

Twelve starving bards of these degenerate days,
 All as a partridge plump, full-fed and fair,
 She formed this image of well-bodied air.
 With pert, flat eyes, she window'd well its head,
 A brain of feathers and a heart of lead;
 And empty words she gave, and sounding strain,
 But senseless, lifeless! Idol void and vain!
 Never was dashed out at one unlucky hit,
 A poet, so just a copy of a wit;
 So like, that critics said and courtiers swore
 A wit it was, and call'd the phantom More."

In the fourth book, he shows the goddess coming in her majesty to destroy order and science, and to substitute the order of dulness on the earth. She recommends her votaries to find proper employment in the study of butterflies, shells, birds' nests, etc., but cautions them particularly against proceeding to any useful or extensive views of the author of nature.

In her speech to the assembled dunces, the goddess tells them what she expects from each, and concludes with a yawn, which is universally contagious, spreads over all the realm, and the poem ends with the restoration of night and chaos. The poet's description of this final scene is excellent:

In vain! in vain, the all-composing hour
 Resistless falls; the muse obeys the power.
 She comes! she comes, the sable throne behold

Of night primeval, and of Chaos old.
 Thus at her felt approach and secret might,
 Art after art goes out and all is night.
 See skulking truth to her old cavern fled,
 Mountains of casuistry heap'd o'er her head.
 Philosophy, that leaned on Heaven before,
 Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
 Physic of metaphysic begs defence,
 And metaphysic calls for aid on sense.
 See mystery to mathematics fly,
 In vain—they gape, turn giddy, rave and die.
 Lo! thy dread empire Chaos is restored;
 Light dies before thy uncreating word;
 Thy hand great anarchy, lets the curtain fall,
 And universal darkness buries all."

Who can read the pungent retort entitled the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," and not admire the phenomenal genius and indomitable courage of young Byron, who stood alone to defend his writings against the attacks of unmerciful censors. The self-constituted critics of the *Edinburgh Review* had undertaken to denounce beyond all reason the earliest efforts of the titled poet, to prejudice the minds of the reading public against his "House of Idleness," and thus securely nip the bud of his rising greatness with the frosts of their literary omnipotence.

However, Byron's force of character and praiseworthy self-confidence laughed to scorn their pigmy efforts, and penned that forceful answer, which has deservedly become a classic, as the following quotation will approve: