

though melancholy mind ; and the melancholy was not of a kind to affect artificial gloom and midnight musings, but rather to seek and find relief in sunshine, in the beauties of nature, in books and leisure, in solitary or social walks, and in the comforts of a quiet fire-side.

"No passages in a poet's works are more carped at than those in which he speaks of himself ; and if he has readers after death, there are none perused with greater interest. In *The Task* there is nothing which could be carped at on that score even by a supercilious critic, and yet the reader feels that the poet is continually present ; he becomes intimately acquainted with him, and it is this which gives to the poem its unity and its peculiar charm."—*Southey*.

"Cowper's verse invigorates, suggests, arouses. He never sacrifices sense to sound ; never charms the ear at the expense of the understanding. Cowper understood the poet's mission—to reform the tastes and correct the follies of the age."—*Balfour*.

"Not creative imagination, nor deep melody, nor even, in general, much of fancy, or grace or tenderness is to be met with in the poetry of Cowper ; but yet it is not without both high and various excellence. Its main charm, and that which is never wanting, is its earnestness. This is a quality which gives it a power over many minds not at all alive to the poetical ; but it is also the source of some of its strongest attractions for those that are. Hence its truth both of landscape painting, and of the description of character and states of mind ; hence its skilful expression of such emotions and passions as it allows itself to deal with ; hence the force and fervour of its denunciatory eloquence giving to some passages as fine an inspiration of the moral sublime as is perhaps anywhere to be found in didactic poetry ; hence, we may say, even, the directness, simplicity and manliness of Cowper's diction—

all that is best in the form, as well as in the spirit of his verse. It was this quality or temper of mind that principally made him an original poet ; and, if not the founder of a new school, the pioneer of a new era, of English poetry. Instead of repeating the unmeaning conventionalities and faded affectations of his predecessors, it led him to turn to the actual nature within him and around him, and there to learn both the truths he should utter, and the words in which he should utter them."—*Craik*.

To assist the student in coming to a definite conclusion upon the literary style of Cowper, his attention is directed to the following 'points.' These he can determine for himself from the criticisms given above, or from his study of the poem.

1. Cowper's choice and treatment of subjects.

2. The mechanical qualities of his style such as :

(a.) The metre employed and its suitability.

(b.) The nature of the pauses and sentences, &c.

(c.) His diction or the character of words employed.

3. The intellectual and emotional qualities of style, such as :

(a.) Strength (including earnestness, &c.)

(b.) Clearness, simplicity.

(c.) His imagery or imaginative power.

(d.) The nature of his satire.

(e.) His regard for melody.

(f.) His descriptive power, both of the subjective and of the objective worlds, or in other words, of mind and matter.

(g.) Pathos.

4. His love of nature—how it differs from Wordsworth's.

5. His subjectivity or the intrusion of self into his writings.

6. His regard for morality and Christianity.