardson collection contains a manuscript in which the poet has transcribed from his Pastorals the various lines he thought defective, and after stating his own objection to them, and subjoining amended readings, he referred the task of selection to Walsh, who has jotted down his decisions at the bottom of Pope's remarks. Both will be found in the notes on the passages to which the comments of the author and his critic relate.

There is no evidence, except the poet's own assertion, to prove that the Pastorals were composed at the age of sixteen. They had been seen by Walsh before April 20, 1705, if any dependence could be placed upon the letter of that date which he wrote to Wycherly, when returning the manuscript, but the letter rests on the authority of Pope alone, and there is reason to question the correctness of the date. The letter of Walsh to Wycherley concludes with the expression of a desire to be made acquainted with Pope. "If," adds Walsh, "he will give himself the trouble any morning to call at my house I shall be very glad to read the verses over with him." The next letter is from Walsh to Pope, and the opening sentence shows that his correspondence with the poet had only just commenced. It appears from what follows that they had met in London, that Walsh had carried Pope's verses into the country, and that these verses were three of the Pastorals. Walsh expresses a hope that when he returns to town, Pope will have some fresh verses to show him, "for I make no doubt," he says, "but any one who writes so well, must write more." These particulars evidently refer to the period when Walsh first became acquainted with the Pastorals, and undertook to criticise them. But the correspondence on the subject begins on June 24, 1706, whence we should infer that it was in April, 1706, and not in 1705, that Wycherley introduced Pope and his Pastorals to Walsh. The poet would have departed from his usual practice if he had not falsified dates to exaggerate his precocity. That he was past seventeen when he first exhibited his Pastorals to his friends is confirmed by a passage from the letter, in which George Granville sketches the character of Wycherley, and invites an unnamed correspondent to meet him. "He shall bring with him, if you will," says Granville, "a young poet, newly inspired in the neighbourhood of Cooper's Hill, whom he and Walsh have taken under their wing. His name is Pope. He is not above seventeen or eighteen years of age, and promises miracles. If he goes on as he has begun in the Pastoral way, as Virgil first tried his strength, we may hope to see English poetry vie with the Roman, and this swan of Windsor sing as sweetly as the Mantuan."[9] [Pg 241] Whatever may be the true date of the Pastorals, a portion of them certainly existed before April 20, 1706, on which day Tonson, the bookseller, wrote to Pope, "I have lately seen a pastoral of yours in Mr. Walsh's and Congreve's hands, which is extremely fine, and is generally approved of by the best judges in poetry. I remember I have formerly seen you at my shop, and am sorry I did not improve my acquaintance with you. If you design your poem for the press, no person shall be more careful in printing of it, nor no one can give a greater encouragement to it." Three years elapsed before the Pastorals saw the light, when Tonson became the publisher, and they

appeared on May 2, 1709, in his Sixth Miscellany. The preface, which Walsh had read in manuscript, and which he calls "very learned and judicious," did not come out till 1717, and then bore the title of A Discourse on Pastoral Poetry. Johnson, repeating the language of Walsh, says that it is "learned in a high degree;" whereas it was avowedly compiled from two or three recent essayists, and demanded nothing from the poet to which the term learning could be properly applied. He owed to his second-hand authorities the arbitrary and pedantic rules which were framed from the practice of the ancients, and which were employed by the mechanical critics of his day to repress the free forms of modern genius. The style would have been remarkable for its maturity, if, as Pope professed, it had been the produce of sixteen, but the Discourse was not printed till he was twenty-nine, and he certainly did not send it uncorrected into the world.

"It must appear strange," says De Quincey, "that Pope at twenty-one should choose to come forward for the first time with a work composed at sixteen. A difference of five years at that stage of life is of more effect than of twenty at a later; and his own expanding judgment could hardly fail to inform him that his Pastorals were by far the worst of his works. In reality, let us not deny, that had Pope never written anything else, his name would not have been known as a name even of promise, but would probably have been redeemed from oblivion by some satirist or writer of a Dunciad."[10] "Expanding judgment" is often a feeble antidote to the partiality of an author for his own compositions, and Pope always spoke of his Pastoral effusions with fond complacency. He did, indeed, pretend to regret their publication. There was some delay in bringing out the Miscellany, and on November 1, 1708, he wrote thus to Cromwell: "But now I talk of the critics, I have good news to tell you concerning myself, for which I expect you should congratulate with me; it is, that beyond all my expectations, and far above my demerits, I have been most mercifully reprieved by the sovereign power of Jacob Tonson from being brought forth to public [Pg 242] punishment, and [have been] respited from time to time from the hands of those barbarous executioners of the muses, whom I was just now speaking of. It often happens that guilty poets, like other guilty criminals, when once they are known and proclaimed, deliver themselves into the hands of justice only to prevent others from doing it more to their disadvantage, and not out of any ambition to spread their fame by being executed in the face of the world, which is a fame but of short continuance." Pope was in his twenty-first year, an age at which frankness commonly preponderates, and he already abounded in the ostentatious profession of sentiments he did not entertain. He had circulated the Pastorals among numerous authors, he had invited their criticisms, he had continued to correct the poems with fastidious care, he retained to the last a high opinion of their merit, and it is impossible to credit his insinuation, that he did not design them for the press, and that he only printed them to avoid a surreptitious edition which nobody gave any sign of preparing. The hypocrisy broke out again when the Miscellany had appeared. "Nothing," wrote Wycherley, May 17, 1709, "has lately been better received by the public than your part of it. You have only displeased the critics by pleasing them too well, having not left them a word to say for themselves against you and your performances. In earnest, all the best judges of good sense or poetry are admirers of yours, and like your part of the book so well that the rest is liked the worse." Pope replied, "I shall be satisfied if I can lose my time agreeably this way, without losing my reputation. As for gaining any, I am as indifferent in the matter as Falstaff was, and may say of fame as he did of honour, 'If it comes, it comes unlooked for; and there's an end on't.'" This affectation of indifference was kept up by him to the end of his days. Yet he was all the time composing, polishing, and publishing; his whole existence was passed in painstaking, and almost drudging authorship; he left no means untried, dishonest as well as fair, to sustain, extend, and perpetuate his reputation; and he pursued every person with inveterate malice who presumed to question his poetical supremacy. In spite of his boasted apathy, there cannot be found in the annals of the irritable race a more anxious, jealous, intriguing candidate for fame.

In his letter to Wycherley, Walsh remarked of Pope's Pastorals, "It is no flattery at all to say that Virgil had written nothing so good at his age." Walsh must have been thinking of Virgil's Eclogues, which are his most juvenile productions, though he is not supposed to have commenced them till he was thirty years old. Pope admired them to excess, and in his manhood he held to the belief that "it was difficult to find any fault in them."[11] His desire was to repeat, [Pg 243] with slight variations, this ancient pattern, which he thought perfection. Virgil himself was a plagiarist, but the Eclogues have more originality than the Pastorals. The descriptions of both Virgil and Pope are artificial, but Virgil has heart-felt touches from the life, of which the Pastorals afford no trace. The taste of both was unformed, but the conceits of Virgil are accompanied by a poetic vein which was not yet equally developed in Pope. Since the Pastorals are an imitation of the Eclogues, it might be expected, as usually happens in such cases, that the copy would have the defects of the model in an exaggerated degree. Pope could not disguise from himself that his verses were the echo of an echo; and in a letter of July 2, 1706, he begged Walsh to tell him sincerely whether he had not stretched the license of borrowing too far. Walsh admitted in his answer, that some persons to whom he had shown the manuscript had made this objection, but he professed not to share it, and comforted his friend by the assurance, "that in all the common subjects of poetry the thoughts are so obvious that whoever writes last must write things like what have been said before." Roscoe has repeated the plea, and speaks of "the unreasonableness" of expecting new images on a topic which "has been the general theme of poetry in every country, period, and language." He forgot that rural scenery and life had furnished abundant novelty to Thomson, Cowper, Wordsworth, and Crabbe, whose pictures are as fresh and unhacknied as if Theocritus and Virgil had never lived. "He that walks behind," said Michael Angelo "can never go before;" and originality was impossible when Pope's only notion of legitimate pastoral was a slavish mimicry of classical remains. Had he drawn his materials from the English landscape before his eyes, from the English characters about his doors, and from the

English usages and modes of thought in his own day, he would have discovered a thousand particulars in which he had not been anticipated by Greeks and Romans. He neglected this inexhaustible territory, and bestowed so little attention upon the realities around him, that though his descriptions are confined to the barest generalities, they are not unfrequently false.

After contending that the triteness of the Pastorals was inevitable, Roscoe puts forth a second defence to save the precocity of their author. "The observation," he says, "of Johnson, that no invention was intended, is, as far as the remark of Warton affects the genius and character of Pope, a decisive answer." This must mean that he copied from choice, and not from necessity, which is contradicted by the confession of Pope himself, who acknowledges that he leant upon his masters because he was unable to go alone.[12] Without his testimony we should have been driven to the same conclusion, since every great poet whose youthful verses have been [Pg 244] preserved, began by imitating his predecessors, and it would be absurd, in defiance of a general law, to assume that Pope was gifted with a juvenile originality which his early works belie. If he had been capable of higher flights, it would have done him no honour to have employed his melodious verse in piecing together stale, vapid, and often paltry ideas.

Johnson, to be sure, was of opinion that Pope in his Pastorals had copied "the poems of antiquity with judicious selection," but this approbation he does not seem to deserve. A large volume might be composed consisting solely of faults which had their counterpart in works of genius. The homage Pope paid to famous names seduced his immature taste into the admiration of many a vicious passage, and he endeavoured to emulate or outdo the frigid and hyperbolical conceits of his prototypes. Throughout the Pastorals, for instance, the phenomena, which are the effects of the seasons, are ascribed to the presence or absence of the nymphs whom his minstrels celebrate. In spring, the skies mourn in showers, the birds are hushed, and the flowers are closed till Delia smiles, when forthwith the skies brighten, the flowers bloom, and the birds sing. In summer, the shepherd boasts that the breezes shall wait upon his heroine, and blow in the places where she walks; that the trees where she sits shall crowd into a shade; that the flowers shall rise up from the soil where she treads; and that vegetation shall flourish where she turns her eyes. In autumn, the birds neglect their song, the leaves fall from the trees, and the flowers droop because Delia has gone away. In winter, the heavens are obscured by clouds, the verdure has withered, the flocks refuse to graze the meadows, the bees neglect their honey, and the streams overflow with tears because Daphne is dead. This last pastoral, which was Pope's favourite, turns mainly on the notion that winter is the consequence of heaven and earth deploring the death of Mrs. Tempest. "Such," says Sandys, "is the sweetness and power of poesy, as it makes that appear which were in prose both false and ridiculous, to resemble the truth." Poetic fancy is separated from extravagance by narrow boundaries; but there must be some affinity to truth, or the understanding is repelled instead of the imagination being captivated. No ideas can have less to recommend them than the hollow rhapsodies of the Pastorals, for they are at once obvious and absurd. "Poetry," said Wordsworth, "is the image of man and nature," and Pope's fantastic superlatives are the image of neither. They never approximate to the exaggeration of fervid passion, but both grief and love are without the semblance of genuine feeling, and only excited the derision of those who looked for a meaning beneath the glitter of words. "Pray tell me the name of him I love," wrote Lady Mary Pierrepont, afterwards the celebrated Lady Mary Wortley, "that I may sigh to the woods and groves hereabouts, and teach it [Pg 245] to the echo. Above all, let me know whether it is most proper to walk in the woods, increasing the winds with my sighs, or to sit by a purling stream, swelling the rivulet with my tears."[13] This happy ridicule of a style of composition, which Pope acknowledged ought "to be full of the greatest simplicity, in nature," was written a few months after the Pastorals were published, and appears to have been suggested by them. The clever girl drew her notions from life, and the perceptions of the young author were sophisticated by books. Bowles believed that Pope was influenced "by the false taste of Cowley at that time prevalent." Cowley's popularity, however, had ceased for some years; the fashion he set had passed away; and Dryden reigned in his stead. "He is sunk in his reputation," said this illustrious successor in 1700, "because he could never forego any conceit which came in his way, but swept, like a drag-net, great and small. For this reason, though he must always be thought a great poet, he is no longer esteemed a good writer, and for ten impressions which his works have had in many successive years, yet at present a hundred books are scarcely purchased once a twelvemonth."[14] The conceits in Pope's Pastorals were derived from other sources. He took little from Cowley, and borrowed none of his peculiarities.

Pope says, in his Discourse, that his Pastorals "have as much variety in respect of the several seasons as Spenser's; that to add to this variety, the several times of the day are observed, the rural employments in each season or time of day, and the rural scenes or places proper to such employments, not without some regard to the several ages of man, and the different passions proper to each age." Johnson has in consequence accorded to the Pastorals the praise of being composed with "close thought;" but the conception was very imperfectly executed, and in part is puerile. Spring and morning, summer and noon, autumn and evening, winter and night, are coupled together, as if each season was specially characterised by a single portion of the day, selected for no other reason than because the order of succession is the same. Between the several ages of man, and the seasons, there is an obvious resemblance, which has furnished similes from time immemorial, but there is no propriety in peopling a spring scene with children, and a winter scene with the old, since all ages figure together in the world, and manifest the feelings which belong to their years, whether it happens to be winter or spring. If the plan had any merit, Pope did not conform to it. The shepherds who sing in spring are grown up. The [Pg 246]

shepherd who sings in summer is a boy. Winter is a funereal lament for a young lady who was cut off in her prime, and has not the most distant reference to old age. The different passions proper to each time of life, which Pope professes to have distinguished, are altogether overlooked. Love is the sole passion which animates the actors in Spring, Summer, and Autumn; and the shepherd in Winter celebrates the departed Daphne in the same lover-like rhapsodies which prevail throughout the three preceding poems. The rural employments proper to each season have been equally forgotten. Sheep-keeping and verse-making are the only occupations, though the poet declares he had changed the scene to suit the changing employment, and represents the first pastoral as sung in a valley, the second on the banks of a stream, the third on a hill, and the fourth in a grove. In place of the variety to which he lays claim, we have a general sameness, and if he had kept faithfully to the outline he sketched, he would, with his mode of composition, have done little towards diversifying the series. He wanted the "intimate acquaintance with those minute and particular appearances of nature which," as Bowles says, "can alone give a lively and original colour to the painting of pastoral poetry." The scenes of his four lays,—the valley, the stream, the hill, and the grove,—are just mentioned, and nothing more. There is no attempt to depict them to the mind, and it does not contribute to variety simply to tell the reader that he is now in a valley, and now upon a hill. The seasons themselves are only marked by the superficial, notorious circumstances which convey no pleasure in the repetition, unless they are accompanied by the nice discriminating touches of an exact observer. To say that showers descend, that birds sing, that crocuses blow, and that trees put forth their leaves in spring, supplies the mind with no fresh ideas, nor assists in giving a new beauty and a more definite form to the ideas we possessed before. The genius of Pope was in another direction; and when we contrast the picturesque details of Thomson's Seasons with the blank common-places of the Pastorals, we perceive how wide is the interval between the elegant, harmonious versifier, and the genuine poet of nature. Sheep are twice mentioned in Pope's Winter, once at ver. 5,

> Now sleeping flocks in their soft fleeces lie;

and again at ver. 37,

> For her the flocks refuse their verdant food.

Widely different in life and vividness are the lines in which Thomson paints the flocks under their true wintry aspect, when the snow is falling, and has buried up the herbage.

> The bleating kind
> Eye the bleak heaven, and next the glist'ning earth,
> With looks of dumb despair.

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In a verse which is not original, but which is more descriptive than usual, Pope speaks of the breezes which, in spring, blow gently among the osiers:

> Let vernal airs through trembling osiers play.

This is flat by the side of the passage in Thomson's Spring, where he describes the effects of the lightest current of air upon the aspen:

> Not a breath
> Is heard to quiver through the closing woods,
> Or rustling turn the many-twinkling leaves
> Of aspen tall.

The epithet "closing" is happily applied to woods just bursting into foliage, and the epithet "many-twinkling" is exquisitely appropriate to the leaves of the aspen, which, when every other tree is still, and the air can hardly be felt to stir, dance up and down incessantly, with an endless play of light and shadow, and rustle as they wave joyously to and fro. Nature scarce affords a prettier sight, or a more soothing sound. These comparisons might be extended through pages, and they are fair examples of Pope's inferiority in a style which was unsuited to his turn of mind, and of which he had never formed adequate ideas.

Roscoe could perceive no impropriety in transferring classical customs and mythology to the plains of Windsor. He conceived that every objection was obviated by the announcement of Pope, "that pastoral is an image of the golden age," which leaves us to infer, that during this happy interlude our British shepherds adopted the manners and religion of Greece. But the golden age was itself an exploded fable, which had lost its hold on the imagination, and even if Englishmen in the eighteenth century could have been beguiled by the dream, they could not at least have been enthralled by the fiction, that Paradise was renewed in England under the auspices of heathenism. The theory of a golden age introduced a second inconsistency into the Pastorals without remedying the first. Bad as is the defence, it cannot be pleaded on Pope's behalf; for discarding in his Winter the notion of some remote and undefined era, he has laid the scene in a particular year of the reign of Queen Anne, and makes Lycidas declare that he will often sacrifice a lamb to the deceased Mrs. Tempest, who died in 1703. There are several other incongruities. "Zodiac" is too hard a term to be remembered correctly by one of Pope's shepherds, a circumstance which is intended to denote the little learning he possessed; and the same ignorant shepherd proceeds to talk as glibly of Hybla, and Cynthus, and Idalia'a groves as if they had been neighbouring parishes.

One characteristic of the Pastorals has been universally allowed—the peculiar softness of the versification, which was considered by Pope to be an essential quality of this species of composition. He told Spence that he had scarce ever bestowed more labour in tuning his lines. [15] He must have had less facility when he was learning the art than when he was thoroughly practised in it; and since authors are apt to estimate the result by the amount of toil it has cost them, the greater pains he expended upon his early efforts may have been the reason that "he esteemed the Pastorals as the most correct in the versification, and musical in the numbers, of all his works." He certainly went forwards in some of his later pieces. Windsor Forest, and the Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard, are finer specimens of melody than the Pastorals. The poetic harmony displayed by Pope in his youth refuted an axiom which Dryden propounded in his lines to the memory of Oldham. [Pg 248]

> O early ripe! to thy abundant store
> What could advancing age have added more?
> It might, what nature never gives the young,
> Have taught the smoothness of thy native tongue.
> But satire needs not this, and wit will shine
> Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line.

Many examples might be quoted in support of Dryden's position, but he had failed to discover, what the later history of poetry has rendered clear, that where there is not a defective ear, the softness or ruggedness of juvenile verses depends upon the model. The imitative faculty of boyhood is never more at home than in catching the trick of metrical harmony. Dryden had used the heroic measure with consummate skill, and no one who came after him could fall into the "harsh cadence" of Oldham's Satires, and Cowley's Davideis, or rest satisfied with the combination of rough and smooth in the productions of Sandys and Denham. The music of the "mighty master" was on every tongue when Pope began "to lisp in numbers." "I learned versification," he said to Spence, "wholly from Dryden's works, who had improved it much beyond any of our former poets; and would, probably, have brought it to its perfection, had not he been unhappily obliged to write so often in haste."[16] What Dryden did for Pope, Pope did for the next generation, and to compose mellifluous verses became the common attainment of ordinary scribblers. Cowper, in his Table Talk, has specially noticed this effect of Pope's writings.

> But he (his musical finesse was such,
> So nice his ear, so delicate his touch)
> Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
> And every warbler has his tune by heart.

In metrical skill Pope was thought by most persons to have surpassed all his predecessors. "He is the most harmonious poet," said Voltaire, "that England ever had. He has reduced the sharp hissings of the English trumpet to the sweet sounds of the flute."[17] Voltaire doubtless found this opinion prevalent in the circle he frequented during his residence in England, from 1720 to 1728; for his own knowledge of our language would not have enabled him to distinguish the nicer shades of melody. The English critics confirm his decision. Johnson declared that the versification of the Pastorals had "no precedent, nor has since had an imitation." Warton pronounced "that it was musical to a degree of which rhyme could hardly be thought capable," and Bowles admitted that Pope "had made the English couplet infinitely more smooth." To the few who "censured his poetry as too uniformly musical, and as glutting the ear with unvaried sweetness," Johnson replied, "I suspect this objection to be the cant of those who judge by principles rather than perception; and who would even themselves have less pleasure in his works, if he had tried to relieve attention by studied discords, or affected to break his lines, and vary his pauses."[18] Bowles sided with the cavillers, as Johnson deemed them, and held that the want of breaks and of variety in the pauses produced a monotony of sound. Lord Kames, on the contrary, asserted that Pope was "eminent for variety of versification," and that the variety of his pauses was the source of the "variety of his melody."[19] I agree with the dissentients who think that his metre is prone to a cloying mannerism, but I believe that the defect is ascribed by Bowles to the wrong cause. Any one who compares the imperial march of the metre in the Vanity of Human Wishes, with the sweet, but less majestic Deserted Village, will perceive that the swell of the heroic measure is capable of wide degrees. A poet judges of the harmony of his verses by trying them on his ear, and the tendency is to set them all to the same tune. This was Pope's error. He has in general, though not always, intermixed the pauses, but he has not varied sufficiently the swell and movement of his lines. Dryden, "in whose admirable ear," as Gray remarks, "the music of our old versification still sounded,"[20] rings the changes with wonderful ease and spirit, and is by turns soft and stately, lively and solemn, familiar and sonorous, while he preserves through all his transitions a freedom, a flow, and an elasticity which never flag. His negligent lines, which are often imputed to haste, have been thought by good writers to be intended to avoid the surfeit of an equable strain. "Sometimes," says Dr. Trapp, "it is not only allowable, but beautiful, to run into harsh and unequal numbers. Mr. Dryden himself does it; and we may be sure he knew when he did it as well as we could tell him. In a work intended for pleasure, variety justifies the breach of almost any rule, provided it be done but rarely."[21] There is extreme exaggeration in the language of Bowles when he states that Pope "gave the first idea of mellifluence." Lines as melodious may be counted in Dryden by the hundred. Pope only maintained a more continuous softness, or, as Johnson puts it, "he discovered, by perusing the works of Dryden, the most perfect fabric of English verse, and habituated himself to that only which he found the best."[22] [Pg 249] [Pg 250]

This constantly recurring note, however attractive in itself, must always appear a retrograde system, to those who appreciate the richer music of more diversified modulations. The sameness of Pope's metre was the reason that "every warbler had his tune by heart," and imitated it so readily. There was a complexity in the incessant rise and fall of Dryden's lines which mechanical verse-makers could only copy imperfectly. The uniformity of Pope gave them little trouble. The repetition soon fixed the brief lesson in their minds, and the petty warblers almost rivalled their original in sound, though they were far enough from approaching the beauty of his language, the terseness of his style, the felicity of his ideas, and the weight of his sense.

As the Pastorals of Philips opened the sixth volume of Tonson's Miscellany, De Quiucey conjectures that Pope's Pastorals may have been placed at the end of the volume by his own desire. Both sets of verses, by this arrangement, were more likely to attract attention, and invite comparison. Pope appears not to have felt any jealousy at the outset. Speaking of Philips's Pastorals in a letter to Cromwell, on October 28, 1710, a year and a half after the Miscellany was published, he said "he agreed with the Tatler that we had no better eclogues in our language." He particularly commended the lines which describe the musician playing on the harp, and added that "nothing could be objected to them, except that they were too lofty for pastoral." He changed his tone after the essays on pastoral poetry had appeared in the Guardian. These papers commenced with No. 22, and in No. 23, for April 7, 1713, some passages are quoted from Philips to illustrate the qualities appropriate to the pastoral style. In No. 30 there are more quotations from Philips to the same purpose, and he and Spenser are singled out as the sole cultivators of [Pg 251] this species of composition, who "have copied and improved the beauties of the ancients." The eulogium reached its climax in No. 32, where it is asserted that there have been only four true masters of the art in above two thousand years,—"Theocritus, who left his dominions to Virgil; Virgil, who left his to his son Spenser; and Spenser, who was succeeded by his eldest born Philips." It is not known who contributed the essays, but it has been conjectured, without any evidence, that they proceeded from Tickell. There cannot be a question that the author had a friendship for Philips, or he would not have ranked him with Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenser; and it is equally certain that he was not an admirer of the Pastorals of Pope, which are passed over in silence, and which violate the canons laid down by the critic. "I must observe," he says, "that our countrymen have so good an opinion of the ancients, and think so modestly of themselves, that the generality of pastoral writers have either stolen all from the Greeks and Romans, or so servilely imitated their manners and customs as makes them very ridiculous."[23] The method of Philips is adduced in advantageous contrast. He is commended for changing the details with the scene, and introducing English ideas into English eclogues. A few months earlier similar praise had been bestowed upon him by Addison, in the Spectator for October 30, 1712. "When we are at school," said Addison in his essay, "it is necessary for us to be acquainted with the system of pagan theology, and we may be allowed to enliven a theme or point an epigram with a heathen god; but no thought is beautiful which is not just, and no thought can be just which is not founded in truth, or at least in that which passes for such. If any are of opinion that there is a necessity of admitting these classical legends into our serious compositions, in order to give them a more poetical turn, I would recommend to their consideration the Pastorals of Mr. Philips. One would have thought it impossible for this kind of poetry to have subsisted without fauns and satyrs, wood-nymphs and water-nymphs, with all the tribe of rural deities. But we see he has given a new life, and a more natural beauty, to this way of writing, by substituting in the place of these antiquated fables the superstitious mythology which prevails among the shepherds of our own country." Addison had previously commenced the reformation by excluding pagan machinery from his Campaign. It needed but a small amount of taste to share his opinions, and the writer in the Guardian can hardly be charged with hostility to Pope for not commending Pastorals which, apart from their melodious language, were little better than a medley of unnatural compliments, and unmeaning mythology. Contemporary criticism is more often corrupted by the kindness of [Pg 252] friendship than by the spite of enmity, but the effect is sometimes the same, and the undue exaltation of Philips increased the comparative contempt which was cast upon Pope. He had reason to be annoyed, and it was not much compensation that the prettiest lines of his January and May were quoted in one of the papers on Pastoral, to show that fairies could be rendered attractive in verse.

The scheme Pope devised for redressing the wrong, was to send a paper to the Guardian in which he ridiculed the Pastorals of his rival and applauded his own. "With an unexampled and unequalled artifice of irony," says Dr. Johnson, "though he himself has always the advantage, he gives the preference to Philips." In the opening sentence of the essay Pope is described as "a gentleman whose character it is, that he takes the greatest care of his works before they are published, and the least concern for them afterwards."[24] He followed his invariable habit of boasting his pre-eminence in the very virtue he was defying, and attached this vaunt to a criticism in which his morbid "concern" for his works had induced him to become his own reviewer and eulogist. He was liberal in his self-laudation, and assured the public that though his Pastorals might not fulfil the strict definition laid down in the Guardian, they were, like Virgil's, "something better." To prove the inferiority of Philips he selected three of his worst passages, and contrasted them with three of his own. He picked out a dozen foolish lines from his rival, and alleged that they were specimens of his ordinary manner. He subjoined some ludicrous imitations of his style, which are only not an outrageous caricature because they have no resemblance at all to the original. The faults of Philips did not require to be exaggerated. The absurdities of his satirist are different in kind, but they are not less in degree. Some defects they had in common, and as self-love is blind, Pope did not perceive that most of his comments recoiled upon himself. He objected that Philips had introduced wolves into England, where they formerly existed, and

the critic forgot that the imaginary golden age, which he maintained in his Discourse was the only era of Pastoral, must be assigned to a period long anterior to their extirpation. Or if the piping shepherds, who composed and chanted poems, were to be considered as existing personages, credibility was not more violated in supposing that Windsor Forest was still haunted by wolves than by heathen gods and goddesses,—in imagining the lambs to be preyed upon by a wild beast, than in picturing Christian bards employed in sacrificing them to Mrs. Tempest with an exact observance of pagan rites. He took especial credit for having kept to the circumstances proper to a particular season of the year, and a certain time of the day, and exposed the [Pg 253] ignorance of Philips, who, says he, "by a poetical creation, hath raised up finer beds of flowers than the most industrious gardener; his roses, lilies, and daffodils blow in the same season." Pope might have remembered that in his own Pastorals he had made roses, violets, and crocuses bloom together, which drew from George Steevens the remark, that he has rarely mentioned flowers without some mistake of the kind. The nicest observers of nature are not exempt from these oversights. The swine in Ivanhoe feed on acorns under the trees in the middle of summer, and though Walter Scott, at the end of the Monastery, alluded playfully to the anachronism, he never cared to correct the error. A more important charge, in which Pope is most of all open to retaliation, was that Philip's Pastorals "gave manifest proof of his knowledge of books." While it was admitted that "his competitor had imitated some single thoughts of the ancients," Philips was held up as a wholesale depredator. He does, indeed, abound in the stock ideas which had served a hundred versifiers. He is a warbler who whistles an old tune, but he is not without a few notes which have a semblance of originality, and these are wanting in his accuser. Inferior to the Pastorals of Pope in polish and versification, the Pastorals of Philips are, on the whole, superior in their substance. The trial of skill between the musician and the nightingale, which forms the subject of the fifth Pastoral, is narrated with singular sweetness, and may still be read with pleasure. In true poetic feeling it is much beyond anything in the Pastorals of his scoffing critic. Philips owed his advantage to his maturer years, and not to the brilliancy of his talents; he was thirty-four when Tonson's Miscellany appeared, and Pope was but twenty-one. The powers of Philips remained stationary, and he ranks low among the minor poets. Pope quickly ripened into genius, and reigned without a competitor. The exaggerated panegyrics of the Guardian could not confer a reputation upon Philips he did not deserve, and Pope derived none of his celebrity from the gross expedient of exalting himself, and decrying his antagonist. There is nothing which is less affected by unjust praise and unjust detraction than an author's works. They are there to speak for themselves, and no amount of petty artifices can long raise them higher or sink them lower than they merit.

Pope was a contributor to the Guardian, and on cordial terms with the editor, but he could not ask to have a paper inserted in which he had drawn a comparison between his own Pastorals and those of his rival, and awarded himself the palm. He therefore sent the criticism anonymously, and Steele, as we are told by Warburton, not discovering that the praise of Philips and the censure of Pope were both ironical, showed the manuscript to the latter, and assured him that he would "never publish any paper where one of the club was complimented at the expense of [Pg 254] another." His ingenuous ally affected magnanimity, and prevailed upon Steele to print the essay. The irony which could not be detected by the wits at Button's might well escape less cultivated minds. Ayre, in his Memoirs of Pope, in 1745, and Dilworth, in 1760, both believed that the criticism was to be interpreted literally, that Steele was the author of it, and that it was dictated by friendship for Philips. Small as was the ability of these biographers, they may be supposed to have shared the common opinion. This continued to be the accepted doctrine in the next generation; and the celebrated circle in which Hannah More lived were unanimous in holding that the essay was not satirical. "The whole criticism," she wrote August 4, 1783, "appears to me a burlesque, but I have some reason to think I am in the wrong, as I have all the world against me. That a writer of so pure a taste could be in earnest when he talks of the elegance of Diggon Davy, and exalts all that trash of Philips's, whose simplicity is silliness, I cannot bring myself to believe." She found it still more difficult to believe that the author could be serious in asserting that Hobbinol and Lobbin are names agreeable to the delicacy of an English ear.[25] Hannah More judged of Philips by the wretched extracts in the Guardian. Her accomplished friends could hardly have admired them; and it must have been for a different reason that the purpose of the essay was misunderstood. Warton says that the misapprehension arose from "the skill with which the irony was conducted." It would be more natural to infer that the execution was defective when the vast majority of literary men mistook the design. The satire, in fact, is imperfectly sustained, and passages, which the author intended for irony, appeared to the reader to be plain common sense. "Mr. Pope," he says of himself, "hath fallen into the same error with Virgil. His names are borrowed from Theocritus and Virgil, which are improper to the scenes of his Pastorals. He introduces Daphnis, Alexis, and Thyrsis on British plains, as Virgil had done before him on the Mantuan." Habit had reconciled Pope to the affectation of calling English shepherds Daphnis and Thyrsis, but "the names," as De Quincey says, "are rank with childishness," and the public, who felt the practice to be absurd, concluded that the censure was real. "It may," said Pope, "be observed, as a farther beauty of this pastoral, that the words nymph, dryad, naiad, faun, Cupid, or satyr, are not once mentioned through the whole," which was a sneer at Addison's commendation of Philips for rejecting those dreary nonentities; but the public, who had been nauseated with them, could not detect a covert sarcasm in the repetition of the praise by the writer in the Guardian. The circumstance which seemed to Warton to render the irony transparent was the remark, that "Philips had with great judgment described wolves in England," [Pg 255] but the ridicule was based upon ignorance, and must have been lost upon every one who was aware that wolves abounded in the antique period to which the pastorals referred. Bowles, who knew that the paper was ironical, yet imagined that Pope was serious in the opening portion,

where it is asserted that Virgil has not above a couple of "true pastorals," and that Theocritus has scarcely more. This part, however, of the essay was in the same sarcastic vein with the rest. The previous critic in the Guardian had laid down the rule that a pastoral should reflect "the golden age of innocence," and Pope, to deprive Philips of the benefit of the definition, endeavoured to show that Theocritus and Virgil had hardly ever conformed to it. He did not mean seriously to admit that his competitor was a more genuine pastoral poet than Virgil and Theocritus. His object was to throw ridicule on the definition itself, albeit he adopted it in his Discourse on Pastoral Poetry when he was no longer engaged in disparaging Philips.

Nothing can be clearer than that Pope was instigated to write the essay in the Guardian by his jealousy of the praise which had been bestowed upon his rival. The course he took was discreditable, and Warburton, without attempting a direct apology, pretends that the incident which influenced the poet was the misrepresentations made of him to Addison by Philips. Ruffhead adds that the calumny consisted in the assertion that Pope was "engaged in the intrigues of the tory ministry." This would be a good reason for his exposing the mis-statement, but would be a poor excuse for his writing an anonymous attack upon Philips's Pastorals, and a panegyric upon his own. The defence, which would be inadequate if it was true, is indubitably incorrect. The account of Warburton did not appear till Philips was dead. Pope, while Philips was living, published an account, in the shape of a letter to Caryll, the date and contents of which prove that Philips did not bring his charge against Pope till a full year after the paper had been printed in the Guardian.[26] The poet adds that when they meet he will inform Caryll "of the secret grounds of Philips's malignity," and Warburton himself subjoins in a note "These grounds were Mr. Pope's writing the ironical comparison between his own and Philips's Pastorals." The strong presumption from the nature of the case that Pope was actuated by literary envy is thus confirmed. The criticism in the Guardian was not provoked by the malignity of Philips, but the bitterness of Philips was the consequence of the criticism. In 1790, Mr. J. C. Walker, the Italian scholar, sent to the Gentleman's Magazine an alleged remark of Philips to the same effect. "When the comparison," says Mr. Walker, "between the Pastorals of Pope and Philips appeared, Philips [Pg 256] was secretary to Primate Boulter, and then in Ireland. Dining one day with the officers of the Prerogative Court, the comparison became the subject of conversation, and Philips said he knew it was written by Pope, adding, 'I wonder why the little crooked bastard should attack me, who never offended him either in word or deed?' This I had from a gentleman who was present."[27] If the conversation ever occurred, the gentleman was mistaken in supposing that the criticism was recent, for the paper in the Guardian came out in 1713, and it was not till more than ten years afterwards that Philips went with Archbishop Boulter to Ireland. The story is unnecessary to prove that Pope was the aggressor, which is sufficiently evident from independent testimony. Unhappily for himself, he began at the outset of his career to stir up those enmities which were the torment of his existence. By his attack upon Dennis, in the Essay on Criticism, he invited the scurrility of that rabid pamphleteer, and by what Bowles calls his "unmanly hostility" to Philips he was reduced to the shame of being scared away from Button's by the no less unmanly retaliation of his victim, who, at some period of the quarrel, hung up a birch, and declared that he would use it on "his rival Arcadian," if he showed his face in the coffee-room.

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] There was only one paper.

[2] Warburton implies that Addison's remark to Pope was made immediately after the essay appeared in the Guardian, in which case Pope could have lost no time in avowing that he was the author of the criticism when once it was in print, for Addison had no suspicion of him from internal evidence. "He did not," says Spence, "discover Mr. Pope's style in the letter on Pastorals, which he published in the Guardian; but then that was a disguised style."

[3] The effect of reality and truth became conspicuous, even when the intention was to show them grovelling and degraded. Gay's pastorals became popular, and were read with delight as just representations of rural manners and occupations, by those who had no interest in the rivalry of the poets, nor knowledge of the critical dispute.—Johnson.

[4] Warton was master of Winchester school.

[5] But if Pope had no invention, and had exhibited in his Pastorals no new or striking images, how could his example have led the way to others, "in point of genius and imagination," whatever it might have done in point of correctness?—Roscoe.

[6] They are not coupled but contra-distinguished, and surely the poet might draw a contrast from Greece without being chargeable with a faulty mixture of British and Grecian ideas.—Ruffhead.

[7] That such causes of complaint will more frequently occur in the Grecian climate is unquestionable; but is it necessary to make a complaint of this kind consistent that every day should be a dog-day? The British shepherd might very consistently describe what he often felt, and we have days in England which might make even a Grecian faint. —Ruffhead.

[8] "New sentiments and new images," says Johnson, in his Life of Pope, "others may produce; but to attempt any further improvement of versification will be dangerous. Art and diligence have done their best, and what shall be added will be the effort of tedious toil and needless curiosity."

[9] Works of Lord Lansdowne, vol. ii. p. 113.

[10] De Quincey's Works, vol. xv. p. 114.

[11] Singer's Spence, p. 162.

[12] Spence, p. 211.

[13] Works of Lady Mary Wortley, ed. Thomas, vol. i. p. 166.

[14] Dryden, Preface to Fables, Ancient and Modern.

[15] Spence, p. 236.

[16] Spence, p. 212.

[17] Œuvres, ed. Beuchot, tom. xxxvii. p. 258.

[18] Lives of the Poets, ed. Cunningham, vol. iii. p. 136. The principle which Johnson derided in his Life of Pope he had upheld in No. 86 of the Rambler: "We are soon wearied with the perpetual recurrence of the same cadence. Necessity has therefore enforced the mixed measure, in which some variation of the accents is allowed. This, though it always injures the harmony of the line considered by itself, yet compensates the loss by relieving us from the continual tyranny of the same sound, and makes us more sensible of the harmony of the pure measure."

[19] Elements of Criticism, 6th ed. vol. ii. p. 143, 155.

[20] Gray's Works, ed. Mitford, vol. v. p. 303.

[21] Trapp's Virgil, vol. i. p. lxxix.

[22] Lives of the Poets, vol. iii. p. 136.

[23] Guardian, No. 30, April 15, 1713.

[24] Guardian, No. 40, April 27, 1713.

[25] Life of Hannah More, vol. i. p. 301.

[26] Pope to Caryll, June 8, 1714.

[27] Nichols, Illustrations of Lit. Hist. vol. vii. 713.

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# A DISCOURSE

[Pg 257]

**ON**

# PASTORAL POETRY.[1]

There are not, I believe, a greater number of any sort of verses than of those which are called pastorals; nor a smaller, than of those which are truly so. It therefore seems necessary to give some account of this kind of poem; and it is my design to comprise in this short paper the substance of those numerous dissertations the critics have made on the subject, without omitting any of their rules in my own favour. You will also find some points reconciled, about which they seem to differ, and a few remarks, which, I think, have escaped their observation.

The original of poetry is ascribed to that age which succeeded the creation of the world: and as the keeping of flocks seems to have been the first employment of mankind, the most ancient sort of poetry was probably pastoral.[2] It is natural to imagine, that the leisure of those ancient shepherds admitting and inviting some diversion, none was so proper to that solitary and [Pg 258] sedentary life as singing; and that in their songs they took occasion to celebrate their own felicity. From hence a poem was invented, and afterwards improved to a perfect image of that happy time; which, by giving us an esteem for the virtues of a former age, might recommend them to the present. And since the life of shepherds was attended with more tranquillity than any other rural employment, the poets chose to introduce their persons, from whom it received the name of pastoral.

A pastoral is an imitation of the action of a shepherd, or one considered under that character. The form of this imitation is dramatic, or narrative, or mixed of both[3]; the fable simple; the manners not too polite nor too rustic: the thoughts are plain, yet admit a little quickness and passion, but that short and flowing: the expression humble, yet as pure as the language will afford; neat, but not florid; easy, and yet lively. In short, the fable, manners, thoughts, and expressions are full of the greatest simplicity in nature.

The complete character of this poem consists in simplicity[4], brevity, and delicacy; the two first of which render an eclogue natural, and the last delightful.

If we would copy nature, it may be useful to take this idea along with us, that pastoral is an image of what they call the golden age. So that we are not to describe our shepherds as shepherds at this day really are, but as they may be conceived then to have been; when the best

of men followed the employment.[5] To carry this resemblance yet further, it would not be amiss to give these shepherds some skill in astronomy, as far as it may be useful to that sort of life. And an air of piety to the gods should shine through the poem, which so visibly appears in all the works of antiquity; and it ought to preserve some relish of the old way of writing; the connection should be loose, the narrations and descriptions short,[6] and the periods concise. Yet it is not sufficient, that the sentences only be brief, the whole eclogue should be so too. For we cannot suppose poetry in those days to have been the business of men, but their recreation at vacant hours.[7] [Pg 259]

But with respect to the present age, nothing more conduces to make these composures natural, than when some knowledge in rural affairs is discovered.[8] This may be made to appear rather done by chance than on design, and sometimes is best shown by inference; lest by too much study to seem natural, we destroy that easy simplicity from whence arises the delight. For what is inviting in this sort of poetry, as Fontenelle observes, proceeds not so much from the idea of that business, as of the tranquillity of a country life. [Pg 260]

We must therefore use some illusion to render a pastoral delightful; and this consists in exposing the best side only of a shepherd's life, and in concealing its miseries.[9] Nor is it enough to introduce shepherds discoursing together in a natural way: but a regard must be had to the subject, that it contain some particular beauty in itself, and that it be different in every eclogue. Besides, in each of them a designed scene or prospect is to be presented to our view, which should likewise have its variety.[10] This variety is obtained in a great degree by frequent comparisons, drawn from the most agreeable objects of the country; by interrogations to things inanimate; by beautiful digressions, but those short; sometimes by insisting a little on circumstances; and lastly, by elegant turns on the words, which render the numbers extremely sweet and pleasing. As for the numbers themselves, though they are properly of the heroic measure, they should be the smoothest, the most easy and flowing imaginable.

It is by rules like these that we ought to judge of pastoral. And since the instructions given for any art are to be delivered as that art is in perfection, they must of necessity be derived from those in whom it is acknowledged so to be. It is therefore from the practice of Theocritus and Virgil (the only undisputed authors of pastoral) that the critics have drawn the foregoing notions concerning it.

Theocritus excels all others in nature and simplicity. The subjects of his Idyllia are purely pastoral; but he is not so exact in his persons, having introduced reapers and fishermen[11] as well as shepherds.[12] He is apt to be too long in his descriptions, of which that of the cup in the first pastoral is a remarkable instance.[13] In the manners he seems a little defective, for his swains are sometimes abusive and immodest, and perhaps too much inclining to rusticity; for instance, in his fourth and fifth Idyllia. But it is enough that all others learnt their excellencies from him, and that his dialect alone has a secret charm in it, which no other could ever attain. [Pg 261] [Pg 262]

Virgil, who copies Theocritus, refines upon his original;[14] and in all points, where judgment is principally concerned, he is much superior to his master. Though some of his subjects are not pastoral in themselves, but only seem to be such, they have a wonderful variety in them,[15] which the Greek was a stranger to.[16] He exceeds him in regularity and brevity, and falls short of him in nothing but simplicity and propriety of style; the first of which perhaps was the fault of his age, and the last of his language.

Among the moderns, their success has been greatest who have most endeavoured to make these ancients their pattern. The most considerable genius appears in the famous Tasso, and our Spenser. Tasso in his Aminta has far excelled all the pastoral writers, as in his Gierusalemme he has outdone the epic poets of his country. But as this piece seems to have been the original of a new sort of poem, the pastoral comedy, in Italy, it cannot so well be considered as a copy of the ancients.[17] Spenser's Calendar, in Mr. Dryden's opinion, is the most complete work of this kind which any nation has produced ever since the time of Virgil.[18] Not but that he may be thought imperfect in some few points. His Eclogues are somewhat too long, if we compare them with the ancients.[19] He is sometimes too allegorical, and treats of matters of religion in a pastoral style, as the Mantuan had done before him. He has employed the lyric measure, which is contrary to the practice of the old poets. His stanza is not still the same, nor always well chosen. This last may be the reason his expression is sometimes not concise enough: for the tetrastic has obliged him to extend his sense to the length of four lines, which would have been more closely confined in the couplet. [Pg 263]

In the manners, thoughts, and characters, he comes near to Theocritus himself; though, notwithstanding all the care he has taken, he is certainly inferior in his dialect: for the Doric had its beauty and propriety in the time of Theocritus; it was used in part of Greece, and frequent in the mouths of many of the greatest persons, whereas the old English and country phrases of Spenser were either entirely obsolete, or spoken only by people of the lowest condition.[20] As there is a difference betwixt simplicity and rusticity, so the expression of simple thoughts should be plain, but not clownish. The addition he has made of a calendar to his Eclogues, is very beautiful; since by this, besides the general moral of innocence and simplicity, which is common to other authors of pastoral, he has one peculiar to himself; he compares human life to the several seasons, and at once exposes to his readers a view of the great and little worlds, in their

various changes and aspects.[21] Yet the scrupulous division of his pastorals into months, has obliged him either to repeat the same description, in other words, for three months together; or, when it was exhausted before, entirely to omit it: whence it comes to pass that some of his Eclogues (as the sixth, eighth, and tenth, for example) have nothing but their titles to distinguish them. The reason is evident, because the year has not that variety in it to furnish every month with a particular description, as it may every season.

Of the following Eclogues I shall only say, that these four comprehend all the subjects which the critics upon Theocritus and Virgil will allow to be fit for pastoral: that they have as much variety of description, in respect of the several seasons, as Spenser's: that in order to add to this variety, the several times of the day are observed, the rural employments in each season or time of day, and the rural scenes or places proper to such employments; not without some regard to the several ages of man, and the different passions proper to each age. But after all, if they have any merit, it is to be attributed to some good old authors, whose works as I had leisure to study, so I hope I have not wanted care to imitate.

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] Written at sixteen years of age.—Pope.

This sensible and judicious discourse written at so early an age is a more extraordinary production than the Pastorals that follow it. Our author has chiefly drawn his observations from Rapin, Fontenelle, and the preface to Dryden's Virgil. A translation of Rapin's Discourse had been some years before prefixed to Creech's translation of Theocritus, and is no extraordinary piece of criticism. And though Hume highly praises the Discourse of Fontenelle, yet Dr. Hurd thinks it only rather more tolerable than his Pastorals.—Warton.

Hume had said that there could not be a finer piece of criticism than Fontenelle's Dissertation on Pastorals, but that the Pastorals themselves displayed false taste, and did not exemplify the rules laid down in the criticism.

[2] Fontenelle's Discourse of Pastorals.—Pope.

[3] Heinsius in Theocr.—Pope.

[4] Rapin de Carm. Past., P. 2.—Pope.

[5] I cannot easily discover why it is thought necessary to refer descriptions of a rural state to the golden age, nor can I perceive that any writer has consistently preserved the Arcadian manners and sentiments. The only reason that I have read on which this rule has been founded is that, according to the customs of modern life, it is improbable that shepherds should be capable of harmonious numbers, or delicate sentiments; and therefore, the reader must exalt his ideas of the pastoral character by carrying his thoughts back to the age in which the care of herds and flocks was the employment of the wisest and greatest men. These reasoners seem to have been led into their hypothesis by considering pastoral, not in general, as a representation of rural nature, and consequently as exhibiting the ideas and sentiments of those, whoever they are, to whom the country affords pleasure or employment, but simply as a dialogue or narrative of men actually tending sheep, and busied in the lowest and most laborious offices; from whence they very readily concluded, since characters must necessarily be preserved, that either the sentiments must sink to the level of the speakers, or the speakers must be raised to the height of the sentiments. In consequence of these original errors, a thousand precepts have been given, which have only contributed to perplex and confound.—Johnson.

[6] Rapin, Reflex. sur l'Art. Poet. d'Arist., P. ii. Refl. xxvii.—Pope.

[7] Pope took this remark from Dr. Knightly Chetwood's Preface to the Pastorals in Dryden's Virgil: "Not only the sentences should be short and smart, but the whole piece should be so too, for poetry and pastime was not the business of men's lives in those days, but only their seasonable recreation after necessary hours." The rule is purely fanciful. By continuing the same subject from week to week, a shepherd could as easily find leisure to compose a single piece of a thousand lines as ten pieces of a hundred lines each. Most of the laws of pastoral poetry which Pope has collected are equally unfounded.

[8] Pref. to Virg. Past. in Dryd. Virg.—Pope.

[9] Fontenelle's Disc. of Pastorals.—Pope.

[10] See the forementioned Preface.—Pope.

[11] ΘΕΡΙΣΤΑΙ, Idyl. x. and ΑΛΙΕΙΣ, Idyl. xxi.—Pope.

Pope's definition of Pastoral is too confined. In fact, his Pastoral Discourse seems made to fit *his* Pastorals. For the same reason he would not class as a true Pastoral the most interesting of all Virgil's Eclogues,—I mean the first, which is founded on fact, which has the most tender and touching strokes of nature, and the plot of which is entirely pastoral, being the complaint of a shepherd obliged to leave the fields of his infancy, and yield the possession to soldiers and strangers. Pope says, because it relates to soldiers, it is not pastoral; but how little of a military cast is seen in it. The soldier is mentioned, but only as far as was absolutely necessary, and always in connection with the rural imagery from whence the most exquisite touches are derived. Pope's pastoral ideas, with the exception of the Messiah, seem to have been taken from the least interesting and poetic scenes of the ancient eclogue,—the Wager, the Contest, the Riddle, the alternate praises

of Daphne or Delia, the common-place complaint of the lover, &c. The more interesting and picturesque subjects were excluded, as not being properly pastoral according to his definition.—Bowles.

In saying that Pope would not allow Virgil's first eclogue to be "a true pastoral," Bowles refers to the paper in the Guardian, where the design was to laugh at the strict definition which would exclude a poem from the pastoral class on such frivolous grounds. In the same jesting tone, Pope asserts that the third eclogue must be set aside, because it introduces "calumny and railing, which are not proper to a state of concord," and the eighth, because it has a shepherd "whom an inviting precipice tempts to self-destruction."

[12] The tenth and twenty-first Idyll here alluded to contain some of the most exquisite strokes of nature and true poetry anywhere to be met with, as does the beautiful description of the carving on the cup, which, indeed is not a cup, but a very large pastoral vessel or cauldron.—Warton.

[13] In what does the great father of the pastoral excel all others? In "simplicity, and nature." I admit with Pope, but more particularly in one circumstance, which seems to have escaped general attention, and that circumstance is the picturesque. Pope says he is too long in his descriptions, particularly of the cup. Was not Pope, a professed admirer of painting, aware that the description of that cup contains touches of the most delightful and highly-finished landscape? The old fisherman, and the broken rock in one scene; in another, the beautiful contrast of the little boy weaving his rush-work, and so intent on it, that he forgets the vineyard he was set to guard. We see him in the foreground of the piece. Then there is his scrip, and the fox eyeing it askance; the ripe and purple vineyard, and the other fox treading down the grapes whilst he continues at his work. Add to these circumstances the wild and beautiful Sicilian scenery, and where can there be found more perfect landscapes in the works, which these pictures peculiarly resemble, of Vernet or Gainsborough? Considered in this view, how rich, wild, and various are the landscapes of the old Sicilian, and we cannot but wonder that so many striking and original traits should be passed over by a "youthful bard," who professed to select from, and to copy the ancients.—Bowles.

[14] He refines indeed so much, as to make him, on this very account, much inferior to the beautiful simplicity of his original.—Warton.

[15] It is difficult to conceive where is the "wonderful variety" in Virgil's Eclogues which "the Greek was a stranger to." Many of the more poetical parts of Virgil are copied literally from Theocritus; but are weakened by being made more general, and often lose much of their picturesque and poetical effect from that circumstance.—Bowles.

[16] Rapin. Refl. on Arist., P. ii. Refl. xxvii. Pref. to the Ecl. in Dryden's Virgil.—Pope.

[17] The Aminta of Tasso is here erroneously mentioned by Pope as the very first pastoral comedy that appeared in Italy. But it is certain that Il Sacrificio of Agostino Beccari was the first, who boasts of it in his prologue, and who died very old in 1590.—Warton.

"There were," says Roscoe, "several writers of pastoral in Italy prior to those mentioned either by Pope or Warton." Roscoe mistook the question, which was, who was the first author of the pastoral *drama*? None of the prior pastoral writers he enumerates produced a drama, and Warton was right in giving the precedency to Beccari.

[18] Dedication to Virg. Ecl.—Pope.

[19] In the manuscript Pope had added, "Some of them contain two hundred lines, and others considerably exceed that number."

[20] Johnson remarks that while the notion that rustic characters ought to use rustic phraseology, led to the adoption in pastorals "of a mangled dialect which no human being ever could have spoken," the authors had the inconsistency to invest their personages with a refinement of thought which was incompatible with coarse and vulgar diction. "Spenser," he continues, "begins one of his pastorals with studied barbarity:

> Diggon Davie, I bid her good day;
> Or Diggon her is, or I missay.
>
> *Dig.* Her wus her while it was day-light,
> But now her is a most wretched wight.

What will the reader imagine to be the subject on which speakers like these exercise their eloquence? Will he not be somewhat disappointed when he finds them met together to condemn the corruptions of the church of Rome? Surely at the same time that a shepherd learns theology, he may gain some acquaintance with his native language."

[21] "It was from hence," the poet went on to say in his manuscript, "I took my first design of the following eclogues. For, looking upon Spenser as the father of English pastoral, I thought myself unworthy to be esteemed even the meanest of his sons, unless I bore some resemblance of him. But, as it happens with degenerate offspring, not only to recede from the virtues, but to dwindle from the bulk of their ancestor; so I have copied Spenser in miniature, and reduced his twelve months into four seasons." When Pope published his Pastorals he stated that three of them were imitated from Virgil and Theocritus, which occasioned his cancelling this passage where he speaks as if he had taken Spenser alone for his model.

# SPRING:

## THE FIRST PASTORAL,

## OR

## DAMON.

## TO SIR WILLIAM TRUMBULL.[1]

First in these fields I try the sylvan strains,[2]
Nor blush to sport on Windsor's blissful plains:[3]
Fair Thames, flow gently from thy sacred spring,[4] [Pg 266]
While on thy banks Sicilian[5] muses sing;
Let vernal airs through trembling osiers play,[6]
And Albion's cliffs resound the rural lay.[7]
You, that too wise for pride, too good for pow'r,[8]
Enjoy the glory to be great no more,
And carrying with you all the world can boast,[9]
To all the world illustriously are lost! [Pg 267]
O let my muse her slender reed inspire,
Till in your native shades[10] you tune the lyre:
So when the nightingale to rest removes,
The thrush may chant to the forsaken groves,[11]
But, charmed to silence, listens while she sings,
And all th' aërial audience clap their wings.[12]
Soon as the flocks shook off the nightly dews,[13]
Two swains, whom love kept wakeful, and the muse, [Pg 268]
Poured o'er the whit'ning[14] vale their fleecy care,
Fresh as the morn, and as the season fair:[15]
The dawn now blushing on the mountain's side,
Thus Daphnis spoke, and Strephon thus replied.[16]

DAPHNIS.

Hear how the birds, on ev'ry bloomy spray,[17]
With joyous music wake the dawning day![18]
Why sit we mute, when early linnets sing,
When warbling Philomel salutes the spring?[19]
Why sit we sad, when Phosphor[20] shines so clear,
And lavish nature paints the purple[21] year?[22]

STREPHON.

Sing then, and Damon shall attend the strain,
While yon slow oxen turn the furrowed plain. [Pg 269]
Here the bright crocus and blue vi'let glow,[23]
Here western winds on breathing[24] roses blow.[25]
I'll stake yon lamb that near the fountain plays,
And from the brink his dancing shade surveys.[26]

DAPHNIS.

And I this bowl, where wanton ivy twines,[27]
And swelling clusters bend the curling vines:[28]
Four figures rising from the work appear,[29]
The various seasons of the rolling year;[30]
And what is that, which binds the radiant sky, [Pg 270]
Where twelve fair signs in beauteous order lie?[31]

DAMON.

Then sing by turns, by turns the muses sing;[32]
Now hawthorns blossom, now the daisies spring,
Now leaves the trees, and flow'rs adorn the ground;
Begin, the vales shall ev'ry note rebound.[33]

STREPHON.

Inspire me, Phœbus, in my Delia's praise,[34]
With Waller's strains, or Granville's moving lays![35]
A milk-white bull shall at your altars stand,
That threats a fight, and spurns the rising sand.[36]

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DAPHNIS.

O Love! for Sylvia let me gain the prize,[37]
And make my tongue victorious as her eyes:
No lambs or sheep for victims I'll impart,
Thy victim, Love, shall be the shepherd's heart.

STREPHON.

Me gentle Delia beckons from the plain,
Then hid in shades, eludes her eager swain;[38]
But feigns a laugh to see me search around,
And by that laugh the willing fair is found.[39]

DAPHNIS.

The sprightly Sylvia trips along the green,
She runs, but hopes she does not run unseen,[40]
While a kind glance at her pursuer flies,[41]
How much at variance are her feet and eyes![42]

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STREPHON.[43]

O'er golden sand let rich Pactolus flow,[44]
And trees weep amber on the banks of Po;[45]
Bright Thames's shores the brightest beauties yield,
Feed here, my lambs, I'll seek no distant field.

DAPHNIS.

Celestial Venus haunts Idalia's groves;
Diana Cynthus, Ceres Hybla loves;
If Windsor-shades delight the matchless maid,
Cynthus and Hybla yield to Windsor-shade.[46]

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STREPHON.

All nature mourns, the skies relent in show'rs,[47]
Hushed are the birds, and closed the drooping flow'rs;
If Delia smile, the flow'rs begin to spring,
The skies to brighten, and the birds to sing.[48]

DAPHNIS.

All nature laughs,[49] the groves are fresh and fair,
The sun's mild lustre warms the vital air;
If Sylvia smiles, new glories gild the shore,
And vanquished nature seems to charm no more.[50]

STREPHON.

In spring the fields, in autumn hills I love,
At morn the plains, at noon the shady grove,
But Delia always; absent from her sight,
Nor plains at morn, nor groves at noon delight.

DAPHNIS.

Sylvia's like autumn ripe, yet mild as May,
More bright than noon, yet fresh as early day;[51]
Ev'n spring displeases, when she shines not here;
But blest with her, 'tis spring throughout the year.

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STREPHON.

Say, Daphnis, say, in what glad soil appears,
A wondrous tree that sacred monarchs bears;[52]
Tell me but this, and I'll[53] disclaim the prize,
And give the conquest to thy Sylvia's eyes.

DAPHNIS.

Nay tell me first, in what more happy fields[54]
The thistle springs, to which the lily yields:[55]
And then a nobler prize I will resign;
For Sylvia, charming Sylvia shall be thine.

DAMON.

Cease to contend; for, Daphnis, I decree
The bowl to Strephon, and the lamb to thee.[56]
Blest swains, whose nymphs in ev'ry grace excel; [Pg 275]
Blest nymphs, whose swains those graces sing so well!
Now rise, and haste to yonder woodbine bow'rs,
A soft retreat from sudden vernal show'rs;
The turf with rural dainties shall be crowned,[57]
While op'ning blooms diffuse their sweets around.
For see! the gath'ring flocks to shelter tend,
And from the Pleiads[58] fruitful show'rs descend.

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] Our author's friendship with this gentleman commenced at very unequal years; he was under sixteen, but Sir William above sixty, and had lately resigned his employment of secretary of state to King William.—Pope.

This amiable old man, who had been a fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, and doctor of civil law, was sent by Charles II. judge advocate to Tangier, and afterwards in a public character to Florence, to Turin, to Paris; and by James II. ambassador to Constantinople; to which city he went through the continent on foot. He was afterwards a lord of the treasury, and secretary of state, with the Duke of Shrewsbury, which office he resigned 1697, and retiring to East Hampstead, died there in December, 1716, aged seventy-seven. Nothing of his writing remains but an elegant character of Archbishop Dolben. —Warton.

Pope says that Sir William Trumbull had "lately" resigned his office at the period of their acquaintance, but seven years had elapsed after the date of Sir William's retirement, before Pope had reached the age of sixteen.

[2] Prima Syracusio dignata est ludere versu,
Nostra nec erubuit sylvas habitare Thalia.

Ecl. vi. 1.

This is the general exordium and opening of the Pastorals, in imitation of the sixth of Virgil, which some have therefore not improbably thought to have been the first originally. In the beginnings of the other three Pastorals, he imitates expressly those which now stand first of the three chief poets in this kind, Spenser, Virgil, Theocritus.

A shepherd's boy (he seeks no better name)—
Beneath the shade a spreading beech displays,—
Thyrsis, the Music of that murm'ring Spring,—

are manifestly imitations of

"—A shepherd's boy (no better do him call)."

"—Tityre, tu patulæ recubans sub tegmine fagi."

"—Ἀδύ τι ψιθύρισμα και ἁ πιτυς, αιτολε, τηνα"—Pope.

[3] Pope not only imitated the lines he quotes from Virgil, but, as Wakefield points out, was also indebted to Dryden's translation of them.

I first transferred to Rome Sicilian strains:
Nor blushed the Doric muse to dwell on Mantuan plains.

Originally Pope had written,

First in these fields I sing the sylvan strains,
Nor blush to sport in Windsor's peaceful plains.

Upon this he says to Walsh, "Objection that the letter is hunted too much—*sing the sylvan—peaceful plains*—and that the word *sing* is used two lines afterwards, *Sicilian muses sing*." He proposed to read "try" in the place of "sing;" "happy" instead of "peaceful," and adds, "Quære. If *try* be not properer in relation to *first*, as we first attempt a thing; and more modest? and if *happy* be not more than *peaceful*?" Walsh replies, "*Try* is better than *sing*. *Happy* does not sound right, the first syllable being short. Perhaps you may find a better word than *peaceful* as *flow'ry*." Pope rejected all three epithets, and substituted "blissful."

[4] Evidently imitated from Spenser's Prothalamion:

> Sweet Thames run softly till I end my song.—Wakefield.

[5] Because Theocritus, the father of Pastoral Poetry, was a Sicilian.—Professor Martyn.

[6] Paradise Regained, ii. 27:

> Where winds with reeds and osiers whisp'ring play.

Dryden, Theodore and Honoria:

> The winds within the quiv'ring branches played.—Wakefield.

[7] Roscommon's Essay on Translated Verse:

> And Albion's rocks repeat his rural song.—Wakefield.

The term "Albion's cliffs," which is usually appropriated to the steeps that bound the sea-shore, is applied by Pope to the hills about Windsor.

[8] The expression in this verse is philosophically just. True wisdom is the knowledge of ourselves, which terminates in a conviction of our absolute insignificancy with respect to God, and our relative inferiority in many instances to the accomplishments of our own species: and power is encompassed with such a multiplicity of dangerous temptations as to be almost incompatible with virtue. A passage in Lucan, viii. 493, is very apposite:

> exeat aula
> Qui vult esse pius. Virtus et summa potestas
> Non coëunt.
>
> He who would spotless live from courts must go:
> No union power supreme and virtue know.—Wakefield.

[9] Waller, The Maid's Tragedy Altered:

> Happy is she that from the world retires,
> And carries with her what the world admires.—Wilkes.

[10] Sir W. Trumbull was born in Windsor-forest, to which he retreated after he had resigned the post of secretary of state of King William III.—Pope.

The address to Trumbull was not in the original manuscript which passed through his hands, and the lines were probably added when the Pastorals were prepared for the press. "Little Pope," wrote Sir William to the Rev. Ralph Bridges on May 2, 1709, "was here two days ago, always full of poetry and services to Mr. Bridges. I saw in the advertisement, after he was gone, the Miscellany is published, or publishing, by Jacob Tonson, wherein are his Pastorals, and which is worse, I am told one of them is inscribed to my worship." A more inappropriate panegyric could not have been devised than to pretend that Trumbull was among poets what the nightingale was among birds. The retired statesman had a true taste for literature, but his efforts as a versifier had been limited to a dozen lines translated from Martial.

[11] Warton observes that the nightingale does not sing till the other birds are at rest. This is a mistake; the nightingale sings by day as well as at night, but the expressions "to rest removes" and "forsaken groves" give an idea of evening, in which case there would be certainly an error in making the thrush "chant" after the nightingale. As to the thrush being "charmed to silence" at any time by the nightingale, and the "aërial audience" applauding, it is allowable as a fanciful allusion, perhaps, though the circumstance is contrary to nature and fact.—Bowles.

[12] Concanen, in a pamphlet called A Supplement to the Profound, objected to the use of an image borrowed from the theatre, and Pope, in vindication of his line, has written "Dryden" in the margin, alluding doubtless to a couplet in Dryden's verses to the Duchess of York:

> Each poet of the air her glory sings
> And round him the pleased audience clap their wings.

Every one must feel the image to be burlesque, and even Dryden's authority cannot recommend it.

[13] The scene of this Pastoral a valley, the time the morning. It stood originally thus,

> Daphnis and Strephon to the shades retired,
> Both warmed by love, and by the muse inspired,
> Fresh as the morn, and as the season fair,
> In flow'ry vales they fed their fleecy care;
> And while Aurora gilds the mountain's side,
> Thus Daphnis spoke, and Strephon thus replied.—Pope.

There was in the manuscript a still earlier, and perhaps better, version of the first two lines:

> Daphnis and Strephon led their flocks along,
> Both famed for love and both renowned in song.

They were however borrowed from Lycon, an Eclogue, in the fifth part of Tonson's

Miscellany:

> Strephon and Damon's flocks together fed,
> Both famed for wit, and famed for beauty both.

Wakefield points out that the opening verse of the couplet, as it stands in the text, was indebted to Congreve's Tears of Amaryllis for Amyntas:

> When woolly flocks their bleating cries renew,
> And from their fleecy sides first shake the silver dew.

[14] The epithet "whitening" most happily describes the progressive effect of the light. —Wakefield.

[15] Dryden's Palamon and Arcite:

> Fresh as the month, and as the morning fair.—Wakefield.

[16] From Virgil, Ecl. vii. 20:

> Hos Corydon, illos referebat in ordine Thyrsis.—Wakefield.

[17] Milton's first sonnet:

> O! nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray
> Warblest at eve!—Wakefield.

[18] Congreve's Tears of Amaryllis for Amyntas:

> When grateful birds prepare their thanks to pay,
> And warble hymns to hail the dawning day.—Wakefield.

[19] Waller's Chloris and Hylas:

> Hylas, oh Hylas! why sit we mute
> Now that each bird saluteth the spring.—Wakefield.

Concanen having commented in the Supplement to the Profound upon the impropriety "of making an English clown call a well-known bird by a classical name," Pope wrote in the margin, "Spenser and Ph." The remainder of the second name has been cut off by the binder. Pope's memory deceived him if A. Philips was meant, for the nightingale is not once called Philomela in his Pastorals.

[20] Phosphor was the Greek name for the planet Venus when she appeared as a morning star.

[21] Purple is here used in the Latin sense of the brightest, most vivid colouring in general, not of that specific tint so called.—Warburton.

[22] Dryden in his Cock and Fox:

> See, my dear!
> How lavish nature has adorned the year.—Wakefield.

[23] In the manuscript this verse ran

> There the pale primrose and the vi'let glow,

which was evidently borrowed from a line in Dryden's Cock and Fox, quoted by Wakefield:

> How the pale primrose and the vi'let spring.

The first edition of the Pastorals had

> Here on green banks the blushing vi'lets glow,

and this reading was retained till the edition of Warburton. It probably at last occurred to the poet that as people do not blush blue or purple, the epithet "blushing" was inapplicable to the violet.

[24] "Breathing" means breathing odours, and Wakefield quotes Paradise Lost, ii. 244:

> his altar breathes
> Ambrosial odours and ambrosial flowers.

[25] Pope rarely mentions flowers without being guilty of some mistake as to the seasons they blow in. Who ever saw roses, crocuses, and violets in bloom at the same time?—Steevens.

[26] The first reading was,

> And his own image from the bank surveys.—Pope.

Pope submitted the reading in the note, and that in the text to Walsh, and asked which was the best. Walsh preferred the text.

[27] Lenta quibus torno facili superaddita vitis,
Diffusos edera vestit pallente corymbos. Virg.—Pope.

[28] Variation:

And clusters lurk beneath the curling vines.—Pope.

Dryden's Virgil, Eclogues:

The grapes in clusters lurk beneath the vines.—Bowles.

[29] Dryden, Æn. viii. 830:

And Roman triumphs rising on the gold.—Wakefield.

[30] The subject of these Pastorals engraven on the bowl is not without its propriety. The Shepherd's hesitation at the name of the zodiac imitates that in Virgil, Ecl. iii. 40:

et quis fuit alter,
Descripsit radio totum qui gentibus orbem?—Pope.

Creech's translation of Eclogue iii.:

And showed the various seasons of the year.

Pope also drew upon Dryden's version of the passage:

Two figures on the sides embossed appear,
Conon, and what's his name who made the sphere,
And showed the seasons of the sliding year?

Virgil's commentators cannot agree upon the name which the shepherd had forgotten, but they unite in commending the stroke of nature which represents a rustic poet as unable to recall the name of a man of science.

[31] Dryden, Georg. i. 328.

And cross their limits cut a sloping way,
Which the twelve signs in beauteous order sway.—Wakefield.

[32] Literally from Virgil, Ecl. iii. 59:

Alternis dicetis: amant alterna Camœnæ,
Et nunc omnis ager, nunc omnis parturit arbos,
Nunc frondent sylvæ, nunc formosissimus annus.—Pope.

Creech's translation:

play
By turns, for verse the muses love by turns.

The usage was for the second speaker to imitate the idea started by the first, and endeavour to outdo him in his vaunt. All the speeches throughout the contest consisted of the same number of lines. In the third eclogue of Virgil we have two rivals and an umpire. One of the antagonists stakes a carved bowl, the other a cow; and the final effort of each poet is to propound a riddle, upon which the umpire interposes, and declares that the candidates are equal in merit. Pope keeps close to his original.

[33] Dryden, Ecl. x. 11.

And echo, from the vales, the tuneful voice rebound.—Wakefield.

[34] In place of this couplet the original manuscript read,

Ye fountain nymphs, propitious to the swain,
Now grant me Phœbus', or Alexis' strain.

Pope imitated Virgil, Ecl. vii. 21:

Mihi carmen,
Quale meo Codro, concedite: proxima Phœbi
Versibus ille facit.

[35] George Granville, afterwards Lord Lansdowne, known for his poems, most of which he composed very young, and proposed Waller as his model.—Pope.

[36] Virgil, Ecl. iii. 86:

Pascite taurum,
Qui cornu petat, et pedibus jam spargat arenam.—Pope.

Dryden, Æn. ix. 859:

A snow-white steer before thy altar led:
And dares the fight, and spurns the yellow sands.—Wakefield.

The second line of the couplet in the text ran thus in the original manuscript:

With butting horns, and heels that spurn the sand.

This also was from Dryden, Ecl. iii. 135:

With spurning heels, and with a butting head.

[37] Originally thus in the manuscript:

> Pan, let my numbers equal Strephon's lays,
> Of Parian stone thy statue will I raise;
> But if I conquer and augment my fold,
> Thy Parian statue shall be changed to gold.—WARBURTON.

This he formed on Dryden's Vir. Ecl. vii. 45:

> Thy statue then of Parian stone shall stand;
> But if the falling lambs increase my fold,
> Thy marble statue shall be turned to gold.—WAKEFIELD.

[38] Pope had at first written,

> The lovely Chloris beckons from the plain,
> Then hides in shades from her deluded swain.

"Objection," he says, in the paper he submitted to Walsh, "that *hides* without the accusative *herself* is not good English, and that *from her deluded swain* is needless. Alteration:

> The wanton Chloris beckons from the plain,
> Then, hid in shades, eludes her eager swain.

Quære. If *wanton* be more significant than *lovely*; if *eludes* be properer in this case than *deluded*; if *eager* be an expressive epithet to the swain who searches for his mistress?"

Walsh. "*Wanton* applied to a woman is equivocal, and therefore not proper. *Eludes* is properer than *deluded*. *Eager* is very well."

[39] He owes this thought to Horace, Ode i. 9, 21.—WAKEFIELD.

Or rather to the version of Dryden, since the lines of Pope have a closer resemblance to the translation than to the original:

> The laugh that guides thee to the mark,
> When the kind nymph would coyness feign,
> And hides but to be found again.

[40] Imitation of Virgil, Ecl. iii. 64:

> Malo me Galatea petit, lasciva puella,
> Et fugit ad salices, et se cupit ante videri.—POPE.

He probably consulted Creech's translation of the passage in Virgil:

> Sly Galatea drives me o'er the green,
> And apples throws, then hides, yet would be seen.—WAKEFIELD.

[41] Dryden's Don Sebastian;

> A brisk Arabian girl came tripping by;
> Passing, she cast at him a sidelong glance,
> And looked behind, in hopes to be pursued.—STEEVENS.

[42] A very trifling and false conceit.—WARTON.

[43] In place of the next speech of Strephon, and the reply of Daphnis, the dialogue continued thus in the original manuscript:

> STREPHON.
>
> Go, flow'ry wreath, and let my Silvia know,
> Compared to thine how bright her beauties show;
> Then die; and dying, teach the lovely maid
> How soon the brightest beauties are decayed.
>
> DAPHNIS.
>
> Go, tuneful bird, that pleased the woods so long,
> Of Amaryllis learn a sweeter song;
> To heav'n arising then her notes convey,
> For heav'n alone is worthy such a lay.

The speech of Strephon is an echo of Waller's well-known song:

> Go, lovely rose,
> Tell her that wastes her time and me,
> That now she knows
> When I resemble her to thee,
> How sweet and fair she seems to be.
>
> Then die, that she
> The common fate of all things rare
> May read in thee;
> How small a part of time they share,
> That are so wondrous sweet and fair.

The speech of Daphnis is from Dryden's Virgil, Ecl. iii. 113:

> Winds, on your wings to heav'n her accents bear,
> Such words as heav'n alone is fit to hear.

[44] It stood thus at first:

> Let rich Iberia golden fleeces boast,
> Her purple wool the proud Assyrian coast,
> Blest Thames's shores, &c.—Pope.

[45] It is evident from the mention of the "golden sands" of Pactolus, and the "amber" of the poplars in connection with the Thames, that he had in view Denham's description in Cooper's Hill:

> Though with those streams he no resemblance hold,
> Whose foam is amber, and their gravel gold.—Wakefield.

The sisters of Phæton, according to the classical fable, were, upon the death of their brother, turned into poplars on the banks of the Po, and the tears which dropt from these trees were said to be converted into amber.

[46] This couplet is a palpable imitation of Virgil, Ecl. vii. 67:

> Sæpius at si me, Lycida formose, revisas,
> Fraxinus in silvis cedet tibi, pinus in hortis.—Wakefield.

The entire speech is a parody of the lines quoted by Wakefield, and of the lines which immediately precede them in Virgil's Eclogue. The passage omitted by Wakefield is thus translated in vol. i. of Tonson's Miscellany:

> Bacchus the vine, the laurel Phœbus loves;
> Fair Venus cherishes the myrtle groves;
> Phyllis the hazel loves, while Phyllis loves that tree,
> Myrtles and laurels of less fame shall be.

[47] Virg. Ecl. vii. 57:

> Aret ager, vitio moriens sitit aëris herba [&c.]
> Phyllidis adventu nostræ nemus omne virebit.—Pope.

[48] These verses were thus at first:

> All nature mourns, the birds their songs deny,
> Nor wasted brooks the thirsty flow'rs supply;
> If Delia smile, the flow'rs begin to spring,
> The brooks to murmur, and the birds to sing.—Pope.

Wakefield remarks that the last couplet of the original version, which is but slightly modified in the text, was closely imitated from Addison's Epilogue to the British Enchanters:

> The desert smiles, the woods begin to grow,
> The birds to warble, and the springs to flow.

[49] Dryden, Ecl. vii. 76:

> And lavish nature laughs.

[50] Pope had at first written,

> If Sylvia smiles she brightens all the shore,
> The sun's outshined, and nature charms no more.

This he submitted to Walsh. Pope. "Quære, whether to say the sun is outshined be too bold and hyperbolical?" Walsh. "For pastoral it is." Pope. "If it should be softened with *seems*? Do you approve any of these alterations?

> If Sylvia smile, she brightens all the shore,
> { All nature seems outshined, and charms no more.
> { Light seems outshined, and nature charms no more.
> { And vanquished nature seems to shine no more.

Quære, which of these three?" Walsh. "The last of these three I like best."

[51] Cowley, Davideis, iii. 553:

> Hot as ripe noon, sweet as the blooming day,
> Like July furious, but more fair than May.—Wakefield.

[52] An allusion to the royal oak, in which Charles II. had been hid from the pursuit after the battle of Worcester.—Pope.

This wretched pun on the word "bears" is called "dextrous" by Wakefield, but Warton says that it is "one of the most trifling and puerile conceits" in all Pope's works, and is only exceeded in badness by the riddle "which follows of the thistle and the lily."

[53] The contraction "I'll," which often occurs in these pastorals, is familiar and undignified. —Wakefield.

[54] It was thus in the manuscript:

> Nay, tell me first what region canst thou find
> In which by thistles lilies are outshined?
> If all thy skill can make the meaning known,
> The prize, the victor's prize, shall be thy own.—Wakefield.

Pope submitted the first two lines to Walsh in conjunction with the version in the text. "Quære, which of these couplets is better expressed, and better numbers? and whether it is better here to use *thistle* or *thistles*, *lily* or *lilies*, singular or plural? The epithet *more happy* refers to something going before." Walsh. "The second couplet [the text] is best; and singular, I think better than plural."

[55] Alludes to the device of the Scots' monarchs, the thistle, worn by Queen Anne; and to the arms of France, the *fleur de lys*. The two riddles are in imitation of those in Virg. Ecl. iii. 106:

> Dic quibus in terris inscripti nomina regum
> Nascantur flores, et Phyllida solus habeto.—Pope.

Thus translated by Dryden;

> Nay, tell me first in what new region springs
> A flow'r that bears inscribed the names of kings;
> And thou shalt gain a present as divine
> As Phœbus' self, for Phyllis shall be thine.

Either the commentators on Virgil have not hit upon the true solution of his riddles, or they are not at all superior to the parody of Pope.

[56] This is from Virg. Ecl. iii. 109:

> Et vitula tu dignus, et hic.—Wakefield.

[57] Originally:

> The turf with country dainties shall be spread,
> And trees with twining branches shade your head.—Pope.

[58] The Pleiades rose with the sun in April, and the poet ascribes the April showers to their influence.

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# SUMMER:

[Pg 276]

## THE SECOND PASTORAL,

### OR

## ALEXIS.[1]

## TO DR. GARTH.[2]

A shepherd's boy (he seeks no better name)[3]
Led forth his flocks[4] along the silver Thame,[5]
Where dancing sun-beams on the waters played,[6] [Pg 277]
And verdant alders formed a quiv'ring[7] shade;[8]
Soft as he mourned, the streams forgot to flow,[9]
The flocks around a dumb compassion show,[10]
The Naïads wept in ev'ry wat'ry bow'r,
And Jove consented in a silent show'r.[11]
Accept, O Garth! the muse's early lays,
That adds this wreath of ivy to thy bays;[12] [Pg 278]
Hear what from love unpractised hearts endure,
From love, the sole disease thou canst not cure.
Ye shady beeches, and ye cooling streams,
Defence from Phœbus', not from Cupid's beams,[13]
To you I mourn; nor to the deaf I sing,[14]
"The woods shall answer, and their echo ring."[15]
The hills and rocks attend my doleful lay,
Why art thou prouder and more hard than they?[16]
The bleating sheep with my complaints agree,
They parched with heat, and I inflamed by thee.[17]
The sultry Sirius burns the thirsty plains,[18]

While in thy heart eternal winter reigns.[19]
Where stray ye, muses, in what lawn or grove,[20]
While your Alexis pines in hopeless love? [Pg 279]
In those fair fields where sacred Isis glides,
Or else where Cam his winding vales divides?[21]
As in the crystal stream I view my face,[22]
Fresh rising blushes paint the wat'ry glass;
But since those graces please thy eyes no more,
I shun the fountains which I sought before.
Once I was skilled in ev'ry herb that grew,
And ev'ry plant that drinks the morning dew;[23]
Ah wretched shepherd, what avails thy art,
To cure thy lambs, but not to heal thy heart![24]
Let other swains attend the rural care,
Feed fairer flocks, or richer fleeces shear:[25]
But nigh yon' mountain[26] let me tune my lays, [Pg 280]
Embrace my love, and bind my brows with bays.[27]
That flute is mine which Colin's[28] tuneful breath
Inspired when living, and bequeathed in death:[29]
He said; Alexis, take this pipe,[30] the same
That taught the groves my Rosalinda's name:[31]
But now the reeds shall hang on yonder tree,[32]
For ever silent, since despised by thee.
Oh! were I made by some transforming pow'r
The captive bird that sings within thy bow'r![33]
Then might my voice thy list'ning ears employ, [Pg 281]
And I those kisses he receives enjoy.
And yet my numbers please the rural throng,[34]
Rough satyrs dance, and Pan applauds the song:[35]
The nymphs, forsaking ev'ry cave and spring,[36]
Their early fruit, and milk-white turtles bring![37]
Each am'rous nymph prefers her gifts in vain,
On you their gifts are all bestowed again.[38]
For you the swains their fairest flow'rs design,
And in one garland all their beauties join;
Accept the wreath which you deserve alone,
In whom all beauties are comprised in one. [Pg 282]
See what delights in sylvan scenes appear!
Descending gods have found Elysium here.[39]
In woods bright Venus with Adonis strayed;
And chaste Diana haunts the forest-shade.
Come, lovely nymph, and bless the silent hours,
When swains from shearing seek their nightly bow'rs;
When weary reapers quit the sultry field,[40]
And crowned with corn their thanks to Ceres yield.
This harmless grove no lurking viper hides,[41]
But in my breast the serpent love abides.[42]
Here bees from blossoms sip the rosy dew,
But your Alexis knows no sweets but you.
O deign to visit our forsaken seats,
The mossy fountains, and the green retreats![43]
Where'er you walk, cool gales shall fan the glade;
Trees, where you sit, shall crowd into a shade;
Where'er you tread, the blushing flow'rs shall rise,[44] [Pg 283]
And all things flourish where you turn your eyes.[45]
O! how I long with you to pass my days,[46]
Invoke the muses, and resound your praise!
Your praise the birds shall chant in ev'ry grove,[47]
And winds shall waft it to the pow'rs above.[48]
But would you sing, and rival Orpheus' strain,[49]
The wond'ring forests soon should dance[50] again, [Pg 284]
The moving mountains hear the pow'rful call,
And headlong streams hang list'ning in their fall.[51]
But see, the shepherds shun the noon-day heat,
The lowing herds to murm'ring brooks retreat,[52]
To closer shades the panting flocks remove;
Ye gods! and is there no relief for love?[53]

But soon the sun with milder rays descends
To the cool ocean, where his journey ends:[54]
On me love's fiercer flames for ever prey,[55]
By night he scorches, as he burns by day.[56]

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] The scene of this Pastoral by the river side, suitable to the heat of the season: the time noon.—Pope.

[2] Dr. Samuel Garth, author of the Dispensary, was one of the first friends of the author, whose acquaintance with him began at fourteen or fifteen. Their friendship continued from the year 1703 to 1718, which was that of his death.—Pope.

He was a man of the sweetest disposition, amiable manners, and universal benevolence. All parties, at a time when party violence was at a great height, joined in praising and loving him. One of the most exquisite pieces of wit ever written by Addison, is a defence of Garth against the Examiner, 1710. It is unfortunate that this second Pastoral, the worst of the four, should be inscribed to the best judge of all Pope's four friends to whom they were addressed.—Warton.

[3] This was one of the passages submitted to Walsh. "Objection," remarks Pope, "against the parenthesis, *he seeks no better name*. Quære. Would it be anything better to say,

> A shepherd's boy, who sung for love, not fame, etc.

Or,

> A shepherd's boy, who fed an amorous flame.

Quære, which of all these is the best, or are none of them good." Walsh preferred the parenthesis in the text. "It is Spenser's way," he said, "and I think better than the others."

[4] Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar:

> A shepherd boy (no better do him call)
> Led forth his flock.—Bowles.

Pope's second Pastoral is an ostensible imitation of Spenser's first eclogue, which is devoted to a lover's complaint, but though Pope has echoed some of the sentiments of Spenser, and appropriated an occasional line, his style has little resemblance to that of his model.

[5] "An inaccurate word," says Warton, "instead of Thames;" and rendered confusing by the fact that there is a real river Thame, which is a tributary of the Thames. Milton has used the same licence, and speaks of the "royal towered Thame" in his lines on the English rivers.

[6] Originally thus in the MS.:

> There to the winds Headrigg plained his hapless love,
> And Amaryllis filled the vocal grove.—Warburton.

[7] Dryden's Theodore and Honoria:

> The winds within the quiv'ring branches played,
> And dancing trees a mournful music made.—Wakefield.

[8] Ver. 1, 2, 3, 4, were thus printed in the first edition:

> A faithful swain, whom Love had taught to sing,
> Bewailed his fate beside a silver spring;
> Where gentle Thames his winding waters leads
> Through verdant forests, and through flow'ry meads.—Pope.

[9] Dryden's Virg. Ecl. viii. 3:

> To which the savage lynxes list'ning stood;
> The rivers stood on heaps, and stopped the running flood.

Milton, Comus, 494:

> Thyrsis, whose artful strains have oft delayed
> The puddling brook to hear his madrigal.—Wakefield.

Garth, in his Dispensary, canto iv., says that, when Prior sings,

> The banks of Rhine a pleased attention show,
> And silver Sequana forgets to flow.

[10] Milton, Comus:

> That dumb things shall be moved to sympathise.—Steevens.

In the tears of Amaryllis for Amyntas, Congreve says of the tigers and wolves, that

They dumb distress and new compassion show.

[11] Virg. Ecl. vii. 60:

Jupiter et læto descendet plurimus imbri.—Pope.

In the original manuscript the couplet was slightly different:

Relenting Naïads wept in ev'ry bow'r,
And Jove consented in a silent show'r.

Pope. "Objection, that the Naïads weeping in bowers is not so proper, being water nymphs, and that the word *consented* is doubted by some to whom I have shown these verses. Alteration:

The Naïads wept in ev'ry wat'ry bow'r,
And Jove relented in a silent show'r.

Quære. Which of these do you like best?" Walsh. "The first. Upon second thoughts I think the second is best." Pope ended by adopting the first line of the second version, and the second line of the first.

[12] This is taken from Virg. Ecl. viii. 12.—Wakefield.

Dryden's translation, ver. 17:

Amidst thy laurels let this ivy twine,
Thine was my earliest muse.

Ivy, with the Romans, was the emblem of literary success, and the laurel crown was worn by a victorious general at a triumph. As Pollio, to whom Virgil addressed his eighth eclogue, was both a conqueror and a poet, the double garland allotted to him was appropriate, but there was no fitness in the application of the passage to Garth.

[13] A harsh line, and a false and affected thought.—Bowles.

[14] Virg. Ecl. x. 8.

Non canimus surdis: respondent omnia sylvæ.—Pope.

Ogilby's translation of the verse in Virgil:

Nor to the deaf do we our numbers sing,
Since woods, in answ'ring us, with echoes ring.—Wakefield.

[15] A line out of Spenser's Epithalamion.—Pope.

[16] A line unworthy our author, containing a false and trivial thought; as is also the 22nd line.—Warton.

[17] Pope says his merit in these Pastorals is his copying from the ancients. Can anything like this, and other conceits, be found in the natural and unaffected language of Virgil? No such thing. But what do we find in Dryden's imitation of Virgil, Ecl. ii. 13:

The creaking locusts with my voice conspire,
They fried with heat, and I with fierce desire.

This is Virgil's:

Sole sub ardenti resonant arbusta cicadis.

And Pope had the imitation in his eye, not the original.—Bowles.

[18] So Virgil says of Sirius, or the dog-star, Geor. ii. 353:

hiulca siti findit Canis æstifer arva.

"Gassendi has well remarked," says Arnauld in his Logic, "that nothing could be less probable than the notion that the dog-star is the cause of the extraordinary heat which prevails in what are called the dog days, because as Sirius is on the other side of the equator, the effects of the star should be greatest at the places where it is most perpendicular, whereas the dog days here are the winter season there. Whence the inhabitants of those countries have much more reason to believe that the dog-star brings cold than we have to believe that it causes heat."

[19] The Shepherd's Calendar of Spenser:

Such rage as winter's reigneth in my heart.

[20] Virg. Ecl. x. 9, out of Theocritus:

Quæ nemora, aut qui vos saltus habuere, puellæ
Naïades, indigno cum Gallus amore periret?
Nam neque Parnassi vobis juga, nam neque Pindi,
Ulla moram fecere, neque Aoniæ Aganippe.—Pope.

Ogilby's translation:

Say, Naïades, where were you, in what grove,
Or lawn, when Gallus fell by ill-matched love.—Wakefield.

[21] Addison's Campaign:

> Or where the Seine her flow'ry fields divides,
> Or where the Loire through winding vineyards glides.—Wakefield.

Pope wrote at random. The Cam does not divide vales, but runs, or rather creeps, through one of the flattest districts in England.

[22]

> Oft in the crystal spring I cast a view,
> And equalled Hylas, if the glass be true;
> But since those graces meet my eyes no more, shun, etc.

Virgil again (Ecl. ii. 25), from the Cyclops of Theocritus:

> nuper me in littore vidi,
> Cum placidum ventis staret mare; non ego Daphnim,
> Judice te, metuam, si nunquam fallit imago.—Pope.

In his first version, which is closer to Virgil than the second, Pope had in his mind Dryden's translation, Ecl. ii. 33:

> and if the glass be true,
> With Daphnis I may vie.

[23] Milton, Penseroso, ver. 172:

> And every herb that sips the dew.—Wakefield.

[24] This is an obvious imitation of those trite lines in Ovid, Met. i. 522:

> herbarum subjecta potentia nobis.
> Hei mihi, quod nullis amor est medicabilis herbis;
> Nec prosunt domino, quæ prosunt omnibus, artes.—Wakefield.

Dryden's translation:

> What herbs and simples grow
> In fields and forests, all their pow'rs I know.
> To cure the pains of love no plant avails,
> And his own physic the physician fails.

It is remarkable that the imitation in the text of some of the most hacknied lines in classical literature, should be one of four passages quoted by Ruffhead, to prove that all the images in Pope's Pastorals had not been borrowed from preceding poets.

[25] The only faulty rhymes, *care* and *shear*, perhaps in these poems, where the versification is in general so exact and correct.—Warton.

[26] The scene is laid upon the banks of the Thames, and "mountain" is a term inapplicable to any of the neighbouring hills. Pope was too intent upon copying Virgil to pay much regard to the characteristics of the English landscape.

[27] It is not easy to conceive a more harsh and clashing line than this. There is the same imagery in Theocritus (Idyll viii. 55), but it is made more striking by the circumstances and picturesque accompaniments, as well as by the extraordinary effect of the lines adapted to the subject.—Bowles.

[28] The name taken by Spenser in his Eclogues, where his mistress is celebrated under that of Rosalinda.—Pope.

[29] Virg. Ecl. ii. 36:

> Est mihi disparibus septem compacta cicutis
> Fistula, Damœtas dono mihi quam dedit olim,
> Et dixit moriens, Te nunc habet ista secundum.—Pope.

Pope's couplet originally ran thus:

> Of slender reeds a tuneful flute I have.
> The tuneful flute which dying Colin gave.

"Objection," he says to Walsh, "that the first line is too much transposed from the natural order of the words, and that the rhyme is inharmonious." He subjoined the couplet in the text, and asked, "Which of these is best?" to which Walsh replies, "The second."

[30] Dr. Johnson says, "that every intelligent reader sickens at the mention of the crook and the pipe, the sheep and the kids." This appears to be an unjust and harsh condemnation of all pastoral poetry.—Warton.

Surely Dr. Johnson's decrying the affected introduction of "crook and pipe," &c., into English pastorals, is not a condemnation of all pastoral poetry. Dr. Johnson certainly could not very highly relish this species of poetry, witness his harsh criticisms on Milton's exquisite Lycidas; but we almost forgive his severity on several genuine pieces of poetic excellence, when we consider that he has done a service to truth and nature in speaking with a proper and dignified contempt for such trite puerilities.—Bowles.

[31] Virg. Ecl. i. 5:

> Formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas.—Wakefield.

[32] Imitated from Virg. Ecl. vii. 24:

> Hic arguta sacra pendebit fistula pinu.—WAKEFIELD.

Dryden's translation:

> The praise of artful numbers I resign,
> And hang my harp upon the sacred pine.

[33] This thought is formed on one in Theocritus iii. 12, and our poet had before him Dryden's translation of that Idyllium:

> Some god transform me by his heav'nly pow'r,
> E'en to a bee to buzz within your bow'r.—WAKEFIELD.

Warton prefers the image of Theocritus, as more wild, more delicate, and more uncommon. It is natural for a lover to wish that he might be anything that could come near to his lady. But we more naturally desire to be that which she fondles and caresses, than to be that which she avoids, at least would neglect. The superior delicacy of Theocritus I cannot discover, nor can indeed find, that either in the one or the other image there is any want of delicacy.—JOHNSON.

Pope had at first written:

> Some pitying god permit me to be made
> The bird that sings beneath thy myrtle shade.

He submitted this couplet and the emendation in the text to Walsh, and said, "The epithet *captive* seems necessary to explain the thought, on account of *those kisses* in the last line [of the paragraph]. Quære. If these be better than the other?" Walsh. "The second are the best, for it is not enough to *permit* you to be made, but to make you."

[34] Virg. Ecl. ix. 33:

> me quoque dicunt
> Vatem pastores.—WAKEFIELD.

[35] Milton's Lycidas, ver. 34:

> Rough satyrs danced.

Dryden's Virgil, Ecl. vi. 42:

> He raised his voice, and soon a num'rous throng
> Of tripping satyrs crowded to the song.

Pan was the god of shepherds, the inventor of the pastoral pipe of reeds, and himself a skilful musician. "The ancient images," says Archbishop Whately, "represent him as partly in the human form, and partly in that of a goat, with horns and cloven hoofs. And hence it is that, by a kind of tradition, we often see, even at this day, representations of Satan in this form. For the early christians seem to have thought that it was he whom the pagans adored under the name of Pan."

[36] Spenser's Elegy on the death of Sir P. Sidney:

> Come forth, ye nymphs, forsake your wat'ry bowers,
> Forsake your mossy caves.

[37] Spenser's Astrophel:

> And many a nymph both of the wood and brook,
> Soon as his oaten pipe began to shrill,
> Both chrystal wells, and shady groves forsook
> To hear the charms of his enchanting skill;
> And brought him presents, flow'rs if it were prime,
> Or mellow fruit if it were harvest time.

[38] From the Shepherd's Calendar of Spenser:

> His clownish gifts and courtsies I disdain,
> His kids, his cracknels, and his early fruit;
> Ah, foolish Hobbinol, thy gifts been vain,
> Colin them gives to Hobbinol again.

[39] Virg. Ecl. ii. 60:

> habitarunt dii quoque sylvas.

Ecl. x. 18:

> Et formosus oves ad flumina pavit Adonis.—POPE.

Dryden's translation of the first line is

> The gods to live in woods have left the skies.

The second line he expanded into a couplet:

> Along the streams, his flock Adonis led,

And yet the queen of beauty blest his bed.

This last verse has nothing answering to it in Virgil, but it suggested ver. 63 of the pastoral to Pope, who copied Dryden, and not the original.

[40] This is formed from Virg. Ecl. ii. 10:

rapido fessis messoribus æstu.
The reapers tired with sultry heats.—Ogilby.—Wakefield.

[41] He had in his mind Virg. Ecl. iii. 93:

Frigidus, O pueri, fugite hinc! latet anguis in herba.—Wakefield.

[42] I think these two lines would not have passed without animadversion in any of our great schools.—Warton.

Another couplet followed in the manuscript:

Here Tereus mourns, and Itys tells his pain,
Of Progne they, and I of you complain.

The horrible mythological story of Progne killing her son Itys, and serving up his flesh to her husband Tereus out of revenge for his violence to her sister Philomela, had no connection with the plaintive sighs of a love-sick swain for an absent mistress. The inappropriateness of the allusion was no doubt the reason why Pope omitted the couplet.

[43] Virg. Ecl. vii. 45:

Muscosi fontes—mossy fountains.—Wakefield.

[44] This thought occurs in several authors. Persius, Sat. ii. 39,

Quicquid calcaverit hic, rosa fiat.

Butler finely ridicules this trite fancy of the poets:

Where'er you tread your foot shall set
The primrose and the violet.—Wakefield.

[45] The six lines from ver. 71 to ver. 76 stood thus in the original manuscript:

Oh, deign to grace our happy rural seats,
Our mossy fountains, and our green retreats;
While you your presence to the groves deny,
Our flowers are faded, and our brooks are dry;
Though with'ring herbs lay dying on the plain,
At your return they shall be green again.

The two last couplets were copied from Dryden's Virg. Ecl. vii. 77:

But if Alexis from our mountains fly,
Ev'n running rivers leave their channels dry.

And ver. 81:

But, if returning Phyllis bless the plain,
The grass revives, the woods are green again.

In Pope's next version, the four lines "While you, &c.," ran as follows:

Winds, where you walk, shall gently fan the glade,

Or,

Where'er you walk fresh gales shall fan the glade,
Trees, where you sit, shall crowd into a shade,
Flow'rs where you tread in painted pride shall rise,

Or,

Where'er you tread the purple flow'rs shall rise,
And all things flourish where you turn your eyes!

Walsh preferred the second form of the passage to the original draught; and of the variations in the second form he preferred the lines beginning "Where'er you walk," and "Where'er you tread."

[46] He had in view Virg. Ecl. x. 43:

hic ipso tecum consumerer ævo.—Wakefield.

[47] Your praise the tuneful birds to heav'n shall bear,
And list'ning wolves grow milder as they hear.

So the verses were originally written. But the author, young as he was, soon found the absurdity which Spenser himself overlooked, of introducing wolves into England.—Pope.

There was no absurdity upon the principle of Pope, that the scene of pastorals was to be laid in the golden age, which could not be supposed to be subsequent to the reign of

Edward I. when wolves still existed in this island. They lingered in Scotland in the reign of Charles II., and in Ireland in the reign of Queen Anne.

[48] Virg. Ecl. iii. 73:

> Partem aliquam, venti, Divum referatis ad aures.—Pope.

[49] In place of this couplet and the next, the original MS. had these lines:

> Such magic music dwells within your name,
> The voice of Orpheus no such pow'r could claim;
> Had you then lived, when he the forests drew,
> The trees and Orpheus both had followed you.

[50] This verse is debased by the word *dance*. But he followed Dryden in Ecl. iii. 69:

> Where Orpheus on his lyre laments his love,
> With beasts encompassed, and a dancing grove.—Wakefield.

[51] Lucan vi. 473:

> de rupe pependit
> Abscissa fixus torrens; amnisque cucurrit
> Non qua pronus erat.
>
> Streams have run back at murmurs of her tongue,
> And torrents from the rock suspended hung. Rowe.—Steevens.

"The line *And headlong streams*," says Ruffhead, "surely presents a new image and a bold one too." Bold indeed! Pope has carried the idea into extravagance when he makes the stream not only "listening," but "hang listening in its headlong fall." An idea of this sort will only bear just touching; the mind then does not perceive its violence; if it be brought before the eyes too minutely, it becomes almost ridiculous.—Bowles.

[52] In the MS.:

> But see the southing sun displays his beams,
> See Tityrus leads his herd to silver streams.

[53] Virg. Ecl. ii. 68:

> Me tamen urit amor, quis enim modus adsit amori?—Pope.

He had Dryden's translation of the passage in Virgil before him:

> Cool breezes now the raging heats remove:
> Ah, cruel heav'n, that made no cure for love.—Wakefield.

[54] The phrase "where his journey ends" is mean and prosaic, nor by any means adequately conveys the sentiment required, which is this,—The sun grows milder by degrees, and is at length extinguished in the ocean, but my flames know neither abatement nor intermission.—Wakefield.

[55] Variation:

> Me love inflames, nor will his fires allay.—Pope.

[56] This is certainly the poorest of Pope's pastorals, and it has many false thoughts and conceits. But the ingenuous and candid critic will always bear in mind the early age at which they were written, and the false taste of Cowley at that time prevalent.—Bowles.

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[Pg 285]

# AUTUMN:

# THE THIRD PASTORAL,[1]

### OR

# HYLAS AND ÆGON.

## TO MR. WYCHERLEY.[2]

Beneath the shade a spreading beech displays,[3]
Hylas and Ægon sung their rural lays;
This mourned a faithless, that an absent love,[4]
And Delia's name and Doris' filled the grove.[5]
Ye Mantuan nymphs, your sacred succour bring; 5 [Pg 286]
Hylas and Ægon's rural lays I sing.
Thou,[6] whom the nine, with Plautus' wit inspire,

The art of Terence, and Menander's fire;
Whose sense instructs us,[7] and whose humour charms,
Whose judgment sways us, and whose spirit[8] warms!
Oh, skilled in nature![9] see the hearts of swains,
Their artless passions, and their tender pains.[10]
  Now setting Phœbus shone serenely bright,
And fleecy clouds were streaked with purple light;
When tuneful Hylas with melodious moan,
Taught rocks to weep, and made the mountains groan.[11]
  Go, gentle gales, and bear my sighs away![12]
To Delia's ear the tender notes convey.
As some sad turtle[13] his lost love deplores
And with deep murmurs fills the sounding shores; [Pg 287]
Thus, far from Delia, to the winds I mourn,
Alike unheard, unpitied, and forlorn.
  Go, gentle gales, and bear my sighs along!
For her, the feathered quires neglect their song:
For her, the limes their pleasing shades deny;
For her, the lilies hang their heads and die.
Ye flow'rs that droop, forsaken by the spring,
Ye birds that, left by summer, cease to sing,
Ye trees that fade when autumn-heats remove,
Say, is not absence death to those who love?[14]
  Go, gentle gales, and bear my sighs away!
Cursed be the fields that cause my Delia's stay;
Fade ev'ry blossom, wither ev'ry tree,[15]
Die ev'ry flower, and perish all but she.
What have I said? where'er my Delia flies,
Let spring attend, and sudden flow'rs arise;
Let op'ning roses knotted oaks adorn,[16]
And liquid amber drop from ev'ry thorn.
  Go, gentle gales, and bear my sighs along!
The birds shall cease to tune their ev'ning song, [Pg 288]
The winds to breathe, the waving woods to move,
And streams to murmur, ere I cease to love.[17]
Not bubbling fountains to the thirsty swain,[18]
Not balmy sleep to lab'rers faint with pain,[19]
Not show'rs to larks, or sunshine to the bee,
Are half so charming as thy sight to me.[20]
  Go, gentle gales, and bear my sighs away!
Come, Delia, come; ah, why this long delay?
Through rocks and caves the name of Delia sounds,
Delia, each cave and echoing rock rebounds.
Ye pow'rs, what pleasing frenzy soothes my mind!
Do lovers dream, or is my Delia kind?[21]
She comes, my Delia comes!—Now cease my lay,[22]
And cease, ye gales, to bear my sighs away!
  Next Ægon sung, while Windsor groves admired;
Rehearse, ye muses, what yourselves inspired. [Pg 289]
  Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful strain!
Of perjured Doris, dying I complain:[23]
Here, where the mountains, less'ning as they rise,
Lose the low vales, and steal into the skies:
While lab'ring oxen, spent with toil and heat,
In their loose traces from the field retreat:[24]
While curling smokes from village tops are seen,
And the fleet shades glide o'er the dusky green.[25]
  Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful lay!
Beneath yon poplar oft we passed the day:
Oft on the rind I carved her am'rous vows,[26]
While she with garlands hung the bending boughs:
The garlands fade, the vows are worn away;
So dies her love, and so my hopes decay.
  Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful strain!
Now bright Arcturus[27] glads the teeming grain,
Now golden fruits on loaded branches shine,
And grateful clusters swell with floods of wine;[28]
Now blushing berries paint the yellow grove;
Just Gods! shall all things yield returns but love? [Pg 290]
  Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful lay!

The shepherds cry, "Thy flocks are left a prey"—
Ah! what avails it me, the flocks to keep,
Who lost my heart while I preserved my sheep?
Pan came, and asked, what magic caused my smart,[29]
Or what ill eyes[30] malignant glances dart?[31]
What eyes but hers, alas, have pow'r to move![32]
And is there magic but what dwells in love!
  Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful strains;
I'll fly from shepherds, flocks, and flow'ry plains,
From shepherds, flocks, and plains, I may remove,
Forsake mankind, and all the world—but love!
I know thee, Love! on foreign mountains bred,[33]
Wolves gave thee suck, and savage tigers fed.[34] [Pg 291]
Thou wert from Ætna's burning entrails torn,
Got by fierce whirlwinds, and in thunder born![35]
  Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful lay!
Farewell, ye woods, adieu the light of day!
One leap from yonder cliff shall end my pains,[36]
No more, ye hills, no more resound my strains!
  Thus sung the shepherds till th' approach of night,
The skies yet blushing with departing light,[37]
When falling dews with spangles decked the glade,
And the low sun had lengthened ev'ry shade.[38]

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] This Pastoral consists of two parts, like the eighth of Virgil: the scene, a hill; the time, at sunset.—Pope.

[2] Mr. Wycherley, a famous author of comedies; of which the most celebrated were the Plain-Dealer and Country-Wife. He was a writer of infinite spirit, satire, and wit. The only objection made to him was, that he had too much. However, he was followed in the same way by Mr. Congreve, though with a little more correctness.—Pope.

[3] Formed on Dryden's version of Ecl. i. 1:

> Beneath the shade which beechen boughs diffuse.—Wakefield.

[4] Before the edition of 1736 the couplet ran thus:

> To whose complaints the list'ning forests bend,
> While one his mistress mourns, and one his friend.

In keeping with this announcement the song of Hylas, which forms the first portion of the Pastoral, was devoted to mourning an absent *shepherd*, and not, as at present, an absent *shepherdess*. When Pope made his lines commemorative of love, instead of friendship, he did little more than change the name of the man (Thyrsis) to that of a woman (Delia), and substitute the feminine for the masculine pronoun. The extravagant idea expressed in the first line of the rejected couplet is found in Oldham's translation of Moschus:

> And trees leaned their attentive branches down.

There is nothing of the kind in the Greek text.

[5] From Dryden's version of Ecl. i. 5:

> While stretched at ease you sing your happy loves,
> And Amaryllis fills the shady groves.—Wakefield.

[6] Wycherley.

[7] He was always very careful in his encomiums not to fall into ridicule, the trap which weak and prostitute flatterers rarely escape. For "sense," he would willingly have said "moral;" propriety required it. But this dramatic poet's moral was remarkably faulty. His plays are all shamefully profligate, both in the dialogue and action.—Warburton.

Warburton's note has more the appearance of an insidious attack upon Pope than of serious commendation; for if, as Warburton assumes, the panegyric in the text has reference to the plays and not to the man, it was a misplaced "encomium" to say that Wycherley "instructed" the world by the "sense," and "swayed" them by the "judgment," which were manifested "in a shamefully profligate dialogue and action."

[8] The reading was "rapture" in all editions till that of 1736.

[9] Few writers have less nature in them than Wycherley.—Warton.

[10] Till the edition of 1736 the following lines stood in place of the couplet in the text:

> Attend the muse, though low her numbers be,
> She sings of friendship, and she sings to thee.

[11] Pope had Waller's Thyrsis and Galatea in his memory:

> Made the wide country echo to your moan,
> The list'ning trees, and savage mountains groan.—Wakefield.

The groans of the trees and mountains are, in Waller's poem, the echo of the mourner's lamentations, but to this Pope has added that the "moan" made "the rocks weep," which has no resemblance to anything in nature.

[12] The lines from verse 17 to 30 are very beautiful, tender, and melodious.—Bowles.

[13] It was a time-honoured fancy that the "moan" of the turtle-dove was a lament for the loss of its mate. *Turtur*, the Latin name for the bird, is a correct representation of its monotonous note. The poets commonly call it simply the turtle, but since the term, to quote the explanation of Johnson in his Dictionary, is also "used by sailors and gluttons for a tortoise" the description of its "deep murmurs" as "filling the sounding shores," calls up this secondary sense, and gives an air of ludicrousness to the passage.

[14] This whole passage is imitated from Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia, Book iii. p. 712, 8vo ed.:

> Earth, brook, flow'rs, pipe, lamb, dove,
> Say all, and I with them,
> Absence is death, or worse, to them that love.—Wakefield.

[15] Congreve's Mourning Muse of Alexis:

> Fade all ye flow'rs, and wither all ye woods.

[16] Virg. Ecl. viii. 52:

> aurea duræ
> Mala ferant quercus, narcisso floreat alnus;
> Pinguia corticibus sudent electra myricæ.—Pope.

His obligations are also due to Dryden's version of Ecl. iv. 21:

> Unlaboured harvests shall the fields adorn,
> And clustered grapes shall blush on ev'ry thorn:
> And knotted oaks shall show'rs of honey weep,
> And through the matted grass the liquid gold shall creep.

Bowles, in his translation of Theocritus, Idyll. v., assisted our bard:

> On brambles now let violets be born,
> And op'ning roses blush on ev'ry thorn.

He seems to have had in view also the third Eclogue of Walsh:

> Upon hard oaks let blushing peaches grow,
> And from the brambles liquid amber flow.—Wakefield.

[17] These four lines followed in the MS.:

> With him through Libyia's burning plains I'll go,
> On Alpine mountains tread th' eternal snow;
> Yet feel no heat but what our loves impart,
> And dread no coldness but in Thyrsis' heart.—Warburton.

Wakefield remarks that the second line in this passage is taken from Dryden's Virg. Ecl. x. 71:

> And climb the frozen Alps, and tread th' eternal snow.

[18] Virg. Ecl. v. 46:

> Quale sopor fessis in gramine, quale per æstum
> Dulcis aquæ saliente sitim restinguere rivo.—Pope.

[19] "Faint with pain" is both flat and improper. It is fatigue, and not pain that makes them faint.—Wakefield.

[20] The turn of the last four lines is evidently borrowed from Drummond of Hawthornden, a charming but neglected poet.

> To virgins flow'rs, to sun-burnt earth the rain,
> To mariners fair winds amid the main,
> Cool shades to pilgrims, whom hot glances burn,
> Are not so pleasing as thy blest return.—Warton.

[21] Virg. Ecl. viii. 108:

> an, qui amant, ipsi sibi somnia fingunt?—Pope.

In the first edition, conformably to the original plan of the Pastoral, the passage stood thus:

> Do lovers dream, or is my shepherd kind?
> He comes, my shepherd comes.—Wakefield.

[22] From Virg. Ecl. viii. 110:

> Parcite, ab urbe venit, jam parcite carmina, Daphnis.

Stafford's translation in Dryden's Miscellany:

> Cease, cease, my charms,
> My Daphnis comes, he comes, he flies into my arms.

[23] Dryden's Virg. Ecl. viii. 26, 29:

> While I my Nisa's perjured faith deplore.
> Yet shall my dying breath to heav'n complain.

[24] This imagery is borrowed from Milton's Comus, ver. 290:

> Two such I saw, what time the laboured ox
> In his loose traces from the furrow came.—Wakefield.

[25] Variation:

> And the fleet shades fly gliding o'er the green.—Pope.

These two verses are obviously adumbrated from the conclusion of Virgil's first eclogue, and Dryden's version of it:

> For see yon sunny hill the shade extends
> And curling smoke from cottages ascends.—Wakefield.

[26] This fancy he derived from Virgil, Ecl. x. 53:

> tenerisque meos incidere amores Arboribus.
> The rind of ev'ry plant her name shall know. Dryden.—Wakefield.

Garth's Dispensary, Canto vi:

> Their wounded bark records some broken vow,
> And willow garlands hang on ev'ry bough.

[27] According to the ancients, the weather was stormy for a few days when Arcturus rose with the sun, which took place in September, and Pope apparently means that rain at this crisis was beneficial to the standing corn. The harvest at the beginning of the last century was not so early as it is now.

[28] The scene is in Windsor Forest; so this image is not so exact.—Warburton.

[29] This is taken from Virg. Ecl. x. 26, 21:

> Pan deus Arcadiæ venit . . . .
> Omnes, unde amor iste, rogant tibi.—Wakefield.

[30] Virg. Ecl. iii. 103:

> Nescio quis teneros oculus mihi fascinat agnos.—Pope.

Dryden's version of the original:

> What magic has bewitched the woolly dams,
> And what ill eyes beheld the tender lambs.—Wakefield.

[31] It should be "darted;" the present tense is used for the sake of the rhyme.—Warton.

[32] Variation:

> What eyes but hers, alas! have pow'r on me;
> Oh mighty Love! what magic is like thee?—Pope.

[33] Virg. Ecl. viii. 43:

> Nunc scio quid sit amor. Duris in cotibus illum, etc.—Pope.

Stafford's version of the original in Dryden's Miscellanies:

> I know thee, Love! on mountains thou wast bred.

Pope was not unmindful of Dryden's translation:

> I know thee, Love! in deserts thou wert bred,
> And at the dugs of savage tigers fed.

He had in view also a passage in the Æneid, iv. 366, and Dryden's version of it:

> But hewn from hardened entrails of a rock,
> And rough Hyrcanian tigers gave thee suck.

Nor did our author overlook the parallel passage in Ovid's Epistle of Dido to Æneas, and Dryden's translation thereof:

> From hardened oak, or from a rock's cold womb,
> At least thou art from some fierce tigress come;

Or on rough seas, from their foundation torn,
Got by the winds, and in a tempest born.—Wakefield.

[34] Till the edition of Warburton, this couplet was as follows:

I know thee, Love! wild as the raging main,
More fell than tigers on the Lybian plain.

[35] Were a man to meet with such a nondescript monster as the following, viz.: "Love out of Mount Ætna by a Whirlwind," he would suppose himself reading the Racing Calendar. Yet this hybrid creature is one of the many zoological monsters to whom the Pastorals introduce us.—De Quincy.

Sentiments like these, as they have no ground in nature, are of little value in any poem, but in pastoral they are particularly liable to censure, because it wants that exaltation above common life, which in tragic or heroic writings often reconciles us to bold flights and daring figures.—Johnson.

[36] Virg. Ecl. viii. 59:

Præceps aërii specula de montis in undas
Deferar.

From yon high cliff I plunge into the main. Dryden.—Wakefield.

This passage in Pope is a strong instance of the abnegation of feeling in his Pastorals. The shepherd proclaims at the beginning of his chant that it is his dying speech, and at the end that he has resolved upon immediate suicide. Having announced the tragedy, Pope treats it with total indifference, and quietly adds, "Thus sung the shepherds," &c.

[37] Ver. 98, 100. There is a little inaccuracy here; the first line makes the time after sunset; the second before.—Warburton.

Pope had at first written:

Thus sung the swains while day yet strove with night,
And heav'n yet languished with departing light.

"Quære," he says to Walsh, "if languish be a proper word?" and Walsh answers, "Not very proper."

[38] Virg. Ecl. ii. 67:

Et sol decedens crescentes duplicat umbras.
The shadows lengthen as the sun grows low. Dryden.—Wakefield.

"Objection," Pope said to Walsh, "that to mention the sunset after twilight (*day yet strove with night*) is improper. Is the following alteration anything better?

And the brown ev'ning lengthened ev'ry shade."

Walsh. "It is not the evening, but the sun being low that lengthens the shades, otherwise the second passage is the best."

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# WINTER:[1]

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## THE FOURTH PASTORAL,

## OR

## DAPHNE.

## TO THE MEMORY OF MRS. TEMPEST.[2]

LYCIDAS.

Thyrsis, the music of that murm'ring spring
Is not so mournful as the strains you sing;[3]
Nor rivers winding through the vales below,[4] [Pg 293]
So sweetly warble, or so smoothly flow.[5]
Now sleeping flocks on their soft fleeces lie,
The moon, serene in glory, mounts the sky,
While silent birds forget their tuneful lays,
Oh sing of Daphne's fate, and Daphne's praise![6]

THYRSIS.

Behold the groves that shine with silver frost,

Their beauty withered, and their verdure lost!
Here shall I try the sweet Alexis' strain,
That called the list'ning dryads to the plain?[7]
Thames heard the numbers as he flowed along,
And bade his willows learn the moving song.[8]

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LYCIDAS.

So may kind rains[9] their vital moisture yield,
And swell the future harvest of the field.
Begin; this charge the dying Daphne gave,[10]
And said, "Ye shepherds sing around my grave!"
Sing, while beside the shaded tomb I mourn,
And with fresh bays her rural shrine adorn.[11]

THYRSIS.

Ye gentle muses, leave your crystal spring,
Let nymphs and sylvans cypress garlands bring
Ye weeping loves, the stream with myrtles hide,[12]
And break your bows, as when Adonis died;[13]
And with your golden darts, now useless grown,
Inscribe a verse on this relenting stone:
"Let nature change, let heav'n and earth deplore,
"Fair Daphne's dead, and love is now no more!"[14]
'Tis done, and nature's various charms decay,[15]

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See gloomy clouds obscure the cheerful day!
Now hung with pearls the dropping trees appear,[16]
Their faded honours scattered on her bier.[17]
See, where on earth the flow'ry glories lie,
With her they flourished, and with her they die.[18]
Ah what avail the beauties nature wore?
Fair Daphne's dead, and beauty is no more!
For her the flocks refuse their verdant food,
The thirsty heifers shun the gliding flood,[19]
The silver swans her hapless fate bemoan,
In notes more sad than when they sing their own;[20]

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In hollow caves[21] sweet echo[22] silent lies,[23]
Silent, or only to her name replies:[24]
Her name with pleasure once she taught the shore,
Now Daphne's dead, and pleasure is no more!
No grateful dews descend from ev'ning skies,
Nor morning odours from the flow'rs arise;
No rich perfumes refresh the fruitful field,
No fragrant herbs their native incense yield.[25]
The balmy zephyrs, silent since her death,
Lament the ceasing of a sweeter breath;[26]
Th' industrious bees neglect their golden store![27]
Fair Daphne's dead, and sweetness is no more![28]
No more the mountain larks, while Daphne sings,[29]
Shall list'ning in mid-air suspend their wings;[30]
No more the birds shall imitate her lays,[31]

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Or hushed with wonder, hearken from the sprays:
No more the streams their murmurs shall forbear,
A sweeter music than their own to hear,[32]
But tell the reeds, and tell the vocal shore,
Fair Daphne's dead, and music is no more!
Her fate is whispered by the gentle breeze,
And told in sighs to all the trembling trees;
The trembling trees, in ev'ry plain and wood,
Her fate remurmur to the silver flood;[33]
The silver flood, so lately calm, appears
Swelled[34] with new passion, and o'erflows with tears;[35]
The winds, and trees, and floods, her death deplore,[36]
Daphne, our grief! our glory now no more!

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But see! where Daphne wond'ring mounts on high[37]
Above the clouds, above the starry sky![38]
Eternal beauties grace the shining scene,
Fields ever fresh, and groves for ever green!

There while you rest in amaranthine bow'rs,
Or from those meads select unfading flow'rs,
Behold us kindly, who your name implore,
Daphne our goddess! and our grief no more!

LYCIDAS.

How all things listen, while thy muse complains![39]
Such silence waits on Philomela's strains,
In some still ev'ning, when the whisp'ring breeze
Pants on the leaves, and dies upon the trees.[40]
To thee, bright goddess, oft a lamb shall bleed,[41]
If teeming ewes increase my fleecy breed.
While plants their shade, or flow'rs their odours give,[42]
Thy name, thy honour, and thy praise shall live![43]

THYRSIS.

But see, Orion sheds unwholesome dews:[44]
Arise; the pines a noxious shade diffuse;
Sharp Boreas blows, and nature feels decay,
Time conquers all, and we must time obey,[45]
Adieu ye vales, ye mountains, streams, and groves,
Adieu ye shepherds' rural lays and loves;
Adieu, my flocks;[46] farewell, ye sylvan crew;
Daphne, farewell; and all the word adieu![47]

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] This was the poet's favourite Pastoral.—Warburton.

It is professedly an imitation of Theocritus, whom Pope does not resemble, and whose Idylls he could only have read in a translation. The sources from which he really borrowed his materials will be seen in the notes.

[2] This lady was of ancient family in Yorkshire, and particularly admired by the author's friend Mr. Walsh, who having celebrated her in a Pastoral Elegy, desired his friend to do the same, as appears from one of his letters, dated Sept. 9, 1706. "Your last Eclogue being on the same subject with mine on Mrs. Tempest's death, I should take it very kindly in you to give it a little turn, as if it were to the memory of the same lady." Her death having happened on the night of the great storm in 1703, gave a propriety to this Eclogue, which in its general turn alludes to it. The scene of the Pastoral lies in a grove, the time at midnight.—Pope.

I do not find any lines that allude to the great storm of which the poet speaks.—Warton.

Nor I. On the contrary, all the allusions to the winds are of the gentler kind,—"balmy Zephyrs," "whispering breezes" and so forth. Miss Tempest was the daughter of Henry Tempest, of Newton Grange, York, and grand-daughter of Sir John Tempest, Bart. She died unmarried. When Pope's Pastoral first appeared in Tonson's Miscellany, it was entitled "To the memory of a Fair Young Lady."—Croker.

[3] This couplet was constructed from Creech's translation of the first Idyll of Theocritus:

> And, shepherd, sweeter notes thy pipe do fill
> Than murm'ring springs that roll from yonder hill.—Wakefield.

[4] Suggested by Virg. Ecl. v. 83:

> nec quæ
> Saxosas inter decurrunt flumina valles.
>
> For winding streams that through the valley glide. Dryden.—Wakefield.

[5] Milton, Par. Lost, v. 195:

> Fountains, and ye that warble, as ye flow,
> Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.

[6] Variation:

> In the warm folds the tender flocks remain,
> The cattle slumber on the silent plain,
> While silent birds neglect their tuneful lays,
> Let us, dear Thyrsis, sing of Daphne's praise.—Pope.

It was originally,

> Now in warm folds the tender flock remains.

Pope. "Objection to the word *remains*. I do not know whether these following be better

or no, and desire your opinion.

> Now while the groves in Cynthia's beams are dressed,
> And folded flocks in their soft fleeces rest;
> While sleeping birds, etc.

Or,

> While Cynthia tips with silver all the groves,
> And scarce the winds the topmast branches moves.

or

> While the bright moon with silver tips the grove,
> And not a breeze the quiv'ring branches move."

Walsh. "I think the last the best, but might not even that be mended?"

[7] Garth's Dispensary, Canto iv.:

> As tuneful Congreve tries his rural strains,
> Pan quits the woods, the list'ning fauns the plains.

Dryden's Virgil, Ecl. vi. 100:

> And called the mountain ashes to the plain.

Among the poems of Congreve is one entitled "The Mourning Muse of Alexis, a Pastoral lamenting the death of Queen Mary." This was the "sweet Alexis strain" to which Pope referred, and which the Thames "bade his willows learn."

[8] Virg. Ecl. vi. 83:

> Audiit Eurotas, jussitque ediscere lauros.—Pope.

Admitting that a river gently flowing may be imagined a sensible being listening to a song, I cannot enter into the conceit of the river's ordering his laurels to learn the song. Here all resemblance to anything real is quite lost. This however is copied literally by Pope.—Lord Kames.

[9] There is some connection implied between the "kind rains" and the "willows learning the song," but I cannot trace the idea.

[10] Virg. Ecl. v. 41:

> mandat fieri sibi talia Daphnis.

[11] Rowe's Ambitious Step-Mother:

> And with fresh roses strew thy virgin urn.—Steevens.

[12] Ver. 23, 24, 25. Virg. Ecl. v. 40, 42:

inducite fontibus umbras.... Et tumulum facite, et tumulo superaddite carmen.—Pope.

If the idea of "hiding the stream with myrtles" have either beauty or propriety, I am unable to discover them. Our poet unfortunately followed Dryden's turn of the original phrase in Virgil:

> With cypress boughs the crystal fountains hide.—Wakefield.

[13] This image is taken from Ovid's elegy on the death of Tibullus, Amor. iii. 9. 6:

> Ecce! puer Veneris fert eversamque pharetram,
> Et fractos arcus, et sine luce facem.—Wakefield.

Ovid copied Bion. Idyl. 1. The Greek poet represents the Loves as trampling upon their bows and arrows, and breaking their quivers in the first paroxysm of their grief for Adonis. In place of this natural burst of uncontrollable sorrow, the shepherd, in Pope, invokes the Loves to break their bows at his instigation. When their darts are said in the next line to be henceforth useless, the sense must be that nobody would love any woman again since Mrs. Tempest was dead. Such hyperboles can neither touch the heart nor gratify the understanding. The Pastorals were verse exercises in which every pretence to real emotion was laid aside, for Pope was not even acquainted with the lady of whom he utters these extravagances.

[14] This is imitated from Walsh's Pastoral on the death of Mrs. Tempest in Dryden's Miscellanies, vol. v. p. 323:

> Now shepherds! now lament, and now deplore!
> Delia is dead, and beauty is no more.—Wakefield.

Congreve's Mourning Muse of Alexis:

> All nature mourns; the floods and rocks deplore
> And cry with me, Pastora is no more.

[15] Originally thus in the MS.

> 'Tis done, and nature's changed since you are gone;

Behold the clouds have put their mourning on.—WARBURTON.

This low conceit, which our poet abandoned for the present reading, was borrowed from Oldham's version of the elegy of Moschus:

For thee, dear swain, for thee, his much-loved son,
Does Phœbus clouds of mourning black put on.—WAKEFIELD.

When Pope submitted the rejected and the adopted reading to Walsh, the critic replied, "*Clouds put on mourning* is too conceited for pastoral. The second is better, and *the thick* or *the dark* I like better than *sable*." The last verse of the couplet in the text was then

See sable clouds eclipse the cheerful day.

[16] Dryden's pastoral elegy on the death of Amyntas:

'Twas on a joyless and a gloomy morn,
Wet was the grass and hung with pearls the thorn.

So in his version of Virgil, Ecl. x. 20:

And hung with humid pearls the lowly shrub appears.—WAKEFIELD.

[17] Spenser's Colin Clout:

The fields with faded flow'rs did seem to mourn.

[18] Oldham's translation of Moschus:

Each flower fades and hangs its withered head,
And scorns to thrive or live now thou art dead.—WAKEFIELD.

[19] Variation:

For her the flocks the dewy herbs disdain,
Nor hungry heifers graze the tender plain.—POPE.

Dryden's Virg. Ecl. v. 38:

The thirsty cattle of themselves abstained
From water, and their grassy fare disdained.

Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar, November, ver. 123, where

The feeble flocks in field refuse their former food,

because Dido is dead.

[20] Oldham's translation of Moschus:

Ye gentle swans....
In doleful notes the heavy loss bewail
Such as you sing at your own funeral.—WAKEFIELD.

[21] Cowley in his verses on Echo:

Ah! gentle nymph! who lik'st so well
In hollow solitary caves to dwell.—WAKEFIELD.

[22] This expression of "sweet echo" is taken from Comus.—WARTON.

[23] Oldham's translation of Moschus:

Sad echo too does in deep silence moan,
Since thou art mute, since thou art speechless grown.—WAKEFIELD.

[24] The couplet was different in the early editions:

Echo no more the rural song rebounds;
Her name alone the mournful echo sounds.

[25] In the MS.

Which but for you did all its incense yield.

This, with the reading in the text, was laid before Walsh, who selected the latter.

[26] Oldham's translation of Moschus:

Fair Galatea too laments thy death,
Laments the ceasing of thy tuneful breath.

Sedley's Elegy:

Here sportive zephyrs cease their selfish play
Despairing now to fetch perfumes away.—WAKEFIELD.

The couplet in the text is the third passage in Pope's Pastorals for which Ruffhead claims the merit of originality. The quotations of Wakefield show that the thought and the

language are alike borrowed, and the only novelty is the bull, pointed out by Johnson, of making the *zephyrs* lament in *silence*.

[27] Oldham's version of Moschus:

> The painful bees neglect their wonted toil.—WAKEFIELD.

[28] The same:

> Alas! what boots it now thy hives to store,
> When thou, that wast all sweetness, art no more.—WAKEFIELD.

[29] In the original draught Pope had again introduced the wolves, and the first four lines of this paragraph stood thus:

> No more the wolves, when you your numbers try,
> Shall cease to follow, and the lambs to fly:
> No more the birds shall imitate your lays,
> Or, charmed to silence, listen from the sprays.

[30] The image of the birds listening with their wings suspended in mid-air is striking, and, I trust, new.—RUFFHEAD.

This circumstance of the lark suspending its wings in mid-air is highly beautiful, because there is a *veri similitudo* in it, which is not the case where a waterfall is made to be suspended by the power of music.—BOWLES.

[31] Oldham's translation of Moschus:

> The feathered choir that used to throng
> In list'ning flocks to learn his well-tuned song.

The line in the text was the earliest reading in the manuscript, but did not appear in print till the edition of Warburton. The reading in the previous editions was,

> No more the nightingales repeat her lays.

This idea of the nightingale repeating the lays is amplified by Philips in his Fifth Pastoral, who copied it, according to Pope in the Guardian, from Strada. Thence also it must have been borrowed by Pope, and he may have restored the primitive version to get rid of the coincidence.

[32] The *veri similitudo*, which Bowles commends in the description of the lark, is not to be found in the notion of the streams ceasing to murmur that they might listen to the song of Daphne. Milton does a similar violence to fact and imagination in his Comus, ver. 494, and many lesser poets, before and after him, adopted the poor conceit.

[33] Dryden's Æneis, vii. 1041:

> Yet his untimely fate th' Angitian woods
> In sighs remurmured to the Fucine floods.—WAKEFIELD.

[34] This is barbarous: he should have written "swoln."—WAKEFIELD.

[35] Ovid, Met. xi. 47:

> lacrimis quoque flumina dicunt
> Increvisse suis.

Oldham's translation of Moschus:

> The rivers too, as if they would deplore
> Her death, with grief swell higher than before.

Fenton in his pastoral on the Marquis of Blandford's death:

> And, swoln with tears, to floods the riv'lets ride.—WAKEFIELD.

[36] Let grief or love have the power to animate the winds, the trees, the floods, provided the figure be dispatched in a single expression, but when this figure is deliberately spread out with great accuracy through many lines, the reader, instead of relishing it, is struck with its ridiculous appearance.—LORD KAMES.

All this is very poor, and unworthy Pope. First the breeze whispers the death of Daphne to the trees; then the trees inform the flood of it; then the flood o'erflows with tears; and then they all deplore together. The whole pastoral would have been much more classical, correct, and pure, if these lines had been omitted. Let us, however, still remember the youth of Pope, and the example of prior poets.—BOWLES.

Moschus in his third Idyll calls upon the nightingales to tell the river Arethusa that Bion is dead. Oldham in his imitation of Moschus exaggerated his original and commanded the nightingales to tell the news "to *all* the British floods,"—to see that it was "conveyed to Isis, Cam, Thames, Humber, and utmost Tweed," and these in turn were to be ordered "to waft the bitter tidings on." Pope went further than Oldham, and describes one class of inanimate objects as conveying the intelligence to another class of inanimate objects till the whole uttered lamentations in chorus. Each succeeding copyist endeavoured to eclipse his predecessor by going beyond him in absurdity. Most of the ideas adopted by Pope in his Winter had been employed by scores of elegiac bards. "The numerous pastorals upon the death of princes or friends," says Dr. Trapp, "are cast in the same

mould; read one, you read all. Birds, sheep, woods, mountains, rivers, are full of complaints. Everything in short is wondrous miserable."

[37] Virg. Ecl. v. 56:

> miratur limen Olympi,
> Sub pedibusque videt nubes et sidera Daphnis.—Pope.

Dryden thus renders the passage in Virgil:

> Daphnis, the guest of heav'n, with wond'ring eyes
> Views in the milky way the starry skies.—Wakefield.

[38] In Spenser's November, and in Milton's Lycidas, there is the same beautiful change of circumstances.—Warton.

It was one of the stereotyped common-places of elegiac poems, and was ridiculed in No. 30 of the Guardian. The writer might almost be thought to have had this passage of Pope in his mind, if his satire did not equally apply to a hundred authors besides. A shepherd announces to his fellow-swain that Damon is dead. "This," says the Guardian, "immediately causes the other to make complaints, and call upon the lofty pines and silver streams to join in the lamentation. While he goes on, his friend interrupts him, and tells him that Damon lives, and shows him a track of light in the skies to conform to it. Upon this scheme most of the noble families in Great Britain have been comforted; nor can I meet with any right honourable shepherd that doth not die and live again, after the manner of the aforesaid Damon."

[39] The four opening lines of the speech of Lycidas were as follows in the MS.:

> Thy songs, dear Thyrsis, more delight my mind
> Than the soft whisper of the breathing wind,
> Or whisp'ring groves, when some expiring breeze
> Pants on the leaves, and trembles in the trees.

The first couplet of the original reading, and the phrase "trembles in the trees," in the second couplet, were from Dryden's Virg. Ecl. v. 128:

> Not the soft whispers of the southern wind,
> That play through trembling trees, delight me more.

[40] Milton, Il Penseroso:

> When the gust hath blown his fill
> Ending on the rustling leaves.

[41] Virg. Ecl. i. 7:

> illius aram
> Sæpe tener, nostris ab ovilibus, imbuet agnus.—Pope.

He partly follows Dryden's translation of his original:

> The tender firstlings of my woolly breed
> Shall on his holy altar often bleed.—Wakefield.

[42] Originally thus in the MS.

> While vapours rise, and driving snows descend.
> Thy honour, name, and praise shall never end.—Warburton.

[43] Virg. Ecl. v. 76:

> Dum juga montis aper, fluvios dum piscis amabit,
> Dumque thymo pascentur apes, dum rore cicadæ,
> Semper honos, nomenque tuum, laudesque manebunt.—Wakefield.

[44] Virg. Ecl. x. 75:

> solet esse gravis cantantibus umbra;
> Juniperi gravis umbra.—Pope.

Dryden's version of the passage is,

> From juniper unwholesome dews distil.—Wakefield.

[45] Virg. Ecl. x. 69:

> Omnia vincit amor; et nos cedamus amori.

Vid. etiam Sannazarii Ecl. et Spenser's Calendar.—Warburton.

Dryden's verse is:

> Love conquers all, and we must yield to love.—Wakefield.

[46] There is a passage resembling this in Walsh's third eclogue:

> Adieu, ye flocks, no more shall I pursue;
> Adieu, ye groves; a long, a long adieu.—Wakefield.

[47] These four last lines allude to the several subjects of the four Pastorals, and to the several scenes of them particularized before in each—Pope.

They should have been added by the poet in his own person, instead of being put into the mouth of a shepherd who is not presumed to have any knowledge of the previous pieces. The specific character which Pope ascribes to each of his Pastorals is not borne out by the poems themselves. There is as much about "flocks" in the first Pastoral as in the second; and there is as much about "rural lays and loves" in the second Pastoral as in the first. The third Pastoral contains no mention of a "sylvan crew," but a couple of shepherds are absorbed by the same "rural lays and loves" which occupied their predecessors.

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# MESSIAH,

[Pg 301]

## A SACRED ECLOGUE:

## IN IMITATION OF VIRGIL'S POLLIO.

### ADVERTISEMENT.

[Pg 303]

In reading several passages of the Prophet Isaiah, which foretell the coming of Christ and the felicities attending it, I could not but observe a remarkable parity between many of the thoughts, and those in the Pollio of Virgil. This will not seem surprising, when we reflect, that the Eclogue was taken from a Sibylline prophecy on the same subject. One may judge that Virgil did not copy it line by line, but selected such ideas as best agreed with the nature of pastoral poetry, and disposed them in that manner which served most to beautify his piece. I have endeavoured the same in this imitation of him, though without admitting anything of my own; since it was written with this particular view, that the reader, by comparing the several thoughts, might see how far the images and descriptions of the prophet are superior to those of the poet. But as I fear I have prejudiced them by my management, I shall subjoin the passages of Isaiah, and those of Virgil, under the same disadvantage of a literal translation.[1]

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This is certainly the most animated and sublime of all our author's compositions, and it is manifestly owing to the great original which he copied. Perhaps the dignity, the energy, and the simplicity of the original, are in a few passages weakened and diminished by florid epithets, and useless circumlocutions.—Warton.

All things considered, the Messiah is as fine and masterly a piece of composition as the English language, in the same style of verse, can boast. I have ventured to point out a passage or two, for they are rare, where the sublimity has been weakened by epithets; and I have done this, because it is a fault, particularly with young writers, so common. In the most truly sublime images of Scripture, the addition of a single word would often destroy their effect. It is therefore right to keep as nearly as possible to the very words. No one understood better than Milton where to be general, and where particular; where to adopt the very expression of Scripture, and where it was allowed to paraphrase.—Bowles.

The fourth eclogue of Virgil is devoted to celebrating the coming birth, while Pollio is Consul, of a boy whose infancy will usher in the golden age, and whose manhood will witness its fullness. Wars are to cease; the beasts of prey are to change their natures; the untilled earth is to bring forth fruits spontaneously; and peace, ease, and plenty are to reign supreme. The names of the parents of this expected child are not recorded, and the commentators are greatly divided upon the question. The most reasonable conjecture is that the intention was to do homage to the ruling genius at Rome, Augustus, or Cæsar Octavianus, as he was then called, whose wife Scribonia was pregnant at the time. Unhappily for the prognostications of the poet the infant "proved a daughter, and the infamous Julia."[2] Virgil grounds his glowing anticipations upon certain Cumæan or Sibylline verses; for, as Jortin well remarks, he would have deprived his announcement of all authority if he himself had set up for a prophet. He could only hope to accredit his promised marvels by appealing to an oracle that was popularly believed to be inspired. "The Sibylline books," says Prideaux, "were a main engine of state. When they were ordered to be consulted the keepers of them always brought forth such an answer as served their purpose, and in many difficulties the governors helped themselves this way."[3] Virgil was equally diplomatic. He probably had no faith in the wonders he announced. His object was to pay court to Augustus, and to assist in establishing his patron's power.

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The resemblance which portions of the Pollio bear to passages in Isaiah is generally admitted. "This," says Pope, "will not seem surprising when we reflect that the Eclogue was taken from a Sibylline prophecy on the same subject." He does not attempt to explain how the Sibyl came by her knowledge, unless he means us to infer that she was divinely illuminated. This theory has been supported by learned men, and would be warranted if the eight books of Sibylline oracles, still extant in Greek verse, were anterior to the Christian era; for since they often go beyond the Old Testament predictions in historic precision, the insight into futurity could not have been gathered exclusively from the Scripture prophets. But the existing oracles, says Jortin, "are without any one exception, mere impostures. They abound with phrases, words, facts, and

passages taken from the Septuagint and the New Testament, and are a remarkable specimen of astonishing impudence, and miserable poetry."[4] Still there remains the circumstance of the parallelism between parts of Isaiah and the Eclogue which Virgil based upon the Sibylline verses. It is easy to account for the coincidence. The original Sibylline books were accidentally burnt B. C. 83. A few years later the senate employed agents to glean together from Italy, Greece, Sicily and Africa a body of prophecies to replace the oracles which had perished. The collection was from private as well as public sources, and a vast number of the same or similar predictions were in the hands of individuals at Rome. The Jews were located everywhere; they abounded in Rome itself; they were animated by the expectation that the reign of the Messiah was approaching; their prophetic records were incomparable for poetic beauty, sublimity, and variety; the language of the Septuagint was well understood by lettered pagans, and was even the language of the new Sibylline oracles, which were embodied in Greek verse. When all these things are considered, it would be strange if the persons employed to pick up prophecies had not come across notions, which had either been derived from personal intercourse with Jews, or from their sacred books. Although the entire world had been sunk in stupid apathy, and not a single heathen had been attracted by curiosity to turn his attention to Hebrew literature and beliefs, it was yet inevitable that a crude conception should get abroad of the leading idea which fermented in the mind of the ubiquitous Jew, and nothing was more likely than that it should be put into Sibylline verse when Roman agents were searching far and wide for oracles, and inviting contributions from every quarter. [Pg 307]

Pope's Messiah first appeared in the Spectator for May 14, 1712, No. 378, where it is prefaced by these words: "I will make no apology for entertaining the reader with the following poem, which is written by a great genius, a friend of mine, in the country, who is not ashamed to employ his wit in the praise of his Maker." After it was published, Steele wrote on June 1, 1712, to Pope, and said, "I have turned to every verse and chapter, and think you have preserved the sublime heavenly spirit throughout the whole, especially at 'Hark a glad voice,' and 'The lamb with wolves shall graze.' Your poem is better than the Pollio." Upon this Johnson remarks, "That the Messiah excels the Pollio is no great praise, if it be considered from what original the improvements are derived." Bowles and Warton thought that Pope had kept up his verse to the level of Isaiah, and had only here and there weakened the sublimity by epithets. Wordsworth was of another opinion. When he contended that the language of poetry should be a selection from the real language of men "in a state of vivid sensation," and repudiated the ornate conventional phraseology which passed for poetic diction, he pointed to the paraphrases on parts of the Bible in illustration of what he condemned, and to the passages as they exist in our authorised version for a specimen of what he approved. "Pope's Messiah throughout" was in his apprehension an adulteration of the original.[5] His criticism appears well founded. The pure and natural language of the prophet is sometimes exchanged for sickly, affected expressions. "Righteousness" becomes "dewy nectar," "sheep" the "fleecy care," and the call upon Jerusalem to "Arise and shine" is turned into an invocation to "exalt her tow'ry head." Apart from these mawkish phrases, the imitation is framed from first to last upon the mistaken principle that the original would be embellished by amplifications, by a profusion of epithets, and by a gaudier diction. The "fir-tree and box-tree" of Isaiah are called by Pope "the *spiry* fir, and *shapely* box." Where the sacred text announces that "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle-tree," Pope tells us that

> "To *leafless* shrubs the *flow'ring* palms succeed,
> And *od'rous* myrtle to the *noisome* weed."

In his translation of the prediction, that in the kingdom of Christ, "the sucking-child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den," Pope makes the cockatrice a "*crested* basilisk," and the asp a "*speckled* snake;" they have both scales of a "*green* lustre," and a "*forky* tongue," and with this last the "*smiling* infant shall *innocently* play." "The leopard," says Isaiah, "shall lie down with the kid, and the young lion, and the fatling [Pg 308] together; and a little child shall lead them"; but Pope could not leave this exquisite picture undecorated, and with him "boys in *flow'ry* bands the tiger lead." How grievously is the force and pathos of the passage impaired by the substitution of "boys" for the "little child"; how completely is the bewitching nature turned into masquerade by the engrafted notion that the beasts are led by "*flow'ry* bands." The alteration is an example of the justice of De Quincey's observation that "the Arcadia of Pope's age was the spurious Arcadia of the opera theatre."[6] The prophet refers anew to the time when creatures of prey shall cease to be carnivorous, and relates that "the lion shall eat straw like the bullock, and dust shall be the serpent's meat." Pope converts the second clause into the statement that "harmless serpents lick the pilgrim's feet," which alters the meaning, and introduces a conception more noticeable for its grotesqueness than for the enchanting vision it should conjure up of universal peace.[7] Pope says he was induced to subjoin in his notes the passages he had versified by "the fear that he had prejudiced Isaiah and Virgil by his management." The reputation of Isaiah and Virgil was safe, and no one can doubt that his real reason for inviting the comparison was the belief that he had improved upon them. He imagined that he had enriched the text of the prophet, and did not suspect that the majesty and truth of the original were vitiated by his embroidery. Bowles has drawn attention to the finest parts of the poem, and it may be allowed that the piece in general is powerful of its kind. The fault is in the kind itself, which belongs to a lower style than the living strains of Isaiah, and borders too closely upon the meretricious to suit the lofty theme. The Messiah is a prophetic vision of a golden age, and on this account was classed by Pope among his Pastorals.[8]

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] Pope printed in his notes only those passages of Isaiah which had some resemblance to the ideas of Virgil. To the other portions of the prophet which he put into verse he merely gave references.

[2] Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. i, p. 323.

[3] Prideaux's Connection, ed. Wheeler, vol. ii, p. 518.

[4] Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. p. 318.

[5] Wordsworth's Works, ed. 1836, vol. ii. p. 343.

[6] De Quincey's Works, vol. xv. p. 115.

[7] Such is the difference of taste that Wakefield says of Pope's variation, "This is indeed a glorious improvement on the sublime original. The diction has the true doric simplicity in perfection, and poetic genius never gave birth to a more delicate and pleasing image."

[8] Singer's Spence, p. 236.

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# MESSIAH,

[Pg 309]

## A SACRED ECLOGUE:

## IN IMITATION OF VIRGIL'S POLLIO.

Ye Nymphs of Solyma![1] begin the song:
To heav'nly themes sublimer strains[2] belong.
The mossy fountains, and the sylvan shades,
The dreams of Pindus[3] and th' Aonian maids,
Delight no more[4]—O Thou my voice inspire
Who touched Isaiah's hallowed lips with fire![5]
  Rapt[6] into future times, the bard begun:[7]
A virgin shall conceive, a virgin bear a son![8]
From Jesse's[9] root behold a branch arise, [Pg 310]
Whose sacred flow'r with fragrance fills the skies:
Th' ethereal Spirit o'er its leaves shall move,
And on its top descends the mystic dove.[10]
Ye heav'ns! from high the dewy nectar pour,[11]
And in soft silence shed the kindly show'r![12]
The sick[13] and weak the healing plant shall aid,
From storms a shelter, and from heat a shade.
All crimes shall cease, and ancient fraud[14] shall fail;
Returning Justice[15] lift aloft her scale;
Peace o'er the world her olive wand extend,
And white-robed Innocence from heaven descend.
Swift fly the years,[16] and rise th' expected morn! [Pg 311]
Oh spring to light, auspicious babe, be born![17]
See Nature hastes her earliest wreaths to bring,[18]
With all the incense of the breathing spring:[19]
See lofty Lebanon[20] his head advance;
See nodding forests on the mountains dance:[21]
See spicy clouds from lowly Saron rise,
And Carmel's flow'ry top perfumes the skies!
Hark! a glad voice the lonely desert cheers;
Prepare the way![22] a God, a God appears: [Pg 312]
A God, a God![23] the vocal hills reply,
The rocks proclaim th' approaching deity.
Lo, earth receives him from the bending skies!
Sink down, ye mountains, and, ye valleys, rise;
With heads declined, ye cedars, homage pay;[24]
Be smooth, ye rocks;[25] ye rapid floods, give way!
The Saviour comes! by ancient bards foretold!
Hear him, ye deaf, and all ye blind, behold![26]
He from thick films shall purge the visual ray,[27]
And on the sightless eye-ball pour the day: [Pg 313]

'Tis he th' obstructed paths of sound shall clear,[28]
And bid new music charm th' unfolding ear:
The dumb shall sing, the lame his crutch forego,
And leap exulting like the bounding roe.[29]
No sigh, no murmur the wide world shall hear,[30]
From ev'ry face he wipes off ev'ry tear,[31]
In adamantine[32] chains shall Death be bound,
And hell's grim tyrant feel th' eternal wound.
As the good shepherd tends his fleecy care,
Seeks freshest pasture and the purest air,
Explores the lost, the wand'ring sheep directs,
By day o'ersees them, and by night protects,
The tender lambs he[33] raises in his arms,[34]
Feeds from his hand, and in his bosom warms;[35]
Thus shall mankind his guardian care engage,
The promised Father[36] of the future age. [Pg 314]
No more shall nation[37] against nation rise,
Nor ardent warriors meet with hateful eyes,
Nor fields with gleaming steel be covered o'er,[38]
The brazen trumpets kindle rage no more;[39]
But useless lances into scythes shall bend,
And the broad faulchion in a plow-share end.
Then palaces shall rise; the joyful son[40]
Shall finish what his short-lived sire begun;[41]
Their vines a shadow to their race shall yield,[42]
And the same hand that sowed, shall reap the field.
The swain in barren deserts[43] with surprise
Sees lilies spring, and sudden verdure rise;[44]
And starts, amidst the thirsty wilds, to hear
New fells of water murm'ring in his ear.[45]
On rifted rocks, the dragon's late abodes,
The green reed trembles, and the bulrush nods. [Pg 315]
Waste sandy valleys,[46] once perplexed with thorn,
The spiry fir and shapely box adorn;
To leafless shrubs the flow'ring palms succeed,
And od'rous myrtle to the noisome weed.
The lambs with wolves shall graze the verdant mead,[47]
And boys in flow'ry bands the tiger lead;[48]
The steer and lion at one crib shall meet,[49]
And harmless serpents lick the pilgrim's feet.[50]
The smiling infant in his hand shall take
The crested basilisk and speckled snake,
Pleased, the green lustre of the scales survey,
And with their forky tongue shall innocently play.[51]
Rise, crowned with light, imperial Salem,[52] rise![53] [Pg 316]
Exalt thy tow'ry head,[54] and lift thy eyes![55]
See, a long race[56] thy spacious courts adorn;
See future sons, and daughters yet unborn,
In crowding ranks on ev'ry side arise,
Demanding life, impatient for the skies!
See barb'rous nations[57] at thy gates attend,
Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend;
See thy bright altars thronged with prostrate kings,
And heaped with products of Sabæan[58] springs![59]
For thee Idume's spicy forests blow,
And seeds of gold in Ophir's mountains glow.
See heav'n its sparkling portals wide display,
And break upon thee in a flood of day.[60]
No more the rising sun[61] shall gild the morn,
Nor ev'ning Cynthia[62] fill her silver horn;
But lost, dissolved in thy superior rays,
One tide of glory,[63] one unclouded blaze [Pg 317]
O'erflow thy courts: the Light himself shall shine
Revealed, and God's eternal day be thine![64]
The seas shall waste, the skies in smoke decay,[65]
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away;
But fixed his word, his saving power remains:

Thy realm for ever lasts, thy own MESSIAH reigns!

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] Solyma is the latter part of the Greek name for Jerusalem, Ἱεροσολυμα.

[2] Dryden's Virg. Ecl. iv. 1.

> Sicilian muse, begin a loftier strain—WAKEFIELD.

[3] The poets of antiquity were thought to receive inspired dreams by sleeping on the poetic mountains.—WAKEFIELD.

[4] The pause and words are evidently from Dryden, a greater harmonist, if I may say so, than Pope:

> The lovely shrubs and trees that shade the plain,
> Delight not all.—BOWLES.

[5] Alluding to Isaiah vi. 6, 7. "Then flew one of the Seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo! this hath touched thy lips." Milton had already made the same allusion to Isaiah, at the close of his Hymn on the Nativity:

> And join thy voice unto the angel quire,
> From out his sacred altar touched with hallowed fire.—WAKEFIELD.

[6] Rapt, that is, carried forwards from the present scene of things into a distant period, from the Latin *rapio*.—WAKEFIELD.

[7] The poet wrongly uses "begun," instead of the past, began.—WAKEFIELD.

[8] Virg. Ecl. iv. 6:

> Jam redit et Virge, redeunt Saturnia regna;
> Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto.—
> Te duce, si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri,
> Irrita perpetua solvent formidine terras.—
> Pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem.

"*Now the Virgin returns, now the kingdom of Saturn returns, now a new progeny is sent down from high heaven. By means of thee, whatever reliques of our crimes remain, shall be wiped away, and free the world from perpetual fears. He shall govern the earth in peace, with the virtues of his father.*"

Isaiah vii. 14. "*Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son.*" Ch. ix. ver. 6, 7. "*Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,—the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government, and of his peace, there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, for ever and ever.*"—POPE.

By "the virgin" Virgil meant Astræa, or Justice, who is said by the poets to have been driven from earth by the wickedness of mankind.—PROFESSOR MARTYN.

[9] Isaiah xi. i.—POPE. "*And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.*"

[10] Pope lowers the comparison when he follows it out into details, and likens the endowments of the Messiah to leaves, and his head to the top of a tree on which the dove descends.

[11] Isaiah xlv. 8.—POPE. "*Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness.*"

[12] Dryden's Don Sebastian:

> But shed from nature like a kindly show'r.—STEEVENS.

[13] Isaiah xxv. 4,—POPE. "*For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat.*"

[14] Warburton says that Pope referred to the fraud of the serpent, but the allusion is more general, and the poet had probably in his mind the "priscæ vestigia fraudis," which Wakefield quotes from Virg. Ecl. iv. 31, and which Dryden renders

> Yet of old fraud some footsteps shall remain.

[15] Isaiah ix. 7.—POPE.

For Justice was fabled by the poets to quit the earth at the conclusion of the golden age. —WAKEFIELD.

[16] This animated apostrophe is grounded on that of Virg. Ecl. iv. 46:

> Talia sæcla . . . currite . . .—WAKEFIELD.

[17] This seems a palpable imitation of Callimachus, Hymn. Del. 214, but where our poet fell upon it I cannot discover.—WAKEFIELD.

[18] Virg. Ecl. iv. 18:

> At tibi prima, puer, nullo munuscula cultu,
> Errantes hederas passim cum baccare tellus,
> Mixtaque ridenti colocasia fundet acantho.—
> Ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores.

"*For thee, O child, shall the earth, without being tilled, produce her early offerings; winding ivy, mixed with Baccar, and Colocasia with smiling Acanthus. Thy cradle shall pour forth pleasing flowers about thee.*"

Isaiah xxxv. 1. "*The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.*" Chap. lx. 13. "*The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary.*"—Pope.

[19] This couplet has too much prettiness, and too modern an air.—Warton.

[20] Isaiah xxxv. 2.—Pope. "*It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.*"

[21] An improper and burlesque image.—Warton.

The line is too particular; it brings the image too close, and by exhibiting the action stronger than poetical propriety and sublimity required, destroys the intended effect. In images of this sort, the greatest care should be taken just to present the idea, but not to detail it,—otherwise it becomes, in the language of Shakespeare, like "ambition that o'er-leaps itself."—Bowles.

Pope copied Dryden's translation of Virgil, Ecl. vi. 44, quoted by Wakefield;

> And silver fauns and savage beasts advanced,
> And nodding forests to the numbers danced,

[22] Virg. Ecl. iv. 46:

> Aggredere, ô magnos, aderit jam tempus, honores,
> Cara deum soboles, magnum Jovis incrementum.

Ecl. v. 62:

> Ipsi lætitia voces ad sidera jactan
> Intonsi montes, ipsæ jam carmina rupes,
> Ipsa sonant arbusta, Deus, deus ille, Menalca!

"*Oh come and receive the mighty honours: the time draws nigh, O beloved offspring of the gods, O great increase of Jove! The uncultivated mountains send shouts of joy to the stars, the very rocks sing in verse, the very shrubs cry out, A god, a god!*"

Isaiah xl. 3, 4. "*The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord! make straight in the desert a high way for our God! Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.*" Chap. xliv. 23. "*Break forth into singing, ye mountains! O forest, and every tree therein! for the Lord hath redeemed Israel.*"—Pope.

The passage from Virgil, in which the shrubs are supposed to cry out "a god, a god," is not from the same Eclogue with the rest of Pope's extracts, and has no reference to the anticipated appearance of a ruler who should regenerate the world. The occasion of the shout is the presumed deification of one Daphnis who is dead.

[23] The repetition is in the true spirit of poetry, "Deus, deus ipse." The whole passage indeed is finely worked up from "lofty Lebanon" to the magnificent and powerful appeal, "Hark! a glad voice."—Bowles.

[24] This line is faulty, for the same reason as given in the remark on "nodding forests." The action is brought too near, and for that reason the image no longer appears grand. —Bowles.

[25] He seems to have had in his eye Cromwell's translation of Ovid, Amor, ii. 16:

> Then, as you pass, let mountains homage pay
> And bow their tow'ring heads to smooth your way.—Wakefield.

[26] Isaiah xlii. 18.—Pope. "*Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.*"

[27] The sense and language show, that by "visual ray," the poet meant the sight, or, as Milton calls it, indeed, something less boldly, "the visual nerve." And no critic would quarrel with the figure which calls the instrument of vision by the name of the cause. But though the term be just, nay noble, and even sublime, yet the expression of "thick films" is faulty, and he fell into it by a common neglect of the following rule of good writing, that when a figurative word is used, whatsoever is predicated of it ought not only to agree in terms to the thing to which the figure is applied, but likewise to that from which the figure is taken. "Thick films" agree only with the thing to which it is applied, namely, to the sight or eye; and not to that from which it is taken, namely, a ray of light coming to the eye. He should have said "thick clouds," which would have agreed with both. But these inaccuracies are not to be found in his later poems.—Warburton.

Concanen had previously made the same objection in his Supplement to the Profound, and Pope has written in the margin, "Milton," who uses "visual ray," Par. Lost, iii. 620,

"visual nerve" xi. 415, and "visual beam," Samson Agonistes, ver. 163; but none of these passages support Pope's misapplication of the phrase "thick films" to rays of light.

[28] Isaiah xxxv. 5.—Pope. "*The ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.*"

[29] Isaiah xxxv. 6.—Pope. "*Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.*"

[30] I wonder Dr. Warton had not here pointed out the force and the beauty of this most comprehensive and striking line.—Bowles.

[31] The verse, as first published, stood

> He wipes the tears for ever from our eyes,

which was from Milton's Lycidas, ver. 181:

> And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.

Steele having objected that Pope's line "in exalted and poetical spirit" was below the original, Isaiah xxv. 8,—"*The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces*,"—the poet altered his text without, perhaps, either injuring or improving it.

[32] Isaiah xxv. 8.—Pope. "*He will swallow up death in victory.*"

The meaning of the original has been missed by Pope. The promise was not that men should cease to die, which would be the ease if Death was "bound in adamantine chains," but that death should lose its terrors through "the life and immortality brought to light by the gospel," and be welcomed as the passport to a blissful eternity.

[33] "He" is redundant.—Warton.

[34] Isaiah xl. 11.—Pope. "*He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom.*"

[35] He was betrayed into a little impropriety here, by not being aware that the "bosom," in classic use, commonly means the capacious flow of the eastern garments.—Wakefield.

[36] Isaiah ix. 6.—Pope. "*His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*"

[37] Isaiah ii. 4.—Pope. "*They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*"

[38] The words "covered o'er" form an insipid termination of this verse.—Wakefield.

[39] Mr. Steevens aptly quotes Virg. Æn. vi. 165:

> Ære ciere viros.
> With breathing brass to kindle fierce alarms. Dryden.—Wakefield.

[40] Isaiah lxv. 21, 22.—Pope. "*And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat.*"

[41] A line almost wholly borrowed from Dryden's Britannica Rediviva:

> And finish what thy god-like sire begins—Wakefield.

[42] St. John iv. 37. "*One soweth, and another reapeth.*"—Wakefield.

[43] Isaiah xxxv. 1.—Pope. "*The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.*"

[44] Virg. Ecl. iv. 28:

> Molli paulatim flavescet campus arista,
> Incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uva,
> Et duræ quercus sudabunt roscida mella.

"*The fields shall grow yellow with ripened ears, and the red grape shall hang upon the wild brambles, and the hard oak shall distil honey like dew.*"

Isaiah xxxv. 7. "*The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: In the habitation where dragons lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.*" Chap. lv. ver. 13. "*Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle-tree.*"—Pope.

[45] Pope has been happy in introducing this circumstance.—Warton.

[46] Isaiah xli. 19, and chap. lv. 13.—Pope. "*I will set in the desert the fir-tree, and the pine, and the box-tree together.*"

[47] Virg. Ecl. iv. 21:

> Ipsæ lacte domum referent distenta capelæ
> Ubera, nec magnos metuent armeuta leones.—
> Occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni
> Occidet.

"*The goats shall bear to the fold their udders distended with milk: nor shall the herds be afraid of the greatest lions. The serpent shall die, and the herb that conceals poison shall*

*die.*"

Isaiah xi. 6, 7, 8. "*The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together: and a little child shall lead them. And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the den of the cockatrice.*"—POPE.

[48] The similarity of the rhymes in this couplet to those of the preceding is a blemish to this passage.—WAKEFIELD.

[49] Isaiah lxv. 25.—POPE. "*The lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat.*"

[50] Pope's line may have been suggested by Ovid's description of the transformation of Cadmus and his wife into snakes. Of Cadmus it is said, Met. iv. 595, that

> ille suæ lambebat conjugis ora;

and of husband and wife, when the change in both was complete, that

> Nunc quoque nec fugiunt hominem, nec vulnere lædunt.

[51] Originally,

> And with their forky tongue and pointless sting shall play.

Wakefield conjectures that Pope altered the line from having learnt the erroneousness of the vulgar belief that the sting of the serpent is in its tail. The expression he substituted in the text is borrowed from Dryden's Palamon and Arcite, quoted by Wakefield:

> And troops of lions innocently play.

[52] Salem is used for Jerusalem in Psalm lxxvi. 2.

[53] Isaiah lx. 1.—POPE. "*Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.*"

[54] The thoughts of Isaiah, which compose the latter part of the poem, are wonderfully elevated, and much above those general exclamations of Virgil, which make the loftiest parts of his Pollio:

> Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo
> —toto surget gens aurea mundo!
> —incipient magni procedere menses!
> Aspice, venture lætentur ut omnia sæclo! &c.

The reader needs only to turn to the passages of Isaiah, here cited.—POPE.

[55] The open vowel *thy eyes* is particularly offensive.—WAKEFIELD.

[56] Isaiah lx. 4.—POPE. "*Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.*"

[57] Isaiah lx. 3.—POPE. "*And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.*"

[58] Dryden in his Aureng-Zebe:

> What sweet soe'er Sabæan springs disclose.—STEEVENS.

Saba, in Arabia, was noted for its aromatic products. Thus Milton, Par. Lost, iv. 161:

> Sabæan odours from the spicy shore
> Of Araby the blest.

[59] Isaiah lx. 6.—POPE. "*All they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord.*"

[60] Broome, in Pope's Miscellanies, p. 104:

> A stream of glory, and a flood of day.—WAKEFIELD.

[61] Isaiah lx. 19, 20.—POPE. "*The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.*"

[62] Cynthia is an improper, because a classical word.—WARTON.

Sandys' Ovid:

> Now waxing Phœbe filled her wained horns.—WAKEFIELD.

[63] Here is a remarkably fine effect of versification. The poet rises with his subject, and the correspondent periods seem to flow more copious and majestic with the grandeur and sublimity of the theme.—BOWLES.

[64] This fine expression is borrowed from Dryden's Ode on Mrs. Killegrew:

> Thou wilt have time enough for hymns divine,

Since heaven's eternal year is thine.—Wakefield.

[65] Isaiah li. 6, and chap. liv. 10.—Pope. "*The heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, but my salvation shall be for ever.—For the mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee.*"

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# WINDSOR FOREST.

[Pg 320]

## To the Right Honourable George, Lord Landsdown.

## By Mr. Pope.

### Folio, 1713.

Non injussa cano: te nostræ. Vare, myricæ,
Te nemus omne canet; nec Phœbo gratior ulla est,
Quam sibi quæ Vari præscripsit pagina nomen.—Virg.

London: Printed for Bernard Lintott, at the Cross-keys,
in Fleet Street.

The work appeared before March 9, 1713, on which day Swift writes to Stella, "Mr. Pope has published a fine poem, called Windsor Forest. Read it." In his manuscript Pope says, "It was first printed in folio in ——. Again in folio the same year, and in octavo the next." It was included in the quarto of 1717, in the second edition of Lintot's Miscellany in 1714, and in the four succeeding editions of 1720, 1722, 1727 and 1732.

This poem was written at two different times. The first part of it, which relates to the country, in the year 1704, at the same time with the Pastorals. The latter part was not added till the year 1713, in which it was published.—Pope. [Pg 321]

In 1713 Pope published Windsor Forest; of which part was, as he relates, written at sixteen, about the same time as his Pastorals; and the latter part was added afterwards: where the addition begins we are not told.[1] The lines relating to the Peace confess their own date. It is dedicated to Lord Lansdowne, who was then in high reputation and influence among the tories; and it is said, that the conclusion of the poem gave great pain to Addison, both as a poet and a politician. Reports like this are often spread with boldness very disproportionate to their evidence. Why should Addison receive any particular disturbance from the last lines of Windsor Forest? If contrariety of opinion could poison a politician, he would not live a day; and, as a poet, he must have felt Pope's force of genius much more from many other parts of his works. The pain that Addison might feel, it is not likely that he would confess; and it is certain that he so well suppressed his discontent, that Pope now thought himself his favourite.

The design of Windsor Forest is evidently derived from Cooper's Hill, with some attention to Waller's poem on the Park; but Pope cannot be denied to excel his masters in variety and elegance, and the art of interchanging description, narrative, and morality. The objection made by Dennis is the want of plan, of a regular subordination of parts, terminating in the principal and original design. There is this want in most descriptive poems, because as the scenes, which they must exhibit successively, are all subsisting at the same time, the order in which they are shown must, by necessity, be arbitrary, and more is not to be expected from the last part than from the first. The attention, therefore, which cannot be detained by suspense, must be excited by diversity, such as this poem offers to its reader. But the desire of diversity may be too much indulged. The parts of Windsor Forest which deserve least praise are those which were added to enliven the stillness of the scene—the appearance of Father Thames, and the transformation of Lodona. Addison had, in his Campaign, derided the rivers, that "rise from their oozy beds" to tell stories of heroes;[2] and it is therefore strange that Pope should adopt a fiction not only unnatural, but lately censured. The story of Lodona is told with sweetness; but a new metamorphosis is a ready and puerile expedient. Nothing is easier than to tell how a flower was once a blooming virgin, or a rock an obdurate tyrant.—Johnson. [Pg 322]

Descriptive poetry was by no means the shining talent of Pope. This assertion may be manifested by the few images introduced in the poem before us which are not equally applicable to any place whatsoever. Rural beauty in general, and not the peculiar beauties of the forest of Windsor, are here described. Nor are the sports of setting, shooting, and fishing, at all more appropriated. The stag-chase, that immediately follows, although some of the lines are incomparably good, is not so full, so animated, and so circumstantial, as that of Somerville.—Warton.

Johnson remarks that this poem was written after the model of Denham's Cooper's Hill, with, perhaps, an eye on Waller's poem of the Park. Marvel has also written a poem on local scenery[3] —upon the hill and grove at Billborow, and another on Appleton House (now Nunappleton), in

Yorkshire. Marvel abounds with conceits and false thoughts, but some of the descriptive touches are picturesque and beautiful. He sometimes observes little circumstances of rural nature with the eye and feeling of a true poet:

> Then as I careless on the bed
> Of gelid strawberries do tread,
> And through the hazels thick espy
> The *hatching thrustle's shining eye*.

The last circumstance is new, highly poetical, and could only have been described by one who was a real lover of nature, and a witness of her beauties in her most solitary retirements. Before this descriptive poem on Windsor Forest, I do not recollect any other professed composition on local scenery, except the poems of the authors already mentioned. Denham's is certainly the best prior to Pope's: his description of London at a distance is sublime:[4] [Pg 323]

> Under his proud survey the city lies,
> And like a mist beneath a hill does rise,
> Whose state and wealth, the bus'ness and the crowd,
> Seems at this distance but a *darker cloud*.

Pope, by the expression of "majestic," has justly characterised the flow of Denham's couplets. It is extraordinary that Pope, who, by this expression, seems to have appreciated the general cast of harmony in Cooper's Hill, should have made his own cadences so regular and almost unvaried. Denham's couplets are often irregular, but the effect of the pauses in the following lines was obviously the result of a fine ear. The language truly suits the subject:

> But his proud head the airy mountain hides
> Among the clouds; his shoulders and his sides
> A shady mantle clothes; his curled brows
> Frown on the gentle stream, which calmly flows,
> Whilst winds and storms his lofty forehead beat!

The occasional introduction of such passages should be managed with great care, but I appeal to any judge of poetry whether he does not feel the effect intended to be raised by the pauses of the lines just quoted?

He who has not an eye to observe every external appearance that nature may exhibit in every change of season, and who cannot with a glance distinguish every diversity of every hue in her variety of beauties, must so far be deficient in one of the essential qualities of a poet. Here Pope, from infirmities and from physical causes, was particularly deficient. When he left his own laurel circus at Twickenham, he was lifted into his chariot or his barge; and with weak eyes and tottering strength, it is physically impossible he could be a descriptive bard. Where description has been introduced among his poems, as far as his observation could go, he excelled; more could not be expected. It is for this reason that his Windsor Forest, and his Pastorals, must ever appear so defective to a lover of nature. In his Windsor Forest he has description, incident, and history. The descriptive part is too general, and unappropriate; the incident, or story part, is such as only would have been adopted by a young man who had just read Ovid; but the historical part is very judiciously and skilfully blended, and the conclusion highly animated and poetical: nor can we be insensible to its more lofty tone of versification.—Bowles.

Richardson transcribed the various readings of Windsor Forest into his copy of the quarto of 1717, and added this note:—"Altered from the first copy of the author's own hand, written out beautifully, as usual, for the perusal and criticism of his friends." The manuscript in Richardson's possession did not contain the entire work, but stopped at ver. 390. On the title-page of the manuscript was a memorandum by Pope, which says, "This poem was written just after the Pastorals, as appears by the last verse of it. That was in the year ——, when the author was ---- years of age. But the last hundred lines, including the celebration of the Peace, were added in the year ——, soon after the ratification of the treaty of Utrecht." Pope supplied the omitted dates in the octavo of 1736, where he ascribes the former part of Windsor Forest to 1704, and the latter part to 1710. The testimony of Pope carries little weight, and there is no subsidiary evidence to confirm the improbable statement that the larger portion of the poem was produced as early as 1704. The date he assigned to the remainder, in a note at ver. 1 of the edition of 1736, and again in a note on ver. 289, must have been a slip of the pen, or an error of the press. Warburton altered 1710 to 1713 in the first note, and left the mistake uncorrected in the second. The amended date was a fresh blunder, for it appears from the letters of Pope to Caryll on Nov. 29, and Dec. 5, 1712, that the new conclusion was then complete. Pope's memory deceived him when he stated that the end of the poem was written "soon after the ratification of the treaty of Utrecht." The treaty, as Mr. Croker remarks, was not signed till March 30, 1713, nor ratified till April 28, and Windsor Forest was published before March 9. The Peace had for some months been an accepted fact, and Pope did not wait for its formal ratification. [Pg 324]

"Lord Lansdowne," said Pope to Spence, "insisted on my publishing my Windsor Forest, and the motto (*non injussa cano*) shows it."[5] Pope not only published, but composed Windsor Forest at the instigation of Lord Lansdowne, if the opening lines of the poem are to be believed. Trumbull, however, asserts that it was he who suggested the topic to Pope. "I should have commended his poem on Windsor Forest much more," wrote Sir William to Mr. Bridges, May 12, 1713, "if he had

not served me a slippery trick; for you must know I had long since put him upon this subject, gave several hints, and at last, when he brought it, and read it, and made some little alterations, &c., not one word of putting in my name till I found it in print." The apparent discrepancy may be explained by the supposition that Trumbull proposed the earlier poem on the Forest, and Lord Lansdowne the subsequent celebration of the Peace. The poet tacked the new matter on to the old, and may have represented that he sang at the command of Granville, because the ultimate form which the work assumed was due to him. [Pg 325]

Mrs. Delany, who was the niece of Lord Lansdowne, and lived with him in her youth, says, in her Autobiography, that he was a man of an open unsuspecting temper, that he had the greatest politeness and good-humour imaginable, that he was magnificent in his nature, and wasted his fortune to gratify his passion for display.[6] His predominant characteristics were amiability and vanity. His love of distinction incited him to become a dramatist, poet, and politician. He had aspirations without ability, and in none of these capacities did he exhibit any vigour of mind. His poetry was an imitation of Waller, "of whom," says Johnson, "he copied the faults, and very little more."[7] His plays reflect the worst qualities of the era of Charles II. In tragedy he thought that to be dull and stately was to be classical; in comedy that affected briskness of dialogue was liveliness, and indecent double meanings wit. He made no figure in politics, and owed his posts in the Harley administration to his wealth, family, and electioneering influence. His literature, aided by his hereditary advantages, sufficed to procure him a factitious fame while he lived, but his reputation was at an end the moment his works lost the lustre they derived from his social position.

Lord Lansdowne was at the zenith of his career when he persuaded Pope to eulogise the Peace. A measure in itself wise had been made subservient to the personal interests of the unprincipled faction in power. These intriguers could not carry on the war without the commanding genius of Marlborough, nor allow a political opponent to perpetuate his ascendancy by a fresh series of victories. Certain that they would be driven from office unless they could huddle up a peace, they were guilty of a treacherous connivance with the enemy, and a flagrant breach of faith towards their allies. They were compelled to grant terms to France which were the boast of her minister, Torcy, and which Bolingbroke confessed were not what policy or our successes required.[8] A man of more enlightened views might have justly urged that hard conditions, offensive to the pride of a great nation, were less calculated to ensure a lengthened peace than lenient demands, which allowed the consolation of an honourable retreat. No such plea was put forth by Bolingbroke. He always retained the vulgar idea that France ought to have been "humbled" and her "power reduced for generations to come." He lamented the moderation of the treaty, and threw the blame upon the want of union among the allies, which was itself occasioned by the knowledge that he and his colleagues had determined to sacrifice all other interests to their own. [Pg 326] [9] There was a risk that a treaty which was thought inadequate by its authors would rouse universal indignation, and prove as fatal to their power as the continuance of the war. The Peace became the political test of the hour, and every artifice of prose and verse was employed to appease public opinion.

Pope did not stop with applauding the Peace; he denounced the Revolution. He afterwards professed a lofty superiority to party prejudices; but there were obvious reasons which might induce him to lay aside his usual caution at this crisis. The war was directed against Louis XIV., the champion of Roman Catholicism, and the Pretender. A general belief prevailed that the Protestant succession could only be secured by reducing the French king to helplessness, and that a Peace, on the other hand, which saved him and the Harley administration from ruin, would be propitious to the cause of tories, papists, and Jacobites. "They fancied," says Bolingbroke, "that the Peace was the period at which their millenary year would begin."[10] A young and sanguine poet may well have shared a conviction in which both sides concurred,—the ministerialists by their hopes, and the opposition by their fears. No sooner was the treaty concluded than it became apparent that the hopes and fears were exaggerated. The ministry was torn to pieces by intestine divisions; its supporters—a heterogeneous body, who had been loosely held together by a common enmity—were rapidly throwing off their allegiance; the good will, which had been founded upon large and vague expectations, was converted into hostility under total disappointment; and the failing health of the Queen rendered it probable that the accession of a whig sovereign would shortly complete the discomfiture of the faction. After the conclusion of the Peace, says Bolingbroke, "we saw nothing but increase of mortification, and nearer approaches to ruin."[11]

Having been too precipitate in casting in his lot with the tories, Pope hastened to qualify his rashness by conciliating the whigs, and undertook to furnish the Prologue to Addison's Cato. This play was brought out April 14, 1713, at the request of the opposition, who intended it for a remonstrance against the arbitrary projects imputed to the ministry. The tragedy was hurried upon the stage towards the close of the dramatic season, lest the salutary lesson should come too [Pg 327] late to save the threatened constitution.[12] Pope told Spence that the manuscript was submitted to him by Addison, that he thought the action not sufficiently theatrical, and that he recommended the author to forego its performance. Shortly afterwards Addison went to him and said, "that some particular friends, whom he could not disoblige, insisted on its being acted." He protested that he had no party purpose in the play, commissioned Pope to convey this assurance to Oxford and Bolingbroke, sent them the tragedy along with the message, and obtained their encouragement. When a year and a half had elapsed, and the House of Hanover had succeeded to the English throne, Addison published in Nov. 1714, a copy of verses to the Princess of Wales, in

which he took credit for the patriotism and daring of his muse in sending forth the play with the express design of defeating the machinations of the government.[13]

> And boldly rising for Britannia's laws,
> Engaged great Cato in her country's cause.

Hurd, unwilling to condemn his hero, Addison, and accepting, without misgiving, the statement reported by Spence, exclaims, "How spotless must that man be, that, in passing through a court, had only contracted this slight stain, even in the opinion of so severe a censor and casuist as Mr. Pope."[14] But unless the conduct of Addison is misrepresented he must have been corrupt and contemptible. The party of which he was a prominent member urged the production of his play, at a momentous crisis, with a political object, and it would have been mean and treacherous to yield to their entreaties, and then privately assure the common enemy that nothing political was intended. The baseness would have been great indeed if, when the power passed over to the whigs, he triumphantly declared that he had pursued the very course he disavowed at the time, and thus endeavoured by a false boast to procure new credit and rewards. Either Addison was unscrupulous, or Pope fabricated the tale. Addison's version was published to the world: Pope's version was dropped into the ear of Spence. Addison made his claim when the circumstances were fresh, and when Pope, Bolingbroke, and Oxford were at hand to expose him: Pope told his story after the lapse of many years, when he had quarrelled with Addison, and the subject of his aspersions was in the grave. Addison has never been convicted of an untruthful word, or a dishonourable act: Pope's career was a labyrinth of deceit, and he abounded in audacious malignant inventions. These considerations are sufficient, but there is more direct evidence. "I [Pg 328] have had lately," wrote Pope to Caryll, Feb. 1713, "the entertainment of reading Mr. Addison's tragedy of Cato. It drew tears from me in several parts of the fourth and fifth acts, where the beauty of virtue appears so charming, that I believe, if it comes upon the theatre, we shall enjoy that which Plato thought the greatest pleasure an exalted soul could be capable of, a view of virtue itself dressed in person, colour, and action. The emotion which the mind will feel from this character, and the sentiments of humanity which the distress of such a person as Cato will stir up in us, must necessarily fill an audience with so glorious a disposition and sovereign a love of virtue, that I question if any play has ever conduced so immediately to morals as this." Here is Pope prognosticating that Cato upon the stage will melt, delight, and animate the audience. He penned the words at the exact period when, according to his later assertion, he was admonishing Addison that the play was unsuited to the theatre, and he is self-convicted by the contradiction. One-half of his story was false, and renders the other half worthless.[15]

In the account which Pope gave to Caryll of the first night of Cato he said that "all the foolish industry possible had been used to make it a party play," and complained that "the prologue writer was clapped into a stanch whig, sore against his will, at almost every two lines."[16] He might be anxious to persuade his jacobite correspondent that he had not been abetting a whig manifesto, and might pretend that he was annoyed at the construction put upon the Prologue, but his verses were chiefly devoted to enforcing the political doctrine of the play, and he must deliberately have laid himself out to catch the applause of its friends. His management advanced his fortunes. Windsor Forest procured him the acquaintance and patronage of the tory leaders. Swift recommended the poem to Stella on March 9, 1713, and in November he was heard by Dr. Kennet "instructing a young nobleman that the best poet in England was Mr. Pope, a papist, who had begun a translation of Homer into English verse, for which he must have them all subscribe, 'for,' says he, 'the author shall not begin to print till I have a thousand guineas for him.'"[17] The other magnates of the faction joined with Swift in befriending him. In those heated times a [Pg 329] Roman Catholic who had won over one party to his interests, by proclaiming his jacobite bias in verse, would naturally have fallen under the ban of their opponents; but his standing sponsor for the whig play, and the relations he maintained with whig authors, kept the whigs from renouncing him. To his art in attracting notice to his poetry through his politics, and in combining the suffrages of embittered political antagonists, he owed the unexampled success of the Homer subscription, which secured his pecuniary independence. He had served both masters by turns, though in unequal degrees, and then unreasonably complained to Caryll that some people called him a whig, and others called him a tory.[18] He disclaimed being either. He talked of his abhorrence of party violence, and propounded his principles in dark unmeaning generalities from which nothing can be gathered, except that he wished to avoid being held responsible for any opinions whatever. He did not take up the position that a purely literary undertaking was independent of politics. The moment the tory cause declined he pleaded his neutrality, and seemed to imagine that he could claim the support of all parties on the ground that he adhered to none. The less wary patron who bespoke Windsor Forest had to suffer for his jacobite zeal. He was arrested on Sept. 21, 1715, and remained in the Tower till Feb. 8, 1717. Bolingbroke and Oxford were impeached, and the selfish bargain they had brought about by dishonourable means, that they might prolong their rule, annihilated their power for ever.

"A person," says Warton, "of no small rank has informed me, that Mr. Addison was inexpressibly chagrined at the noble conclusion of Windsor Forest, both as a politician and as a poet,—as a politician, because it so highly celebrated that treaty of peace which he deemed so pernicious to the liberties of Europe; and as a poet, because he was deeply conscious that his own Campaign, that gazette in rhyme, contained no strokes of such genuine and sublime poetry."[19] This is one of those plausible imputations which enemies propagate on the evidence of their own suspicions, and which therefore require to be substantiated by unexceptionable testimony. Warton had

nothing better to adduce in support of the credibility of his informant than the irrelevant circumstance that he was "a person of no small rank." The description of the witness declares his incompetence. It is not pretended that the "person of no small rank" was intimate with Addison, or had any authentic means of ascertaining his sentiments, and they are certainly misrepresented by the assertion that he could not endure poetical panegyrics on a Peace he disapproved, for in the Spectator of Oct. 30, 1712, he wrote up Tickell's laudatory verses, and "hoped his poem [Pg 330] would meet with such a reward from its patrons as so noble a performance deserved."[20] There is not a party word added to extenuate the praise; a tory might have endorsed the essay. Intolerance and "inexpressible chagrin" were not at any time characteristics of Addison.

Tickell's Prospect of Peace went through six editions, and to judge by the sale was more popular than Windsor Forest, which was published four months later. The greater success of the far inferior poem was doubtless owing to the eulogium in the Spectator. Pope joined in applauding Tickell's work. He said that it contained "several most poetical images, and fine pieces of painting," he specified certain "strokes of mastery," and he especially commended the versification.[21] His too liberal praise may have been influenced by the couplet in which Tickell exclaimed,

> Like the young spreading laurel, Pope! thy name
> Shoots up with strength and rises into fame.

Nearly the whole of the poem is in an equally dreary style, and this dull mediocrity was not attained without numerous imitations of ancient and modern authors. The insipidity did not exclude extravagance; for both poetry and patriotism were thought to be displayed by a nonsensical exaggeration of British beauty, valour, and power.

Windsor Forest is not free from flat passages, inflation of sentiment, and false and puerile thoughts. Pope mixed up in it the beauties of his manlier period with the vices of his early style. No writer clung more tenaciously to the lifeless phantoms of paganism, nor applied the hereditary common-places in a more servile manner. Liberty is "Britannia's goddess;" the sun is "Phœbus' fiery car;" the sea is "Neptune's self;" the harvest is "Ceres' gifts;" the orchard is "Pomona crowned with fruits;" the ground is "painted by blushing Flora; "and the flocks on the hills are attended by Pan. This last personage leaves his innocent pastoral employment to chase, with evil intentions, "a rural nymph" who calls on "Father Thames" for aid. Father Thames is deaf or indifferent, and Pan is about to clutch her when at her own request she is dissolved into a river. Before her transformation she was one of the "buskined virgins" of Diana, what time the goddess forsook "Cynthus' top" for Windsor, and was often seen roving there over the "airy wastes." There was no occasion now to envy "Arcadia the immortal huntress and her virgin train," since Windsor could boast

> As bright a goddess, and as chaste a queen,

[Pg 331]

and the poet proceeds to complete the comparison between Diana and Queen Anne,—between the virgin huntress, and a prolific mother, who was ugly, corpulent, gouty, sluggish, a glutton and a tippler. Pope afterwards affected a disdain of royalty; he was ready enough to flatter it when he had his own ends to serve. He could not have devised a less felicitous compliment. Tickell's poem was specially praised in the Spectator for its freedom from the follies of "pagan theology." Addison laughed at the whole tiresome tribe of gods and goddesses, and, with good-humoured pleasantry, warned the versifiers, who were about to celebrate the Peace, against introducing "trifling antiquated fables unpardonable in a poet that was past sixteen." He laid stress upon the circumstance that in a panegyric, which should be distinguished for truth, "nothing could be more ridiculous than to have recourse to our Jupiters and Junos,"[22] and no incongruity of the kind could be more absurd than to couple Diana and Queen Anne. Windsor Forest was still in manuscript when Addison's essay appeared. Pope was not at the pains to re-cast his poem, but he must have recognised the force of the playful satire, and thenceforward he abjured mythological trash.

The passage on the death of Cowley exemplifies, in a short compass, the unskilful use to which Pope put the worn-out rags of antiquity:

> O early lost! what tears the river shed,
> When the sad pomp along his banks was led!
> His drooping swans on ev'ry note expire,
> And on his willows hung each muse's lyre.

"The appropriate business of poetry," says Wordsworth, "her privilege, and her duty, is to treat of things not as they are, but as they appear; not as they exist in themselves, but as they seem to exist to the senses and passions."[23] Since genuine emotions are often founded upon fancies, since thoughts are not always the true reflection of outward realities, poetasters, and even poets, have concluded that they might represent things neither as they are nor as they appear, might neglect nature altogether, and be unfaithful alike to the world of intelligence, and the world of matter. To this spurious class of invention belong the notions that a river, which had flowed for ages, was the tears of the river-god lamenting the newly-deceased Cowley, and that all the swans on the Thames died with grief on the day of his funeral. The mind refuses to admit such jejune and monstrous fictions among the illusions of imagination. The compound of mythological and biblical ideas in the fourth line has converted a pathetic incident in the Psalms into a cold and

miserable conceit. The harp of the Jew was a reality; and when he wept over his captivity by the rivers of Babylon he hung up his harp in very truth because his broken spirit would not permit him to sing the Lord's song in a strange land. There is, on the contrary, only hollow pedantry in the pretence that non-existent muses hung up non-existent lyres on the willows of the Thames because Cowley was dead. The passage goes on in the same empty artificial strain: [Pg 332]

> Who now shall charm the shades, where Cowley strung
> His living harp, and lofty Denham sung?
> But hark! the groves rejoice, the forest rings!
> Are these revived?—or is it Granville sings?

It is an excellent remark of Bowles that there are some ideas which will only just bear touching. The earliest poems were sung, and singing became synonymous with poetical composition, but when a phrase, which is now a mere figure of speech, is expanded, and the groves are said to rejoice, and the forests to ring with the singing of Granville, the predominant effect produced by the metaphor is a sense of its falsity and grotesqueness. The picture called up is not that of a poet, but of a half-crazed opera singer. This sickly vein of counterfeit pastoral is continued, and we are told that the groves of Windsor are filled with the name of Mira, the subject of Lord Lansdowne's amatory verses, and that the Cupids tuned the lover's lyre in the shades.

The lines on Lord Lansdowne offend the more from the fulsomeness of the adulation. Pope said that "flattery turned his stomach,"[24] which meant that he could not endure his own vices in other people. He had emphatically satirised the sycophancy which estimated literary works by the rank of the author:

> What woful stuff this madrigal would be
> In some starved hackney sonneteer, or me!
> But let a lord once own the happy lines,
> How the wit brightens! how the style refines!
> Before his sacred name flies ev'ry fault,
> And each exalted stanza teems with thought.[25]

The "sacred name" of Lansdowne imparted genius to verse which would have been "woful stuff" in Dennis or Welsted. When Pope, in later years, called him "Granville the polite" he characterised him correctly; when, in Windsor Forest, he exalted him to the rank of a transcendent poet, he said what he could not believe. He outraged candour in prose as well as in verse. He wrote a sycophantic letter to Lord Lansdowne, boasting his freedom from the [Pg 333] insincerity of his "fellow scribblers" who composed panegyrics "at random, and persuaded the next vain creature they could find that it was his own likeness." Pope vowed he had erred in the opposite direction, and had forborne to praise Lord Lansdowne up to the height of his deserts out of deference to his modesty. "Whereas others are offended if they have not more than justice done them, you would be displeased if you had so much. Therefore I may safely do you as much injury in my word as you do yourself in your own thoughts. I am so vain as to think I have shown you a favour in sparing your modesty, and you cannot but make me some return for prejudicing the truth to gratify you."[26] Here was triple incense,—the original adulation, the protestation that it was inadequate, and the pretence that Lord Lansdowne, a man noted for vanity, was too modest to endure merited praise. Pope spoke more truth than he intended when he said that he had "prejudiced truth to gratify him."

"Who now reads Cowley?" asked Pope in 1737.[27] The panegyric in Windsor Forest was an anachronism, and he might have asked the same question in 1713. Never was an equal reputation more ephemeral. While Cowley lived, and for a few years afterwards, the most cultivated minds in the kingdom called him the "great Cowley," the "incomparable Cowley," the "divine Cowley." When he died, Denham said that Death had

> Plucked the fairest, sweetest flow'r
> That in the Muses' garden grew.

The herd of readers vied with men of letters in applauding him, as was shown by the sale of his works, and is implied in the couplet of Oldham:

> One likes my verses, and commends each line,
> And swears that Cowley's are but dull to mine.[28]

The wonder is not that he lost his pre-eminence, but that he ever obtained it. His poetry is a puzzle from its contradictory qualities. Some of his pieces have a gay facility which had not hitherto been rivalled, and the greater part are harsh, heavy and obscure. He loved to search for remote analogies, and his profusion of far-fetched similes are constantly of a kind which debase the subject they are intended to elevate and adorn. His language is incessantly pitched in a high, heroic key, and then sinks in the same, or the succeeding sentence, into the tamest, meanest phrases of colloquial prose. His verse in entire poems, as well as in single lilies and occasional [Pg 334] passages, is remarkable for its tripping ease, and is more often rugged to such a degree that it is incredible how it could pass with him for verse at all. The faulty side in him predominates, and the general impression he leaves is that of dullness, laboured and negligent by turns. He did not owe the whole of his popularity to his real abilities, and the bad taste of his age. He was a conspicuous adherent of the Stuarts, and the cavaliers adopted his works out of compliment to

his politics. The grand funeral procession, commemorated in Windsor Forest, was a tribute paid to him by a party, because he united the fame of a forward royalist to the celebrity of an author. In a generation when authors and royalists were both dissolute, his writings had at least the merit of being untainted by the prevailing vice. Pope, describing the infidelity and debauchery of the Restoration era, exclaims,

> Unhappy Dryden! in all Charles's days,
> Roscommon only boasts unspotted bays.[29]

He might have remembered Milton if he overlooked Cowley, who was nevertheless a far greater poet than Roscommon. The one had gleams of genius, and the other had none. The contemporaries of Cowley had not been blind to the moral merits of his productions. "I cannot," says Sir John Denham, "but mention with honour my friend Mr. Cowley, who was the first who of late offered to redeem poesy from that slavery wherein this depraved age has prostituted her to all imaginable uncleanness."[30] His request in his will, that his compositions, printed and manuscript, should be collected by Dr. Sprat, was accompanied by a clause "beseeching him not to let any pass (if anything of that kind has escaped my pen) which may give the least offence in point of religion and good manners." His life was in keeping with his writings. Evelyn calls him that "incomparable poet, and virtuous man;" and Pepys heard Dr. Ward, the bishop of Winchester, and Dr. Bates, the well-known puritan, "mightily lamenting his death, as the best poet of our nation and as good a man."[31] The king was pleased to add his testimony, worthless if it had stood alone, and declared "that Mr. Cowley had not left a better man behind him in England."[32]

"In Windsor Forest," says Bowles, "there is description, incident, and history." A few remarks may still be made on it under each of these heads. Wordsworth assigned to it the distinction, in [Pg 335] conjunction with Lady Winchelsea's Nocturnal Reverie, of containing the only "new images of external nature" to be found "in the poetry of the period intervening between Paradise Lost and the Seasons."[33] He limited the praise to "a passage or two," and does not particularise the passages to which he alluded. He must chiefly have referred to the lines from ver. 111 to ver. 146; for the other happy "images of external nature" are borrowed. Pope had but a faint perception of latent and subtle beauties, and he usually kept to those general appearances which are obvious to all the world. His trees cast a shade, his streams murmur, his heath is purple, his harvests are yellow, and his skies blue. Living in the midst of English peasants he shows less familiarity with rural character than with rural scenes. Neither in his verse, nor his letters, is there anything to indicate that he had mixed, like Thomson, Cowper, and Wordsworth, with the cottagers around him, or had divined the noble qualities which are masked by a rustic exterior. His sympathies were contracted, and strange to say there is not one word in his voluminous writings on human kind which denotes that he had felt in the smallest degree the loveliness of children. His main interest was in men and women, whose names, for good or evil, were before the world, and in speaking of them he dwelt principally upon their foibles and misdeeds.

The censure of Warton is valid when he complains that Pope's account of field sports is deficient in characteristic details. He found a stag-chase in Cooper's Hill, which determined him to extend, while ho imitated, the plan of his original, and introduce hunting, fishing, shooting, and netting into Windsor Forest, though he was not a sportsman. The objection that his stag-chase is not as circumstantial as that of Somerville, is fairly answered by Johnson's remark, that the chase was the main subject of Somerville, and is only subsidiary with Pope. More, nevertheless, was required than a description of the impatience and galloping of the horses, and of the eagerness of the riders. Of this single topic one half was a translation from Statius. The fishing and shooting are superior to the hunt. The particulars are meagre, but there is mastery in the mode of representing them. The dying pheasant is painted in language as rich as its plumage, and the doves, the lapwing, the lark, and the wintry landscape, could not have been brought more vividly before the mind, or in fewer words. A gentle pathos intermingles with the whole. The portrait of the angler would have been perfect, in the single circumstance to which it is confined, if Pope had not said of him, "he hopes the scaly breed." Wakefield observed that "hope," used as an active verb, was intolerably affected, and he might have extended the remark to the use of "scaly [Pg 336] breed" for fish.

The "story part" of Windsor Forest is a mosaic of translated scraps from Ovid's Metamorphoses. The fictions of heathen mythology, which had been repeated to satiety, which exhibited no invention, and had no charm for modern imaginations, are worse than an excrescence in the midst of English prospects, sports, and history. The bad effect does not stop with the puerilities themselves, but they communicate an air of weakness and unreality to the general texture of the work.

The well-merited praise which Bowles bestowed upon "the historical part" of the poem is inapplicable to the ill drawn character of William the Conqueror. Pope saw in him only a devastator and a tyrant. He had not caught a glimpse of the robust will, and masculine genius, which conquered and consolidated a great country. The vigour, daring, and sagacity which tempered the grosser traits in the mind of William are suppressed, and the masterly warrior and statesman is reduced to an inglorious spoiler of peasants, and hunter of deer. The advantages which accrued to England from the conquest itself were unknown to Pope, who fancied that its principal result was to destroy agriculture, and impoverish the people. He was not aware that it introduced a more advanced civilisation, imparted new energy to a backward stagnant

population, opened up to them a vista of grander views, and repaid transitory suffering by vast and permanent benefits.

A fourth element in Windsor Forest is not noticed by Bowles. Pope considered that the "reflections upon life and political institutions" were the distinguishing excellence of Cooper's Hill. He emulated in this respect his master's merits, surpassed him in polish of style, and fell below him in strength of thought. Hunting the hare suggests to Pope this poor and false conclusion:

> Beasts urged by us their fellow beasts pursue,
> And learn of man each other to undo.

How much more weighty is the sentiment expressed by Denham, when the stag endeavours to take refuge in the herd:

> The herd, unkindly wise,
> Or chases him from thence, or from him flies;
> Like a declining statesman, left forlorn
> To his friends' pity, and pursuers' scorn,
> With shame remembers, while himself was one
> Of the same herd, himself the same had done.

The terse satire upon Henry VIII. is a still better specimen of Denham's moralisings. As he surveys the prospect round Cooper's Hill he is reminded of the dissolution of the monasteries, by the sight of the place where once stood a chapel which had shared the fate of its parent abbey. This rouses his indignation, and he thus proceeds: [Pg 337]

> Tell me, my Muse, what monstrous dire offence,
> What crime could any Christian king incense
> To such a rage? Was't luxury or lust?
> Was *he* so temperate, so chaste, so just?
> Were these their crimes?—they were his own much more;
> But wealth is crime enough to him that's poor,
> Who having spent the treasures of his crown,
> Condemns their luxury to feed his own.
> Thus he the church at once protects and spoils:
> But princes' swords are sharper than their styles.

The last couplet is a contrast between the destroying energy of Henry VIII., and the impotence of his book against Luther.

Windsor Forest has rather more variety in its versification than is usual with Pope. The poem opens with one of those breaks in the metre which were incessant in the older rhymsters, and which were gradually abjured by their successors.

> Thy forest, Windsor! and thy green retreats,
> At once the monarch's and the muse's seats,
> Invite my lays.

This use of the full stop commonly required that the sense should be carried on without a pause from the preceding line, whereas the theory spread that the close of the sense should coincide with the close of the rhymed sound, or in other words that the full stop should be always at the end of the couplet. To keep the rhyme predominant there was an increasing tendency to have at least the pause of a comma, even after the final word of the first line of the couplet. Thus from a license, which, as Prior says, "was found too dissolute and wild, and came very often too near prose," the writers of heroics arrived at a system which "produced too frequent an identity in the sound, and brought every couplet to the point of an epigram."[34] Denham, according to Johnson, was the chief reformer who "taught his followers the art of concluding their sense in couplets," [35] but he retained much of the primitive freedom, and Prior says that to Dryden belongs the credit of perfecting the innovation, and the blame of pushing it to excess. Pope went further than Dryden. When once the change had commenced there was a constant movement towards uniformity till the utmost verge was reached, and a fresh reaction began. Bowles, with his fine ear, was a zealous advocate for diversified harmony, and tuneful strength. He felt that an occasional break, managed with skill, adds dignity to the couplet, while the toning down of the final syllables, by sometimes running one verse into another, is a grateful antidote to the cloying monotony of emphatic rhymes. Imperfect rhymes offend from the impression they give of imperfect art, but perfect rhymes softened by the continuous flow of the pronunciation, are a relief to the ear. As the rhymed sound should be diminished at intervals, so, at intervals, it may be advantageously increased by the introduction of triplets. Dryden often used them with admirable effect;[36] Pope employed them sparingly, and they were almost entirely laid aside by his immediate imitators. With them the taste for numerous verse was extinct. [Pg 338]

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] Johnson was mistaken. Pope states in a note that the addition commenced at ver. 291.

[2] When actions, unadorned, are faint and weak,
Cities and countries must be taught to speak;
Gods may descend in factions from the skies,
And rivers from their oozy beds arise.

[3] "Denham," says Johnson, "seems to have been, at least among us, the author of a species of composition that may be denominated *local poetry*, of which the fundamental subject is some particular landscape, to be poetically described, with the addition of such embellishments as may be supplied by historical retrospection or incidental meditation."

[4] Critics differ. "Nothing," says Warton, "can be colder and more prosaic than the manner in which Denham has spoken of the distant prospect of London and St. Paul's."

[5] Singer's Spence, p. 153.

[6] Autobiography of Mrs. Delany, vol. i. p. 20, 82.

[7] Lives of the Poets, ed. Cunningham, vol. ii. p. 307.

[8] Mémoires, Col. Michaud, 3rd Series, tom. viii. p. 731; Bolingbroke's Works, vol. ii. p. 315, Philadelphia, 1841.

[9] Bolingbroke's Works, vol. ii. p. 315, 317, 320. "The sole question," says Bolingbroke, "is, who caused this disunion?—and that will be easily decided by every impartial man, who informs himself carefully of the public anecdotes of that time. If the private anecdotes were to be laid open as well as those, and I think it almost time they should, the whole monstrous scene would appear, and shock the eye of every honest man." The prediction has been fulfilled, and the vaunting prophet consigned to infamy through the evidence he invoked.

[10] Bolingbroke's Works, vol. i. p. 123.

[11] Bolingbroke's Works, vol. i. p. 124.

[12] Gibber's Apology, 4th ed. vol. ii. p. 11.

[13] Warburton's Pope, ed. 1760, vol. iv. p. 172; Spence, p. 148.

[14] Hurd's Addison, vol. i. p. 299.

[15] Pope related, perhaps truly, that Addison objected to the phrase "Britons *arise*!" in the Prologue to Cato, and said, "it would be called stirring the people to rebellion." Warburton holds this incident to be a proof that Addison "was exceedingly afraid of party imputations throughout the carriage of the whole affair," as if, because he did not wish to be considered an instigator to rebellion, it followed that he shrunk from seeming an advocate for whig principles.

[16] Pope to Caryll, April 30, 1713.

[17] Scott's Life of Swift, p. 139.

[18] Pope to Caryll, May 1, 1714.

[19] Essay on the Genius of Pope, 5th ed. vol. i. p. 29.

[20] Spectator, No. 523.

[21] Pope to Caryll, Nov. 29, 1712.

[22] Spectator, No. 523, Oct. 30, 1712.

[23] Wordsworth's Works, ed. 1836, vol. iii. p. 316.

[24] Epilogue to the Satires; Dialog. 2, ver. 182.

[25] Essay on Criticism, ver. 418.

[26] Pope to Lord Lansdowne, Jan. 10, 1712 [13].

[27] Imitations of Horace, bk. ii. ep. 1, ver. 75.

[28] Oldham's Elegies.

[29] Imitations of Horace, bk. ii. ep. 1, ver. 213.

[30] A Version of the Psalms: Preface.

[31] Evelyn's Diary, vol. ii. p. 27; Pepys's Diary, 4th ed., vol. iii. p. 219.

[32] Account of the Life of Cowley, prefixed to his works, ed. 1688

[33] Wordsworth's Works, vol. iii. p. 333.

[34] Prior's Preface to Solomon.

[35] Lives of the Poets, vol. i. p. 77.

[36] Dryden maintains, in his Dedication to the Æneis, that the triplet, conjoined with the Alexandrine, is "the *magna charta* of heroic poetry." "Besides," he says, "the majesty which it gives, it confines the sense within the barriers of three lines, which would languish if it were lengthened into four." Johnson, while granting that the variety arising from triplets was desirable, wished that there should "be some stated mode of admitting them," in order to prevent their coming upon the reader by surprise, and to keep up the constancy of metrical laws. Such a rule would introduce a new species of monotony, and do away with the benefit which principally recommended triplets to Dryden. Ideas which were not enough for four lines, and over-much for two, would not recur at stages fixed

beforehand. Swift thought triplets and Alexandrines "a corruption," and boasted that he had "banished them" by a triplet in his City Shower. "I absolutely," he adds, "did prevail with Mr. Pope, and Gay, and Dr. Young, and one or two more to reject them. Mr. Pope never used them till he translated Homer, which was too long a work to be so very exact in; and I think in one or two of his last poems he has, out of laziness, done the same thing, though very seldom." Swift was mistaken in his assertion that Pope never used triplets till he translated the Iliad. They occur in the Essay on Criticism, the Temple of Fame, and other pieces, and not only did these works appear before the Homer, but they appeared after the triplet in the City Shower, which Swift flattered himself had banished all triplets from poetry. Nor had he any need to persuade Young and Gay to reject them if they had been exploded by his triplet of 1710, for it was two or three years later before either Young or Gray printed their first rhymes. They contained, however, triplets in spite of his City Shower, which had none of the effect he imagined. It merely proved, what no one doubted, that a metre proper to serious subjects was ludicrous in a burlesque. Swift's dislike to triplets and Alexandrines was a prejudice, and he did not pretend to offer any reason for his decree.

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# WINDSOR FOREST.

[Pg 339]

## TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

## GEORGE LORD LANSDOWN.[1]

Thy forest, Windsor! and thy green retreats,
At once the monarch's and the muse's seats,[2]
Invite my lays. Be present, sylvan maids!
Unlock your springs, and open all your shades.[3]
Granville commands; your aid, O muses, bring!
What muse for Granville can refuse to sing?[4]
The groves of Eden, vanished now so long, [Pg 340]
Live in description,[5] and look green in song:
These, were my breast inspired with equal flame,[6]
Like them in beauty, should be like in fame.[7]
Here hills and vales, the woodland and the plain,
Here earth and water, seem to strive again;
Not chaos-like together crushed and bruised,
But, as the world, harmoniously confused:[8]
Where order in variety we see,
And where, though all things differ, all agree.[9]
Here waving groves a chequered scene display,
And part admit, and part exclude the day;
As some coy nymph her lover's warm address
Nor quite indulges, nor can quite repress.[10]
There, interspersed in lawns and opening glades,
Thin trees arise that shun each other's shades.
Here in full light the russet plains extend:
There wrapt in clouds the blueish hills ascend. [Pg 341]
Ev'n the wild heath displays her purple dyes,[11]
And 'midst the desert fruitful fields arise,
That crowned with tufted trees[12] and springing corn,
Like verdant isles the sable waste adorn.
Let India boast her plants, nor envy we
The weeping amber, or the balmy tree,[13]
While by our oaks the precious loads are borne,
And realms commanded which those trees adorn.
Not proud Olympus yields a nobler sight,
Though gods assembled grace his tow'ring height,[14]
Than what more humble mountains offer here,
Where, in their blessings, all those gods appear.[15]
See Pan with flocks, with fruits Pomona crowned,[16]
Here blushing Flora paints th' enamelled ground,
Here Ceres' gifts in waving prospect stand,
And nodding tempt the joyful reaper's hand;
Rich Industry sits smiling on the plains,
And peace and plenty tell, a Stuart reigns. [Pg 342]
Not thus the land appeared in ages past,
A dreary desert and a gloomy waste,[17]
To savage beasts and savage laws a prey,[18]

And kings more furious and severe than they;[19]
Who claimed the skies, dispeopled air and floods,
The lonely lords of empty wilds and woods:[20]
Cities laid waste, they stormed the dens and caves,
(For wiser brutes were backward to be slaves.)[21]
What could be free, when lawless beasts obeyed,[22]
And ev'n the elements[23] a tyrant swayed?
In vain kind seasons swelled the teeming grain,
Soft show'rs distilled, and suns grew warm in vain; [Pg 343]
The swain with tears his frustrate labour yields,[24]
And famished dies amidst his ripened fields.[25]
What wonder then, a beast or subject slain[26]
Were equal crimes in a despotic reign?
Both doomed alike, for sportive tyrants bled,
But while the subject starved, the beast was fed.
Proud Nimrod first the bloody chace began,
A mighty hunter, and his prey was man:
Our haughty Norman boasts that barb'rous name,
And makes his trembling slaves the royal game.
The fields are ravished from th' industrious swains,
From men their cities, and from gods their fanes:[27]
The levelled towns[28] with weeds lie covered o'er;[29]
The hollow winds through naked temples roar;[30] [Pg 344]
Round broken columns clasping ivy twined;
O'er heaps of ruin stalked the stately hind;[31]
The fox obscene to gaping tombs retires,
And savage howlings[32] fill the sacred choirs.[33]
Awed by his nobles, by his commons curst,
Th' oppressor ruled tyrannic where he durst,[34]
Stretched o'er the poor and church his iron rod,
And served alike his vassals and his God.[35]
Whom ev'n the Saxon spared, and bloody Dane,
The wanton victims of his sport remain.
But see, the man, who spacious regions gave
A waste for beasts, himself denied a grave![36] [Pg 345]
Stretched on the lawn[37] his second hope survey,[38]
At once the chaser, and at once the prey:[39]
Lo Rufus, tugging at the deadly dart,
Bleeds in the forest like a wounded hart.[40]
Succeeding monarchs heard the subject's cries,
Nor saw displeased the peaceful cottage rise.[41]
Then gath'ring flocks on unknown[42] mountains fed,
O'er sandy wilds were yellow harvests spread,
The forest wondered at th' unusual grain,[43]
And secret transport touched the conscious swain.[44]
Fair Liberty, Britannia's goddess, rears
Her cheerful head, and leads the golden years.[45]
Ye vig'rous swains! while youth ferments your blood, [Pg 346]
And purer spirits swell the sprightly flood,[46]
Now range the hills, the gameful[47] woods beset,
Wind the shrill horn, or spread the waving net.
When milder autumn summer's heat succeeds,[48]
And in the new-shorn field the partridge feeds,
Before his lord the ready spaniel bounds,
Panting with hope, he tries the furrowed grounds;
But when the tainted gales the game betray,
Couched close he lies, and meditates the prey;[49]
Secure they trust th' unfaithful field beset,
Till hov'ring o'er them sweeps the swelling net.
Thus (if small things we may with great compare)[50]
When Albion sends her eager sons to war,
Some thoughtless town, with ease and plenty blest,[51]
Near, and more near, the closing lines invest; [Pg 347]
Sudden they seize th' amazed, defenceless prize,
And high in air Britannia's standard flies.
See! from the brake the whirring pheasant springs,
And mounts exulting on triumphant wings:[52]
Short is his joy; he feels the fiery wound,

Flutters in blood, and panting beats the ground.
Ah! what avail his glossy, varying dyes,[53]
His purple crest, and scarlet-circled eyes,
The vivid green his shining plumes unfold,
His painted wings,[54] and breast that flames with gold?
  Nor yet, when moist Arcturus clouds the sky,
The woods and fields their pleasing toils deny.[55]
To plains with well-breathed beagles we repair,
And trace the mazes of the circling hare:
Beasts, urged by us, their fellow-beasts pursue,
And learn of man each other to undo.[56]
With slaught'ring guns th' unwearied fowler roves,
When frosts have whitened all the naked groves;[57]
Where doves in flocks the leafless trees o'ershade,[58]
And lonely woodcocks haunt the wat'ry glade. [Pg 348]
He lifts the tube, and levels with his eye;[59]
Straight a short thunder breaks the frozen sky:
Oft, as in airy rings they skim the heath,
The clam'rous lapwings feel the leaden death:
Oft, as the mounting larks their notes prepare,
They fall, and leave their little lives in air.[60]
  In genial spring, beneath the quiv'ring shade,
Where cooling vapours breathe along the mead,
The patient fisher takes his silent stand,
Intent, his angle trembling in his hand:[61]
With looks unmoved, he hopes[62] the scaly breed,
And eyes the dancing cork, and bending reed.
Our plenteous streams a various race supply,
The bright-eyed perch with fins of Tyrian dye,
The silver eel, in shining volumes[63] rolled,
The yellow carp, in scales bedropped with gold,[64]
Swift trouts, diversified with crimson stains, [Pg 349]
And pikes, the tyrants of the wat'ry plains.[65]
  Now Cancer glows with Phœbus' fiery car:[66]
The youth rush eager to the sylvan war,[67]
Swarm o'er the lawns, the forest walks surround,
Rouse the fleet hart, and cheer the opening hound.
Th' impatient courser pants in ev'ry vein,
And pawing, seems to beat the distant plain.
Hills, vales, and floods appear already crossed,
And ere he starts, a thousand steps are lost.[68]
See the bold youth strain up the threat'ning[69] steep,
Rush through the thickets, down the valleys sweep,
Hang o'er their coursers' heads with eager speed,
And earth rolls back beneath the flying steed.[70]
Let old Arcadia boast her ample plain, [Pg 350]
Th' immortal huntress, and her virgin-train;
Nor envy, Windsor! since thy shades have seen
As bright a goddess, and as chaste a queen;[71]
Whose care, like hers, protects the sylvan reign,[72]
The earth's fair light, and empress of the main.[73]
  Here too, 'tis sung, of old Diana strayed,
And Cynthus' top forsook for Windsor shade:
Here was she seen o'er airy wastes to rove,
Seek the clear spring, or haunt the pathless grove;[74]
Here armed with silver bows, in early dawn,
Her buskined virgins traced the dewy lawn.
  Above the rest a rural nymph was famed,[75]
Thy offspring, Thames! the fair Lodona named; [Pg 351]
(Lodona's fate, in long oblivion cast,
The muse shall sing, and what she sings shall last.)
Scarce could the goddess from her nymph be known,
But by the crescent and the golden zone.[76]
She scorned the praise of beauty, and the care;
A belt her waist, a fillet binds her hair;[77]
A painted quiver on her shoulder sounds,[78]
And with her dart the flying deer she wounds.
It chanced, as eager of the chace, the maid
Beyond the forest's verdant limits strayed,

Pan saw and loved, and burning with desire[79]
Pursued her flight, her flight increased his fire.
Not half so swift the trembling doves can fly,
When the fierce eagle cleaves the liquid sky;
Not half so swiftly the fierce eagle moves,
When through the clouds he drives the trembling doves,[80]
As from the god she flew with furious pace,
Or as the god, more furious urged the chace.[81]
Now fainting, sinking, pale, the nymph appears;
Now close behind, his sounding steps she hears;
And now his shadow reached her as she run,[82]
His shadow lengthened by the setting sun; [Pg 352]
And now his shorter breath, with sultry air,
Pants on her neck, and fans her parting hair.[83]
In vain on father Thames she calls for aid,
Nor could Diana help her injured maid.
Faint, breathless, thus she prayed, nor prayed in vain;
"Ah Cynthia! ah—though banished from thy train,
Let me, O let me, to the shades repair,
My natives shades—there weep, and murmur there."
She said, and melting as in tears she lay,
In a soft, silver stream dissolved away.
The silver stream her virgin coldness keeps,
For ever murmurs, and for ever weeps;
Still bears the name the hapless virgin bore,[84]
And bathes the forest where she ranged before.
In her chaste current oft the goddess laves,
And with celestial tears augments the waves.[85]
Oft in her glass the musing shepherd spies[86]
The headlong mountains and the downward skies,[87]
The wat'ry landscape of the pendant woods, [Pg 353]
And absent[88] trees that tremble in the floods;
In the clear azure gleam the flocks are seen,
And floating forests paint the waves with green,
Through the fair scene roll slow the ling'ring streams,
Then foaming pour along, and rush into the Thames.
Thou too, great father of the British floods!
With joyful pride survey'st our lofty woods;
Where tow'ring oaks their growing[89] honours rear,
And future navies on thy shores appear.
Not Neptune's self from all his[90] streams receives
A wealthier tribute than to thine he gives.
No seas so rich, so gay no banks appear,[91]
No lake so gentle, and no spring so clear.
Nor Po[92] so swells the fabling poet's lays,[93]
While led along the skies his current strays,[94] [Pg 354]
As thine,[95] which visits Windsor's famed abodes,
To grace the mansion of our earthly gods:
Nor all his stars above a lustre show,
Like the bright beauties on thy banks below;[96]
Where Jove, subdued by mortal passion still,
Might change Olympus for a nobler hill.
Happy the man whom this bright court approves,[97]
His sov'reign favours, and his country loves:[98]
Happy next him, who to these shades retires,
Whom nature charms, and whom the muse inspires:
Whom humbler joys of home-felt quiet please,
Successive study, exercise, and ease.
He gathers health from herbs the forest yields,
And of their fragrant physic spoils the fields:
With chemic art exalts the min'ral pow'rs,
And draws the aromatic souls of flow'rs: [Pg 355]
Now marks the course of rolling orbs on high;
O'er figured worlds now travels with his eye;
Of ancient writ unlocks the learned store,
Consults the dead, and lives past ages o'er:
Or wand'ring thoughtful in the silent wood,
Attends the duties of the wise and good,[99]
T' observe a mean, be to himself a friend,
To follow nature, and regard his end;[100]

Or looks on heav'n with more than mortal eyes,
Bids his free soul expatiate in the skies,
Amid her kindred stars familiar roam,
Survey the region, and confess her home!
Such was the life great Scipio once admired,
Thus Atticus, and Trumbull thus retired.
  Ye sacred Nine! that all my soul possess,
Whose raptures fire me, and whose visions bless,[101]
Bear me, oh bear me to sequestered scenes,
The bow'ry mazes, and surrounding greens;[102]
To Thames's banks which fragrant breezes fill,
Or where ye Muses sport on Cooper's Hill.
On Cooper's Hill eternal wreaths shall grow
While lasts the mountain,[103] or while Thames shall flow.
I seem through consecrated walks to rove,[104]
I hear soft music die along the grove: [Pg 356]
Led by the sound, I roam from shade to shade,
By god-like poets venerable made:[105]
Here his first lays[106] majestic[107] Denham sung;
There the last numbers flowed from Cowley's tongue.[108]
O early lost![109] what tears the river shed,[110]
When the sad pomp along his banks was led![111]
His drooping swans on ev'ry note expire,[112]
And on his willows hung each muse's lyre.[113]
  Since fate relentless stopped their heav'nly voice, [Pg 357]
No more the forests ring, or groves rejoice;
Who now shall charm the shades, where Cowley strung
His living[114] harp, and lofty Denham sung?
But hark! the groves rejoice, the forest rings!
Are these reviv'd? or is it Granville sings![115]
'Tis yours, my lord, to bless our soft retreats,
And call the muses to their ancient seats;
To paint anew the flow'ry sylvan scenes,
To crown the forests with immortal greens,
Make Windsor-hills in lofty numbers rise,
And lift her turrets nearer to the skies;
To sing those honours you deserve to wear,[116]
And add new lustre to her silver star.[117]
  Here[118] noble Surrey[119] felt the sacred rage,
Surrey, the Granville of a former age:
Matchless his pen, victorious was his lance,
Bold in the lists, and graceful in the dance: [Pg 358]
In the same shades the Cupids tuned his lyre
To the same notes of love, and soft desire:
Fair Geraldine,[120] bright object of his vow,
Then filled the groves, as heavenly Mira now.[121]
  Oh would'st thou sing what heroes Windsor bore,
What kings first breathed upon her winding shore,
Or raise old warriors, whose adored remains
In weeping vaults her hallowed earth contains![122]
With Edward's acts adorn the shining page,[123]
Stretch his long triumphs down through ev'ry age,
Draw monarchs chained,[124] and Crecy's glorious field,
The lilies[125] blazing on the regal shield:[126]
Then, from her roofs when Verrio's[127] colours fall,
And leave inanimate the naked wall, [Pg 359]
Still in thy song should vanquished France appear,
And bleed for ever under Britain's spear.[128]
  Let softer strains ill-fated Henry[129] mourn,
And palms eternal flourish round his urn.
Here o'er the martyr-king the marble weeps,
And, fast beside him, once-feared Edward[130] sleeps:
Whom not th' extended Albion could contain,
From old Belerium[131] to the northern main,[132]
The grave unites; where ev'n the great find rest,
And blended lie th' oppressor and th' oppressed!
  Make sacred Charles's tomb for ever known,[133]
(Obscure the place, and uninscribed the stone)[134]

Oh fact accurst! what tears has Albion shed,[135]
Heav'ns, what new wounds! and how her old have bled! [Pg 360]
She saw her sons with purple death expire,
Her sacred domes involved in rolling fire,[136]
A dreadful series of intestine wars,
Inglorious triumphs and dishonest scars.[137]
At length great Anna said—"Let discord cease!"[138]
She said, the world obeyed, and all was peace!
In that blest moment, from his oozy bed
Old father Thames advanced his rev'rend head;[139]
His tresses dropped with dews,[140] and o'er the stream[141]
His shining horns[142] diffused a golden gleam; [Pg 361]
Graved on his urn, appeared the moon that guides
His swelling waters, and alternate tides;
The figured streams in waves of silver rolled,
And on their banks Augusta[143] rose in gold.
Around his throne the sea-born brothers[144] stood,
Who swell with tributary urns his flood:
First the famed authors of his ancient name,[145]
The winding Isis and the fruitful Thame;[146]
The Kennet swift, for silver eels renowned;[147]
The Loddon slow, with verdant alders crowned;[148]
Cole, whose dark streams his flow'ry islands lave; [Pg 362]
And chalky Wey,[149] that rolls a milky wave:
The blue, transparent Vandalis[150] appears;
The gulphy Lee his sedgy tresses rears;[151]
And sullen Mole, that hides his diving flood;[152]
And silent Darent, stained with Danish blood.[153]
High in the midst, upon his urn reclined,
(His sea-green mantle waving with the wind)[154]
The god appeared: he turned his azure eyes
Where Windsor-domes and pompous turrets rise;
Then bowed and spoke;[155] the winds forget to roar,
And the hushed waves glide softly to the shore.[156]
"Hail, sacred Peace! hail, long-expected days,
That Thames's glory to the stars shall raise! [Pg 363]
Though Tiber's streams immortal Rome behold,
Though foaming Hermus swells with tides of gold,[157]
From heav'n itself though sevenfold Nilus flows,
And harvests on a hundred realms bestows,[158]
These now no more shall be the muse's themes,
Lost in my fame, as in the sea their streams.
Let Volga's banks with iron squadrons shine,[159]
And groves of lances glitter on the Rhine;
Let barb'rous Ganges arm a servile train;
Be mine the blessings of a peaceful reign.
No more my sons shall dye with British blood
Red Iber's sands, or Ister's foaming flood:[160]
Safe on my shore each unmolested swain
Shall tend the flocks, or reap the bearded grain;
The shady empire shall retain no trace[161]
Of war or blood, but in the sylvan chace;
The trumpet sleep while cheerful horns are blown,
And arms employed on birds and beasts alone.[162]
Behold! th' ascending villas on my side, [Pg 364]
Project long shadows o'er the crystal tide;
Behold! Augusta's glitt'ring spires increase,
And temples rise,[163] the beauteous works of peace.
I see, I see, where two fair cities bend
Their ample bow, a new Whitehall ascend![164]
There mighty nations shall inquire their doom,
The world's great oracle in times to come;[165]
There kings shall sue, and suppliant states be seen
Once more to bend before a British Queen.[166]
Thy trees, fair Windsor![167] now shall leave their woods,[168]
And half thy forests rush into thy floods,[169] [Pg 365]
Bear Britain's thunder, and her cross[170] display,

To the bright regions of the rising day;[171]
Tempt icy seas,[172] where scarce the waters roll,
Where clearer flames glow round the frozen pole;
Or under southern skies exalt[173] their sails,
Led by new stars, and borne by spicy gales![174]
For me the balm shall bleed, and amber flow,
The coral redden, and the ruby glow,
The pearly shell its lucid globe infold,
And Phœbus warm the ripening ore to gold.[175]
The time shall come, when, free as seas or wind,[176]
Unbounded Thames shall flow for all mankind,[177] [Pg 366]
Whole nations enter with each swelling tide,
And seas but join the regions they divide;[178]
Earth's distant ends our glory shall behold,
And the new world launch forth to seek the old.
Then ships of uncouth form shall stem the tide,
And feathered people crowd my wealthy side,
And naked youths[179] and painted chiefs admire[180]
Our speech, our colour, and our strange attire.
Oh stretch thy reign, fair Peace! from shore to shore,
Till conquest cease, and slav'ry be no more;
Till the freed Indians in their native groves
Reap their own fruits, and woo their sable loves,
Peru once more a race of kings behold,
And other Mexicos be roofed with gold.[181]
Exiled by thee from earth to deepest hell,
In brazen bonds,[182] shall barb'rous Discord dwell: [Pg 367]
Gigantic Pride, pale Terror, gloomy Care,
And mad Ambition shall attend her there:
There purple Vengeance bathed in gore retires,
Her weapons blunted, and extinct her fires:
There hateful Envy her own snakes shall feel,
And Persecution mourn her broken wheel:
There Faction roar, Rebellion bite her chain,[183]
And gasping Furies thirst for blood in vain."
  Here cease thy flight, nor with unhallowed lays
Touch the fair fame of Albion's golden days:
The thoughts of gods let Granville's verse recite,
And bring the scenes of opening fate to light.[184]
My humble muse, in unambitious strains,
Paints the green forests and the flow'ry plains,[185]
Where Peace descending bids her olive spring,
And scatters blessings from her dove-like wing.
Ev'n I more sweetly pass my careless days,
Pleased in the silent shade with empty praise; [Pg 368]
Enough for me, that to the list'ning swains
First in these fields I sung the sylvan strains.[186]

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] Notwithstanding the many praises lavished on this celebrated nobleman as a poet, by Dryden, by Addison, by Bolingbroke, by our Author, and others, yet candid criticism must oblige us to confess, that he was but a feeble imitator of the feeblest parts of Waller. After having been secretary at war, 1710, controller and treasurer to the household, and of her majesty's privy council, and created a peer, 1711, he was seized as a suspected person, at the accession of George I., and confined in the Tower. Whatever may be thought of Lord Lansdowne as a poet, his character as a man was highly valuable. His conversation was most pleasing and polite; his affability, and universal benevolence, and gentleness, captivating; he was a firm friend and a sincere lover of his country. This is the character I received of him from his near relation, the late excellent Mrs. Delany.—Warton.

[2] Thus Hopkins, in his History of Love:

> Ye woods and wilds, serene and blest retreats,
> At once the lovers' and the Muses' seats
> To you I fly.—Wakefield.

[3] Originally thus:

> Chaste goddess of the woods,
> Nymphs of the vales, and Naïads of the flood,
> Lead me through arching bow'rs, and glimin'ring glades,
> Unlock your springs.—Pope.

Dryden's Virgil, Geor. ii. 245:

> Once more unlock for thee the sacred spring.

Æn. x. 241:

> Now, sacred sisters, open all your spring.—Wakefield.

[4] Neget quis carmina Gallo? Virg.—Warburton.

[5] Evidently suggested by Waller:

> Of the first Paradise there's nothing found,
> Yet the description lasts.—Holt White.

Addison's Letter from Italy:

> Sometimes misguided by the tuneful throng,
> I look for streams immortalised in song,
> That lost in silence and oblivion lie;
> Dumb are their fountains, and their channels dry;
> Yet run for ever by the muse's skill,
> And in the smooth description murmur still.—Wakefield.

[6] There is an inaccuracy in making the flame equal to a grove. It might have been Milton's flame.—Warton.

Addison's Letter from Italy:

> O, could the muse my ravished breast inspire
> With warmth like yours, and raise an equal fire.—Wakefield.

[7] This is borrowed from the lines, quoted by Bowles, in which Denham alludes to the founder of Windsor Castle being as doubtful as was the birth-place of Homer:

> Like him in birth, thou should'st be like in fame,
> As thine his fate, if mine had been his flame.

[8] From Waller:

> As in old chaos heav'n with earth confused,
> And stars with rocks together crushed and bruised.—Wakefield.

[9] Evidently from Cooper's Hill:

> Here Nature, whether more intent to please
> Us, or herself, with strange varieties,
> Wisely she knew the harmony of things,
> As well as that of sounds, from discord springs.
> Such was the discord which did first disperse
> Form, order, beauty through the universe.—Warton.

[10] There is a levity in this comparison which appears to me unseasonable, and but ill according with the serene dignity of the subject.—Wakefield.

[11] Originally thus:

> Why should I sing our better suns or air,
> Whose vital draughts prevent the leech's care,
> While through fresh fields th' enlivening odours breathe,
> Or spread with vernal blooms the purple heath?—Pope.

The first couplet of the lines in Pope's note, was from Dryden's epistle to his kinsman:

> He scapes the best, who, nature to repair,
> Draws physic from the fields, in draughts of vital air.

[12] Milton's Allegro, ver. 78:

> Bosomed high in tufted trees.—Wakefield.

[13] Milton, Par. Lost, iv. 248:

> Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balms.

This fancy was borrowed from the ancients. According to Ovid (Met. x. 500), Myrrha, changed into a tree, weeps myrrh, and the sisters of Phæton (Met. ii. 364), transformed into poplars, shed tears which harden in the sun, and turn into amber.

[14] This fabulous mixture of stale images, Olympus and the Gods, is, in my opinion, extremely puerile, especially in a description of real scenery. Pan, Pomona, and the rest, mere representative substitutions, give no offence.—Wakefield.

[15] The making the hills nobler than Olympus with all its gods, because the gods appeared "in their blessings" on the humbler mountains of Windsor, is a thought only to be excused in a very young writer.—Bowles.

[16] The word "crowned" is exceptionable; it makes Pan crowned with flocks.—Warton.

Pope, in his manuscript, has underscored "Pan with flocks," and "crowned," and set a

mark against the line, as if he had detected, and intended to remove, the defect.

[17] Dryden's Translations from Ovid:

> A dismal desert, and a silent waste.

Pope weakened the line in varying it. "Dreary desert" and "gloomy waste" are synonymous, but "silent" adds a distinct idea to "dismal."

[18] The Forest Laws.—Pope.

The killing a deer, boar, or hare, was punished with the loss of the delinquent's eyes. —Warton.

Thierry believes that the forest laws had a more serious object than to secure for the king a monopoly of sport. The chief intention was to keep the newly conquered Saxons from going armed under the pretext that they were in pursuit of game. Hence the penalty was of a nature to incapacitate the offender for military service.

[19] This is in imitation of Waller:

> Prove all a desert! and none there make stay
> But savage beasts, or men as wild as they.—Wakefield.

Sir William Temple says of the forests on the continent that they

> give a shade
> To savage beasts who on the weaker prey,
> Or human savages more wild than they.

Wakefield remarks that there is an inaccuracy in Pope's couplet, since the "savage laws" to which the pronoun "they" in part refers, were the mode in which the severity of the king displayed itself.

[20] The representation is erroneous. The "air, floods, and wilds" were not "dispeopled." The forest laws occasioned an increase in the quantity of game, which was preserved more carefully when it became the property of the privileged few, and was no longer liable to be exterminated by the many. Pope is not consistent with himself, for he afterwards complains that "while the subject starved the *beast* was *fed*."

[21] Originally thus in the MS.:

> From towns laid waste, to dens and caves they ran
> (For who first stooped to be a slave was man).—Warburton.

The conceit is childish, because dens and caves are the residence of these brutes at all times, and therefore their retreat to these places constitutes no argument of their aversion to slavery. And the following couplet is by no means worthy of the poet. —Wakefield.

[22] According to this doctrine no nation can lie free in which lawless beasts are subjugated by man.

[23] Pope puts "the elements" for the creatures which inhabited them.

[24] In the first edition it was,

> The swain with tears to beasts his labour yields,

which defined the poet's idea more clearly. He changed the expression to avoid the recurrence of the same word when he introduced "beast" into the next couplet.

[25] Addison's Letter from Italy:

> The poor inhabitant beholds in vain
> The reddening orange, and the swelling grain:
> Joyless he sees the growing oils and wines,
> And in the myrtle's fragrant shade repines:
> Starves, in the midst of nature's bounty curst,
> And in the loaden vineyard dies for thirst.—Holt White.

This passage, which describes the misery entailed upon the Italian peasants by an oppressive government, plainly suggested the lines of Pope. The death from thirst, which Addison adds to the death from starvation, is too great an exaggeration. Water could always be had.

[26]
> No wonder savages or subjects slain—
> But subjects starved, while savages were fed.

It was originally thus, but the word "savages" is not properly applied to beasts, but to men; which occasioned the alteration.—Pope.

[27] Translated from

> Templa adimit divis, fora civibus, arva colonis,

an old monkish writer, I forget who.—Pope.

[28] Alluding to the destruction made in the New Forest, and the tyrannies exercised there by William I.—Pope.

I have the authority of three or four of our best antiquarians to say, that the common tradition of villages and parishes, within the compass of thirty miles, being destroyed, in the New Forest, is absolutely groundless, no traces or vestiges of such being to be discovered, nor any other parish named in Doomsday Book, but what now remains. —Warton.

The argument from Doomsday Book is of no weight if, as Lingard asserts, the New Forest was formed before the registration took place. William was an eager sportsman. "He loved the beasts of chase," says the Saxon chronicle, "as if he had been their father," and the source of his love was the pleasure he took in killing them. His hunting grounds, however, were ample without the New Forest, and Thierry thinks that his motive in forming it may have been political. The wooded district, denuded of a hostile population, and stretching to the sea, would have afforded shelter to the Normans in the event of a reverse, and enabled them to disembark in safety.

[29] Addison's Campaign:

> O'er prostrate towns and palaces they pass,
> Now covered o'er with weeds, and hid in grass.

[30] Donne, in his second Satire,

> When winds in our ruined abbeys roar.—Wakefield.

[31] It is a blemish in this fine passage that a couplet in the past tense should be interposed for the sake of the rhyme, in the midst of a description in the present tense.

[32] Originally:

> And wolves with howling fill, &c.

The author thought this an error, wolves not being common in England at the time of the Conqueror.—Pope.

[33] "The temples," "broken columns," and "choirs," of the poet, suppose a much statelier architecture than belonged to the rude village churches of the Saxons. With the same exaggeration the hamlets which stood on the site of the New Forest are converted by Pope into "cities," and "towns."

[34] William did not confine his oppression to the weak and succumb to the strong. The statement that he was "awed by his nobles" is opposed to the contemporary testimony of the Saxon chronicle. "No man," says the writer, "durst do anything against his will; he had earls in his bonds who had done against his will, and at last he did not spare his own brother, Odo; him he set in prison." "His rich men moaned," says the chronicler again, "and the poor men murmured, but he was so hard that he recked not the hatred of them all."

[35] The language is too strong. "When his power or interest was concerned," says Lingard, "William listened to no suggestions but those of ambition or avarice, but on other occasions he displayed a strong sense of religion, and a profound respect for its institutions." While resisting ecclesiastical usurpation, and depriving individuals who were disaffected or incompetent, of their preferment, he upheld the church and its dignitaries, and left both in a more exalted position than he found them.

[36] It is incorrect to say that William was denied a grave. As his body was about to be lowered into the vault in the church of St. Stephen, which he had founded at Caen, a person named Fitz-Arthur forbade the burial, on the plea that the land had been taken by violence from his father, but the prelates having paid him sixty shillings on the spot, and promised him further compensation, the ceremony was allowed to proceed.

[37] "An open space between woods," is Johnson's definition of "lawn," which is the meaning here, and at ver. 21 and 149. The term has since been appropriated to the dressed green-sward in gardens.

[38] Richard, second son of William the Conqueror.—Pope.

Richard is said by some to have been killed by a stag in the New Forest, by others to have been crushed against a tree by his horse.

[39] This verse is taken from one of Denham's in his translation of the Second Æneis:

> At once the taker, and at once the prey.—Wakefield.

[40] The oak under which Rufus was shot, was standing till within these few years.—Bowles.

A stone pillar now marks the spot.—Croker.

[41] In the New Forest, where the cottages had been swept away by William. "Succeeding monarchs" did not, as Pope implies, suffer encroachments on the forest out of pity for their subjects. The concession was extorted. Some of the provisions of Magna Charta were directed against the increase of the royal forests and against the "evil customs" maintained with respect to them.

[42] Mountains hitherto unknown to the flocks, who were now for the first time permitted to feed there.

[43] Miraturque novas frondes et non sua poma. Virg.—Warburton.

Virgil is treating of grafts, and says that the parent stock, when the slips grow, wonders at leaves and fruit not its own. Here the imagination keeps pace with the description, but

stops short before the notion that the trees in the forest wondered to behold the crops of corn.

[44] He doubtless had in his eye, Vir. Æn. i. 506:

> Latonæ tacitum pertentant gaudia pectus.—Wakefield.

Dryden's translation:

> And feeds with secret joy her silent breast.

In Virgil the silent exultation is felt by a mother, who, in an assembly of nymphs, marks the superior beauty of her goddess daughter. There was not the same reason why the swain should keep secret the transport he felt at the sight of wheat fields.

[45] Originally:

> O may no more a foreign master's rage,
> With wrongs yet legal, curse a future age!
> Still spread, fair liberty! thy heav'nly wings,
> Breathe plenty on the fields, and fragrance on the springs.—Pope.

The last couplet was suggested by Addison's Letter to Lord Halifax:

> O Liberty, thou goddess heav'nly bright,
> Profuse of bliss, and pregnant with delight!
> Eternal pleasures in thy presence reign,
> And smiling plenty leads thy wanton train.

[46] Addison's Campaign:

> Their courage dwells not in a troubled flood
> Of mounting spirits, and fermenting blood.

[47] "Thickest woods" till Warburton's edition. The epithet "gameful," to express that the woods were full of game, seems to be peculiar to Pope.

[48] Originally:

> When yellow autumn summer's heat succeeds,
> And into wine the purple harvest bleeds,
> The partridge feeding in the new-shorn fields,
> Both morning sports and evening pleasures yields.—Pope.

Richardson transcribes from the margin of Pope's MS. "Qu. if allowable to describe the season by a circumstance not proper to our climate, the vintage?" And the line which speaks of the making of wine was no doubt altered to obviate this objection.

[49] Dryden's Sigismonda and Guiscardo:

> Watchful to betray
> With inward rage he meditates his prey.—Holt White.

[50] From Virgil, Geo. iv. 176:

> si parra licet componere magnis.

> If little things with great we may compare. Dryden.—Wakefield.

[51] It stood thus in the first editions:

> Pleased in the general's sight, the host lie down
> Sudden before some unsuspecting town;
> The young, the old, one instant make our prize,
> And o'er their captive heads Britannia's standard flies.—Warburton.

Pope, as Wakefield observes, has joined together in the simile in the text the inconsistent notions of a town surprised, and a town taken by the regular approaches of a siege. "The passage," adds Wakefield, "as it originally stood was free from this heterogeneous intermixture, and by a little polish might have been made superior to the present reading."

[52] Richardson gives a more descriptive line from the manuscript:

> Exults in air and plies his whistling wings.

The poet doubtless substituted the later version, because the expression "whirring pheasant" conveyed the same idea as "whistling wings."

[53] This fine apostrophe was probably suggested by that of Virgil on the ox dying of the plague:

> Now what avails his well-deserving toil. Dryden.—Wakefield.

[54] Steevens quotes Pictæque volucres. Virg. Painted birds. Dryden.—Bowles.

Pope probably took the phrase from Paradise Lost, where the birds are described as spreading "their painted wings." In transferring the expression he overlooked the fact that the wings are not the part of the pheasant to which the epithet "painted" is

especially applicable.

[55] Originally thus:

> When hoary-winter clothes the years in white,
> The woods and fields to pleasing toils invite.—Pope.

[56] The reflection is misplaced; for dogs by nature chase hares, and man avails himself of their instinctive propensities.

[57] Originally:

> O'er rustling leaves around the naked groves.—Warburton.

This is a better line.—Warton.

[58] Wakefield understood Pope to mean that the trees shaded the doves, and he objected that leafless trees could not properly be said to overshadow. Steevens pointed out that it was the doves, on the contrary, which overshadowed the trees, by alighting on them in flocks. The ambiguity was caused by Pope's bad and inveterate habit of putting the accusative case before the verb.

[59] The fowler lifts his levelled tube on high.—Pope.

He owed the line in the text to Dryden's Virgil, Geor. ii. 774.

> And bends his bow, and levels with his eyes.

"Tube" is an affected term for a gun, but the word is adopted by Cowper and Campbell. Thomson, in his lines on partridge-shooting, was not afraid to call the gun by its own name, and yet is more poetical than Cowper, Campbell, or Pope:

> the gun
> Glanced just and sudden from the fowler's eye,
> O'ertakes their sounding pinions.

The last expression is nobly descriptive.

[60] Præcipites altá vitam sub nube relinquunt. Virg.—Warburton.

So before Pope, Philips in his Cider:

> ——they leave their little lives above the clouds.—Steevens.

[61] It is singular, that in a poem on a forest, the majestic oak, the deer, and many other interesting and characteristic circumstances, should be all thrown in the distant ground, whilst objects much less appropriate, the fisher, the fowler, &c. are brought forward. —Bowles.

[62] The active use of the word hope, though authorised by Dryden, appears to my taste intolerably harsh and affected.—Wakefield.

[63] "Volume," except in its application to books, now carries with it an idea of magnitude. In Pope's day it was still used in its strictly etymological sense. When Milton, in his personification of Sin (Par. Lost, ii. 651), says that she

> ended foul in many a scaly fold
> Voluminous and vast,

"voluminous" is the synonym for "many a scaly fold," and not for the conjoint epithet "vast."

[64] Wakefield points out that Pope borrowed the language from Lauderdale's translation of the fourth Georgic, where he says of the bees that they are "bedropped with gold," or from Milton's description of the fish, which

> sporting with quick glance
> Show to the sun their waved coats dropt with gold.

[65] "The wat'ry plain" from the *campi liquentes* of Virgil, is an expression of Dryden's in his translation of Ovid, Met. i., and elsewhere. Drayton in his Polyolbion has the tyrant pike. —Wakefield.

"The luce, or pike," says Walton, "is the tyrant of the fresh waters."

[66] Originally thus:

> But when bright Phœbus from the twins invites
> Our active genius to more free delights,
> With springing day we range the lawns around.—Pope.

[67] "Sylvan *war*," is an expression borrowed from writers who described the chase of ferocious beasts,—the lion, tiger, and boar. The language is inapplicable to the pursuit of such timid creatures as the hare, deer, and fox.

[68] Translated from Statius.

> Stare adeo miserum est, pereunt vestigia mille
> Ante fugam, absentemque ferit gravis ungula campum.

These lines Mr. Dryden, in his preface to his translation of Fresnoy's Art of Painting, calls wonderfully fine, and says "they would cost him an hour, if he had the leisure, to translate them, there is so much of beauty in the original," which was the reason, I suppose, why Mr. Pope tried his strength with them.—Warburton.

[69] "Threatening" is an inappropriate epithet for the sloping hills up which the hunters rode in the neighbourhood of Windsor.

[70] Instead of this couplet, Pope had written in his early manuscript,

> They stretch, they sweat, they glow, they shout around;
> Heav'n trembles, roar the mountains, thunders all the ground.

He was betrayed into this bombast, which his better taste rejected, by the attempt to carry on the hyperbolical strain of Statius.

[71] Queen Anne.—Warburton.

Congreve's Prologue to the Queen:

> For never was in Rome nor Athens seen
> So fair a circle, and so bright a queen.

[72] This use of the word "reign" for the territory ruled over, instead of for the sway of the ruler, was always uncommon, and is now obsolete. Queen Anne is mentioned in connection with the chase and the "immortal huntress," because her favourite diversion before she grew unwieldy and inactive, was to follow the hounds in her chaise.

[73] Better in the manuscript:

> And rules the boundless empire of the main.

By the alteration Pope increased the compliment to Anne by making her the light of the earth as well as mistress of the forest and the sea. Wakefield thinks that this application to the queen of the offices of Diana as goddess of the woods, the luminary of the night, and the chief agent in the production of the tides, is happily conceived, but the moon and the monarch were "the light of the earth "and "empress of the main" in such different senses, that the line is a trivial play upon words.

[74] In the last edition published in Pope's lifetime, the four previous lines, with the variation of "sunny heaths" for "airy wastes," were printed in a note, and their place in the text was supplied by a single couplet:

> Here, as old bards have sung, Diana strayed,
> Bathed in the springs, or sought the cooling shade.

Wakefield suggests that Pope rejected this latter line, as not being suited to the prevailing character of the English climate, but at ver. 209 he represents the goddess as often "laving" in the Lodona, and to bathe and luxuriate in shade are surely common enough in England.

[75] Dr. Warton says, "that Johnson seems to have passed too severe a censure on this episode of Lodona; and that a tale in a descriptive poem has a good effect." Johnson does not object to a tale in a descriptive poem. He objects only to the triteness of such a tale as this.—Bowles.

[76] Dryden's Translations from Ovid:

> The nicest eye did no distinction know,
> But that the goddess bore a golden bow.

[77] > Nec positu variare comas; uni fibula vestem,
> Vitta coercuerat neglectos alba capillos. Ovid.—Warburton.

[78] This thought of the quiver sounding is found both in Homer and Virgil.—Wakefield.

Pope remembered Dryden's translation of Virgil, Æneis, xi. 968:

> Diana's arms upon her shoulder sounds.

And xi. 1140:

> A gilded quiver from his shoulder sounds.

[79] Dryden's Æneis, xii. 108:

> The lover gazed, and burning with desire,
> The more he looked the more he fed the fire.

[80] > Ut fugere accipitrem penna trepidante columbæ,
> Ut solet accipiter trepidas agitare columbas. Ovid, Met. lib. v.
> —Warburton.

Sandys' translation:

> As trembling doves the eager hawks eschew;
> As eager hawks the trembling dovers pursue.

[81] In the first edition:

As from the god with fearful speed she flew,
As did the god with equal speed pursue.

[82] Wakefield remarks that Pope, yielding to the exigencies of rhyme, has put "run" for "ran."

[83] Sol erat a tergo: vidi præcedere longam
Ante pedes umbram; nisi timor illa videbat.
Sed certe sonituque pedum terrebar; et ingens
Crinales vittas afflabat anhelitus oris. Ovid, Met. lib. v.—
WARBURTON.

Sandys, whom our bard manifestly consulted, renders thus:

The sun was at our backs; before my feet
I saw his shadow, or my fear did see't.
Howere his sounding steps, and thick-drawn breath
That fanned my hair, affrighted me to death.—WAKEFIELD.

Not only is the story of Lodona copied from the transformation of Arethusa into a stream, but nearly all the particulars are taken from different passages in Ovid, of which Warburton has furnished a sufficient specimen.

[84] The river Loddon.—POPE.

[85] The idea of "augmenting the waves with tears" was very common among the earliest English poets, but perhaps the most ridiculous use ever made of this combination, was by Shakespeare:

Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears.—BOWLES.

Dryden's translation of the first book of Ovid's Art of Love:

Her briny tears augment the briny flood.

[86] These six lines were added after the first writing of this poem.—POPE.

And in truth they are but puerile and redundant.—WARTON.

[87] Eve, looking into the fountain, in Dryden's State of Innocence, Act ii.:

What's here? another firmament below
Spread wide, and other trees that downward grow.—STEEVENS.

[88] The epithet "absent," employed to denote that the trees were only a reflection in the water, is more perplexing than descriptive, particularly as the "absent trees" are distinguished from the "pendant woods," which must equally have been absent.

[89] In every edition before Warburton's it was "spreading honours." Pope probably considered that "rear," which denoted an upward direction, could not be consistently conjoined with "spreading." For "shores," improperly applied in the next line to a river, all the editions before 1736 had "banks."

[90] "Her" appears for the first time in the edition of Warburton in the place of "his," and is now the accepted reading, but it is manifestly a misprint, since "her" has no antecedent. The couplet is obscure. Pope could hardly intend to assert that the flow of the tide poured as much water into the Thames as all the other rivers of the world discharged into the ocean, and he probably meant that all the navigable rivers of the globe did not send more commerce to the sea than came from the sea up the Thames. Even in this case it was a wild, without being a poetical, exaggeration.

[91] In the first edition:

No seas so rich, so full no streams appear.

The epithets "clear," "gentle," "full," which Pope applies to the Thames, show that he had in his mind the celebrated passage in Cooper's Hill:

Though deep yet clear, though gentle yet not dull,
Strong without rage, without o'er-flowing full.

[92] The ancients gave the name of the terrestrial Eridanus or Po, to a constellation which has somewhat the form of a winding river. Pope copied Denham:

Heav'n her Eridanus no more shall boast,
Whose fame in thine, like lesser currents lost,
By nobler streams shall visit Jove's abodes,
To shine amongst the stars and bathe the gods.

[93] Very ill expressed, especially the rivers swelling the lays.—WARTON.

[94] The original readings were beyond all competition preferable both in strength and beauty:

Not fabled Po more swells the poet's lays
While through the skies his shining current strays.—WAKEFIELD.

[95] In saying that the Po did not swell the lays of the poet in the same degree as the Thames,

Pope more especially alluded to the celebrated description of the latter in Cooper's Hill.

[96] In the earlier editions,

> Nor all his stars a brighter lustre show,
> Than the fair nymphs that gild thy shore below.

The MS. goes on thus:

> Whose pow'rful charms enamoured gods may move
> To quit for this the radiant court above;
> And force great Jove, if Jove's a lover still,
> To change Olympus, &c.

[97] Originally:

> Happy the man, who to these shades retires,
> But doubly happy, if the muse inspires!
> Blest whom the sweets of home-felt quiet please;
> But far more blest, who study joins with ease.—Pope.

The turn of this passage manifestly proves that our poet had in view that incomparable encomium of Virgil's second Georgic on philosophy and a country life.—Wakefield.

In addition to the imitation of the second Georgic, and the translation of lines in Horace and Lucan, Pope adopted hints, as Warton has remarked, from Philips's Cider:

> He to his labour hies
> Gladsome, intent on somewhat that may ease
> Unhealthy mortals, and with curious search
> Examines all the properties of herbs,
> Fossils and minerals, &c.
> or else his thoughts
> Are exercised with speculations deep,
> Of good, and just, and meet, and th' wholesome rules
> Of temperance, and ought that may improve
> The moral life; &c.

[98] Lord Lansdowne.—Croker.

[99] This is taken from Horace's epistle to Tibullus:

> An tacitum silvas inter reptare salubres,
> Curantem quidquid dignum sapiente bonoque est?—Wakefield.

Pope remembered Creech's translation of the passage:

> Or dost thou gravely walk the healthy wood,
> Considering what befits the wise and good.

[100] > ——servare modum, finemque tenere,
> Naturamque sequi. Lucan.—Warburton.

[101] Dryden's Virgil, Geor. ii. 673:

> Ye sacred muses! with whose beauty fired,
> My soul is ravished, and my brain inspired.—Wakefield.

Addison in his Letter from Italy has the expression "fired with a thousand raptures."

[102] > O, qui me gelidis in vallibus Hæmi
> Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra! Virg.—Warburton.

[103] Cooper's Hill is the elevation, not deserving the name of mountain, just over Egham and Runnymede.—Croker.

[104] It stood thus in the MS.

> Methinks around your hold scenes I rove,
> And hear your music echoing through the grove:
> With transport visit each inspiring shade,
> By god-like poets venerable made.—Warburton.

[105] From Philips's Cider, ii. 6:

> or what
> Unrivalled authors by their presence made
> For ever venerable.—Steevens.

[106] By "first lays," Pope means Cooper's Hill, but Denham had previously written the Sophy, a tragedy, and translated the second book of the Æneid.

[107] Dryden says of the Cooper's Hill, "it is a poem which for *majesty* of style is, and ever will be, the standard of good writing." From hence, no doubt, Pope took the word "majestic."—Bowles.

[108] Mr. Cowley died at Chertsey, on the borders of the Forest, and was from thence conveyed to Westminster.—Pope.

Pope told Spence that Cowley was killed by a fever brought on by lying out all night in the fields. He had got drunk, in company with his friend Dean Sprat, at the house of a neighbour, and they lost their way in the attempt to walk home. Sprat had long before related that Cowley caught his last illness in the "meadows," but says it was caused "by staying too long amongst his labourers in the heat of the summer." The drunkenness, and the lying out all night, appear to have been the embellishments of scandal.

[109] Cowley died July 28, 1667, in the 49th year of his age. Pope's "O early lost!" is copied from the "O early ripe!" of Dryden in his lines to the Memory of Oldham.

[110] Oldham's Imitation of Moschus:

> This, Thames, ah! this, is now thy second loss
> For which in tears thy weeping current flows.

[111] On the margin of his manuscript Pope wrote the passage of Virgil which he imitated:

> quæ, Tiberine, videbis
> Funera, cum tumulum præterlabere recentem.

The "pomp" was not a poetical exaggeration. Evelyn, who attended the funeral, says that Cowley's body was "conveyed to Westminster Abbey in a hearse with six horses, near a hundred coaches of noblemen, and persons of quality following."

[112] Originally:

> What sighs, what murmurs, filled the vocal shore!
> His tuneful swans were heard to sing no more.—Pope.

[113] We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. Psalm cxxxvii. 2. —Wakefield.

Pope says that "*each* muse" hung up her lyre because Cowley was thought to excel in many departments of verse. "He was beloved," said Dr. Felton, "by every muse he courted, and has rivalled the ancients in every kind of poetry but tragedy." Dr. Sprat entitled his poem on him an "Ode to the English Ovid, Anacreon, Pindar, and Virgil."

[114] Warton mentions, that "living lyre" is used by Cowley.

[115] This couplet was a triplet in the manuscript with the following middle line:

> What bard, what angel, tunes the warbling strings?

It is surprising that Pope did not feel the bathos of the expression, "'Tis yours, my lord," introduced into the midst of the high-flown adulation.

[116] Philips:

> And paint those honours thou art sure to wear.—Steevens.

[117] Meaning, I apprehend, the star of the knights of the Garter installed at Windsor. —Wakefield.

The order was founded by Edward III., the builder of Windsor Castle, which further connected it with Pope's subject. Denham had celebrated the institution of the garter in Cooper's Hill, and Lord Lansdowne, in his Progress of Beauty, "sung the honours" in a few despicable verses, which certainly added no "lustre to the silver star."

[118] All the lines that follow were not added to the poem till the year 1710 [1712]. What immediately followed this, and made the conclusion, were these;

> My humble muse in unambitious strains
> Paints the green forests and the flow'ry plains;
> Where I obscurely pass my careless days,
> Pleased in the silent shade with empty praise,
> Enough for me that to the list'ning swains
> First in these fields I sung the sylvan strains.—Pope.

[119] Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, one of the first refiners of the English poetry; famous in the time of Henry VIII. for his sonnets, the scene of many of which is laid at Windsor. —Pope.

[120] The Fair Geraldine, the general object of Lord Surrey's passionate sonnets, was one of the daughters of Gerald Fitzgerald, Earl of Kildare. In Warton's History of English Poetry, is a poem of the elegiac kind, in which Surrey laments his imprisonment in Windsor Castle.—Warton.

[121] The Mira of Granville was the Countess of Newburgh. Towards the end of her life Dr. King, of Oxford, wrote a very severe satire against her, in three hooks, called The Toast. —Warton.

She proved in her conduct to be the reverse of "heavenly." "Granville," says Johnson, "wrote verses to her before he was three-and-twenty, and may be forgiven if he regarded the face more than the mind. Poets are sometimes in too much haste to praise."

[122]

> Not to recount those several kings, to whom
> It gave a cradle, and to whom a tomb. Denham.—Bowles.

[123] Edward III. born here.—Pope.

[124] David Bruce, king of Scotland, taken prisoner at the battle of Nevil's Cross, 1346, and John, king of France, captured at the battle of Poitiers, 1356. "Monarchs chained" conveys the idea of a rigorous imprisonment, and belies the chivalry, which was the pride of Edward and the Black Prince. David, who was the brother-in-law of Edward III., was subjected to so little constraint, that he was allowed to visit Scotland, and confer with his people on the terms of his ransom. John was received with royal honours in England, and during the whole of his residence here was surrounded with regal luxury and state.

[125] Denham's Cooper's Hill:

> ——Great Edward, and thy greater son,
> The lilies which his father wore, he won.

Edward III. claimed the crown of France by descent, and quartered the French fleur-de-lis on his shield before the victories of the Black Prince had made the assumption something more than an empty boast.

[126] Originally thus in the MS.

> When brass decays, when trophies lie o'er-thrown,
> And mould'ring into dust drops the proud stone,
> From Windsor's roofs, &c.—Warburton.

[127] He was a Neapolitan. Without much invention, and with less taste, his exuberant pencil was ready at pouring out gods, goddesses, kings, emperors, and triumphs, over those public surfaces on which the eye never rests long enough to criticise,—I mean ceilings and staircases. Charles II. consigned over Windsor to his pencil. He executed most of the ceilings there, one whole side of St. George's Hall, and the chapel. On the accession of James II., Verrio was again employed at Windsor in Wolsey's Tomb-house.—Horace Walpole.

[128] Pope had in his head this couplet of Halifax:

> The wounded arm would furnish all their rooms,
> And bleed for ever scarlet in the looms.—Holt White.

[129] Henry VI.—Pope.

[130] Edward IV.—Pope.

[131] The Land's End in Cornwall is called by Diodorus Siculus, *Belerium promentorium*, perhaps from Bellerus, one of the Cornish giants with which that country and the poems of old British bards were once filled.—T. Warton.

[132] Dryden's translation of the tenth Satire of Juvenal, ver. 236:

> Whom Afric was not able to contain
> Whose length runs level with th' Atlantic main.—Wakefield.

[133] Dr. Chetwood's verses to Roscommon:

> Make warlike James's peaceful virtues known.—Wakefield.

[134] Charles I. was buried in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. The precise spot was a matter of doubt till an accidental aperture was made in 1813 into the vault of Henry VIII., when a lead coffin was discovered bearing the inscription "King Charles, 1648." It was opened in the presence of the Regent; and the corpse was in a sufficient state of preservation to enable the spectators to recognise the likeness of the countenance to Vandyke's portraits of the king, and to ascertain that the head had been severed from the body.

[135] Originally thus in the MS.

> Oh fact accurst! oh sacrilegious brood,
> Sworn to rebellion, principled in blood!
> Since that dire morn what tears has Albion shed,
> Gods! what new wounds, &c.—Warburton.

[136] To say that the plague in London, and its consumption by fire, were judgments inflicted by heaven for the murder of Charles I., is a very extraordinary stretch of tory principles indeed.—Warton.

[137] This couplet is directed at the Revolution, considered by Pope, in common with all jacobites, to be a like public calamity with the plague and the fire of London.—Croker.

Pope had in his mind, when he wrote the couplet, Creech's Hor., Ode xxxv. lib. 1.

> I blush at the dishonest show,
> I die to see the wounds and scars,
> Those glories of our civil wars.

[138] Thus in the MS.

> Till Anna rose, and bade the Furies cease;
> *Let there be peace*—she said, and all was *peace*.—Warburton.

It may be presumed that Pope varied the couplet from perceiving the impropriety of a parody on the fiat of the Creator.

[139] Dryden's Annus Mirabilis:

> Old Father Thames raised up his rev'rend head.

And again, at the conclusion of his Threnodia Augustalis:

> While, starting from his oozy bed,
> Th' asserted ocean rears his rev'rend head.—WAKEFIELD.

The gods of rivers are invariably represented as old men.

[140] Spenser of Father Thames:

> his beard all gray
> Dewed with silver drops that trickled down alway.—WAKEFIELD.

[141] Between verse 330 and 331, originally stood these lines;

> From shore to shore exulting shouts he heard,
> O'er all his banks a lambent light appeared,
> With sparkling flames heav'n's glowing concave shone,
> Fictitious stars, and glories not her own.
> He saw, and gently rose above the stream
> His shining horns diffused a golden gleam:
> With pearl and gold his tow'ry front was drest,
> The tributes of the distant East and West.—POPE.

[142] Horns were a classical attribute of rivers,—not I think, according to the common view, as a mark of dignity, but as a symbolical expression of the fact that the principal streams, like the ocean itself, are formed from a confluence of tributaries.—CROKER.

Pope's personification of the Thames is the echo of Addison's translation of a passage in Claudian, describing the deity of the Eridanus:

> His head above the floods he gently reared,
> And as he rose his golden horns appeared,
> That on the forehead shone divinely bright
> And o'er the banks diffused a yellow light:
> Beneath his arm an urn supported lies
> With stars embellished, and fictitious skies.

[143] Augusta was the name which the Romans at one period gave to London. The representation of the god attended by

> All little rivers, which owe vassalage
> To him, as to their lord, and tribute pay,

and the accompanying enumeration of the subsidiary streams, is closely imitated from the Faery Queen. Pope professes to describe the river-gods who stood round the throne of Father Thames, but he has confounded the river-gods with the rivers, and some of his epithets,—"winding Isis," "blue transparent Vandalis," "gulphy Lee,"—are not applicable to persons.

[144] The river-gods were said to be the children of Oceanus and Tethys, but in the earlier mythology, Oceanus was himself a *river* (not a sea), surrounding the earth, and the lesser rivers were his progeny.

[145] The Tamesis. It was a common but erroneous notion, that the appellation was formed from appending the name Isis to Thame.

[146] Warton observes that Pope has here copied and equalled the description of rivers in Spenser, Drayton, and Milton. The description is beautiful, but in some points it is deficient. "Winding Isis" and "fruitful Thame" are ill designated. No peculiar and visible image is added to the character of the streams, either interesting from beauty, or incidental circumstances. Most rivers wind and may be called fruitful, as well as the Isis and Thame. The latter part of the description is much more masterly, as every river has its distinctive mark, and that mark is picturesque. It may be said, however, that all the epithets, in a description of this sort, cannot be equally significant, but surely something more striking should have been given as circumstantially characteristic of such rivers as the Isis and Thames, than that they were "winding" and "fruitful," or of the Kennet that it was renowned for "silver eels."—BOWLES.

[147] Drayton:

> The crystal Trent for fords and fish renowned.—BOWLES.

The Kennet is not linked by Pope to any poetical association when he simply says that it is "renowned for silver eels," but Spenser brings a delightful picture before the eye when he speaks of the

> still Darent in whose waters clean
> Ten thousand fishes play, and deck his pleasant stream.

[148] Addison:

> Where silver lakes with verdant shadows crowned.

[149] Several of Pope's epithets are borrowed, although he has not always coupled them with

the same streams to which they are applied in his originals. For "Kennet swift" Milton has "Severn swift," and for "chalky Wey" Spenser has "chalky Kennet."

[150] The Wandle.—CROKER.

[151] Milton has "gulphy Dun" and "sedgy Lee," and Pope combined the characteristics. The remainder of the couplet is from Addison's translation of a passage in Claudian:

> Her dropping locks the silver Tessin rears,
> The blue transparent Adda next appears.

[152] Milton's Vacation Exercise:

> Or sullen Mole, that runneth underneath.—WAKEFIELD.

The Mole at particular spots, called the swallows, sinks through crevices in the chalk, and during dry seasons, when there is not sufficient water to till both the subterranean and the upper channel, the bed of the river is laid bare in parts of its course. The stream sometimes entirely disappears from Burford-bridge to the neighbourhood of Thorncroft-bridge, a distance of nearly three miles.

[153] Drayton:

> And the old Lee brags of the Danish blood.—BOWLES.

Pope's epithet "silent" was suggested by "the still Darent" of Spenser, and the same poet had said of the Eden that it was

> ——stained with blood of many a band
> Of Scots and English.

[154] Addison's translation of an extract from Ovid:

> While thus she rested on her arm reclined,
> The hoary willows waving with the wind.

[155] The river god bowing respectfully to his human audience, before he commenced his speech, is a ludicrous idea, into which Pope was seduced by his courtly desire to represent even the deities as doing homage to Queen Anne.

[156] So Dryden, Æneis, x. 156:

> The winds their breath restrain,
> And the hushed waves lie flatted on the main.—WAKEFIELD.

Pope's lines are compiled from the passage quoted by Wakefield and a couplet in the Court Prospect of Hopkins:

> Unrolling waves steal softly to the shore,
> They know their sovereign and they fear to roar.

[157] The Hermus is characterised by Virgil as "turbid with gold." The property was more usually ascribed to its tributary, the Pactolus, but there was no gold in either.

[158] An undoubted imitation, I think, of Dr. Bathurst's verses on Selden:

> As when old Nilus, who with bounteous flows
> Waters a hundred nations as he goes,
> Scattering rich harvests, keeps his sacred head
> Amidst the clouds still undiscovered.

Homer denominates the Nile, whose sources were unknown, a river that falls from Jupiter or heaven. And our countryman calls it sevenfold, as Ovid before him *septemfluus*, and Catullus still earlier *septemgeminus*, from the seven mouths by which its waters are discharged into the Mediterranean.—WAKEFIELD.

[159] Originally thus in the MS.

> Let Venice boast her tow'rs amidst the main,
> Where the rough Adrian swells and roars in vain;
> Here not a town, but spacious realms shall have
> A sure foundation on the rolling wave.—WARBURTON.

This he altered with his usual discernment, on account of the mean conceit in the equivocal use of the word "foundation."—WAKEFIELD.

[160] This alludes to General Stanhope's campaigns on the Ebro, and the Duke of Marlborough's on the Danube.—CROKER.

In saying that British blood should no more dye foreign lands, Pope meant to furnish an argument for the Peace by intimating that the war was kept up, at the sacrifice of English life, for the benefit of other nations.

[161] In the manuscript:

> O'er all the Forests shall appear no trace.

[162] And certainly sufficient ferocity is displayed even in these amusements. Cowley says,

> And all his malice, all his craft is shown

In innocent wars, on beasts and birds alone.

His commentator, Dr. Hurd, remarks in a spirit that endears him to the reader, "Innocent, he means, in comparison with wars on his own kind."—WAKEFIELD.

[163] The fifty new churches.—POPE.

[164] This seems imitated from Hopkins' Court Prospect:

As far as fair Augusta's buildings reach,
Bent, like a bow, along a peaceful beach.—WAKEFIELD.

Cowley's Somerset House:

And here, behold, in a long bending row,
How two joint cities make one glorious bow.

Whitehall is just above that circular sweep of the Thames in the midst of which the cities of London and Westminster unite. Pope wrote in the belief that the magnificent design of Inigo Jones for the palace at Whitehall would one day be executed.

[165] Addison's translation of a passage in Claudian on the imperial palace at Rome:

Thither the kingdoms and the nations come,
In supplicating crowds to learn their doom.
To Delphi less th' inquiring worlds repair.

[166] "Once more," as in the renowned reign of Elizabeth.—HOLT WHITE.

After holding out a prospect of perpetual peace, Pope conjures up a future vision of "sueing kings," and "suppliant states," which are the consequences of war and victory.

[167] This return to the trees of Windsor Forest, his original subject, is masterly and judicious; and the whole speech of Thames is highly animated and poetical,—forcible and rich in diction, as it is copious and noble in imagery.—BOWLES.

[168] Originally thus:

Now shall our fleets the bloody cross display
To the rich regions of the rising day,
Or those green isles, where headlong Titan steeps
His hissing axle in th' Atlantic deeps:
Tempt icy seas, &c.—POPE.

The original lines were rejected, probably as too nearly resembling a passage in Comus:

And the gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream.—BOWLES.

[169] Pope has written "if obscure?" against this line in the manuscript. It is plain he meant that the trees were converted into ships, but the language is extravagant.

[170] The red cross upon the Union Jack.

[171] Waller's verses on Tea:

To the fair region where the sun does rise.

[172] "To tempt the sea" is a classical expression, significant of hazard and resolution. Dryden's Iliad:

What now remains
But that once more we tempt the wat'ry plains.—WAKEFIELD.

[173] "Exalt" is an inefficient and prosaic word.—WAKEFIELD.

The word is certainly not "prosaic," for no one in prose would talk of exalting a sail, but it is "inefficient," just because it is one of those deviations from common speech, which sound affected.

[174] The whole passage seems a grand improvement from Philips' Cider, book ii.:

uncontroll'd
The British navy, through the ocean vast,
Shall wave her double cross t' extremest climes
Terrific, and return with od'rous spoils
Of Araby well fraught, or Indus' wealth,
Pearl and barbaric gold.—WAKEFIELD.

Pope also drew upon Addison's lines to William III.:

Where'er the waves in restless errors roll,
The sea lies open now to either pole:
Now may we safely use the northern gales,
And in the polar circle spread our sails:
Or deep in southern climes, secure from wars,
New lands explore, and sail by other stars;
Fetch uncontrolled each labour of the sun,
And make the product of the world our own.

Towards the close of 1712 Tickell published his poem on the Prospect of Peace. "The description," Pope wrote to Caryll, "of the several parts of the world in regard to our trade has interfered with some lines of my own in Windsor Forest, though written before I saw his. I transcribe both, and desire your sincere judgment whether I ought not to strike out mine, either as they seem too like his, or as they are inferior." The close resemblance arose from their having copied a common original. The couplet of Pope on the West India islands, which he subsequently omitted, has no counterpart in Tickell, because it was not derived from the passage in Addison.

[175] In poetical philosophy the crude material from which jewels and the precious metals were formed, was supposed to be ripened into maturity by the sun. Tickell has the same idea:

> Here nearer suns prepare the ripening gem,
> And here the ore, &c.

[176] This was suggested by a couplet of Denham's on the same subject in his Cooper's Hill:

> Nor are his blessings to his banks confined,
> But free and common as the sea or wind.—WAKEFIELD.

[177] A wish that London may be made a FREE PORT.—POPE.

[178] This resembles Waller in his panegyric on Cromwell:

> While by your valour and your bounteous mind,
> Nations, divided by the sea, are joined.—WAKEFIELD.

[179] Better in the first edition, "Whose naked youth," and in the Miscellanies better still, "While naked youth."—WAKEFIELD.

[180] "Admire" was formerly applied to anything which excited surprise, whether the surprise was coupled with commendation or censure, or was simply a sentiment of wonder. Thus Milton, using the word in this last sense, says, Par. Lost, i. 690:

> Let none admire
> That riches grow in hell; that soil may best
> Deserve the precious bane.

"Admire" has the same signification in Windsor Forest. Pope means that the savages would be astonished at "our speech, our colour, and our strange attire," and not that they would admire them in our present laudatory sense of the term, which would be contrary to the fact. "A fair complexion," says Adam Smith, "is a shocking deformity upon the coast of Guinea. Thick lips and a flat nose are a beauty."

[181] As Peru was particularly famous for its long succession of Incas, and Mexico for many magnificent works of massy gold, there is great propriety in fixing the restoration of the grandeur of each to that object for which each was once so remarkable.—WARTON.

[182] Rage in Virgil is bound in "brazen bonds," and Envy is tormented by "the snakes of Ixion." These coincidences are specified by Wakefield.

[183] Sir J. Beaumont's Bosworth Field:

> Beneath her feet pale envy bites her chain,
> And snaky discord whets her sting in vain.

[184] Hor., Ode iii. lib. 3:

> Quo, Musa, tendis? desine pervicax
> Referre sermones Deorum et
> Magna modis tenuare parvis.—WARBURTON.

Addison's translation of Horace's Ode:

> But hold, my muse, forbear thy tow'ring flight
> Nor bring the secrets of the gods to light.

Pope says that he will not presume "to touch on Albion's golden days," and "bring the scenes of opening fate to light," oblivious that the speech which Father Thames has just delivered is entirely made up of these two topics. As might be inferred from their feebleness, the lines from ver. 426 formed part of the original Windsor Forest, with the exception of the couplet beginning "Where Peace descending," which is of another order of poetry. The second line is exquisite.

[185] He adopted one or two hints, and especially the turn of the compliment to Lord Lansdowne, from the conclusion of Addison's Letter to Lord Halifax:

> But I've already troubled you too long,
> Nor dare attempt a more adventurous song.
> My humble verse demands a softer theme,
> A painted meadow, or a purling stream:
> Unfit for heroes; whom immortal lays
> And lines like Virgil's, or like yours, should praise.

[186] It is observable that our author finishes this poem with the first line of his Pastorals, as Virgil closed his Georgics with the first line of his Eclogues. The preceding couplet scarcely rises to mediocrity, and seems modelled from Dryden's version of the passage

imitated:

> Whilst I at Naples pass my peaceful days,
> Affecting studies of less noisy praise.—WAKEFIELD.

The conclusion is feeble and flat. The whole should have ended with the speech of Thames.—WARTON.

**END OF VOL. I.**

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