

throne of genius, and elect themselves presidents in the republic of letters, then must right assert itself, and censure the ambitious pretenders as severely as a thief or an impostor would be sentenced in a civil court of law.

Invective and satire have been used and allowed in all ages.

In Roman literature, Juvenal adopted the satiric style to wage a savage onslaught on the tremendous vices of the capital.

Each succeeding age in European literature may reasonably lay claim to professed satirists, whose line of demarkation is drawn by the nature of the subjects on which they wrote.

Religion and its ministers in the fourteenth and fifteenth, with the vices of society, politics and literary rivalry in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, formed the favorite themes of those whose wit and genius made them the terror of the evil-doers.

The limited scope of this essay will prevent our making an extended review of the progress of the satire; suffice it to say, that our English representatives in this school of writing have, in every age, proved incomparably superior to all their contemporaries.

In poetry, the works of Dryden, Pope, Byron and Burns; in prose, McAulay Burke, Newman and Webster are striking examples of superior excellence attained in satirical writing. Our object in this paper is merely to place before the reader a few short specimens of this style drawn from the English classics; and to call the attention of the student-body to the excellent results which may be derived from an extended study in this inviting field of literature. As man should practise the manly art of self-defence, that he

may successfully resist a physical aggressor, so should the ambitious student be intelligently acquainted with that style of writing, which is above all calculated to silence the vaporings of annoying or anonymous scribblers.

We have made selections from the standard authors only, authors whose excellence in invective is universally acknowledged, and we shall consider them in chronological order.

John Dryden is the first representative author of the present English school of satirists. When in 1681, partly at the instigation of Charles II and partly from his own impulse, he lifted up his powerful pen, and with wonderful facility and felicity wrote the satire of "Absalom and Achitophel," he rendered this style of writing instantly and irresistibly popular. This is a political satire written in the style of a scriptural narrative, in which the incidents of the rebellion of Absalom against David are admirably applied to Charles II, the Duke of Monmouth, and Shadwell, Earl of Shaftesbury.

In his description of Shaftesbury he is particularly happy. He says:

Of these the false Achitophel was first,

A name to all succeeding ages cursed:
For close designs and crooked counsels fit;

Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;

Restless, unfix'd in principles and place;

In power unpleas'd, impatient of disgrace:

Pleas'd with the danger when the waves ran high,

He sought the storms; but for a calm unfit,

Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit.