

they ought never to be judged by the standard by which we ourselves shall be judged, who live in times of liberty, of which they knew nothing, and under the shade of institutions many of which did not exist.

We should, therefore, be very cautious in our estimate of men and things gone by, especially when we depend for our data on the evidence of persons, who only saw a part of what was then going on, and who may have given a coloured and partial representation. What a strange idea of the English nation would be formed by one who, living in the year 2000, should read the accounts given by Mr. Russell, the *Times* correspondent, of the disasters in the Crimea, and should imagine that this was a fair sample of every matter of business conducted by the English nation. Or take another instance, suppose some eager advocate of Chancery Reform, and exposé of abuses in the Court of Chancery were to be selected as the exponent of the manner in which all the business of our Courts of Justice is transacted. Good taste, it is evident will avoid this common error. We should judge our ancestors as we wish to be judged ourselves, wisely, charitably, and with discrimination, but never condemning them, nor their institutions by wholesale, especially when our information on the subject is derived from secondary sources.

On the other hand, a servile imitation is as much to be censured, though perhaps in the present day, not so much to be apprehended. Whatever was noble, generous, or wise in the manners, morals, and institutions of the past, we should study, and as far as appears possible and useful, we may re-produce it. Yet if we have really caught the principle which we seek to adopt, we shall probably find it necessary to vary the detail. An absolute copy may be made, whilst the principle is entirely kept out of sight.

Mere servile imitation is characterized in our tongue by a very contemptuous but a very forcible and significant term, *apishness*, which exactly expresses the error which I am speaking of. The monkey imitates the actions of the man, but he can never penetrate the source from which those actions spring. He copies the gesture, but he knows nothing of the mind which prompts it. Thus bad taste either condemns in the mass all past ages as ignorant and foolish in comparison with itself, and raises a statute to its own praise, or with servile flattery, it apes the defects rather than the virtues of its original, and like the courtiers of the king of Macedon, sets one shoulder higher than the other, because Alexander's head was a little on one side.

As I before said, good taste is concerned with the *utility*, the *beauty* and the *propriety* of the things with which we have