

But *à nos moutons*. The definition of Poetry as "measurable verse" is decidedly imperfect; it is not even respectably descriptive. Much of the literary stuff called Poetry, though it be "measurable verse," is very common place prose; whilst, on the contrary, a great deal of what we term Prose, is Poetry of the highest order. As an illustration of the former I submit the following (from Chapman's "Translation of Homer"): "Chapman is regarded as one who possesses true poetic instinct:—

"Apollo's priest to the Argive fleet did bring
 Gifts for his daughter, prisoner to the king;
 For which his tendered freedom he entreats;
 But being dismissed with contumelious threats
(not decent rhyme!)
 At Phoebus' hands, by vengeful pray'r he seeks
 To have a plague inflicted on the Greeks."

If this is not Prose, what is it?

As an illustration of Prose which has all the requisites of Poetry, take the following (from Ruskin's description of the English fields in Spring):—

"Pastures beside the pacing brooks, soft banks and knolls of lowly hills; thymy slopes of down overlooked by the blue line of lifted sea; Crisp lawns all dim with dew, or smooth in evening warmth of barred sunshine, dinted with happy feet, and softening in their fall the sound of loving voices."

Admirable Poetry, lacking only arrangement.

Just another illustration (from a little-suspected source — Marie Corelli's "Barabbas"):—

"Set in the solemn shadows of the trees, 'twas a pale warning to the world; nevertheless, despite its frozen tragedy, it was not all despair — Remorse, repentance; and for true repentance. God hath but one reply — Pity and Pardon."

This is Poetry of the highest order; at least it seems so to us.

It is decidedly difficult to draw a strict line of demarcation between Poetry and Prose; and our canons are not necessarily the norm of others. For example:—Byron, the merciless critic of Wordsworth, (whom we regard as the Poet of Nature, without peer) says of some of the latter's poetry:—

"He both of precept and example shows,
 That prose is verse, and verse is only prose."

Wordsworth, however, says in answer to the question: "What is a Poet?" "The Poet is one who will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings."