

classics. We must therefore not follow out this rule to its full extent, since we must devote much of our time to modern writers also.

We now come to a very remarkable passage of this poem. It says,

“Some beauties yet no precepts can declare,
For there's a happiness as well as care.”

By this Pope means that there are certain beauties in poetry, which rules cannot teach, and which are but the offspring of true genius. These beauties generally carry with them a slight defect, to correct or remove which would destroy the whole thing. How many of these do we find in the works of the great poets, and especially in those of Shakespeare. Of them Pope says :

“Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend
And rise to faults true critics dare not mend,
From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art.”

The last line is one very frequently quoted, for it beautifully expresses what those beauties or graces are. They are graces snatched from beyond the reach of art. No rules can teach us how to form these graces since they must be supplied by our genius alone.

A true critic sees but the beauty of the thought and let the ideas “gain the heart without passing through the judgment.” Cavillers on the contrary, with eyes so sharp, see not the grand excellence but seizing the small fault, destroy all. These critics consider nothing but their rules : they look upon a work without proper consideration and thus many beauties seem faults just as,

“Some figures monstrous and misshaped appear
Considered singly or beheld too near,
Which but proportioned to their light and place
Due distance reconciles to form and grace.”

This is but a comparison, but by its aid we can fully understand how some beauties in poetry may sometimes seem faults.

Pope again turns back to the Ancients, praises them highly and ends the first part of the poem by an invocation.

“Oh may some spark of your celestial fire,
The last the meanest of your sons inspire
To teach vain wits a science little known
To admire superior sense and doubt their own.

—The second part of the poem begins with some very just reflections on pride

which he calls the “never-failing vice of fools :

“Whatever Nature has in worth denied
She gives in large recruits of needful pride.”

Such was the case when Pope lived, so it is now and ever shall be. For we all know that the proudest are the most worthless.

“Pride where wit fails steps in to our defence
And fills up all the mighty void of sense.”

We will all admit that the ignorant are often the proudest. However large minds which have received but little learning have plenty of room for pride in large quantities. On account of this Pope wrote the following well known lines.

A little learning is a dangerous thing
Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring
Their shallow draughts intoxicate the brain
And drinking largely sobers us again.”

By this is meant that a person with a little knowledge does not know how much there is to be learnt but he who has a good education fully understands how much more there is to be learned and that he knows comparatively nothing. Pope beautifully expresses this in the following oft-repeated lines.

“But more advanced beholds with strange
surprise
New distant scenes of endless science rise.
The increasing prospect tries our wandering eyes
Hills peep o'er hill and Alps on Alps arise.

There are some critics, who without any consideration whatever search only for trivial faults, overlooking the greater beauties. But

“A perfect judge will read each work of wit
With the same spirit as its author writ.”

For, just as in other works of art, it is not one single part that shows the beauty but the whole joined together

Moreover, there is no work of man that is perfect and,

Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor ne'er shall be.

We should therefore examine the work in general and not look for trivial faults for

“As men of breeding, sometimes men of wit
To avoid great errors must the less commit.

Pope now ridicules those critics, who if they do not find every single part correct condemn the whole.