

coats and white duck trousers' on the occasion of His Majesty's advent, inwardly swore that he would put on white coat and black pants rather than give in to such 'scandalous flunkeys,' from whose threatened 'effervescence' of loyalty he fled for a week's country jaunt. But it is the same with authors of every stamp. Lamb and his sisters are 'a very sorry pair of phenomena.' Yet, undoubtedly Lamb sacrificed more for his sister than Carlyle ever did for his suffering wife, and never had to pen such remorseful sentences as Carlyle does here about his own neglect. Lamb's talk is 'contemptibly small, indicating wondrous ignorance and shallowness,' not to say 'insuperable proclivity to gin.' His wit is 'diluted insanity.' The popularity of Darwin's physical discoveries was wonderful to him, 'as indicating the capricious stupidity of mankind. . . . I could never waste the least thought on it.' Mrs. Carlyle's abilities must be exaggerated at the expense of 'all the Sands and Eliots and babbling *coquet* of "celebrated scribbling women," all of whom, boiled down, 'could not make one such woman.' This is bad, but what follows is worse. Wordsworth's works he could 'never considerably reverence,' his melody is as of 'an honest rustic fiddle, good and well handled, but wanting two or more of the strings, and not capable of much!' Personally, he found Wordsworth conceited. Milton and Shakespeare had their limitations and 'gradually it became apparent to me that of transcendent unlimited there was, to this critic, probably but one specimen known,—himself!' After this, we need not wonder that 'nothing came from "Coleridge" that was of use to me that day, or in fact any day.' Macaulay, De Quincey, what treatment can they expect when great genius is thus roughly labelled and pushed aside as useless and imperfect? It is with sorrow that we have written the concluding paragraph of this notice, but when so great a man as Carlyle shows so narrow a power of appreciation for the greatness of others it is a duty, no less necessary than painful, to point out the blot lest we should suffer his declared opinions to blemish the received reputations of men in every way his equals.

*Ward's Selections from the English Poets.* London & New York : Macmillan & Co., 1880. [FOURTH NOTICE. Vol. III. Addison to Blake.] Toronto : Copp, Clarke & Co.

No more difficult problem is presented to the critic than that which calls for the correct appreciation of the poetry of the eighteenth century. We look back with pity, not unmingled with contempt, at the overweening confidence in their own powers with which the polished writers of our so-called Augustan age complacently dubbed themselves the heirs of the beauties of their predecessors and the correctors of their faults. It was in this vein that Johnson cried Milton down, and Addison patronisingly cried him up, and it was the conviction that every alteration they made must be an improvement which spoilt the scholars of that century as editors of our older poets.

But while there is no risk now-a-days of our sharing the exaggerated views which our forefathers held about the charms of the ingenious Mr. Tickell, and his host of fellow versifiers, neither is it possible for us any longer to swell the chorus of depreciation beneath which the school of Wordsworth at one time drowned the few feeble voices which were yet uplifted in praise of the school whose glories culminated in Pope. Between these two opposing courses the critic must steer a justly distinguishing way of his own, and, as usual, it will be found that one of his greatest difficulties arises from the grouping of too many opposing elements together and the attempt to find a general formula sufficiently wide to embrace them all. So long as it was the generally received notion that from Dryden onwards English verse became more and more polished, cold and artificial, until Wordsworth and Coleridge by a dead lift raised it again to a warmer and more natural atmosphere, criticism was baffled in its attempts to conform to such an unnatural classification. The task would have been too great even for Proculus to make Addison, Pope and Johnson on the one hand, and Gray, Chatterton and Blake on the other, lie snugly in the same bed.

It is, however, a fact, and one which Mr. Ward's selections bring out clearly before us, that the natural style of poetry as opposed to the artificial style, the