

Some people follow their own erring judgment too closely and consequently fall into grave errors ; probably

"Pleased with a work where nothing's just or fit
One glaring chaos and wild heap of wit,"
they often forget that

"True wit is nature to advantage dressed
What oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed."

When examining a work we must give our attention to the language but at the same time must not disregard the sense

"Words are like leaves ; and where they most abound
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found."

Some persons are in the habit of using newly-coined words or obsolete ones. That we may guard against this, Pope gives us the following advice

"Be not the first by whom the new are tried
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside."

Most critics, says Pope, judge poetry by the verse alone. They are satisfied if the metre and rhyme are perfect.

"While expletives their feeble aid do join,
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line."

This is a very good instance of precept and example. In the first line we find the expletive "do" which certainly enfeebles the line and the second verse contains the "ten low words."

However a true critic must not be satisfied with the smoothness of the verse alone

"Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,
The sound must seem an echo to the sense."

Again we have an example following

"Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows ;

But when loud surges lash the sounding shore
The hoarse rough verse should like the torrent roar."

The first two lines seem to move as smoothly as the zephyr or the stream, while in the two last we imagine we hear "the surges lash the sounding shore"

We must try not to be among those who never give their own judgment, but are ready to catch and believe anybody's opinion.

"Some ne'er advance a judgment of their own,
But catch the spreading notion of the town."

How many persons do we see who never give an original notion, but are always looking for that of someone else. Anybody can convince them.

It is often the case that great works have been censured for a time, but after-

wards their true worth is seen. For there are always those who are willing to blame, "Nay should great Homer lift his awful head, Zoilus again would start up from the dead."

This Zoilus was a minor poet whose name would never now be mentioned had he not criticised Homer very severely, for which he was called "chastiser of Homer." As an example of this hasty criticism Pope gives Dryden's works. But Milton's "Paradise Lost," is a remarkable example. This famous work was not appreciated until long after it was written.

Pope ends his second part with a severe but very just criticism on those writers who try to injure an author's reputation. Of these he says :

"All seems infected that the infected spy,
As all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye."

At first sight, it would seem that a judge needs knowledge only. However, to use Pope's words,

"Tis not enough, taste, judgment, learning join,
In all you speak let truth and candor shine.
Be silent always when you doubt your sense,
And speak, though sure, with seeming diffidence."

The next few lines are very satirical. Pope ridicules poor writers and severe critics. He says it is better to leave this class of men alone.

"Tis best, sometimes, your censure to restrain,
And charitably let the dull be vain."

Such men are found everywhere.

"For fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

Pope now turns to the ancients and gives them high praise. Of course it is natural for him to praise those whom he imitated ; still, what he says is very true.

"Such once were critics ; such the happy few
Athens and Rome in better ages knew."

In the latter part of the poem Pope traces literature through its variations from the time Roman learning was at its height until his own days, and ends the poem by praising some inferior poets and critics to whom he was considerably indebted.

If we take Pope's advice and consider the poem as a whole, at the same time regarding its end, we cannot but praise it. Though we cannot deny that he pays too much attention to the Ancients, yet we must confess that many just rules and sound principles are laid down, which, if followed, would prevent many blunders, not only in writing, but also in every day life.

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