

numerous classical allusions, obviously written down by Cowper at haphazard when he had the intention of completing a thorough annotation later. One note, however, on ll. 4-6 of the last Sonnet (p. 623) is worth repeating, as a pendant to Cowper's reference to Bentley (p. 582, *note*):

'It has ever been thought difficult for an author to speak gracefully of himself, especially in commendation; but Milton, who was gifted with powers to overcome difficulties of every kind, is eminently happy in this particular. He has spoken frequently of himself both in verse and prose, and he continually shows, that he thought highly of his own endowments; but if he praises himself, he does it with that dignified frankness and simplicity of conscious truth, which render even egotism respectable and delightful: whether he describes the fervent and tender emotions of his juvenile fancy, or delineates his situation in the decline of life, when he had to struggle with calamity and peril, the more insight he affords us into his own sentiments and feelings, the more reason we find both to love, and to revere him.'

592-92. 'let' is the reading of the first edition, text and notes; if it stands it must be governed by 'to' in l. 91.

633 *Lines*. Cowper took great pains over this trifle, and produced several versions before he and his friends were satisfied. An earlier version ran:

In vain to live from age to age
We modern bards endeavour;
But write in Patty's book one page,
You gain your point for ever.