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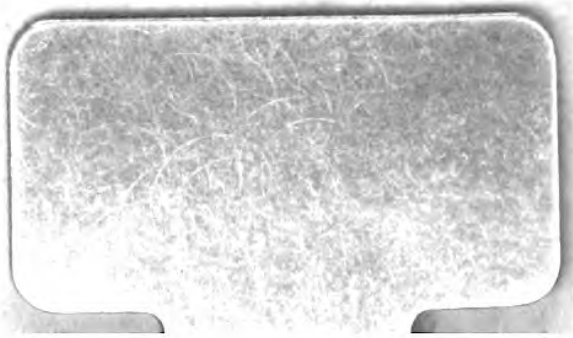
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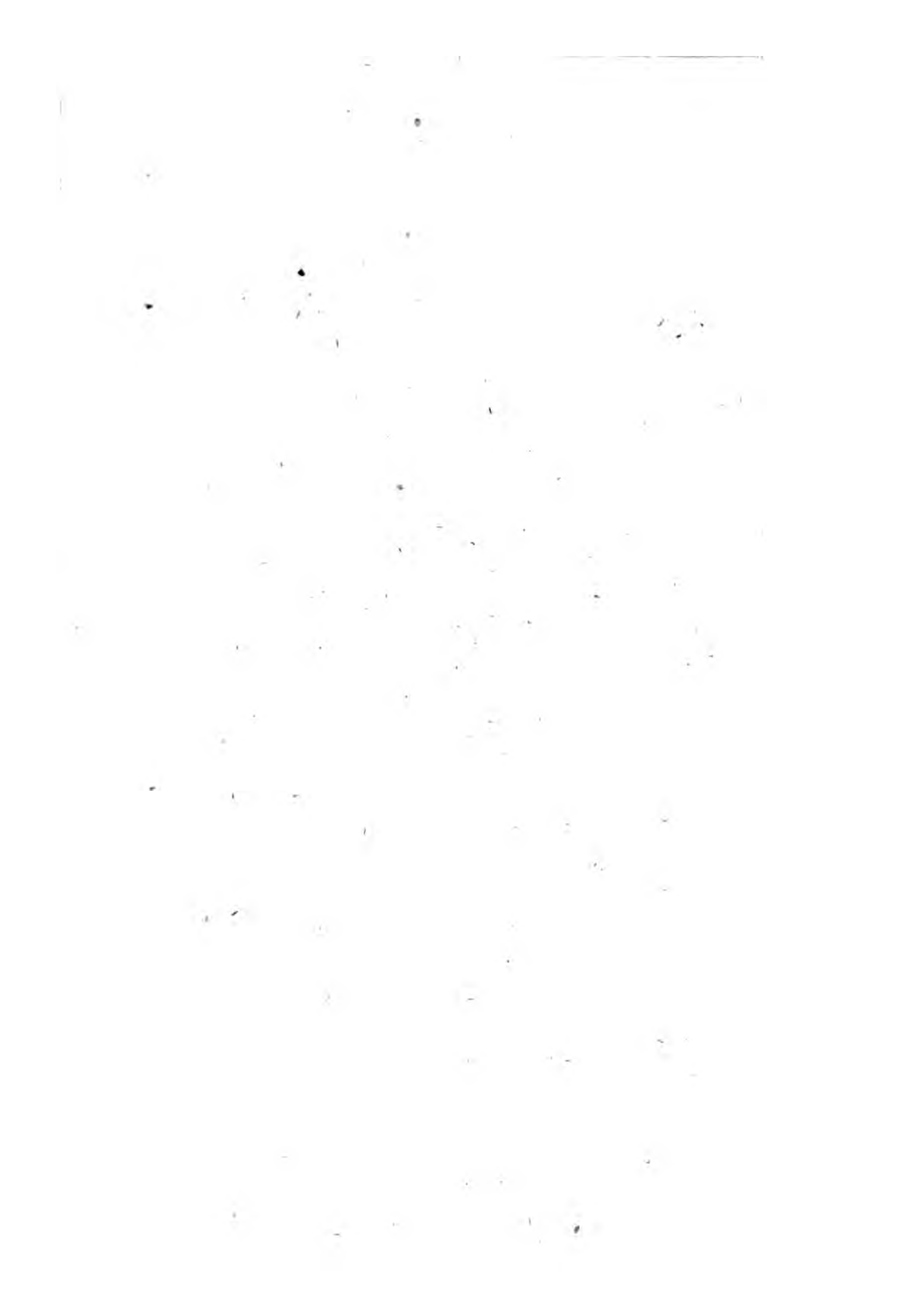
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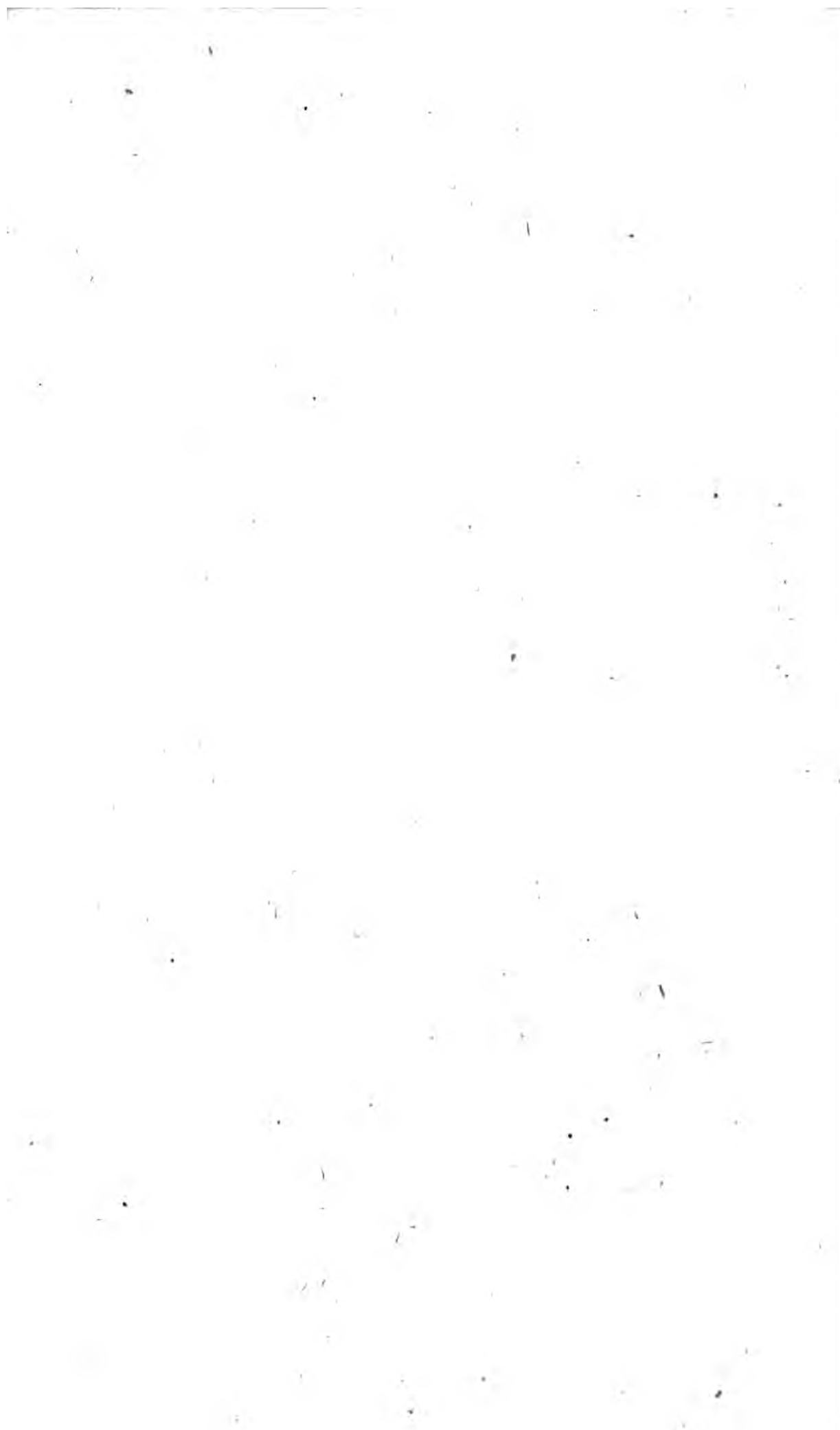


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P R E F A C E S,
B I O G R A P H I C A L
A N D
C R I T I C A L,
T O T H E
W O R K S
O F T H E
E N G L I S H P O E T S.
B Y S A M U E L J O H N S O N.

V O L U M E T H E S E V E N T H .

L O N D O N :

P R I N T E D B Y J . N I C H O L S ;

F O R C . B A T H U R S T , J . B U C K L A N D , W . S T R A H A N , J . R I V I N G -
T O N A N D S O N S , T . D A V I E S , T . P A Y N E , L . D A V I S , W . O W E N ,
E . W H I T E , S . C R O W D E R , T . C A S L O N , T . L O N G M A N ,
E . L A W , C . D I L L Y , J . D O D S L E Y , J . W I L K I E , J . R O B -
S O N , J . J O H N S O N , T . L O W N D E S , G . R O B I N S O N ,
T . C A D E L L , J . N I C H O L S , E . N E W B E R Y ,
T . E V A N S , J . R I D L E Y , R . B A L D W I N ,
G . N I C O L , L E I G H A N D S O T H E B Y ,
J . B E W , N . C O N A N T , J . M U R R A Y ,
W . F O X , J . B O W E N .

M D C C L X X X I .



P R E F A C E

T O

P O P E.

VOL. VII.

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P O P E.

ALEXANDER POPE was born in London, May 22, 1688, of parents whose rank or station was never ascertained: we are informed that they were of *gentle blood*; that his father was of a family of which the Earl of Downe was the head, and that his mother was the daughter of William Turner, Esquire, of York, who had likewise three sons, one of whom had the honour of being killed, and the other of dying, in the service of Charles the First;

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the third was made a general officer in Spain, from whom the sister inherited what sequestrations and forfeitures had left in the family.

This, and this only, is told by Pope; who is more willing, as I have heard observed, to shew what his father was not, than what he was. It is allowed that he grew rich by trade; but whether in a shop or on the Exchange has never been discovered. Both parents were papists.

Pope was from his birth of a constitution tender and delicate; but is said to have shewn remarkable gentleness and sweetness of disposition. The weakness of his body continued through his life, but the mildness of his mind perhaps ended with his childhood. His
voice,

voice, when he was young, was so pleasing, that he was called in fondness the *little Nightingale*.

Being not sent early to school, he was taught to read by an aunt; and when he was seven or eight years old became a lover of books. He first learned to write by imitating printed books; a species of penmanship in which he retained great excellence through his whole life, though his ordinary hand was not elegant.

When he was about eight, he was placed in Hampshire under Taverner, a Romish priest, who, by a method very rarely practised, taught him the Greek and Latin rudiments together. He was now first regularly initiated in poetry by

the perusal of Ogylby's *Homier*, and Sandys's *Ovid*: Ogylby's assistance he never repaid with any praise; but of Sandys he declared, in his notes to the *Iliad*, that English poetry owed much of its present beauty to his translations. Sandys very rarely attempted original composition.

From the care of Taverner, under whom his proficiency was considerable, he was removed to a school at Twyford near Winchester, and again to another school about Hyde-park Corner; from which he used sometimes to stroll to the playhouse, and was so delighted with theatrical exhibitions, that he formed a kind of play from Ogylby's *Iliad*, with some verses of his own intermixed,

which he persuaded his school-fellows to act, with the addition of his master's gardener, who personated *Ajax*.

At the two last schools he used to represent himself as having lost part of what Taverner had taught him, and on his master at Twyford he had already exercised his poetry in a lampoon. Yet under those masters he translated more than a fourth part of the *Metamorphoses*. If he kept the same proportion in his other exercises, it cannot be thought that his loss was great.

He tells of himself, in his poems, that *he lisp'd in numbers*; and used to say that he could not remember the time when he began to make verses. In the style of fiction it might have been said

of him as of Pindar, that when he lay in his cradle *the bees swarmed about his mouth.*

About the time of the Revolution his father, who was undoubtedly disappointed by the sudden blast of popish prosperity, quitted his trade, whatever it was, and retired to Binfield in Windsor Forest, with about twenty thousand pounds; for which, being conscientiously determined not to intrust it to the government, he found no better use than that of locking it up in a chest, and taking from it what his expences required; and his life was long enough to consume a great part of it, before his son came to the inheritance.

To Binfield Pope was called by his father when he was about twelve years old ; and there he had for a few months the assistance of one Deane, another priest, of whom he learned only to construe a little of *Tully's Offices*. How Mr. Deane could spend, with a boy who had translated so much of *Ovid*, some months over a small part of *Tully's Offices*, it is now vain to enquire.

Of a youth so successfully employed, and so conspicuously improved, a minute account must be naturally desired ; but curiosity must be contented with confused, imperfect, and sometimes improbable intelligence. Pope, finding little advantage from external help, resolved thenceforward to direct himself, and at

twelve formed a plan of study which he completed with little other incitement than the desire of excellence.

His primary and principal purpose was to be a poet, with which his father accidentally concurred, by proposing subjects, and obliging him to correct his performances by many revisals; after which the old gentleman, when he was satisfied, would say *these are good rhymes*.

In his perusal of the English poets he soon distinguished the versification of Dryden, which he considered as the model to be studied, and was impressed with such veneration for his instructor, that he persuaded some friends to take him to the coffee-house which Dryden
fre-

frequented, and pleased himself with having seen him.

Dryden died May 1, 1701, some days before Pope was twelve; so early must he therefore have felt the power of harmony, and the zeal of genius. Who does not wish that Dryden could have known the value of the homage that was paid him, and foreseen the greatness of his young admirer?

The earliest of Pope's productions is his *Ode on Solitude*, written before he was twelve, in which there is nothing more than other forward boys have attained, and which is not equal to Cowley's performances at the same age.

His time was now spent wholly in reading and writing. As he read the

Clas-

Classicks, he amused himself with translating them; and at fourteen made a version of the first book of the *Thebais*, which, with some revision, he afterwards published. He must have been at this time, if he had no help, a considerable proficient in the Latin tongue.

By Dryden's Fables, which had then been not long published, and were much in the hands of poetical readers, he was tempted to try his own skill in giving Chaucer a more fashionable appearance, and put *January and May*, and the *Prologue of the Wife of Bath*, into modern English. He translated likewise the Epistle of *Sappho to Phaon* from Ovid, to complete the version, which was before imperfect; and wrote
some

some other small pieces, which he afterwards printed.

He sometimes imitated the English poets, and professed to have written at fourteen his poem upon *Silence*, after Rochester's *Nothing*. He had now formed his versification, and in the smoothness of his numbers surpassed his original: but this is but a small part of his praise; he discovers such acquaintance both with human life and publick affairs as is not easily conceived to have been attainable by a boy of fourteen in *Windfor Forest*.

Next year he was desirous of opening to himself new sources of knowledge, by making himself acquainted with modern languages; and removed for a time

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to London, that he might study French and Italian, which, as he desired nothing more than to read them, were by diligent application soon dispatched. Of Italian learning he does not appear to have ever made much use in his subsequent studies.

He then returned to Binfield, and delighted himself with his own poetry. He tried all styles, and many subjects. He wrote a comedy, a tragedy, an epick poem, with panegyricks on all the Princes of Europe; and, as he confesses, *thought himself the greatest genius that ever was.* Self-confidence is the first requisite to great undertakings; he, indeed, who forms his opinion of himself in solitude, without knowing the powers of

of

of other men, is very liable to errour; but it was the felicity of Pope to rate himself at his real value.

Most of his puerile productions were, by his maturer judgement, afterwards destroyed; *Alexander*, the epick poem, was burnt by the persuasion of Atterbury. The tragedy was founded on the legend of *St. Genevieve*. Of the comedy there is no account.

Concerning his studies it is related, that he translated Tully *on old Age*; and that, besides his books of poetry and criticism, he read *Temple's Essays* and *Locke on human Understanding*. His reading, though his favourite authors are not known, appears to have been sufficiently extensive and multifarious; for
his

his early pieces shew, with sufficient evidence, his knowledge of books.

He that is pleased with himself, easily imagines that he shall please others. Sir William Trumbal, who had been ambassador at Constantinople, and secretary of state, when he retired from business, fixed his residence in the neighbourhood of Binfield. Pope, not yet sixteen, was introduced to the statesman of sixty, and so distinguished himself that their interviews ended in friendship and correspondence. Pope was, through his whole life, ambitious of splendid acquaintance, and he seems to have wanted neither diligence nor success in attracting the notice of the great; for from his first entrance into the world,
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and his entrance was very early, he was admitted to familiarity with those whose rank or station made them most conspicuous.

From the age of sixteen the life of Pope, as an author, may be properly computed. He now wrote his Pastorals, which were shewn to the Poets and Critics of that time; as they well deserved, they were read with admiration, and many praises were bestowed upon them and upon the Preface, which is both elegant and learned in a high degree: they were, however, not published till five years afterwards.

Cowley, Milton, and Pope, are distinguished among the English Poets by the early exertion of their powers; but

the works of Cowley alone were published in his childhood, and therefore of him only can it be certain that his puerile performances received no improvement from his maturer studies.

At this time began his acquaintance with Wicherley, a man who seems to have had among his contemporaries his full share of reputation, to have been esteemed without virtue, and carested without good-humour. Pope was proud of his notice; Wycherley wrote verses in his praise, which he was charged by Dennis with writing to himself, and they agreed for a while to flatter one another. It is pleasant to remark how soon Pope learned the cant of an author, and began to treat criticks with contempt,

tempt, though he had yet suffered nothing from them.

But the fondness of Wycherley was too violent to last. His esteem of Pope was such, that he submitted some poems to his revision; and when Pope, perhaps proud of such confidence, was sufficiently bold in his criticisms, and liberal in his alterations, the old scribler was angry to see his pages defaced, and felt more pain from the detection than content from the amendment of his faults. They parted; but Pope always considered him with kindness, and visited him a little time before he died.

Another of his early correspondents was Mr. Cromwel, of whom I have learned nothing particular but that he

used to ride a-hunting in a tye-wig. He was fond, and perhaps vain, of amusing himself with poetry and criticism; and sometimes sent his performances to Pope, who did not forbear such remarks as were now-and-then unwelcome. Pope, in his turn, put the juvenile version of *Statius* into his hands for correction.

Their correspondence afforded the publick its first knowledge of Pope's Epistolary Powers; for his Letters were given by Cromwel to one Mrs. Thomas, and she many years afterwards sold them to Curl, who inserted them in a volume of his Miscellanies.

Walsh, a name yet preserved among the minor poets, was one of his first encouragers. His regard was gained
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by the Pastorals, and from him Pope received the counsel by which he seems to have regulated his studies. Walsh advised him to correctness, which, as he told him, the English poets had hitherto neglected, and which therefore was left to him as a basis of fame; and, being delighted with rural poems, recommended to him to write a pastoral comedy, like those which are read so eagerly in Italy; a design which Pope probably did not approve, as he did not follow it.

Pope had now declared himself a poet; and, thinking himself entitled to poetical conversation, began at seventeen to frequent Will's, a coffee-house on the north side of Ruffel-street in Covent-garden,

garden, where the wits of that time used to assemble, and where Dryden had, when he lived, been accustomed to preside.

During this period of his life he was indefatigably diligent, and insatiably curious; wanting health for violent and money for expensive pleasures, and having certainly excited in himself very strong desires of intellectual eminence, he spent much of his time over his books; but he read only to store his mind with facts and images, seizing all that his authors presented with undistinguishing voracity, and with an appetite for knowledge too eager to be nice. In a mind like his, however, all the faculties were at once involuntarily im-

improving. Judgement is forced upon us by experience. He that reads many books must compare one opinion or one style with another, and when he compares must necessarily distinguish, reject, and prefer. But the account given by himself of his studies was, that from fourteen to twenty he read only for amusement, from twenty to twenty-seven for improvement and instruction; that in the first part of this time he desired only to know, and in the second he endeavoured to judge.

The Pastorals, which had been for some time handed about among poets and criticks, were at last printed (1709) in Tonson's Miscellany, in a volume

which began with the Pastorals of Philips, and ended with those of Pope.

The same year was written the *Essay on Criticism*; a work which displays such extent of comprehension, such nicety of distinction, such acquaintance with mankind, and such knowledge both of ancient and modern learning, as are not often attained by the maturest age and longest experience. It was published about two years afterwards, and being praised by Addison in the *Spectator* with sufficient liberality, met with so much favour as enraged Dennis, “who,” he says, “found himself attacked, without any manner of provocation on his side, and attacked in his person, instead of his writings, by one who was
“ wholly

“ wholly a stranger to him, at a time
“ when all the world knew he was per-
“ secuted by fortune ; and not only saw
“ that this was attempted in a clan-
“ destine manner, with the utmost false-
“ hood and calumny, but found that
“ all this was done by a little affected
“ hypocrite, who had nothing in his
“ mouth at the same time but truth,
“ candour, friendship, good-nature, hu-
“ manity, and magnanimity.”

How the attack was clandestine is not easily perceived, nor how his person is depreciated ; but he seems to have known something of Pope's character, in whom may be discovered an appetite to talk too frequently of his own virtues.

The pamphlet is such as rage might be expected to dictate. He supposes himself to be asked two questions; whether the Effay will succeed, and who or what is the author.

Its success he admits to be secured by the false opinions then prevalent; the author he concludes to be *young and raw*.

First, because he discovers a sufficiency beyond his little ability, and hath rashly undertaken a task infinitely above his force. Secondly, while this little author struts, and affects the dictatorial air, he plainly shews that at the same time he is under the rod, and while he pretends to give law to others is a pedantick slave to authority and opinion.

Third-

Thirdly, he hath, like schoolboys, borrowed both from living and dead. Fourthly, he knows not his own mind, and frequently contradicts himself. Fifthly, he is almost perpetually in the wrong.

All these positions he attempts to prove by quotations and remarks; but his desire to do mischief is greater than his power. He has, however, justly criticised some passages. In these lines,

There are whom heav'n has blest'd with
store of wit,

Yet want as much again to manage it;
For wit and judgement ever are at
strife—

it is apparent that *wit* has two meanings, and that what is wanted, though called

called *wit*, is truly judgement. So far Dennis is undoubtedly right; but, not content with argument, he will have a little mirth, and triumphs over the first couplet in terms too elegant to be forgotten. “By the way, what rare numbers are here! Would not one swear that this youngster had espoused some antiquated Muse, who had sued out a divorce on account of impotence from some superannuated sinner; and, having been p—xed by her former spouse, has got the gout in her decrepit age, which makes her hobble so damnably.” This was the man who would reform a nation sinking into barbarity.

In another place Pope himself allowed that Dennis had detected one of those blunders which are called *bulls*. The first edition had this line :

What is this wit—

Where wanted, scorn'd, and envied
where acquir'd?

“How,” says the critick, “can wit be
“*scorn'd* where it is not? Is not this a
“figure frequently employed in Hiber-
“nian land? The person that wants this
“wit may indeed be scorned, but the
“scorn shews the honour which the
“contemner has for wit.” Of this re-
mark Pope made the proper use, by cor-
recting the passage.

I have preserved, I think, all that is
reasonable in Dennis's criticism; it re-
mains

mains that justice be done to his delicacy.
 “ For his acquaintance (says Dennis) he
 “ names Mr. Walsh, who had by no means
 “ the qualification which this author rec-
 “ kens absolutely necessary to a critick, it
 “ being very certain that he was, like
 “ this Effayer, a very indifferent poet ;
 “ he loved to be well-dressed ; and I re-
 “ member a little young gentleman
 “ whom Mr. Walsh used to take into
 “ his company, as a double foil to his
 “ person and capacity.—Enquire be-
 “ tween *Sunninghill* and *Oakingham* for
 “ a young, short, squab gentleman, the
 “ very bow of the God of Love, and
 “ tell me whether he be a proper author
 “ to make personal reflections?—He
 “ may extol the antients, but he has
 “ reason

“ reason to thank the gods that he was
“ born a modern ; for had he been born
“ of Grecian parents, and his father
“ consequently had by law had the ab-
“ solute disposal of him, his life had
“ been no longer than that of one of
“ his poems, the life of half a day.—
“ Let the person of a gentleman of his
“ parts be never so contemptible, his
“ inward man is ten times more ridi-
“ culous ; it being impossible that his
“ outward form, though it be that of
“ downright monkey, should differ so
“ much from human shape, as his un-
“ thinking immaterial part does from
“ human understanding.” Thus began
the hostility between Pope and Dennis,
which, though it was suspended for a
short

short time, never was appeased. Pope seems, at first, to have attacked him wantonly; but though he always professed to despise him, he discovers, by mentioning him often, that he felt his force or his venom.

Of this Essay Pope declared that he did not expect the sale to be quick, because *not one gentleman in sixty, even of liberal education, could understand it.* The gentlemen, and the education of that time, seem to have been of a lower character than they are of this. He mentions a thousand copies as a numerous impression.

Dennis was not his only censurer; the zealous papists thought the monks treated with too much contempt, and Eras-

mus

mus too studiously praised ; but to these objections he had not much regard.

The *Essay* has been translated into French by *Hamilton*, author of the *Comte de Grammont*, whose version was never printed, by *Robotham*, secretary to the King for Hanover, and by *Resnel*; and commented by *Dr. Warburton*, who has discovered in it such order and connection as was not perceived by *Addison*, nor, as is said, intended by the author.

Almost every poem, consisting of precepts, is so far arbitrary and immethodical, that many of the paragraphs may change places with no apparent inconvenience ; for of two or more positions, depending upon some remote and general

neral principle, there is seldom any cogent reason why one should precede the other. But for the order in which they stand, whatever it be, a little ingenuity may easily give a reason. *It is possible, says Hooker, that by long circumduction, from any one truth all truth may be inferred.* Of all homogeneous truths at least, of all truths respecting the same general end, in whatever series they may be produced, a concatenation by intermediate ideas may be formed, such as when, it is once shewn, shall appear natural; but if this order be reversed, another mode of connection equally specious may be found or made. Aristotle is praised for naming Fortitu de first of the cardinal virtues, as that with-



out

out which no other virtue can steadily be practised; but he might, with equal propriety, have placed Prudence and Justice before it, since without Prudence Fortitude is mad; without Justice, it is mischievous.

As the end of method is perspicuity, that series is sufficiently regular that avoids obscurity; and where there is no obscurity it will not be difficult to discover method.

In the *Spectator* was published the *Messiah*, which he first submitted to the perusal of Steele, and corrected in compliance with his criticisms.

It is reasonable to infer, from his Letters, that the verses on the *Unfortunate Lady* were written about the time

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when his *Essay* was published. The Lady's name and adventures I have sought with fruitless enquiry.

I can therefore tell no more than I have learned from Mr. Ruffhead, who writes with the confidence of one who could trust his information. She was a woman of eminent rank and large fortune, the ward of an unkle, who, having given her a proper education, expected like other guardians that she should make at least an equal match, and such he proposed to her, but found it rejected in favour of a young gentleman of inferior condition.

Having discovered the correspondence between the two lovers, and finding the young lady determined to abide by her
own

own choice, he supposed that separation might do what can rarely be done by arguments, and sent her into a foreign country, where she was obliged to converse only with those from whom her uncle had nothing to fear.

Her lover took care to repeat his vows; but his letters were intercepted and carried to her guardian, who directed her to be watched with still greater vigilance; till of this restraint she grew so impatient, that she bribed a woman-servant to procure her a sword, which she directed to her heart.

From this account, given with evident intention to raise the Lady's character, it does not appear that she had any claim to praise, nor much to com-

passion. She seems to have been impatient, violent, and ungovernable. Her uncle's power could not have lasted long; the hour of liberty and choice would have come in time. But her desires were too hot for delay, and she liked self-murder better than suspense.

Nor is it discovered that the uncle, whoever he was, is with much justice delivered to posterity as a *false Guardian*; he seems to have done only that for which a guardian is appointed; he endeavoured to direct his niece till she should be able to direct herself. Poetry has not often been worse employed than in dignifying the amorous fury of a raving girl.

Not

Not long after he wrote the *Rape of the Lock*, the most airy, the most ingenious, and the most delightful of all his compositions, occasioned by a frolick of gallantry, rather too familiar, in which Lord Petre cut off a lock of Mrs. Arabella Fermor's hair. This, whether stealth or violence, was so much resented, that the commerce of the two families, before very friendly, was interrupted. Mr. Caryl, a gentleman who, being secretary to King James's Queen, had followed his Mistress into France, and as the author of *Sir Solomon Single*, a comedy, and some translations, was entitled to the notice of a wit, solicited Pope to endea-

your a reconciliation by a ludicrous poem, which might bring both the parties to a better temper. In compliance with Caryl's request, though his name was for a long time marked only by the first and last letter, C—l, a poem of two cantos was written (1711), as is said, in a fortnight, and sent to the offended Lady, who liked it well enough to shew it; and, with the usual process of literary transactions, the author, dreading a surreptitious edition, was forced to publish it.

The event is said to have been such as was desired; the pacification and diversion of all to whom it related, except Sir *George Brown*, who complained
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with some bitterness that, in the character of *Sir Plume*, he was made to talk nonsense. Whether all this be true, I have some doubt; for at Paris, a few years ago, a niece of Mrs. Fermor, who presided in an English Convent, mentioned Pope's work with very little gratitude, rather as an insult than an honour; and she may be supposed to have inherited the opinion of her family.

At its first appearance it was termed by Addison *merum sal*. Pope, however, saw that it was capable of improvement; and having luckily contrived to borrow his machinery from the *Rosicrucians*, imparted the scheme with which his head was teeming to Addison, who told

him that his work, as it stood, was *a delicious little thing*, and gave him no encouragement to retouch it.

This has been too hastily considered as an instance of Addison's jealousy; for as he could not guess the conduct of the new design, or the possibilities of pleasure comprised in a fiction of which there had been no examples, he might very reasonably and kindly persuade the author to acquiesce in his own prosperity, and forbear an attempt which he considered as an unnecessary hazard.

Addison's counsel was happily rejected. Pope foresaw the future effluence of imagery then budding in his mind, and resolved to spare no art, or industry of cultivation. The soft

luxu-

luxuriance of his fancy was already shooting, and all the gay varieties of diction were ready at his hand to colour and embellish it.

His attempt was justified by its success. The *Rape of the Lock* stands forward, in the classes of literature, as the most exquisite example of ludicrous poetry. Berkley congratulated him upon the display of powers more truly poetical than he had shewn before; with elegance of description and justness of precepts, he had now exhibited boundless fertility of invention.

He always considered the intertexture of the machinery with the action as his most successful exertion of poetical art. He indeed could never afterwards pro-

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duce any thing of such unexampled excellence. Those performances, which strike with wonder, are combinations of skilful genius with happy casualty; and it is not likely that any felicity, like the discovery of a new race of preternatural agents, should happen twice to the same man.

Of this poem the author was, I think, allowed to enjoy the praise for a long time without disturbance. Many years afterwards Dennis published some remarks upon it, with very little force, and with no effect; for the opinion of the publick was already settled, and it was no longer at the mercy of criticism.

About

About this time he published the *Temple of Fame*, which, as he tells Steele in their correspondence, he had written two years before ; that is, when he was only twenty-two years old, an early time of life for so much learning and so much observation as that work exhibits.

On this poem Dennis afterwards published some remarks, of which the most reasonable is, that some of the lines represent *motion* as exhibited by *sculpture*.

Of the Epistle from *Eloisa to Abelard*, I do not know the date. His first inclination to attempt a composition of that tender kind arose, as Mr. Savage told me, from his perusal of Prior's *Nut-brown Maid*. How much he has surpassed Prior's work it is not necessary
to

to mention, when perhaps it may be said with justice, that he has excelled every composition of the same kind. The mixture of religious hope and resignation gives an elevation and dignity to disappointed love, which images merely natural cannot bestow. The gloom of a convent strikes the imagination with far greater force than the solitude of a grove.

This piece was, however, not much his favourite in his latter years, though I never heard upon what principle he slighted it.

In the next year (1713) he published *Windsor Forest*; of which part was, as he relates, written at sixteen, about the same time as his Pastorals, and the latter

ter part was added afterwards: where the addition begins we are not told. The lines relating to the Peace confess their own date. It is dedicated to Lord Lansdown, who was then high in reputation and influence among the Tories; and it is said that the conclusion of the poem gave great pain to Addison, both as a poet and a politician. Reports like this are often spread with boldness very disproportionate to their evidence. Why should Addison receive any particular disturbance from the last lines of *Windsor Forest*? If contrariety of opinion could poison a politician, he would not live a day; and, as a poet, he must have felt Pope's force of genius much more from many other parts of his works.

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The pain that Addison might feel it is not likely that he would confess; and it is certain that he so well suppressed his discontent, that Pope now thought himself his favourite; for having been consulted in the revival of *Cato*, he introduced it by a Prologue; and, when Dennis published his Remarks, undertook not indeed to vindicate but to revenge his friend, by a *Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis*.

There is reason to believe that Addison gave no encouragement to this disingenuous hostility; for, says Pope, in a Letter to him, “ indeed your opinion, “ that ’tis entirely to be neglected, “ would be my own in my own case; “ but I felt more warmth here than I “ did

“ did when I first saw his book against
“ myself (though indeed in two minutes
“ it made me heartily merry).” Addison
was not a man on whom such cant of sensibility could make much impression. He left the pamphlet to itself, having disowned it to Dennis, and perhaps did not think Pope to have deserved much by his officiousness.

This year was printed in the *Guardian* the ironical comparison between the Pastorals of Phillips and Pope; a composition of artifice, criticism, and literature, to which nothing equal will easily be found. The superiority of Pope is so ingeniously dissembled, and the feeble lines of Phillips so skilfully preferred; that Steele, being deceived, was unwilling

willing to print the paper lest Pope should be offended. Addison immediately saw the writer's design; and, as it seems, had malice enough to conceal his discovery, and to permit a publication which, by making his friend Phillips ridiculous, made him for ever an enemy to Pope.

It appears that about this time Pope had a strong inclination to unite the art of Painting with that of Poetry, and put himself under the tuition of Jervas. He was near-sighted, and therefore not formed by nature for a painter: he tried however how far he could advance, and sometimes persuaded his friends to sit. A picture of Betterton, supposed to be drawn by him, was in the possession

sion of Lord Mansfield: if this was taken from the life, he must have begun to paint earlier; for Betterton was now dead. Pope's ambition of this new art produced some encomiastick verses to Jervas, which certainly shew his power as a poet, but I have been told that they betray his ignorance of painting.

He appears to have regarded Betterton with kindness and esteem; and after his death published, under his name, a version into modern English of Chaucer's Prologues, and one of his Tales, which, as was related by Mr. Harte, were believed to have been the performance of Pope himself by Fenton, who made him a gay offer of five pounds, if he would shew them in the hand of Betterton.

The next year (1713) produced a bolder attempt, by which profit was fought as well as praise. The poems which he had hitherto written, however they might have diffused his name, had made very little addition to his fortune. The allowance which his father made him, though, proportioned to what he had, it might be liberal, could not be large; his religion hindered him from the occupation of any civil employment, and he complained that he wanted even money to buy books*.

He therefore resolved to try how far the favour of the publick extended, by soliciting a subscription to a version of the *Iliad*, with large notes.



* Spence.

To

To print by subscription was, for some time, a practice peculiar to the English. The first considerable work for which this expedient was employed is said to have been Dryden's *Virgil*; and it had been tried again with great success when the *Tatlers* were collected into volumes.

There was reason to believe that Pope's attempt would be successful. He was in the full bloom of reputation, and was personally known to almost all whom dignity of employment or splendour of reputation had made eminent; he conversed indifferently with both parties, and never disturbed the publick with his political opinions; and it might be naturally expected, as each faction then boasted its literary zeal, that the

great men, who on other occasions practised all the violence of opposition, would emulate each other in their encouragement of a poet who had delighted all, and by whom none had been offended.

With those hopes, he offered an English *Iliad* to subscribers, in six volumes in quarto, for six guineas; a sum, according to the value of money at that time, by no means inconsiderable, and greater than I believe to have been ever asked before. His proposal, however, was very favourably received, and the patrons of literature were busy to recommend his undertaking, and promote his interest. Lord Oxford, indeed, lamented that such a genius should be
waste

wasted upon a work not original ; but proposed no means by which he might live without it : Addison recommended caution and moderation, and advised him not to be content with the praise of half the nation, when he might be univervally favoured.

The greatness of the design, the popularity of the author, and the attention of the literary world, naturally raised such expectations of the future sale, that the booksellers made their offers with great eagerness ; but the highest bidder was *Bernard Lintot*, who became proprietor on condition of supplying, at his own expence, all the copies which were to be delivered to subscribers, or presented to friends, and

paying two hundred pounds for every volume.

Of the Quartos it was, I believe, stipulated that none should be printed but for the author, that the subscription might not be depreciated; but Lintot impressed the same pages upon a small Folio, and paper perhaps a little thinner; and sold exactly at half the price, for half a guinea each volume, books so little inferior to the Quartos, that, by a fraud of trade, those Folios, being afterwards shortened by cutting away the top and bottom, were sold as copies printed for the subscribers.

Lintot printed some on royal paper in Folio for two guineas a volume; but of this experiment he repented, and his

son sold copies of the first volume with all their extent of margin for two shillings.

It is unpleasant to relate that the bookfeller, after all his hopes and all his liberality, was, by a very unjust and illegal action, defrauded of his profit. An edition of the English *Iliad* was printed in Holland in Duodecimo, and imported clandestinely for the gratification of those who were impatient to read what they could not yet afford to buy. This fraud could only be counteracted by an edition equally cheap and more commodious; and Lintot was compelled to contract his Folio at once into a Duodecimo, and lose the advantage of an intermediate gradation. The

notes, which in the Dutch copies were placed at the end of each book, as they had been in the large volumes, were now subjoined to the text in the same page, and are therefore more easily consulted. Of this edition the sale was doubtless very numerous; but indeed great numbers were necessary to produce considerable profit.

Pope, having now emitted his proposals, and engaged not only his own reputation, but in some degree that of his friends who patronised his subscription, began to be frightened at his own undertaking; and finding himself at first embarrassed with difficulties, which retarded and oppressed him, he was for a time timorous and uneasy; had his
nights

nights disturbed by dreams of long journeys through unknown ways, and wished, as he said, *that somebody would hang him* *.

This misery, however, was not of long continuance; he grew by degrees more acquainted with Homer's images and expressions, and practice increased his facility of versification. In a short time he represents himself as dispatching regularly fifty verses a day, which would shew him by an easy computation the termination of his labour.

His own diffidence was not his only vexation. He that asks a subscription soon finds that he has enemies. All who do not encourage him defame him.

* Spence.

He that wants money will rather be thought angry than poor, and he that wishes to save his money conceals his avarice by his malice. Addison had hinted his suspicion that Pope was too much a Tory; and some of the Tories suspected his principles because he had contributed to the *Guardian*, which was carried on by *Steele*.

To those who censured his politicks were added enemies yet more dangerous, who called in question his knowledge of Greek, and his qualifications for a translator of Homer. To these he made no publick opposition; but in one of his Letters escapes from them as well as he can. At an age like his, for he was not more than twenty-five, with an irregular

gular education, and a course of life of which much seems to have passed in conversation, it is not very likely that he overflowed with Greek. But when he felt himself deficient he sought assistance, and what man of learning would refuse to help him? Minute enquiries into the force of words are less necessary in translating Homer than other poets, because his positions are general, and his representations natural, with very little dependence on local or temporary customs, on those changeable scenes of artificial life, which, by mingling original with accidental notions, and crowding the mind with images which time effaces, produce ambiguity in diction, and obscurity in books. To
this

this open display of unadulterated nature it must be ascribed that Homer has fewer passages of doubtful meaning than any other poet either in the learned or in modern languages. I have read of a man, who being, by his ignorance of Greek, compelled to gratify his curiosity with the Latin printed on the opposite page, declared that from the rude simplicity of the lines literally rendered, he formed nobler ideas of the Homeric majesty than from the laboured elegance of polished versions.

Those literal translations were always at hand, and from them he could always obtain his author's sense with sufficient certainty; and among the readers of Homer the number is very small of
those

those who find much in the Greek more than in the Latin, except the musick of the numbers.

If more help was wanting, he had the poetical translation of *Eobanus Hessus*, an unwearied writer of Latin verses; he had the French Homers of *La Valterie* and *Dacier*, and the English of *Chapman*, *Hobbes*, and *Ogylby*. With *Chapman*, whose work, though now totally neglected, seems to have been popular almost to the end of the last century, he had very frequent consultations, and perhaps never translated any passage till he had read his version, which indeed he has been sometimes suspected of using instead of the original.

Notes were likewise to be provided; for the six volumes would have been very little more than six pamphlets without them. What the mere perusal of the text could suggest, Pope wanted no assistance to collect or methodize; but more was necessary; many pages were to be filled, and learning must supply materials to wit and judgement. Something might be gathered from Dacier; but no man loves to be indebted to his contemporaries, and Dacier was accessible to common readers. Eustathius was therefore necessarily consulted. To read Eustathius, of whose work there was then no Latin version, I suspect Pope, if he had been willing, not to have been able; some other was therefore

fore

fore to be found, who had leisure as well as abilities, and he was doubtless most readily employed who would do much work for little money.

The history of the notes has never been traced. Broome, in his preface to his poems, declares himself the commentator *in part upon the Iliad*; and it appears from Fenton's Letter, preserved in the Museum, that Broome was at first engaged in consulting Eustathius; but that after a time, whatever was the reason, he desisted: another man of Cambridge was then employed, who soon grew weary of the work; and a third was recommended by *Thirlby*, who is now discovered to have been *Jortin*, a man since well known to the learned world,

world, who complained that Pope, having accepted and approved his performance, never testified any curiosity to see him. The terms which Fenton uses are very mercantile: *I think at first sight that his performance is very commendable, and have sent word for him to finish the 17th book, and to send it with his demands for his trouble. I have here enclosed the specimen; if the rest come before the return, I will keep them till I receive your order.*

Broome then offered his service a second time, which was probably accepted, as they had afterwards a closer correspondence. Parnell contributed the *Life of Homer*, which Pope found so harsh, that he took great pains in correcting it; and

and by his own diligence, with such help as kindness or money could procure him, in somewhat more than five years he completed his version of the *Iliad*, with the notes. He began it in 1712, his twenty-fifth year, and concluded it in 1718, his thirtieth year.

When we find him translating fifty lines a day, it is natural to suppose that he would have brought his work to a more speedy conclusion. The *Iliad*, containing less than sixteen thousand verses, might have been despatched in less than three hundred and twenty days by fifty verses in a day. The notes, compiled with the assistance of his mercenaries, could not be supposed to require more time than the text. According to this calculation, the progress of Pope

E may

may seem to have been slow; but the distance is commonly very great between actual performances and speculative possibility. It is natural to suppose, that as much as has been done to-day may be done to-morrow; but on the morrow some difficulty emerges, or some external impediment obstructs. Indolence, interruption, business, and pleasure, all take their turns of retardation; and every long work is lengthened by a thousand causes that can, and ten thousand that cannot, be recounted. Perhaps no extensive and multifarious performance was ever effected within the term originally fixed in the undertaker's mind. He that runs against Time, has an antagonist not subject to casualties.

The

The encouragement given to this translation, though report seems to have over-rated it, was such as the world has not often seen. The subscribers were five hundred and seventy-five. The copies, for which subscriptions were given, were six hundred and fifty-four. For those copies Pope had nothing to pay; he therefore received, including the two hundred pounds a volume, five thousand three hundred and twenty pounds four shillings, without deduction, as the books were supplied by Lintot.

By the success of his subscription Pope was relieved from those pecuniary distresses with which, notwithstanding his popularity, he had hitherto struggled. Lord Oxford had often lamented his disqua-

lification for publick employment, but never proposed a pension. While the translation of *Homer* was in its progress, Mr. Craggs, then secretary of state, offered to procure him a pension, which, at least during his ministry, might be enjoyed with secrecy. This was not accepted by Pope, who told him, however, that, if he should be pressed with want of money, he would send to him for occasional supplies. Craggs was not long in power, and was never solicited for money by Pope, who disdained to beg what he did not want.

With the product of this subscription, which he had too much discretion to squander, he secured his future life from want by considerable annuities.

The

The estate of the Duke of Buckingham was found to have been charged with five hundred pounds a year, payable to Pope, which doubtless his translation enabled him to purchase.

It cannot be unwelcome to literary curiosity, that I deduce thus minutely the history of the English *Iliad*. It is certainly the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen; and its publication must therefore be considered as one of the great events in the annals of Learning.

To those who have skill to estimate the excellence and difficulty of this great work, it must be very desirable to know how it was performed, and by what gradations it advanced to correct-

ness. Of such an intellectual process the knowledge has very rarely been attainable; but happily there remains the original copy of the *Iliad*, which, being obtained by Bolingbroke as a curiosity, descended from him to Mallet, and is now by the solicitation of the late Dr. Maty repositèd in the Museum.

Between this manuscript, which is written upon accidental fragments of paper, and the printed edition, there must have been an intermediate copy, that was perhaps destroyed as it returned from the press.

From the first copy I have procured a few transcripts, and shall exhibit first the printed lines; then, in a smaller print, those of the manuscripts, with
all

all their variations. Those words in the small print which are given in Italicks, are cancelled in the copy, and the words placed under them adopted in their stead.

The beginning of the first book stands thus:

The wrath of Peleus' son, the direful
spring

Of all the Grecian woes, O Goddess, sing;
That wrath which hurl'd to Pluto's
gloomy reign

The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain.

The stern Pelides' rage, O Goddess, sing,
wrath

Of all the woes of Greece the fatal spring,
Grecian

That strew'd with warriors dead the Phrygian plain,
 heroes

And peopled the dark hell with heroes slain;
 fill'd the shady hell with chiefs untimely

Whose limbs, unburied on the naked
 shore,

Devouring dogs and hungry vultures
 tore,

Since great Achilles and Atreides strove;

Such was the sovereign doom, and such
 the will of Jove.

Whose limbs, unburied on the hostile shore,

Devouring dogs and greedy vultures tore,

Since first Atreides and Achilles strove;

Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will
 of Jove.

Declare, O Muse, in what ill-fated hour

Sprung the fierce strife, from what of-
 fended Power!

Latona's.

Latona's son a dire contagion spread,
 And heap'd the camp with mountains of
 the dead;
 The King of Men his reverend priest
 defy'd,
 And for the King's offence the people
 dy'd.

Declare, O Goddess, what offended Power
 Enflam'd their rage, in that *ill-omen'd* hour;
 anger fatal, hapless
 Phœbus himself the *dire* debate procur'd,
 fierce
 T' avenge the wrongs his injur'd priest endur'd;
 For this the God a dire infection spread,
 And heap'd the camp with millions of the dead:
 The King of Men the sacred Sire defy'd,
 And for the King's offence the people dy'd.

For

For Chryses fought with costly gifts to
gain

His captive daughter from the Victor's
chain;

Suppliant the venerable Father stands,
Apollo's awful ensigns grace his hands,
By these he begs, and, lowly bending
down,

Extends the sceptre and the laurel crown,

For Chryses fought by *presents to regain*
costly gifts to gain

His captive daughter from the Victor's chain;

Suppliant the venerable Father stands,
Apollo's awful ensigns grac'd his hands,

By these he begs, and lowly bending down

The golden sceptre and the laurel crown,
Presents the sceptre

For these as ensigns of his God he bare,

The God that sends his golden shafts afar;

The low on earth, the venerable man,
 Suppliant before the brother kings began.

He sued to all, but chief implor'd for
 grace

The brother kings of Atreus' royal race;
 Ye kings and warriors, may your vows
 be crown'd,

And Troy's proud walls lie level with
 the ground;

May Jove restore you, when your toils
 are o'er,

Safe to the pleasures of your native
 shore.

To all he sued, but chief implor'd for grace

The brother kings of Atreus' royal race.

Ye sons of Atreus, may your vows be crown'd;
 Kings and warriors

Your labours, by the Gods be all your labours
 crown'd;

So may the Gods your arms with conquest bless,
 And Troy's proud walls lie level with the ground;
 Till *laid*
 And crown your labours with deserv'd success;
 May Jove restore you, when your toils are o'er,
 Safe to the pleasures of your native shore!

But, oh! relieve a wretched parent's pain,
 And give Chryseis to these arms again;
 If mercy fail, yet let my present move,
 And dread avenging Phœbus, son of
 Jove.

But, oh! relieve a hapless parent's pain,
 And give my daughter to these arms again;
 Receive my gifts; if mercy fails, yet let my
 present move,
 And fear the God that deals his darts around,
 avenging Phœbus, son of Jove.

The Greeks, in shouts, their joint assent
 declare

The priest to reverence, and release the
 fair.

Not so Atrides; he, with kingly pride,
 Repuls'd the sacred Sire, and thus re-
 ply'd.

He said, the Greeks their joint assent declare,
The father said, the gen'rous Greeks relent;

T'accept the ransom, and release the fair :
Revere the priest, and speak their joint assent :

Not so *the tyrant*, he, with kingly pride,
 Atrides

Repuls'd the sacred Sire, and thus reply'd.

[Not so, the tyrant. DRYDEN.]

Of these lines, and of the whole first
 book, I am told that there was yet a
 former copy, more varied, and more de-
 formed with interlineations.

The

The beginning of the second book varies very little from the printed page, and is therefore set down without any parallel; the few slight differences do not require to be elaborately displayed.

Now pleasing sleep had seal'd each
mortal eye;

Stretch'd in their tents the Grecian leaders
lie;

Th' Immortals flumber'd on their thrones
above,

All but the ever-watchful eye of Jove.

To honour Thetis' son he bends his
care,

And plunge the Greeks in all the woes
of war.

Then

Then bids an empty phantom rise to
fight,

And thus *commands* the vision of the night:
directs

Fly hence, delusive dream, and, fight as
air,

To Agamemnon's royal tent repair;

Bid him in arms draw forth th' embattled
train,

March all his legions to the dusty plain.

Now tell the King 'tis given him to destroy
Declare ev'n now

The lofty *walls* of wide-extended Troy ;
towers

For now no more the Gods with Fate
contend ;

At Juno's suit the heavenly factions end.

Destruction *hovers* o'er yon devoted wall,
hangs

And nodding Ilium waits th' impending
fall.

Invocation to the Catalogue of Ships.

Say, Virgins, seated round the throne
divine,

All-knowing Goddesses! immortal Nine!
Since earth's wide regions, heaven's un-
measur'd height,

And hell's abyfs, hide nothing from your
fight,

(We, wretched mortals! lost in doubts
below,

But guess by rumour, and but boast we
know)

Oh say what heroes, fir'd by thirst of fame,
Or urg'd by wrongs, to Troy's destruction
came!

To count them all, demands a thousand
tongues,

A throat of brafs and adamantine lungs.

Now,

Now, Virgin Goddesses, immortal Nine !
 That round Olympus' heavenly summit shine,
 Who see through heaven and earth, and hell
 profound,
 And all things know, and all things can resound ;
 Relate what armies fought the Trojan land,
 What nations follow'd, and what chiefs com-
 mand :
 (For doubtful Fame distracts mankind below,
 And nothing can we tell, and nothing know)
 Without your aid, to count th' unnumber'd train,
 A thousand mouths, a thousand tongues were
 vain.

Book V. v. 1.

But Pallas now Tydides' foul inspires,
 Fills with her force, and warms with all
 her fires :

E Above

Above the Greeks his deathless fame to
raise,

And crown her hero with distinguish'd
praise,

High on his helm celestial lightnings
play,

His beamy shield emits a living ray ;

'Th' unwearied blaze incessant streams
supplies,

Like the red star that fires th' autumnal
skies.

But Pallas now Tydides' soul inspires,

Fills with her *rage*, and warms with all her *fires*;
force

O'er all the Greeks decrees his fame to raise,

Above the Greeks *her warrior's* fame to raise,
his deathless

And crown her hero with *immortal* praise :
distinguish'd

Bright

Bright from his beamy crest the lightnings play,
 High on helm
 From his broad buckler flash'd the living ray,
 High on his helm celestial lightnings play,
 His beamy shield emits a living ray.
 The Goddess with her breath the flame supplies,
 Bright as the star whose fires in Autumn rise ;
 Her breath divine thick streaming flames supplies,
 Bright as the star that fires th' autumnal skies :
 Th' unwearied blaze incessant streams supplies,
 Like the red star that fires th' autumnal skies.

When first he rears his radiant orb to
 fight,
 And bath'd in ocean shoots a keener
 light.

Such glories Pallas on the chief bestow'd,
 Such from his arms the fierce effulgence
 flow'd;

Onward she drives him furious to engage,
Where the fight burns, and where the
thickest rage.

When fresh he rears his radiant orb to fight,
And gilds old Ocean with a blaze of light,
Bright as the star that fires th' autumnal skies,
Fresh from the deep, and gilds the seas and skies.
Such glories Pallas on her chief bestow'd,
Such sparkling rays from his bright armour
flow'd.

Such from his arms the fierce effulgence flow'd.
Onward she drives him *headlong* to engage,
furious

Where the *war bleeds*, and where the *fiercest* rage.
fight burns thickest

The sons of Dares first the combat sought,
A wealthy priest, but rich without a fault;

In

In Vulcan's fane the father's days were
led,

The sons to toils of glorious battle bred ;

There liv'd a Trojan—Dares was his name,

The priest of Vulcan, rich, yet void of blame ;

The sons of Dares first the combat fought,

A wealthy priest, but rich without a fault.

Conclusion of Book VIII. v. 687.

As when the moon, refulgent lamp of
night,

O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sa-
cred light ;

When not a breath disturbs the deep
serene,

And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn
scene ;

Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing
polar pole;

O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure
shed,

And tip with silver every mountain's head;
Then shine the vales—the rocks in pro-
spect rise,

A flood of glory bursts from all the skies;
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the
fight,

Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful
light.

So many flames before proud Ilion blaze,
And lighten glimmering Xanthus with
their rays;

The long reflexion of the distant fires
Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the
spires: A thou-

A thousand piles the dusky horrors gild;
 And shoot a shady lustre o'er the field;
 Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,
 Whose umber'd arms by fits thick flashes
 send;

Loud neigh the coursers o'er their heaps
 of corn,

And ardent warriors wait the rising morn.

As when in stillness of the silent night,

As when the moon in all her lustre bright,

As when the moon refulgent lamp of night,

O'er heaven's clear azure sheds her silver light;
 pure spreads sacred

As still in air the trembling lustre stood;

And o'er its golden border shoots a flood;

When *no loose gale* disturbs the deep serene,
 not a breath

And *no dim* cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;

not a

Around her silver throne the planets glow,
 And stars unnumber'd trembling beams bestow;
 Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
 And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole:
 Clear gleams of light o'er the dark trees are seen,
 o'er the dark trees a yellow sheds,
 O'er the dark trees a yellower green they shed,
 gleam
 verdure
 And tip with silver all the mountain heads:
 forest
 And tip with silver every mountain's head,
 The vallies open, and the forests rise,
 The vales appear, the rocks in prospect rise,
 'Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
 All Nature stands reveal'd before our eyes;
 A flood of glory bursts from all the skies.
 The conscious shepherd, joyful at the sight,
 Eyes the blue vault, and numbers ev'ry light,
 The conscious swains rejoicing at the sight,
 shepherds gazing with delight

Eye the blue vault, and bless the *vivid* light,

glorious
useful

So many flames before *the navy* blaze,

proud lion

And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays,

Wide o'er the fields to Troy extend the gleams,

And tip the distant spires with fainter beams;

The long reflexions of the distant fires

Gild the high walls, and tremble on the spires,

Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires;

A thousand fires at distant stations bright,

Gild the dark prospect, and dispel the night.

Of these specimens every man who has cultivated poetry, or who delights to trace the mind from the rudeness of its first conceptions to the elegance of its last, will naturally desire a greater number; but most other readers are already tired,

tired, and I am not writing only to poets and philosophers.

The *Iliad* was published volume by volume, as the translation proceeded; the first four books appeared in 1715. The expectation of this work was undoubtedly high, and every man who had connected his name with criticism, or poetry, was desirous of such intelligence as might enable him to talk upon the popular topick. Halifax, who, by having been first a poet, and then a patron of poetry, had acquired the right of being a judge, was willing to hear some books while they were yet unpublished. Of this rehearsal Pope afterwards gave the following account*.

* Spence.

“ The

“ The famous Lord Halifax was ra-
“ ther a pretender to taste than really
“ possessed of it.—When I had finished
“ the two or three first books of my
“ translation of the *Iliad*, that Lord de-
“ sired to have the pleasure of hearing
“ them read at his house.—Addison,
“ Congreve, and Garth, were there at
“ the reading. In four or five places,
“ Lord Halifax stopt me very civilly,
“ and with a speech each time, much
“ of the same kind, ‘ I beg your par-
“ don, Mr. Pope; but there is some-
“ thing in that passage that does not
“ quite please me.—Be so good as to
“ mark the place, and consider it a little
“ at your leisure.—I’m sure you can
“ give it a little turn.’ I returned from
“ Lord

“ Lord Halifax’s with Dr. Garth, in his
“ chariot; and, as we were going along,
“ was saying to the Doctor, that my
“ Lord had laid me under a good deal
“ of difficulty by such loose and general
“ observations; that I had been think-
“ ing over the passages almost ever since,
“ and could not guess at what it was
“ that offended his Lordship in either of
“ them. Garth laughed heartily at my
“ embarrassment; said, I had not been
“ long enough acquainted with Lord
“ Halifax to know his way yet; that I
“ need not puzzle myself about look-
“ ing those places over and over, when
“ I got home. ‘ All you need do (says
“ he) is to leave them just as they are;
“ call on Lord Halifax two or three
“ months

“months hence, thank him for his kind
 “observations on those passages, and
 “then read them to him as altered. I
 “have known him much longer than
 “you have, and will be answerable for
 “the event.” I followed his advice;
 “waited on Lord Halifax some time
 “after; said, I hoped he would find
 “his objections to those passages re-
 “moved; read them to him exactly as
 “they were at first: and his Lordship
 “was extremely pleased with them, and
 “cried out, *Ay, now they are perfectly*
 “*right: nothing can be better.*”

It is seldom that the great or the wise
 suspect that they are despised or cheated.
 Halifax, thinking this a lucky oppor-
 tunity of securing immortality, made

some advances of favour and some overtures of advantage to Pope, which he seems to have received with sullen coldness. All our knowledge of this transaction is derived from a single Letter (Dec. 1, 1714), in which Pope says, "I am obliged to you, both for the favours you have done me, and those you intend me. I distrust neither your will nor your memory, when it is to do good; and if I ever become troublesome or solicitous, it must not be out of expectation, but out of gratitude. Your Lordship may cause me to live agreeably in the town, or contentedly in the country, which is really all the difference I set between an easy fortune and a small one. It is
" indeed

“indeed a high strain of generosity in
“you to think of making me easy all
“my life, only because I have been so
“happy as to divert you some few
“hours; but, if I may have leave to
“add it is because you think me no
“enemy to my native country, there
“will appear a better reason; for I
“must of consequence be very much
“(as I sincerely am) yours &c.”

These voluntary offers, and this faint acceptance, ended without effect. The patron was not accustomed to such frigid gratitude, and the poet fed his own pride with the dignity of independence. They probably were suspicious of each other. Pope would not dedicate till he saw at what rate his praise was valued;

he would be *troublesome out of gratitude, not expectation.* Halifax thought himself entitled to confidence, and would give nothing, unless he knew what he should receive. Their commerce had its beginning in hope of praise on one side, and of money on the other, and ended because Pope was less eager of money than Halifax of praise. It is not likely that Halifax had any personal benevolence to Pope; it is evident that Pope looked on Halifax with scorn or hatred.

The reputation of this great work failed of gaining him a patron; but it deprived him of a friend. Addison and he were now at the head of poetry and criticism; and both in such a state of eleva-

elevation, that, like the two rivals in the Roman state, one could no longer bear an equal, nor the other a superior. Of the gradual abatement of kindness between friends, the beginning is often scarcely discernible by themselves, and the process is continued by petty provocations, and incivilities sometimes peevishly returned, and sometimes contemptuously neglected, which would escape all attention but that of pride, and drop from any memory but that of resentment. That the quarrel of those two wits should be minutely deduced, is not to be expected from a writer to whom, as Homer says, *nothing but rumour has reached, and who has no personal knowledge.*

Pope doubtless approached Addison, when the reputation of their wit first brought them together, with the respect due to a man whose abilities were acknowledged, and who, having attained that eminence to which he was himself aspiring, had in his hands the distribution of literary fame. He paid court with sufficient diligence by his Prologue to *Cato*, by his abuse of Dennis, and, with praise yet more direct, by his poem on the *Dialogues on Medals*, of which the immediate publication was then intended. In all this there was no hypocrisy; for he confessed that he found in Addison something more pleasing than in any other man.

It may be supposed, that as Pope saw himself favoured by the world, and more frequently compared his own powers with those of others, his confidence increased, and his submission lessened; and that Addison felt no delight from the advances of a young wit, who might soon contend with him for the highest place. Every great man, of whatever kind be his greatness, has among his friends those who officiously, or insidiously, quicken his attention to offences, heighten his disgust, and stimulate his resentment. Of such adherents Addison doubtless had many, and Pope was now too high to be without them.

From the emission and reception of the Proposals for the *Iliad*, the kindness of Addison seems to have abated. Jervas the painter once pleased himself (Aug. 20, 1714) with imagining that he had re-established their friendship; and wrote to Pope that Addison once suspected him of too close a confederacy with Swift, but was now satisfied with his conduct. To this Pope answered, a week after, that his engagements to Swift were such as his services in regard to the subscription demanded, and that the Tories never put him under the necessity of asking leave to be grateful. *But, says he, as Mr. Addison must be the judge in what regards himself, and seems to have no very just one in regard to me, so I must*



own to you I expect nothing but civility from him. In the same Letter he mentions Phillips, as having been busy to kindle animosity between them; but, in a Letter to Addison, he expresses some consciousness of behaviour, inattentively deficient in respect.

Of Swift's industry in promoting the subscription there remains the testimony of Kennet, no friend to either him or Pope.

“ Nov. 2, 1713, Dr. Swift came into
 “ the coffee-house, and had a bow from
 “ every body but me, who, I confess,
 “ could not but despise him. When I
 “ came to the anti-chamber to wait, be-
 “ fore prayers, Dr. Swift was the prin-
 “ cipal man of talk and business, and

“acted as master of requests.—Then he
 “instructed a young nobleman that the
 “*best Poet in England* was *Mr. Pope* (a
 “*papist*), who had begun a translation
 “of *Homer* into English verse, for which
 “*he must have them all subscribe*; for,
 “says he, the author *shall not* begin to
 “print till *I have* a thousand guineas
 “for him.”

About this time it is likely that
 Steele, who was, with all his political
 fury, good-natured and officious, pro-
 cured an interview between these angry
 rivals, which ended in aggravated male-
 volence. On this occasion, if the re-
 ports be true, Pope made his complaint
 with frankness and spirit, as a man un-
 deservedly neglected or opposed; and

Addi-

Addison affected a contemptuous unconcern, and, in a calm even voice, reproached Pope with his vanity, and telling him of the improvements which his early works had received from his own remarks and those of Steele, said, that he, being now engaged in publick business, had no longer any care for his poetical reputation; nor had any other desire, with regard to Pope, than that his should not, by too much arrogance, alienate the publick.

To this Pope is said to have replied with great keenness and severity, upbraiding Addison with perpetual dependance, and with the abuse of those qualifications which he had obtained at the publick cost, and charging him with

mean endeavours to obstruct the progress of rising merit. The contest rose so high, that they parted at last without any interchange of civility.

The first volume of *Homer* was (1715) in time published; and a rival version of the first *Iliad*, for rivals the time of their appearance inevitably made them, was immediately printed, with the name of Tickell. It was soon perceived that, among the followers of Addison, Tickell had the preference, and the criticks and poets divided into factions. *I*, says Pope, *have the town, that is, the mob, on my side; but it is not uncommon for the smaller party to supply by industry what it wants in numbers.—I appeal to the people as my rightful judges, and, while they are not*
3 *inclined*

inclined to condemn me, shall not fear the high-flyers at Button's. This opposition he immediately imputed to Addison, and complained of it in terms sufficiently resentful to Craggs, their common friend.

When Addison's opinion was asked, he declared the versions to be both good, but Tickell's the best that ever had been written; and sometimes said that they were both good, but that Tickell had more of *Homer*.

Pope was now sufficiently irritated; his reputation and his interest were at hazard. He once intended to print together the four versions of Dryden, Maynwaring, Pope, and Tickell, that they might be readily compared, and
fairly

fairly estimated. This design seems to have been defeated by the refusal of Tonson, who was the proprietor of the other three versions.

Pope intended at another time a rigorous criticism of Tickell's translation, and had marked a copy, which I have seen, in all places that appeared defective. But while he was thus meditating defence or revenge, his adversary sunk before him without a blow; the voice of the publick was not long suspended, and the preference was universally given to Pope's performance.

He was convinced, by adding one circumstance to another, that the other translation was the work of Addison himself; but if he knew it in Addison's

life-

life-time, it does not appear that he told it. He left his illustrious antagonist to be punished by what has been considered as the most painful of all reflections, the remembrance of a crime perpetrated in vain.

The other circumstances of their quarrel were thus related by Pope *.

“ Philips seemed to have been encouraged to abuse me in coffee-houses, and conversations : and Gildon wrote a thing about Wycherley, in which he had abused both me and my relations very grossly. Lord Warwick himself told me one day, that it was in vain for me to endeavour to be well with Mr. Addison; that his jealous

* Spence.

“ temper

“ temper would never admit of a settled
“ friendship between us: and, to con-
“ vince me of what he had said, assured
“ me, that Addison had encouraged
“ Gildon to publish those scandals, and
“ had given him ten guineas after they
“ were published. The next day, while
“ I was heated with what I had heard,
“ I wrote a Letter to Mr. Addison, to
“ let him know that I was not unac-
“ quainted with this behaviour of his;
“ that if I was to speak severely of him,
“ in return for it, it should be in such
“ a dirty way, that I should rather tell
“ him, himself, fairly of his faults,
“ and allow his good qualities; and
“ that it should be something in the
“ following manner: I then adjoined
“ the

“the first sketch of what has since been
“called my satire on Addison. Mr.
“Addison used me very civilly ever
“after.”

The verses on Addison, when they were sent to Atterbury, were considered by him as the most excellent of Pope's performances; and the writer was advised, since he knew where his strength lay, not to suffer it to remain unemployed.

This year (1715) being, by the subscription, enabled to live more by choice, having persuaded his father to sell their estate at Binfield, he purchased, I think only for his life, that house at Twickenham to which his residence afterwards procured so much celebration, and removed

While the volumes of his *Homer* were annually published, he collected his former works (1717) into one quarto volume, to which he prefixed a Preface, written with great spriteliness and elegance, which was afterwards reprinted, with some passages subjoined that he at first omitted; other marginal additions of the same kind he made in the later editions of his poems. Waller remarks, that poets lose half their praise, because the reader knows not what they have blotted. Pope's voracity of fame taught him the art of obtaining the accumulated honour both of what he had published, and of what he had suppressed.

In this year his father died suddenly, in his seventy-fifth year, having passed
twenty-

twenty-nine years in privacy. He is not known but by the character which his son has given him. If the money with which he retired was all gotten by himself, he had traded very successfully in times when sudden riches were rarely attainable.

The publication of the *Iliad* was at last completed in 1720. The splendor and success of this work raised Pope many enemies, that endeavoured to depreciate his abilities; Burnet, who was afterwards a Judge of no mean reputation, censured him in a piece called *Homericides* before it was published; Ducket likewise endeavoured to make him ridiculous. Dennis was the perpetual persecutor of all his studies. But, who-

H

ever

ever his criticks were, their writings are lost, and the names which are preserved are preserved in the *Dunciad*.

In this disastrous year (1720) of national infatuation, when more riches than Peru can boast were expected from the South Sea, when the contagion of avarice tainted every mind, and even poets panted after wealth, Pope was seized with the universal passion, and ventured some of his money. The stock rose in its price; and he for a while thought himself *the Lord of Thousands*. But this dream of happiness did not last long, and he seems to have waked soon enough to get clear with the loss only of what he once thought himself to have won, and perhaps not wholly of that.

Next

Next year he published some select poems of his friend Dr. Parnell, with a very elegant Dedication to the Earl of Oxford; who, after all his struggles and dangers, then lived in retirement, still under the frown of a victorious faction, who could take no pleasure in hearing his praise.

He gave the same year (1721) an edition of *Shakespeare*. His name was now of so much authority, that Tonson thought himself entitled, by annexing it, to demand a subscription of six guineas for Shakespeare's plays in six quarto volumes; nor did his expectation much deceive him; for of seven hundred and fifty which he printed, he dispersed a great number at the price proposed.

The reputation of that edition indeed sunk afterwards so low, that one hundred and forty copies were sold at sixteen shillings each.

On this undertaking, to which Pope was induced by a reward of two hundred and seventeen pounds twelve shillings, he seems never to have reflected afterwards without vexation; for Theobald, a man of heavy diligence, with very slender powers, first, in a book called *Shakespeare Restored*, and then in a formal edition, detected his deficiencies with all the insolence of victory; and, as he was now high enough to be feared and hated, Theobald had from others all the help that could be supplied, by the desire of humbling a haughty character.

From

From this time Pope became an enemy to editors, collaters, commentators, and verbal criticks; and hoped to persuade the world, that he miscarried in this undertaking only by having a mind too great for such minute employment.

Pope in his edition undoubtedly did many things wrong, and left many things undone; but let him not be defrauded of his due praise. He was the first that knew, at least the first that told, by what helps the text might be improved. If he inspected the early editions negligently, he taught others to be more accurate. In his Preface he expanded, with great skill and elegance, the character which had been given of Shakespeare by Dryden; and he drew

the publick attention upon his works, which, though often mentioned, had been little read.

Soon after the appearance of the *Iliad*, resolving not to let the general kindness cool, he published proposals for a translation of the *Odyſſey*, in five volumes, for five guineas. He was willing, however, now to have associates in his labour, being either weary with toiling upon another's thoughts, or having heard, as Ruffhead relates, that Fenton and Broome had already begun the work, and liking better to have them confederates than rivals.

In the patent, instead of ſaying that he had *translated* the *Odyſſey*, as he had ſaid of the *Iliad*, he ſays that he had

under-

undertaken a translation ; and in the proposals the subscription is said to be not solely for his own use, but for that of *two of his friends who have assisted him in this work.*

In 1723, while he was engaged in this new version, he appeared before the Lords at the memorable trial of Bishop Atterbury, with whom he had lived in great familiarity, and frequent correspondence. Atterbury had honestly recommended to him the study of the popish controversy, in hope of his conversion ; to which Pope answered in a manner that cannot much recommend his principles, or his judgement. In questions and projects of learning, they agreed better. He was called at the trial to give an account

of Atterbury's domestick life, and private employment, that it might appear how little time he had left for plots. Pope had but few words to utter, and in those few he made several blunders.

His Letters to Atterbury express the utmost esteem, tenderness, and gratitude: *perhaps, says he, it is not only in this world that I may have cause to remember the Bishop of Rochester.* At their last interview in the Tower, Atterbury presented him with a Bible.

Of the *Odyssey* Pope translated only twelve books; the rest were the work of Broome and Fenton: the notes were written wholly by Broome, who was not over-liberally rewarded. The Publick was carefully kept ignorant of the several

veral shares; and an account was subjoined at the conclusion, which is now known not to be true.

The first copy of Pope's books, with those of Fenton, are to be seen in the Museum. The parts of Pope are less interlined than the *Iliad*, and the latter books of the *Iliad* less than the former. He grew dexterous by practice, and every sheet enabled him to write the next with more facility. The books of Fenton have very few alterations by the hand of Pope. Those of Broome have not been found; but Pope complained, as it is reported, that he had much trouble in correcting them.

His contract with Lintot was the same as for the *Iliad*, except that only

one

one hundred pounds were to be paid him for each volume. The number of subscribers was five hundred and seventy-four, and of copies eight hundred and nineteen; so that his profit, when he had paid his assistants, was still very considerable. The work was finished in 1725, and from that time he resolved to make no more translations.

The sale did not answer Lintot's expectation, and he then pretended to discover something of fraud in Pope, and commenced, or threatened, a suit in Chancery.

On the English *Odyssey* a criticism was published by Spence, at that time Professor of Poetry at Oxford; a man whose learning was not very great, and whose

mind

mind was not very powerful. His criticism, however, was commonly just, what he thought, he thought rightly; and his remarks were recommended by his coolness and candour. In him Pope had the first experience of a critic without malevolence, who thought it as much his duty to display beauties as expose faults; who censured with respect, and praised with alacrity.

With this criticism Pope was so little offended, that he sought the acquaintance of the writer, who lived with him from that time in great familiarity, attended him in his last hours, and compiled memorials of his conversation. The regard of Pope recommended him to the great and powerful, and he obtained

tained very valuable preferments in the Church.

Not long after Pope was returning home from a visit in a friend's coach, which, in passing a bridge, was overturned into the water; the windows were closed, and being unable to force them open, he was in danger of immediate death, when the postilion snatched him out by breaking the glass, of which the fragments cut two of his fingers in such a manner, that he lost their use.

Voltaire, who was then in England, sent him a Letter of Consolation. He had been entertained by Pope at his table, where he talked with so much grossness that Mrs. Pope was driven from

from the room. Pope discovered, by a trick, that he was a spy for the Court, and never considered him as a man worthy of confidence.

He soon afterwards (1727) joined with Swift, who was then in England, to publish three volumes of *Miscellanies*, in which amongst other things he inserted the *Memoirs of a Parish Clerk*, in ridicule of Burnet's importance in his own *History*, and a *Debate upon Black and White Horses*, written in all the formalities of a legal process by the assistance, as is said, of Mr. Fortescue, afterwards Master of the Rolls. Before these *Miscellanies* is a preface signed by Swift and Pope, but apparently written by Pope; in which he makes a ridiculous

lous

lous and romantick complaint of the robberies committed upon authors by the clandestine seizure and sale of their papers. He tells, in tragick strains, how *the cabixets of the Sick and the closets of the Dead have been broke open and ransacked*; as if those violences were often committed for papers of uncertain and accidental value, which are rarely provoked by real treasures; as if epigrams and essays were in danger where gold and diamonds are safe. A cat, hunted for his musk, is, according to Pope's account, but the emblem of a wit winded by booksellers.

His complaint, however, received some attestation; for the same year the Letters written by him to Mr. Cromwell, in
his

his youth, were sold by Mrs. Thomas to Curll, who printed them.

In these Miscellanies was first published the *Art of Sinking in Poetry*, which, by such a train of consequences as usually passes in literary quarrels, gave in a short time, according to Pope's account, occasion to the *Dunciad*.

In the following year (1728) he began to put Atterbury's advice in practice; and shewed his satirical powers by publishing the *Dunciad*, one of his greatest and most elaborate performances, in which he endeavoured to sink into contempt all the writers by whom he had been attacked, and some others whom he thought unable to defend themselves.

At

At the head of the Dunces he placed poor Theobald, whom he accused of ingratitude; but whose real crime was supposed to be that of having revised *Shakespeare* more happily than himself. This satire had the effect which he intended, by blasting the characters which it touched. Ralph, who, unnecessarily interposing in the quarrel, got a place in a subsequent edition, complained that for a time he was in danger of starving, as the bookfellers had no longer any confidence in his capacity.

The prevalence of this poem was gradual and slow: the plan, if not wholly new, was little understood by common readers. Many of the allusions required illustration; the names were often ex-

pressed only by the initial and final letters, and, if they had been printed at length, were such as few had known or recollected. The subject itself had nothing generally interesting, for whom did it concern to know that one or another scribler was a dunce? If therefore it had been possible for those who were attacked to conceal their pain and their resentment, the *Dunciad* might have made its way very slowly in the world.

This, however, was not to be expected: every man is of importance to himself, and therefore, in his own opinion, to others; and, supposing the world already acquainted with all his pleasures and his pains, is perhaps the first to
I publish

publish injuries or misfortunes, which had never been known unless related by himself, and at which those that hear them will only laugh; for no man sympathises with the sorrows of vanity.

The history of the *Dunciad* is very minutely related by Pope himself, in a Dedication which he wrote to Lord Middlesex in the name of Savage.

“ I will relate the war of the *Dunces*
 “ (for so it has been commonly called),
 “ which began in the year 1727, and
 “ ended in 1730.

“ When Dr. Swift and Mr. Pope
 “ thought it proper, for reasons specified in the Preface to their *Miscellanies*, to publish such little pieces of theirs as had casually got abroad,
 “ there

“ there was added to them the *Treatise*
“ of the *Bathos*, or the *Art of Sinking in*
“ *Poetry*. It happened that in one chap-
“ ter of this piece the several species of
“ bad poets were ranged in classes, to
“ which were prefixed almost all the
“ letters of the alphabet (the greatest
“ part of them at random); but such
“ was the number of poets eminent in
“ that art, that some one or other took
“ every letter to himself: all fell into
“ so violent a fury, that, for half a year
“ or more, the common newspapers (in
“ most of which they had some proper-
“ ty, as being hired writers) were filled
“ with the most abusive falsehoods and
“ scurrilities they could possibly devise.
“ A liberty no way to be wondered at

“ in those people, and in those papers,
“ that for many years, during the un-
“ controuled license of the press, had
“ aspersed almost all the great charac-
“ ters of the age; and this with impu-
“ nity, their own persons and names
“ being utterly secret and obscure.

“ This gave Mr. Pope the thought,
“ that he had now some opportunity of
“ doing good, by detecting and dragging
“ into light these common enemies of
“ mankind; since, to invalidate this
“ universal slander, it sufficed to shew
“ what contemptible men were the au-
“ thors of it. He was not without
“ hopes, that, by manifesting the dull-
“ ness of those who had only malice to
“ recommend them, either the book-
“ fellers

“ fellers would not find their account in
“ employing them, or the men them-
“ selves, when discovered, want courage
“ to proceed in so unlawful an occupa-
“ tion. This it was that gave birth to
“ the *Dunciad*; and he thought it an
“ happiness, that, by the late flood of
“ slander on himself, he had acquired
“ such a peculiar right over their names
“ as was necessary to this design.

“ On the 12th of March, 1729, at
“ St. James's, that poem was presented
“ to the King and Queen (who had be-
“ fore been pleased to read it) by the
“ right honourable Sir Robert Wal-
“ pole; and some days after the whole
“ impression was taken and dispersed by

“ several noblemen and persons of the
 “ first distinction.

“ It is certainly a true observation,
 “ that no people are so impatient of
 “ censure as those who are the greatest
 “ slanderers, which was wonderfully
 “ exemplified on this occasion. On the
 “ day the book was first vended, a
 “ crowd of authors besieged the shop;
 “ intreaties, advices, threats of law and
 “ battery, nay cries of treason, were all
 “ employed to hinder the coming-out
 “ of the *Dunciad*: on the other side,
 “ the booksellers and hawkers made as
 “ great efforts to procure it. What
 “ could a few poor authors do against
 “ so great a majority as the publick?

“ There

“There was no stopping a torrent with
 “ a finger, so out it came. British spirit
 “ Many ludicrous circumstances at-
 “ tended it. The *Dinners* (for by this
 “ name they were called) held weekly
 “ clubs, to consult of hostilities against
 “ the author: one wrote a Letter to a
 “ great minister, assuring him Mr. Pope
 “ was the greatest enemy the govern-
 “ ment had; and another bought his
 “ image in clay, to execute him in
 “ effigy, with which sad sort of satisfac-
 “ tions the gentlemen were a little com-
 “ forted.
 “ Some false editions of the book
 “ having an owl in their frontispiece,
 “ the true one, to distinguish it, fixed in
 “ its stead an ass laden with authors.

“Then another surreptitious one being
 “printed with the same ass, the new
 “edition in octavo returned for distinc-
 “tion to the owl again. Hence arose
 “a great contest of booksellers against
 “booksellers, and advertisements against
 “advertisements; some recommending
 “the edition of the owl, and others the
 “edition of the ass; by which names
 “they came to be distinguished, to the
 “great honour also of the gentlemen of
 “the *Dunciad*.”

Pope appears by this narrative to have
 contemplated his victory over the *Dunces*
 with great exultation; and such was his
 delight in the tumult which he had
 raised, that for a while his natural sensi-
 bility was suspended, and he read re-
 proaches

proaches and invectives without emotion, considering them only as the necessary effects of that pain which he rejoiced in having given.

It cannot however be concealed that, by his own confession, he was the aggressor; for nobody believes that the letters in the *Bathos* were placed at random; and it may be discovered that, when he thinks himself concealed, he indulges the common vanity of common men, and triumphs in those distinctions which he had affected to despise. He is proud that his book was presented to the King and Queen by the right honourable Sir Robert Walpole; he is proud that they had read it before; he is proud that the edition was taken off
by

by the nobility and persons of the first distinction.

The edition of which he speaks was, I believe, that, which by telling in the text the names, and in the notes the characters of those whom he had satirised, was made intelligible and diverting. The criticks had now declared their approbation of the plan, and the common reader began to like it without fear; those who were strangers to petty literature, and therefore unable to decipher initials and blanks, had now names and persons brought within their view; and delighted in the visible effect of those shafts of malice, which they had hitherto contemplated, as shot into the air.

Dennis,

Dennis, upon the fresh provocation now given him, renewed the enmity which had for a time been appeased by mutual civilities; and published remarks, which he had till then suppressed, upon the *Rape of the Lock*. Many more grumbled in secret, or vented their resentment in the newspapers by epigrams or invectives.

Ducket, indeed, being mentioned as loving Burnet with *pious passion*, pretended that his moral character was injured, and for some time declared his resolution to take vengeance with a cudgel. But Pope appeased him, by changing *pious passion* to *cordial friendship*, and by a note, in which he vehemently

mently disclaims the malignity of meaning imputed to the first expression.

Aaron Hill, who was represented as diving for the prize, expostulated with Pope in a manner so much superior to all mean sollicitation, that Pope was reduced to sneak and shuffle, sometimes to deny, and sometimes to apologise; he first endeavours to wound, and is then afraid to own that he meant a blow.

The *Dunciad*, in the complete edition, is addressed to Dr. Swift: of the notes, part was written by Dr. Arbuthnot, and an apologetical Letter was prefixed, signed by Cleland, but supposed to have been written by Pope.

After this general war upon dulness, he seems to have indulged himself awhile

in.

in tranquillity; but his subsequent productions prove that he was not idle. He published (1731) a poem on *Taste*, in which he very particularly and severely criticises the house, the furniture, the gardens, and the entertainments of *Timon*, a man of great wealth and little taste. By *Timon* he was universally supposed, and by the Earl of Burlington, to whom the poem is addressed, was privately said, to mean the Duke of Chandos; a man perhaps too much delighted with pomp and show, but of a temper kind and beneficent, and who had consequently the voice of the publick in his favour.

A violent outcry was therefore raised against the ingratitude and treachery of

Pope, who was said to have been indebted to the patronage of Chandos for a present of a thousand pounds, and who gained the opportunity of insulting him by the kindness of his invitation.

The receipt of the thousand pounds Pope publickly denied; but from the reproach which the attack on a character so amiable brought upon him, he tried all means of escaping. The name of Cleland was again employed in an apology, by which no man was satisfied; and he was at last reduced to shelter his temerity behind diffimulation, and endeavour to make that disbelieved which he never had confidence openly to deny. He wrote an exculpatory Letter to the Duke, which was answered

with great magnanimity, as by a man who accepted his excuse without believing his professions. He said, that to have ridiculed his taste, or his buildings, had been an indifferent action in another man; but that in Pope, after the reciprocal kindness that had been exchanged between them, it had been less easily excused.

Pope, in one of his Letters, complaining of the treatment which his poem had found, *owns that such criticks can intimidate him, nay almost persuade him to write no more, which is a compliment this age deserves.* The man who threatens the world is always ridiculous; for the world can easily go on without him, and in a short time will
cease

cease to miss him. I have heard of an idiot, who used to revenge his vexations by lying all night upon the bridge. *There is nothing, says Juvenal, that a man will not believe in his own favour.* Pope had been flattered till he thought himself one of the moving powers in the system of life. When he talked of laying down his pen, those who sat round him intreated and implored, and self-love did not suffer him to suspect that they went away and laughed.

The following year deprived him of Gay, a man whom he had known early, and whom he seemed to love with more tenderness than any other of his literary friends. Pope was now forty-four years
old;

old; an age at which the mind begins less easily to admit new confidence, and the will to grow less flexible, and when therefore the departure of an old friend is very acutely felt.

In the next year he lost his mother, not by an unexpected death, for she had lasted to the age of ninety-three; but she did not die unlamented. The filial piety of Pope was in the highest degree amiable and exemplary; his parents had the happiness of living till he was at the summit of poetical reputation, till he was at ease in his fortune, and without a rival in his fame, and found no diminution of his respect or tenderness. Whatever was his pride, to them he was obedient; and whatever was his

irritability, to them he was gentle. Life has, among its soothing and quiet comforts, few things better to give than such a son.

One of the passages of Pope's life, which seems to deserve some enquiry, was a publication of Letters between him and many of his friends, which falling into the hands of *Curll*, a rapacious bookseller of no good fame, were by him printed and sold. This volume containing some Letters from noblemen, Pope incited a prosecution against him in the House of Lords for breach of privilege, and attended himself to stimulate the resentment of his friends. *Curll* appeared at the bar, and, knowing himself in no great danger,

ger, spoke of Pope with very little reverence. *He has, said Curll, a knack at versifying; but in prose I think myself a match for him.* When the orders of the House were examined, none of them appeared to have been infringed; Curll went away triumphant, and Pope was left to seek some other remedy.

Curll's account was, that one evening a man in a clergyman's gown, but with a lawyer's band, brought and offered to sale a number of printed volumes, which he found to be Pope's epistolary correspondence; that he asked no name, and was told none, but gave the price demanded, and thought himself authorised to use his purchase to his own advantage.

That Curll gave a true account of the transaction, it is reasonable to believe, because no falshood was ever detected; and when some years afterwards I mentioned it to Lintot, the son of Bernard, he declared his opinion to be, that Pope knew better than any body else how Curll obtained the copies, because another parcel was at the same time sent to himself, for which no price had ever been demanded, as he made known his resolution not to pay a porter, and consequently not to deal with a nameless agent.

Such care had been taken to make them publick, that they were sent at once to two bookfellers; to Curll, who was likely to seize them as a prey, and to Lintot,

tot, who might be expected to give Pope information of the seeming injury. Lintot, I believe, did nothing; and Curll did what was expected. That to make them publick was the only purpose may be reasonably supposed, because the numbers offered to sale by the private messengers shewed that hope of gain could not have been the motive of the impression.

It seems that Pope, being desirous of printing his Letters, and not knowing how to do, without imputation of vanity, what has in this country been done very rarely, contrived an appearance of compulsion; that when he could complain that his Letters were surreptitiously published, he might, de-

cently and defensively publish them himself.

Pope's private correspondence thus promulgated, filled the nation with praises of his candour, tenderness, and benevolence, the purity of his purposes, and the fidelity of his friendship. There were some Letters which a very good or a very wise man would wish suppressed; but, as they had been already exposed, it was impracticable now to retract them.

From the perusal of those Letters, Mr. Allen first conceived the desire of knowing him; and with so much zeal did he cultivate the friendship which he had newly formed, that when Pope told his purpose of vindicating his own property

perty by a genuine edition, he offered to pay the cost.

This however Pope did not accept; but in time solicited a subscription for a Quarto volume, which appeared (1737), I believe, with sufficient profit. In the Preface he tells that his Letters were repositied in a friend's library, said to be the Earl of Oxford's, and that the copy thence stolen was sent to the press. The story was doubtless received with different degrees of credit. It may be suspected that the Preface to the Miscellanies was written to prepare the publick for such an incident; and to strengthen this opinion, James Worfdale, a painter, who was employed in clandestine negotiations, but whose vera-

city was very doubtful, declared that he was the messenger who carried, by Pope's direction, the books to Curl.

When they were thus published and avowed, as they had relation to recent facts, and persons either then living or not yet forgotten, they may be supposed to have found readers; but as the facts were minute, and the characters being either private or literary, were little known, or little regarded, they awakened no popular kindness or resentment: the book never became much the subject of conversation; some read it as contemporary history, and some perhaps as a model of epistolary language; but those who read it did not talk of it. Not much therefore was added by it to fame or
envy;

envy; nor do I remember that it produced either publick praise, or publick censure.

It had however, in some degree, the recommendation of novelty. Our language has few Letters, except those of statesmen. Howel indeed, about a century ago, published his Letters, which are commended by *Morhoff*, and which alone of his hundred volumes continue his memory. Loveday's Letters were printed only once; those of Herbert and Suckling are hardly known. Mrs. Phillips's [*Orinda's*] are equally neglected; and those of Walsh seem written as exercises, and were never sent to any living mistress or friend. Pope's epistolary excellence had an open field; he had

had no English rival, living or dead. Pope is seen in this collection as connected with the other contemporary wits, and certainly suffers no disgrace in the comparison; but it must be remembered that he had the power of favouring himself: he might have originally had publication in his mind, and have written with care, or have afterwards selected those which he had most happily conceived, or most diligently laboured; and I know not whether there does not appear something more studied and artificial in his productions than the rest, except one long Letter by Bolingbroke, composed with all the skill and industry of a professed author. It is indeed not easy to distinguish affectation

fection from habit; he that has once studiously formed a style, rarely writes afterwards with complete ease. Pope may be said to write always with his reputation in his head; Swift perhaps like a man who remembered that he was writing to Pope; but Arbuthnot like one who lets his thoughts drop from his pen as they rise into his mind.

Before these Letters appeared, he published the first part of what he persuaded himself to think a system of Ethicks, under the title of an *Essay on Man*; which, if his Letter to Swift (of Sept. 14, 1725) be rightly explained by the commentator, had been eight years under his consideration, and of which he seems to have desired the success with

great

great solicitude. He had now many open and doubtless many secret enemies. The *Dunces* were yet smarting with the war; and the superiority which he publickly arrogated, disposed the world to wish his humiliation.

All this he knew, and against all this he provided. His own name, and that of his friend to whom the work is inscribed, were in the first editions carefully suppressed; and the poem, being of a new kind, was ascribed to one or another, as favour determined, or conjecture wandered; it was given, says Warburton, to every man, except him only who could write it. Those who like only when they like the author, and who are under the dominion of a name;

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condemned it; and those admired it who are willing to scatter praise at random, which while it is unappropriated excites no envy. Those friends of Pope, that were trusted with the secret, went about lavishing honours on the new-born poet, and hinting that Pope was never so much in danger from any former rival.

To those authors whom he had personally offended, and to those whose opinion the world considered as decisive, and whom he suspected of envy or malevolence, he sent his essay as a present before publication, that they might defeat their own enmity by praises; which they could not afterwards decently retract.

With

With these precautions, in 1733 was published the first part of the *Essay on Man*. There had been for some time a report that Pope was busy upon a System of Morality; but this design was not discovered in the new poem, which had a form and a title with which its readers were unacquainted. Its reception was not uniform; some thought it a very imperfect piece, though not without good lines. While the author was unknown, some, as will always happen, favoured him as an adventurer, and some censured him as an intruder; but all thought him above neglect; the sale increased, and editions were multiplied.

The

The subsequent editions of the first Epistle exhibited two memorable corrections. At first, the poet and his friend

Expatriate free o'er this scene of man,
A mighty maze of walks without a plan.
For which he wrote afterwards,

A mighty maze, *but not without a plan.*
For, if there were no plan, it was vain
to describe or to trace the maze.

The other alteration was of these lines;
And spite of pride, *and in thy reason's*
spite,

One truth is clear, whatever is, is right:
but having afterwards discovered, or
been shewn, that the *truth* which sub-
sisted *in spite of reason* could not be very
clear, he substituted

And spite of pride, *in erring reason's spite.*
To such oversights will the most vigorous mind be liable, when it is employed at once upon argument and poetry.

The second and third Epistles were published; and Pope was, I believe, more and more suspected of writing them; at last, in 1734, he avowed the fourth, and claimed the honour of a moral poet.

In the conclusion it is sufficiently acknowledged, that the doctrine of the *Essay on Man* was received from Bolingbroke, who is said to have ridiculed Pope, among those who enjoyed his confidence, as having adopted and advanced principles of which he did not perceive the consequence, and as blindly

propagating opinions contrary to his own. That those communications had been consolidated into a scheme regularly drawn, and delivered to Pope, from whom it returned only transformed from prose to verse, is reported, but hardly can be true. The Essay plainly appears the fabrick of a poet: what Bolingbroke supplied could be only the first principles; the order, illustration, and embellishments must all be Pope's.

These principles it is not my business to clear from obscurity, dogmatism, or falsehood; but they were not immediately examined; philosophy and poetry have not often the same readers; and the Essay abounded in splendid amplifications and sparkling sentences, which

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were

were read and admired, with no great attention to their ultimate purpose; its flowers caught the eye, which did not see what the gay foliage concealed, and for a time flourished in the sunshine of universal approbation. So little was any evil tendency discovered, that, as innocence is unsuspecting, many read it for a manual of piety.

Its reputation soon invited a translator. It was first turned into French prose, and afterwards by Resnel into verse. Both translations fell into the hands of Croufaz, who first, when he had the version in prose, wrote a general censure, and afterwards reprinted Resnel's version, with particular remarks upon every paragraph.

Crou-

Croufaz was a professor of Switzerland, eminent for his treatise of Logick, and his *Examen de Pyrrhonisme*, and, however little known or regarded, was no mean antagonist. His mind was one of those in which philosophy and piety are happily united. He was accustomed to argument and disquisition, and perhaps was grown too desirous of detecting faults; but his intentions were always right, his opinions were solid, and his religion pure.

His incessant vigilance for the promotion of piety disposed him to look with distrust upon all metaphysical systems of Theology, and all schemes of virtue and happiness purely rational, and therefore it was not long before he

was persuaded that the positions of Pope, as they terminated for the most part in natural religion, were intended to draw mankind away from Revelation, and to represent the whole course of things as a necessary concatenation of indissoluble fatality; and it is undeniable, that in many passages a religious eye may easily discover expressions not very favourable to morals, or to liberty.

About this time Warburton began to make his appearance in the first ranks of learning. He was a man of vigorous faculties, a mind fervid and vehement, supplied by incessant and unlimited enquiry, with wonderful extent and variety of knowledge, which yet
had

had not oppressed his imagination, nor clouded his perspicacity. To every work he brought a memory full fraught with a fancy fertile of original combinations, and at once exerted the powers of the scholar, the reasoner, and the wit. But his knowledge was too multifarious to be always exact, and his pursuits were too eager to be always cautious. His abilities gave him an haughty confidence, which he disdained to conceal or mollify; and his impatience of opposition disposed him to treat his adversaries with such contemptuous superiority as made his readers commonly his enemies, and excited against him the wishes of some who favoured his cause. He seems to have adopted the

Roman Emperor's determination, *oderint dum metuant*; he used no allurements of gentle language, but wished to compel rather than persuade.

His style is copious without selection, and forcible without neatness; he took the words that presented themselves; his diction is coarse and impure, and his sentences are unmeasured.

He had, in the early part of his life, pleased himself with the notice of inferior wits, and corresponded with the enemies of Pope. A Letter was produced, when he had perhaps himself forgotten it, in which he tells *Concanen*, that Milton borrowed by affectation, Dryden by idleness, and Pope by necessity. And when Theobald published *Shakespeare*,

spears, in opposition to Pope, the best notes were supplied by Warburton.

But the time was now come when Warburton was to change his opinion, and Pope was to find a defender in him who had contributed so much to the exaltation of his rival.

The arrogance of Warburton excited against him every artifice of offence, and therefore it may be supposed that his union with Pope was censured as hypocritical inconstancy; but surely to think differently, at different times, of poetical merit, may be easily allowed. Such opinions are often admitted, and dismissed, without nice examination. Who is there that has not found reason

for changing his mind about questions of greater importance?

Warburton, whatever was his motive, undertook, without solicitation, to rescue Pope from the talons of Croufaz, by freeing him from the imputation of favouring fatality, or rejecting revelation; and from month to month continued a vindication of the *Essay on Man*, in the literary journal of that time called the *Republick of Letters*.

Pope, who probably began to doubt the tendency of his own work, was glad that the positions, of which he perceived himself not to know the full meaning, could by any mode of interpretation be made to mean well. How much he was pleased with his gratuitous defender,

fender, the following Letter evidently
shews :

“S I R, March 24, 1743.

“I have just received from Mr. R.
“two more of your Letters. It is in
“the greatest hurry imaginable that I
“write this; but I cannot help thank-
“ing you in particular for your third
“Letter, which is so extremely clear,
“short, and full, that I think Mr.
“Croufaz ought never to have another
“answer, and deserved not so good an
“one. I can only say, you do him too
“much honour, and me too much right,
“so odd as the expression seems; for
“you have made my system as clear as
“I ought to have done, and could not.
“It is indeed the same system as mine,
“ but

“but illustrated with a ray of your own,
“as they say our natural body is the
“same still when it is glorified. I am
“sure I like it better than I did before,
“and so will every man else. I know
“I meant just what you explain; but I
“did not explain my own meaning so
“well as you. You understand me as
“well as I do myself; but you express
“me better than I could express my-
“self. Pray, accept the sincerest ac-
“knowledgements. I cannot but wish
“these Letters were put together in
“one Book, and intend (with your
“leave) to procure a translation of part,
“at least, of all them into French; but
“I shall not proceed a step without your
“consent and opinion, &c.”

By

By this fond and eager acceptance of an exculpatory comment, Pope testified that, whatever might be the seeming or real import of the principles which he had received from Bolingbroke, he had not intentionally attacked religion; and Bolingbroke, if he meant to make him without his own consent an instrument of mischief, found him now engaged with his eyes open on the side of truth.

It is known that Bolingbroke concealed from Pope his real opinions. He once discovered them to Mr. Hooke, who related them again to Pope, and was told by him that he must have mistaken the meaning of what he heard; and Bolingbroke, when Pope's uneasiness incited him to desire an explanation,

to which his works entitled him, and which he had not impaired by any private misconduct or factious partiality. Though Bolingbroke was his friend, Walpole was not his enemy; but treated him with so much consideration as, at his request, to solicit and obtain from the French Minister an abby for Mr. Southcot, whom he considered himself as obliged to reward, by this exertion of his interest, for the benefit which he had received from his attendance in a long illness.

It was said, that, when the Court was at Richmond, Queen Caroline had declared her intention to visit him. This may have been only a careless effusion, thought on no more: the report of such notice,

notice, however, was soon in many mouths; and, if I do not forget or misapprehend Savage's account, Pope, pretending to decline what was not yet offered, left his house for a time, not, I suppose, for any other reason than lest he should be thought to stay at home in expectation of an honour which would not be conferred. He was therefore angry at Swift, who represents him as *refusing the visits of a Queen*, because he knew that what had never been offered, had never been refused.

Beside the general system of morality supposed to be contained in the *Essay on Man*, it was his intention to write distinct poems upon the different duties or conditions of life; one of which is the

Epistle to Lord Bathurst (1733) on the *Use of Riches*, a piece on which he declared great labour to have been bestowed*.

Into this poem some incidents are historically thrown, and some known characters are introduced, with others of which it is difficult to say how far they are real or fictitious; but the praise of *Kyrl*, the *Man of Ross*, deserves particular examination, who, after a long and pompous enumeration of his publick works and private charities, is said to have diffused all those blessings from *five hundred a year*. Wonders are willingly told, and willingly heard. The truth is, that *Kyrl* was a man of known

* Spence.

integrity, and active benevolence, by whose sollicitation the wealthy were persuaded to pay contributions to his charitable schemes; this influence he obtained by an example of liberality exerted to the utmost extent of his power, and was thus enabled to give more than he had. This account Mr. *Victor* received from the minister of the place, and I have preserved it, that the praise of a good man being made more credible, may be more solid. Narrations of romantick and impracticable virtue will be read with wonder, but that which is unattainable is recommended in vain; that good may be endeavoured, it must be shewn to be possible.

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This

This is the only piece in which the author has given a hint of his religion, by ridiculing the ceremony of burning the pope, and by mentioning with some indignation the inscription on the Monument.

When this poem was first published, the dialogue, having no letters of direction, was perplexed and obscure. Pope seems to have written with no very distinct idea; for he calls that an *Epistle to Bathurst*, in which Bathurst is introduced as speaking.

He afterwards (1734) inscribed to Lord Cobham his *Characters of Men*, written with close attention to the operations of the mind and modifications of life. In this poem he has endeavoured

voured to establish and exemplify his favourite theory of the *Ruling Passion*, by which he means an original direction of desire to some particular object, an innate affection which gives all action a determinate and invariable tendency, and operates upon the whole system of life, either openly, or more secretly by the intervention of some accidental or subordinate propension.

Of any passion, thus innate and irresistible, the existence may reasonably be doubted. Human characters are by no means constant; men change by change of place, of fortune, of acquaintance; he who is at one time a lover of pleasure, is at another a lover of money. Those indeed who attain any excel-

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lence,

lence, commonly spend life in one pursuit; for excellence is not often gained upon easier terms. But to the particular species of excellence men are directed, not by an ascendant planet or predominating humour, but by the first book which they read, some early conversation which they heard, or some accident which excited ardour and emulation.

It must be at least allowed that this *ruling Passion*, antecedent to reason and observation, must have an object independent on human contrivance; for there can be no natural desire of artificial good. No man therefore can be born, in the strict acceptation, a lover of money; for he may be born where mo-
ney

ney does not exist; nor can he be born; in a moral sense, a lover of his country; for society, politically regulated, is a state contradistinguished from a state of nature; and any attention to that coalition of interests which makes the happiness of a country, is possible only to those whom enquiry and reflection have enabled to comprehend it.

This doctrine is in itself pernicious as well as false: its tendency is to produce the belief of a kind of moral predestination, or over-ruling principle which cannot be resisted; he that admits it, is prepared to comply with every desire that caprice or opportunity shall excite, and to flatter himself that he submits only to the lawful dominion of Nature,

in obeying the resifless authority of his *ruling Passion*.

Pope has formed his theory with fo little skill, that, in the examples by which he illustrates and confirms it, he has confounded passions, appetites, and habits.

To the *Characters of Men* he added soon after, in an Epistle supposed to have been addressed to Martha Blount, but which the last edition has taken from her, the *Characters of Women*. This poem, which was laboured with great diligence, and in the author's opinion with great success, was neglected at its first publication, as the commentator supposes, because the publick was informed by an advertisement, that it

contained *no Character drawn from the life*; an assertion which Pope probably did not expect or wish to have been believed, and which he soon gave his readers sufficient reason to distrust, by telling them in a note, that the work was imperfect, because part of his subject was *Vice too high* to be yet exposed.

The time however soon came, in which it was safe to display the Dutcheſs of Marlborough under the name of *Atossa*; and her character was inserted with no great honour to the writer's gratitude.

He published from time to time (between 1730 and 1740) Imitations of different poems of Horace, generally with his name, and once as was suspected

without it. What he was upon moral principles ashamed to own, he ought to have suppressed. Of these pieces it is useless to settle the dates, as they had seldom much relation to the times, and perhaps had been long in his hands.

This mode of imitation, in which the ancients are familiarised, by adapting their sentiments to modern topicks, by making Horace say of Shakspeare what he originally said of Ennius, and accommodating his satires on Pantolabus and Nomentanus to the flatterers and prodigals of our own time, was first practised in the reign of Charles the Second by Oldham and Rochester, at least I remember no instances more ancient. It is a kind of middle composition between
transla-

translation and original design, which pleases when the thoughts are unexpectedly applicable, and the parallels lucky. It seems to have been Pope's favourite amusement; for he has carried it further than any former poet.

He published likewise a revival, in smoother numbers, of Dr. Donne's Satires, which was recommended to him by the Duke of Shrewsbury and the Earl of Oxford. They made no great impression on the publick. Pope seems to have known their imbecillity, and therefore suppressed them while he was yet contending to rise in reputation, but ventured them when he thought their deficiencies more likely to be imputed to Donne than to himself.

The

The Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, which seems to be derived in its first design from Boileau's *Adresse à son Esprit*, was published in January 1735, about a month before the death of him to whom it is inscribed. It is to be regretted that either honour or pleasure should have been missed by Arbuthnot; a man estimable for his learning, amiable for his life, and venerable for his piety.

Arbuthnot was a man of great comprehension, skilful in his profession, versed in the sciences, acquainted with ancient literature, and able to animate his mass of knowledge by a bright and active imagination; a scholar with great brilliancy of wit; a wit, who, in the crowd
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of life, retained and discovered a noble
ardour of religious zeal.

In this poem Pope seems to reckon
with the publick. He vindicates him-
self from censures; and with dignity,
rather than arrogance, enforces his own
claims to kindness and respect.

Into this poem are interwoven several
paragraphs which had been before prin-
ted as a fragment, and among them the
satirical lines upon Addison, of which
the last couplet has been twice corrected.
It was at first,

Who would not smile if such a man
there be?

Who would not laugh if Addison were
he?

Then,

Then,

Who would not grieve if such a man
there be?

Who would not laugh if Addison were
he?

At last it is,

Who but must laugh if such a man
there be?

Who would not weep if Atticus were
he?

He was at this time at open war with Lord Hervey, who had distinguished himself as a steady adherent to the Ministry, and, being offended with a contemptuous answer to one of his pamphlets, had summoned Pulteney to a duel. Whether he or Pope made the
first

first attack, perhaps cannot now be easily known: he had written an invective against Pope, whom he calls, *Hard as thy heart, and as thy birth obscure*; and hints that his father was a *batter*. To this Pope wrote a reply in verse and prose: the verses are in this poem; and the prose, though it was never sent, is printed among his Letters, but to a cool reader of the present time exhibits nothing but tedious malignity.

His last Satires, of the general kind, were two dialogues, named from the year in which they were published *Seventeen hundred and Thirty-eight*. In these poems many are praised, and many are reproached. Pope was then entangled in the opposition; a follower of
the

the Prince of Wales, who dined at his house, and the friend of many who obstructed and censured the conduct of the Ministers. His political partiality was too plainly shewn; he forgot the prudence with which he passed, in his earlier years, uninjured and unoffending through much more violent conflicts of faction.

In the first dialogue, having an opportunity of praising Allen of Bath, he asked his leave to mention him as a man not illustrious by any merit of his ancestors, and called him in his verses *low-born Allen*. Men are seldom satisfied with praise introduced or followed by any mention of defect. Allen seems not to have taken any pleasure in his epithet,

epithet, which was afterwards softened into *humble Allen*.

In the second Dialogue he took some liberty with one of the *Foxes*, among others; which *Fox*, in a reply to Lyttelton, took an opportunity of repaying, by reproaching him with the friendship of a lampooner, who scattered his ink without fear or decency, and against whom he hoped the resentment of the Legislature would quickly be discharged.

About this time Paul Whitehead, a small poet, was summoned before the Lords for a poem called *Manners*, together with Dodley his publisher. Whitehead, who hung loose upon society, sculked and escaped; but Dodley's shop and family made his appearance necessary.

fary. He was, however, soon dismissed; and the whole process was probably intended rather to intimidate Pope than to punish Whitehead.

Pope never afterwards attempted to join the patriot with the poet, nor drew his pen upon statesmen. That he desisted from his attempts of reformation is imputed, by his commentator, to his despair of prevailing over the corruption of the time. He was not likely to have been ever of opinion that the dread of his satire would countervail the love of power or of money; he pleased himself with being important and formidable, and gratified sometimes his pride, and sometimes his resentment; till at

last he began to think he should be more safe, if he were less busy.

The *Memoirs of Scriblerus*, published about this time, extend only to the first book of a work, projected in concert by Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot, who used to meet in the time of Queen Anne, and denominated themselves the *Scriblerus Club*. Their purpose was to censure the abuses of learning by a fictitious Life of an infatuated Scholar. They were dispersed; the design was never completed; and Warburton laments its miscarriage, as an event very disastrous to polite letters.

If the whole may be estimated by this specimen, which seems to be the production of Arbuthnot, with a few

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touches

touches perhaps by Pope, the want of more will not be much lamented; for the follies which the writer ridicules are so little practised, that they are not known; nor can the satire be understood but by the learned: he raises phantoms of absurdity, and then drives them away. He cures diseases that were never felt.

For this reason the joint production of three great writers has never obtained any notice from mankind; it has been little read, or when read has been forgotten, as no man could be wiser, better, or merrier, by remembering it.

The design cannot boast of much originality; for, besides its general resemblance to *Don Quixote*, there will be
found

found in it particular imitations of the *History of Mr. Ouffle*.

Swift carried so much of it into Ireland as supplied him with hints for his *Travels*; and with those the world might have been contented, though the rest had been suppressed.

Pope had sought for images and sentiments in a region not known to have been explored by many other of the English writers; he had consulted the modern writers of Latin poetry, a class of authors whom Boileau endeavoured to bring into contempt, and who are too generally neglected. Pope, however, was not ashamed of their acquaintance, nor ungrateful for the advantages which he might have derived from it. A small

selection from the Italians who wrote in Latin had been published at London, about the latter end of the last century, by a man who concealed his name, but whom his Preface shews to have been well qualified for his undertaking. This collection Pope amplified by more than half, and (1740) published it in two volumes, but injuriously omitted his predecessor's preface. To these books, which had nothing but the mere text, no regard was paid, the authors were still neglected, and the editor was neither praised nor censured.

He did not sink into idleness; he had planned a work, which he considered as subsequent to his *Essay on Man*, of which he has given this account to Dr. Swift.

“ March

“ March 25, 1736.

“ If ever I write any more Epistles
 “ in verse, one of them shall be ad-
 “ dressed to you. I have long con-
 “ certed it, and begun it; but I would
 “ make what bears your name as finished
 “ as my last work ought to be, that is to
 “ say, more finished than any of the rest.
 “ The subject is large, and will divide
 “ into four Epistles, which naturally
 “ follow the *Essay on Man*, viz: 1. Of
 “ the Extent and Limits of Human Rea-
 “ son and Science. 2. A View of the
 “ useful and therefore attainable, and
 “ of the unuseful and therefore unat-
 “ tainable Acts. 3. Of the Nature,
 “ Ends, Application, and Use of dif-
 “ ferent Capacities. 4. Of the Use of

“ *Learning, of the Science, of the World,*
“ and of *Wit*. It will conclude with a
“ satire against the Misapplication of all
“ these, exemplified by Pictures, Cha-
“ racters, and Examples.”

This work in its full extent, being now afflicted with an asthma, and finding the powers of life gradually declining, he had no longer courage to undertake; but, from the materials which he had provided, he added, at Warburton's request, another book to the *Dunciad*, of which the design is to ridicule such studies as are either hopeless or useless, as either pursue what is unattainable, or what, if it be attained, is of no use.

When

When this book was printed (1742) the laurel had been for some time upon the head of Cibber; a man whom it cannot be supposed that Pope could regard with much kindness or esteem, though in one of the Imitations of *Horace* he has liberally enough praised the *Careless Husband*. In the *Dunciad*, among other worthless scribblers, he had mentioned Cibber; who, in his *Apology*, complains of the great poet's unkindness as more injurious, *because*, says he, *I never have offended him*.

It might have been expected that Pope should have been, in some degree, mollified by this submissive gentleness; but no such consequence appeared. Though he condescended to commend

Cibber once, he mentioned him afterwards contemptuously in one of his Satires, and again in his Epistle to Arbuthnot; and in the fourth book of the *Dunciad* attacked him with acrimony, to which the provocation is not easily discoverable. Perhaps he imagined that in ridiculing the Laureat, he satirised those by whom the laurel had been given, and gratified that ambitious petulance with which he affected to insult the great.

The severity of this satire left Cibber no longer any patience. He had confidence enough in his own powers to believe that he could disturb the quiet of his adversary, and doubtless did not want instigators, who, without any care about
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the victory, desired to amuse themselves by looking on the contest. He therefore gave the town a pamphlet, in which he declares his resolution from that time never to bear another blow without returning it, and to tire out his adversary by perseverance, if he cannot conquer him by strength.

The incessant and unappeasable malignity of Pope he imputes to a very distant cause. After the *Three Hours after Marriage* had been driven off the stage, by the offence which the mummy and crocodile gave the audience, while the exploded scene was yet fresh in memory, it happened that Cibber played *Bays* in the *Rehearsal*; and, as it had been usual to enliven the part by the
men-

mention of any recent theatrical transactions, he said, that he once thought to have introduced his lovers disguised in a Mummy and a Crocodile. "This," says he, "was received with loud claps, which indicated contempt of the play." Pope, who was behind the scenes, meeting him as he left the stage, attacked him, as he says, with all the virulence of a *Wit out of his senses*; to which he replied, "that he would take no other notice of what was said by so particular a man than to declare, that, as often as he played that part, he would repeat the same provocation."

He shews his opinion to be, that Pope was one of the authors of the play which
he

he so zealously defended; and adds an idle story of Pope's behaviour at a tavern.

The pamphlet was written with little power of thought or language, and, if suffered to remain without notice, would have been very soon forgotten. Pope had now been enough acquainted with human life to know, if his passion had not been too powerful for his understanding, that, from a contention like his with Cibber, the world seeks nothing but diversion, which is given at the expence of the higher character. When Cibber lampooned Pope, curiosity was excited; what Pope would say of Cibber nobody enquired, but in hope that Pope's
aspe-

asperity might betray his pain and lessen his dignity.

He should therefore have suffered the pamphlet to flutter and die, without confessing that it stung him. The dishonour of being shewn as Cibber's antagonist could never be compensated by the victory. Cibber had nothing to lose; when Pope had exhausted all his malignity upon him, he would rise in the esteem both of his friends and his enemies. Silence only could have made him despicable; the blow which did not appear to be felt, would have been struck in vain.

But Pope's irascibility prevailed, and he resolved to tell the whole English world that he was at war with Cibber; and

and to shew that he thought him no common adversary, he prepared no common vengeance; he published a new edition of the *Dunciad*, in which he degraded *Theobald* from his painful pre-eminence, and enthroned *Cibber* in his stead. Unhappily the two heroes were of opposite characters, and Pope was unwilling to lose what he had already written; he has therefore depraved his poem by giving to *Cibber* the old books, the cold pedantry and sluggish pertinacity of *Theobald*.

Pope was ignorant enough of his own interest to make another change, and introduced *Osborne* contending for the prize among the bookfellers. *Osborne* was a man intirely destitute of shame, without

without sense of any disgrace but that of poverty. He told me, when he was doing that which raised Pope's resentment, that he should be put into the *Dunciad*; but he had the fate of *Cassandra*; I gave no credit to his prediction, till in time I saw it accomplished. The shafts of satire were directed equally in vain against Cibber and Osborne; being repelled by the impenetrable impudence of one, and deadened by the impassive dulness of the other. Pope confessed his own pain by his anger; but he gave no pain to those who had provoked him. He was able to hurt none but himself; by transferring the same ridicule from one to another, he destroyed its efficacy; for by shewing that what he

had

had said of one he was ready to say of another, he reduced himself to the insignificance of his own magpye, who from his cage calls cuckold at a venture.

Cibber, according to his engagement, repaid the *Dunciad* with another pamphlet, which, Pope said, *would be as good as a dose of hartshorn to him*; but his tongue and his heart were at variance. I have heard Mr. Richardson relate, that he attended his father on a visit, when one of Cibber's pamphlets came into the hands of Pope, who said, *These things are my diversion*. They sat by him while he perused it, and saw his features writhen with anguish; and young Richardson said to his father, when they returned, that he hoped to be preserved from

from such diversion as had been that day the lot of Pope.

From this time, finding his diseases more oppressive, and his vital powers gradually declining, he no longer strained his faculties with any original composition, nor proposed any other employment for his remaining life than the revival and correction of his former works; in which he received advice and assistance from Warburton, whom he appears to have trusted and honoured in the highest degree.

He laid aside his Epick Poem, perhaps without much loss to mankind; for his hero was *Brutus* the Trojan, who, according to a ridiculous fiction, established a colony in Britain. The subject

therefore was of the fabulous age; the actors were a race upon whom imagination has been exhausted, and attention wearied, and to whom the mind will not easily be recalled, when it is invited in blank verse, which Pope had adopted with great imprudence, and, I think, without due consideration of the nature of our language. The sketch is, at least in part, preserved by Ruffhead; by which it appears, that Pope was thoughtless enough to model the names of his heroes with discordant terminations not known in the same age.

He lingered through the next year; but perceived himself, as he expresses it, *going down the bill*. He had for at least five years been afflicted with an asthma,

and other disorders, which his physicians were unable to relieve. Towards the end of his life he consulted Dr. Thomson, a man who had, by large promises, and free censures of the common practice of physick, forced himself up into sudden reputation. Thomson declared his distemper to be a dropsy, and evacuated part of the water by tincture of jalap; but confessed that his belly did not subside. Thomson had many enemies, and Pope was persuaded to dismiss him.

While he was yet capable of amusement and conversation, as he was one day sitting in the air with Lord Bolingbroke and Lord Marchmont, he saw his favourite Martha Blount at the bottom
of

of the terrace, and asked Lord Bolingbroke to go and hand her up. Bolingbroke, not liking his errand, crossed his legs, and sat still; but Lord Marchmont, who was younger and less captious, waited on the Lady; who, when he came to her, asked, *What, is he not dead yet?* She is said to have neglected him, with shameful unkindness, in the latter time of his decay; yet, of the little which he had to leave, she had a very great part. Their acquaintance begun early; the life of each was pictured on the other's mind; their conversation therefore was endearing, for when they met, there was an immediate coalition of congenial notions. Perhaps he considered her unwillingness to approach

the chamber of sickness as female weakness, or human frailty; perhaps he was conscious to himself of peevishness and impatience, or, though he was offended by her inattention, might yet consider her merit as overbalancing her fault; and, if he had suffered his heart to be alienated from her, he could have found nothing that might fill her place; he could have only shrunk within himself; it was too late to transfer his confidence or fondness.

In May 1744, his death was approaching*; on the sixth, he was all day delirious, which he mentioned four days afterwards as a sufficient humiliation of the vanity of man; he afterwards

* * Spence.

complained of seeing things as through a curtain, and in false colours; and one day, in the presence of Doddsley, asked what arm it was that came out from the wall. He said, that his greatest inconvenience was inability to think.

Bolingbroke sometimes wept over him in this state of helpless decay; and being told by Spence, that Pope, at the intermission of his deliriousness, was always saying something kind either of his present or absent friends, and that his humanity seemed to have survived his understanding, answered, *It has so.* And added, *I never in my life knew a man that had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or more general friendship for mankind.* At another time he said,

I have known Pope these thirty years, and value myself more in his friendship than— his grief then suppressed his voice.

Pope expressed undoubting confidence of a future state. Being asked by his friend Mr. Hooke, a papist, whether he would not die like his father and mother, and whether a priest should not be called, he answered, *I do not think it essential, but it will be very right; and I thank you for putting me in mind of it.*

In the morning, after the priest had given him the last sacraments, he said,
 “ There is nothing that is meritorious
 “ but virtue and friendship, and indeed
 “ friendship itself is only a part of
 “ virtue.”

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He died in the evening of the thirtieth day of May, 1744, so placidly, that the attendants did not discern the exact time of his expiration. He was buried at Twickenham, near his father and mother, where a monument has been erected to him by his commentator, the Bishop of Gloucester.

He left the care of his papers to his executors, the Earl of Marchmont and Lord Bolingbroke, whom undoubtedly he expected to be proud of the trust, and eager to extend his fame. But let no man dream of influence beyond his life. After a decent time Dodfley the bookseller attended one of them, to solicit preference as the publisher, and was told that the parcel had not been

yet inspected; and, whatever was the reason, the world has been disappointed of what was reserved for the next age.

He lost, indeed, the favour of Bolingbroke by a kind of posthumous offence. The political pamphlet called the *Patriot King* had been put into his hands, that he might procure the impression of a very few copies, to be distributed according to the author's direction among his friends, and Pope assured him that no more had been printed than were allowed; but, soon after his death, the printer brought and resigned a complete edition of fifteen hundred copies, which Pope had ordered him to print, and to retain in secret. He kept, as was observed, his engagement to Pope better than

than Pope had kept it to his friend; and nothing was known of the transaction, till, upon the death of his employer, he thought himself obliged to deliver the books to the right owner, who, with great indignation, made a fire in his yard, and delivered the whole impression to the flames.

Hitherto nothing had been done which was not naturally dictated by resentment of violated faith; resentment more acrimonious, as the violator had been more loved or more trusted. But here the anger might have stopped; the injury was private, and there was little danger from the example.

Bolingbroke, however, was not yet satisfied; his thirst of vengeance incited him

him to blast the memory of the man over whom he had wept in his last struggles ; and he employed Mallet, another friend of Pope, to tell the tale to the publick, with all its aggravations. Warburton, whose heart was warm with his legacy, and tender by the recent separation, thought it proper for him to interpose ; and undertook, not indeed to vindicate the action, for breach of trust has always something criminal, but to extenuate it by an apology. Having advanced, what cannot be denied, that moral obliquity is made more or less excusable by the motives that produce it, he enquires what evil purpose could have induced Pope to break his promise. He could not delight his
vanity

vanity by usurping the work, which, though not sold in shops, had been shewn to a number more than sufficient to preserve the author's claim : he could not gratify his avarice ; for he could not sell his plunder till Bolingbroke was dead ; and even then, if the copy was left to another, his fraud would be defeated, and if left to himself, would be useless.

Warburton therefore supposes, with great appearance of reason, that the irregularity of his conduct proceeded wholly from his zeal for Bolingbroke, who might perhaps have destroyed the pamphlet, which Pope thought it his duty to preserve, even without its author's approbation.

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He brought some reproach upon his own memory by the petulant and contemptuous mention made in his will of Mr. Allen, and an affected repayment of his benefactions. Mrs. Blount, as the known friend and favourite of Pope, had been invited to the house of Allen, where she comported herself with such indecent arrogance, that she parted from Mrs. Allen in a state of irreconcilable dislike, and the door was for ever barred against her. This exclusion she resented with so much bitterness as to refuse any legacy from Pope, unless he left the world with a disavowal of obligation to Allen. Having been long under her dominion, now tottering in the decline of life, and unable to resist the violence
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of her temper, or, perhaps with the prejudice of a lover, persuaded that she had suffered improper treatment, he complied with her demand, and polluted his will with female resentment. Allen accepted the legacy, which he gave to the Hospital at Bath; observing that Pope was always a bad accountant, and that if to 150*l.* he had put a cypher more, he had come nearer to the truth.





THE person of Pope is well known not to have been formed by the nicest model. He has, in his account of the *Little Club*, compared himself to a spider, and is described as protuberant behind and before. He is said to have been beautiful in his infancy; but he was of a constitution originally feeble and weak; and as bodies of a tender frame are easily distorted, his deformity was probably in part the effect of his application. His stature was so low, that, to bring him to a level with common tables, it was necessary to raise his

feat. But his face was not displeasing, and his eyes were animated and vivid.

By natural deformity, or accidental distortion, his vital functions were so much disordered, that his life was a *long disease*. His most frequent assailant was the headach, which he used to relieve by inhaling the steam of coffee, which he very frequently required.

Most of what can be told concerning his petty peculiarities was communicated by a female domestick of the Earl of Oxford, who knew him perhaps after the middle of life. He was then so weak as to stand in perpetual need of female attendance; extremely sensible of cold, so that he wore a kind of fur doublet, under a shirt of very coarse

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warm linen with fine sleeves. When he rose, he was invested in boddicoe made of stiff canvass, being scarce able to hold himself erect till they were laced; and he then put on a flannel waistcoat. One side was contracted. His legs were so slender, that he enlarged their bulk with three pair of stockings, which were drawn on and off by the maid; for he was not able to dress or undress himself, and neither went to bed nor rose without help. His weakness made it very difficult for him to be clean.

His hair had fallen almost all away; and he used to dine sometimes with Lord Oxford, privately, in a velvet cap. His dress of ceremony was black, with a tye-wig, and a little sword.

The indulgence and accommodation which his sickness required, had taught him all the unpleasing and unsocial qualities of a valetudinary man. He expected that every thing should give way to his ease or humour, as a child, whose parents will not hear her cry, has an unresisted dominion in the nursery.

C'est que l'enfant toujours est homme,

C'est que l'homme est toujours enfant.

When he wanted to sleep, he *nodded in company*; and once slumbered at his own table, while the Prince of Wales was talking of poetry.

The reputation which his friendship gave, procured him many invitations; but he was a very troublesome inmate. He brought no servant, and had so many

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wants,

wants, that a numerous attendance was scarcely able to supply them. Wherever he was, he left no room for another, because he exacted the attention and employed the activity of the whole family. His errands were so frequent and frivolous, that the footmen in time avoided and neglected him; and the Earl of Oxford discharged some of the servants for their resolute refusal of his messages. The maids, when they had neglected their business, alleged that they had been employed by Mr. Pope. One of his constant demands was of coffee in the night, and to the woman that waited on him in his chamber he was very burthensome; but he was careful to recompense her want of sleep; and

and Lord Oxford's servant declared, that in a house where her business was to answer his call, she would not ask for wages.

He had another fault, easily incident to those who, suffering much pain, think themselves entitled to whatever pleasures they can snatch. He was too indulgent to his appetite; he loved meat highly seasoned and of strong taste; and, at the intervals of the table, amused himself with biscuits and dry preserves. If he sat down to a variety of dishes, he would oppress his stomach with repletion, and though he seemed angry when a dram was offered him, did not forbear to drink it. His friends, who knew the avenues to his heart, pampered him with

presents of luxury, which he did not suffer to stand neglected. The death of great men is not always proportioned to the lustre of their lives. Hannibal, says Juvenal, did not perish by a javelin or a sword; the slaughters of Cannæ were revenged by a ring. The death of Pope was imputed by some of his friends to a silver saucèpan, in which it was his delight to heat potted lampreys.

That he loved too well to eat, is certain; but that his sensuality shortened his life will not be hastily concluded, when it is remembered that a confirmation so irregular lasted six and fifty years, notwithstanding such pertinacious diligence of study and meditation.

In all his intercourse with mankind, he had great delight in artifice, and endeavoured to attain all his purposes by indirect and unsuspected methods. *He hardly drank tea without a stratagem.* If, at the house of his friends, he wanted any accommodation, he was not willing to ask for it in plain terms, but would mention it remotely as something convenient; though, when it was procured, he soon made it appear for whose sake it had been recommended. Thus he teized Lord Orrery till he obtained a screen. He practised his arts on such small occasions, that Lady Bolingbroke used to say, in a French phrase, that *he plaid the politician about cabbages and turnips.* His unjustifiable impression of the *Patriot*

King, as it can be imputed to no particular motive, must have proceeded from his general habit of secrecy and cunning; he caught an opportunity of a fly trick, and pleased himself with the thought of outwitting Bolingbroke.

In familiar or convivial conversation, it does not appear that he excelled. He may be said to have resembled Dryden, as being not one that was distinguished by vivacity in company. It is remarkable, that, so near his time, so much should be known of what he has written, and so little of what he has said: traditional memory retains no fallies of raillery, nor sentences of observation; nothing either pointed or solid, either wise or merry. One apophthegm
only

only stands upon record. When an objection raised against his inscription for Shakspeare was defended by the authority of *Patrick*, he replied—*horresco referens*—that *he would allow the publisher of a Dictionary to know the meaning of a single word, but not of two words put together.*

He was fretful, and easily displeased, and allowed himself to be capriciously resentful. He would sometimes leave Lord Oxford silently, no one could tell why, and was to be courted back by more letters and messages than the footmen were willing to carry. The table was indeed infested by Lady Mary Wortley, who was the friend of Lady Oxford, and who, knowing his peevishness,

could by no intreaties be restrained from contradicting him, till their disputes were sharpened to such asperity, that one or the other quitted the house.

He sometimes condescended to be jocular with servants or inferiors; but by no merriment, either of others or his own, was he ever seen excited to laughter.

Of his domestick character, frugality was a part eminently remarkable. Having determined not to be dependent, he determined not to be in want, and therefore wisely and magnanimously rejected all temptations to expence unfuitable to his fortune. This general care must be universally approved; but it sometimes appeared in petty artifices of parsimony, such as the practice of
writing

writing his compositions on the back of letters, as may be seen in the remaining copy of the *Iliad*, by which perhaps in five years five shillings were saved; or in a niggardly reception of his friends, and scantiness of entertainment, as, when he had two guests in his house, he would set at supper a single pint upon the table; and having himself taken two small glasses would retire, and say, *Gentlemen, I leave you to your wine.* Yet he tells his friends, that *he has a heart for all, a house for all, and, whatever they may think, a fortune for all.*

He sometimes, however, made a splendid dinner, and is said to have wanted no part of the skill or elegance which such performances require. That this

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magnificence should be often displayed, that obstinate prudence with which he conducted his affairs would not permit; for his revenue, certain and casual, amounted only to about eight hundred pounds a year, of which however he declares himself able to assign one hundred to charity.

Of this fortune, which as it arose from publick approbation was very honourably obtained, his imagination seems to have been too full: it would be hard to find a man, so well entitled to notice by his wit, that ever delighted so much in talking of his money. In his Letters, and in his Poems, his garden and his grotto, his quincunx and his vines, or some hints of his opulence, are al-

ways to be found. The great topick of his ridicule is poverty; the crimes with which he reproaches his antagonists are their debts, their habitation in the Mint, and their want of a dinner. He seems to be of an opinion not very uncommon in the world, that to want money is to want every thing.

Next to the pleasure of contemplating his possessions, seems to be that of enumerating the men of high rank with whom he was acquainted, and whose notice he loudly proclaims not to have been obtained by any practices of meanness or servility; a boast which was never denied to be true, and to which very few poets have ever aspired. Pope never set his genius to sale; he never flattered

tered those whom he did not love, or praised those whom he did not esteem. Savage however remarked, that he began a little to relax his dignity when he wrote a distich for *his Highness's dog*.

His admiration of the Great seems to have increased in the advance of life. He passed over peers and statesmen to inscribe his *Iliad* to Congreve, with a magnanimity of which the praise had been compleat, had his friend's virtue been equal to his wit. Why he was chosen for so great an honour, it is not now possible to know; there is no trace in literary history of any particular intimacy between them; nor does the name of Congreve appear in the Letters. To his latter works, however, he took care
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to annex names dignified with titles, but was not very happy in his choice; for, except Lord Bathurst, none of his noble friends were such as that a good man would wish to have his intimacy with them known to posterity: he can derive little honour from the notice of Cobham, Burlington, or Bolingbroke.

Of his social qualities, if an estimate be made from his Letters, an opinion too favourable cannot easily be formed; they exhibit a perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence, and particular fondness. There is nothing but liberality, gratitude, constancy, and tendernefs. It has been so long said as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in their

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Letters, and that he who writes to his friend lays his heart open before him. But the truth is, that such were simple friendships of the *Golden Age*, and are now the friendships only of children. Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, and of which, by whatever accident exposed, they do not shun a distinct and continued view; and, certainly, what we hide from ourselves we do not shew to our friends. There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse. In the eagerness of conversation the first emotions of the mind often burst out, before they are considered; in the tumult of business, interest and passion

have

have their genuine effect; but a friendly Letter is a calm and deliberate performance, in the cool of leisure, in the stillness of solitude, and surely no man sits down to depreciate by design his own character.

Friendship has no tendency to secure veracity; for by whom can a man so much wish to be thought better than he is, as by him whose kindness he desires to gain or keep? Even in writing to the world there is less constraint; the author is not confronted with his reader, and takes his chance of approbation among the different dispositions of mankind; but a Letter is addressed to a single mind, of which the prejudices and partialities are known; and must there-

therefore please, if not by favouring them, by forbearing to oppose them.

To charge those favourable representations, which every man gives of himself, with the guilt of hypocritical falshood, would shew more severity than knowledge. The writer commonly believes himself. Almost every man's thoughts, while they are general, are right; and most hearts are pure, while temptation is away. It is easy to awaken generous sentiments in privacy; to despise death when there is no danger; to glow with benevolence when there is nothing to be given. While such ideas are formed they are felt, and self-love does not suspect the gleam of virtue to be the meteor of fancy.

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If the Letters of Pope are considered merely as compositions, they seem to be premeditated and artificial. It is one thing to write because there is something which the mind wishes to discharge, and another, to solicit the imagination because ceremony or vanity requires something to be written. Pope confesses his early Letters to be vitiated with *affectation and ambition*: to know whether he disentangled himself from these perverters of epistolary integrity, his book and his life must be set in comparison.

One of his favourite topics is contempt of his own poetry. For this, if it had been real, he would deserve no commendation, and in this he was

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certainly

certainly not sincere; for his high value of himself was sufficiently observed, and of what could he be proud but of his poetry? He writes, he says, when *he has just nothing else to do*; yet Swift complains that he was never at leisure for conversation, because *he had always some poetical scheme in his head*. It was punctually required that his writing-box should be set upon his bed before he rose; and Lord Oxford's domestick related, that, in the dreadful winter of Forty, she was called from her bed by him four times in one night, to supply him with paper, lest he should lose a thought.

He pretends insensibility to censure and criticism, though it was observed by

all

all who knew him that every pamphlet disturbed his quiet, and that his extreme irritability laid him open to perpetual vexation; but he wished to despise his criticks, and therefore hoped that he did despise them.

As he happened to live in two reigns when the Court paid little attention to poetry, he nursed in his mind a foolish disesteem of Kings, and proclaims that *he never sees Courts*. Yet a little regard shewn him by the Prince of Wales melted his obduracy; and he had not much to say when he was asked by his Royal Highness, *how he could love a Prince while he disliked Kings?*

He very frequently professes contempt of the world, and represents himself

as looking on mankind, sometimes with gay indifference, as on emmets of a hillock, below his serious attention; and sometimes with gloomy indignation, as on monsters more worthy of hatred than of pity. These were dispositions apparently counterfeited. How could he despise those whom he lived by pleasing, and on whose approbation his esteem of himself was superstructed? Why should he hate those to whose favour he owed his honour and his ease? Of things that terminate in human life, the world is the proper judge; to despise its sentence, if it were possible, is not just; and if it were just, is not possible. Pope was far enough from this unreasonable temper; he was sufficiently *a fool to Fame,*

Fame, and his fault was that he pretended to neglect it. His levity and his fullness were only in his Letters; he passed through common life, sometimes vexed, and sometimes pleased, with the natural emotions of common men.

His scorn of the Great is repeated too often to be real; no man thinks much of that which he despises; and as falsehood is always in danger of inconsistency, he makes it his boast at another time that he lives among them.

It is evident that his own importance swells often in his mind. He is afraid of writing, lest the clerks of the Post-office should know his secrets; he has many enemies; he considers himself as surrounded by universal jealousy; *after*

many deaths, and many dispersions, two or three of us, says he, may still be brought together, not to plot, but to divert ourselves, and the world too, if it pleases; and they can live together, and shew what friends wits may be, in spite of all the fools in the world. All this while it was likely that the clerks did not know his hand; he certainly had no more enemies than a publick character like his inevitably excites, and with what degree of friendship the wits might live very few were so much fools as ever to enquire.

Some part of this pretended discontent he learned from Swift, and expresses it, I think, most frequently in his correspondence with him. Swift's resentment

ment was unreasonable, but it was sincere; Pope's was the mere mimickry of his friend, a fictitious part which he began to play before it became him. When he was only twenty-five years old, he related that *a glut of study and retirement had thrown him on the world*, and that there was danger lest *a glut of the world should throw him back upon study and retirement*. To this Swift answered with great propriety, that Pope had not yet either acted or suffered enough in the world to have become weary of it. And, indeed, it must be some very powerful reason that can drive back to solitude him who has once enjoyed the pleasures of society.

In the Letters both of Swift and Pope there appears such narrowness of mind, as makes them insensible of any excellence that has not some affinity with their own, and confines their esteem and approbation to so small a number, that whoever should form his opinion of the age from their representation, would suppose them to have lived amidst ignorance and barbarity, unable to find among their contemporaries either virtue or intelligence, and persecuted by those that could not understand them.

When Pope murmurs at the world, when he professes contempt of fame, when he speaks of riches and poverty, of success and disappointment, with negligent indifference, he certainly does
not

not express his habitual and settled sentiments, but either wilfully disguises his own character, or, what is more likely, invests himself with temporary qualities, and falls out in the colours of the present moment. His hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows, acted strongly upon his mind; and if he differed from others, it was not by carelessness; he was irritable and resentful; his malignity to Philips, whom he had first made ridiculous, and then hated for being angry, continued too long. Of his vain desire to make Bentley contemptible, I never heard any adequate reason. He was sometimes wanton in his attacks; and, before Chandos, Lady

Wort-

Wortley, and Hill, was mean in his retreat.

The virtues which seem to have had most of his affection were liberality and fidelity of friendship, in which it does not appear that he was other than he describes himself. His fortune did not suffer his charity to be splendid and conspicuous; but he assisted Doddsley with a hundred pounds, that he might open a shop; and of the subscription of forty pounds a year that he raised for Savage, twenty were paid by himself. He was accused of loving money, but his love was eagerness to gain, not solicitude to keep it.

In the duties of friendship he was zealous and constant: his early maturity

erity of mind commonly united him with men older than himself, and therefore, without attaining any considerable length of life, he saw many companions of his youth sink into the grave; but it does not appear that he lost a single friend by coldness or by injury; those who loved him once, continued their kindness. His ungrateful mention of Allen in his will, was the effect of his adherence to one whom he had known much longer, and whom he naturally loved with greater fondness. His violation of the trust reposed in him by Bolingbroke could have no motive inconsistent with the warmest affection; he either thought the action so near to indifferent that he forgot

forgot it, or so laudable that he expected his friend to approve it.

It was reported, with such confidence as almost to enforce belief, that in the papers intrusted to his executors was found a defamatory Life of Swift, which he had prepared as an instrument of vengeance to be used, if any provocation should be ever given. About this I enquired of the Earl of Marchmont, who assured me that no such piece was among his remains.

The religion in which he lived and died was that of the Church of Rome, to which in his correspondence with Racine he professes himself a sincere adherent. That he was not scrupulously pious in some part of his life, is known
by

by many idle and indecent applications of sentences taken from the Scriptures; a mode of merriment which a good man dreads for its profaneness, and a witty man disdains for its easiness and vulgarity. But to whatever levities he has been betrayed, it does not appear that his principles were ever corrupted, or that he ever lost his belief of Revelation. The positions which he transmitted from Bolingbroke he seems not to have understood, and was pleased with an interpretation that made them orthodox.

A man of such exalted superiority, and so little moderation, would naturally have all his delinquences observed and aggravated: those who could not

deny that he was excellent, would rejoice to find that he was not perfect.

Perhaps it may be imputed to the unwillingness with which the same man is allowed to possess many advantages, that his learning has been depreciated. He certainly was in his early life a man of great literary curiosity; and when he wrote his *Essay on Criticism* had, for his age, a very wide acquaintance with books. When he entered into the living world, it seems to have happened to him as to many others, that he was less attentive to dead masters; he studied in the academy of Paracelsus, and made the universe his favourite volume. He gathered his notions fresh from reality, not from the copies of authors, but
the

the originals of Nature. Yet there is no reason to believe that literature ever lost his esteem; he always professed to love reading; and Dobson, who spent some time at his house translating his *Essay on Man*, when I asked him what learning he found him to possess, answered, *More than I expected*. His frequent references to history, his allusions to various kinds of knowledge, and his images selected from art and nature, with his observations on the operations of the mind and the modes of life, shew an intelligence perpetually on the wing, excursive, vigorous, and diligent, eager to pursue knowledge, and attentive to retain it.

From

From this curiosity arose the desire of travelling, to which he alludes in his verses to Jervas, and which, though he never found an opportunity to gratify it, did not leave him till his life declined.

Of his intellectual character, the constituent and fundamental principle was Good Sense, a prompt and intuitive perception of consonance and propriety. He saw immediately, of his own conceptions, what was to be chosen, and what to be rejected; and, in the works of others, what was to be shunned, and what was to be copied.

But good sense alone is a sedate and quiescent quality, which manages its possessions well, but does not increase them;

them; it collects few materials for its own operations, and preserves safety, but never gains supremacy. Pope had likewise genius; a mind active, ambitious, and adventurous, always investigating, always aspiring; in its widest searches still longing to go forward, in its highest flights still wishing to be higher; always imagining something greater than it knows, always endeavouring more than it can do.

To assist these powers, he is said to have had great strength and exactness of memory. That which he had heard or read was not easily lost; and he had before him not only what his own meditation suggested, but what he had found in

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other

other writers that might be accommodated to his present purpose.

These benefits of nature he improved by incessant and unwearied diligence; he had recourse to every source of intelligence, and lost no opportunity of information; he consulted the living as well as the dead; he read his compositions to his friends, and was never content with mediocrity when excellence could be attained. He considered poetry as the business of his life, and however he might seem to lament his occupation, he followed it with constancy; to make verses was his first labour, and to mend them was his last.

From his attention to poetry he was never diverted. If conversation offered
any

any thing that could be improved, he committed it to paper; if a thought, or perhaps an expression more happy than was common, rose to his mind, he was careful to write it; an independent distich was preserved for an opportunity of insertion, and some little fragments have been found containing lines, or parts of lines, to be wrought upon at some other time.

He was one of those few whose labour is their pleasure: he was never elevated to negligence, nor wearied to impatience; he never passed a fault unamended by indifference, nor quitted it by despair. He laboured his works first to gain reputation, and afterwards to keep it.

Of composition there are different methods. Some employ at once memory and invention, and, with little intermediate use of the pen, form and polish large masses by continued meditation, and write their productions only when, in their own opinion, they have completed them. It is related of Virgil, that his custom was to pour out a great number of verses in the morning, and pass the day in retrenching exuberances and correcting inaccuracies. The method of Pope, as may be collected from his translation, was to write his first thoughts in his first words, and gradually to amplify, decorate, rectify, and refine them.

With

With such faculties, and such dispositions, he excelled every other writer in *poetical prudence*; he wrote in such a manner as might expose him to few hazards. He used almost always the same fabrick of verse; and, indeed, by those few essays which he made of any other, he did not enlarge his reputation. Of this uniformity the certain consequence was readiness and dexterity. By perpetual practice, language had in his mind a systematical arrangement; having always the same use for words, he had words so selected and combined as to be ready at his call. This increase of facility he confessed himself to have perceived in the progress of his translation.

But what was yet of more importance, his effusions were always voluntary, and his subjects chosen by himself. His independence secured him from drudging at a task, and labouring upon a barren topick: he never exchanged praise for money, nor opened a shop of condolence or congratulation. His poems, therefore, were scarce ever temporary. He suffered coronations and royal marriages to pass without a song, and derived no opportunities from recent events, or popularity from the accidental disposition of his readers. He was never reduced to the necessity of soliciting the sun to shine upon a birth-day, of calling the Graces and Virtues to a wedding, or of saying what multitudes
have

sulted himself, and let nothing pass against his own judgement.

He professed to have learned his poetry from Dryden, whom, whenever an opportunity was presented, he praised through his whole life with unvaried liberality; and perhaps his character may receive some illustration, if he be compared with his master.

Integrity of understanding and nicety of discernment were not allotted in a less proportion to Dryden than to Pope. The rectitude of Dryden's mind was sufficiently shewn by the dismissal of his poetical prejudices, and the rejection of unnatural thoughts and rugged numbers. But Dryden never desired to apply all the judgement that he had. He wrote,

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and professed to write, merely for the people; and when he pleased others, he contented himself. He spent no time in struggles to rouse latent powers; he never attempted to make that better which was already good, nor often to mend what he must have known to be faulty. He wrote, as he tells us, with very little consideration; when occasion or necessity called upon him, he poured out what the present moment happened to supply, and, when once it had passed the press, ejected it from his mind; for when he had no pecuniary interest, he had no further solicitude.

Pope was not content to satisfy; he desired to excel, and therefore always endeavoured to do his best: he did not

court

court the candour, but dared the judgement of his reader, and expecting no indulgence from others, he shewed none to himself. He examined lines and words with minute and punctilious observation, and retouched every part with indefatigable diligence, till he had left nothing to be forgiven.

For this reason he kept his pieces very long in his hands, while he considered and reconsidered them. The only poems which can be supposed to have been written with such regard to the times as might hasten their publication, were the two satires of *Thirty-eight*; of which Dodley told me, that they were brought to him by the author, that they might be fairly copied. “Every
“line,”

“line,” said he, “was then written
“twice over; I gave him a clean tran-
“script, which he sent some time af-
“terwards to me for the press, with
“every line written twice over a second
“time.”

His declaration, that his care for his works ceased at their publication, was not strictly true. His parental attention never abandoned them; what he found amiss in the first edition, he silently corrected in those that followed. He appears to have revised the *Iliad*, and freed it from some of its imperfections; and the *Essay on Criticism* received many improvements after its first appearance. It will seldom be found that he altered without adding clearness, elegance, or vigour.

vigour. Pope had perhaps the judgement of Dryden; but Dryden certainly wanted the diligence of Pope.

In acquired knowledge, the superiority must be allowed to Dryden, whose education was more scholastick, and who before he became an author had been allowed more time for study, with better means of information. His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illustrations from a more extensive circumference of science. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation, and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge

of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope.

Poetry was not the sole praise of either; for both excelled likewise in prose; but Pope did not borrow his prose from his predecessor. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied, that of Pope is cautious and uniform; Dryden obeys the motions of his own mind, Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by

by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.

Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgement is cold and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred that of this poetical vigour Pope had only a little, because Dryden had more; for every other writer since Milton must give place to Pope; and even of Dryden it must be said, that if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were always hasty, either excited by some external

ternal occasion, or extorted by domestic necessity; he composed without consideration, and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he sought, and all that he gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce, or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it.

it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight.

This parallel will, I hope, when it is well considered, be found just; and if the reader should suspect me, as I suspect myself, of some partial fondness for the memory of Dryden, let him not too hastily condemn me; for meditation and enquiry may, perhaps, shew him the reasonableness of my determination.





THE Works of Pope are now to be distinctly examined, not so much with attention to slight faults or petty beauties, as to the general character and effect of each performance.

It seems natural for a young poet to initiate himself by Pastorals, which, not professing to imitate real life, require no experience, and, exhibiting only the simple operation of unmingled passions, admit no subtle reasoning or deep enquiry. Pope's Pastorals are not however composed but with close thought;

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they have reference to the times of the day, the seasons of the year, and the periods of human life. The last, that which turns the attention upon age and death, was the author's favourite. To tell of disappointment and misery, to thicken the darkness of futurity, and perplex the labyrinth of uncertainty, has been always a delicious employment of the poets. His preference was probably just. I wish, however, that his fondness had not overlooked a line in which the *Zephyrs* are made to lament in *silence*.

To charge these Pastorals with want of invention, is to require what never was intended. The imitations are so ambitiously frequent, that the writer evidently

·dently means rather to shew his literature than his wit. It is surely sufficient for an author of sixteen not only to be able to copy the poems of antiquity with judicious selection, but to have obtained sufficient power of language, and skill in metre, to exhibit a series of versification, which had in English poetry no precedent, nor has since had an imitation.

The design of *Windsor Forcst* is evidently derived from *Cooper's Hill*, with some attention to Waller's poem on *The Park*; but Pope cannot be denied to excel his masters in variety and elegance, and the art of interchanging description, narrative, and morality. The objection made by Dennis is the want of

plan, of a regular subordination of parts terminating in the principal and original design. There is this want in most descriptive poems, because the scenes, which they must exhibit successively, are all subsisting at the same time, and therefore the order in which they are shewn must by necessity be arbitrary, and more is not to be expected from the last part than from the first. The attention, therefore, which cannot be detained by suspense, must be excited by diversity, such as this poem offers to its reader.

But the desire of diversity may be too much indulged; the parts of *Windsor Forest* which deserve least praise, are those which were added to enliven the stillness of the scene, the appearance of
Father

Father Thames, and the transformation of *Lodona*. Addison had in his *Campaign* derided the *Rivers* that *rise from their oozy beds* to tell stories of heroes, and it is therefore strange that Pope should adopt a fiction not only unnatural but lately censured. The story of *Lodona* is told with great sweetness; but a new metamorphosis is a ready and puerile expedient; nothing is easier than to tell how a flower was once a blooming virgin, or a rock an obdurate tyrant.

The *Temple of Fame* has, as Steele warmly declared, *a thousand beauties*. Every part is splendid; there is great luxuriance of ornaments; the original vision of Chaucer was never denied to be much improved; the allegory is

very skilfully continued, the imagery is properly selected, and learnedly displayed: yet, with all this comprehension of excellence, as its scene is laid in remote ages, and its sentiments, if the concluding paragraph be excepted, have little relation to general manners or common life, it seems never to have obtained much notice, but is turned silently over, and seldom quoted or mentioned with either praise or blame.

That the *Messiah* excels the *Pollio* is no great praise, if it be considered from what original the improvements are derived.

The *Verses on the unfortunate Lady* have drawn much attention by the illaudable singularity of treating suicide with

with respect; and they must be allowed to be written in some parts with vigorous animation, and in others with gentle tenderness; nor has Pope produced any poem in which the sense predominates more over the diction. But the tale is not skilfully told; it is not easy to discover the character of either the Lady or her Guardian. History relates that she was about to disparage herself by a marriage with an inferior; Pope praises her for the dignity of ambition, and yet condemns the unkle to detestation for his pride; though the ambitious love of a niece may be opposed by the interest, malice, or envy of an unkle, but never by his pride. On such an occasion a poet may be

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allowed

allowed to be obscure, but inconsistency never can be right.

The *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* was undertaken at the desire of Steele: in this the author is generally confessed to have miscarried, yet he has miscarried only as compared with Dryden; for he has far outgone other competitors. Dryden's plan is better chosen; history will always take stronger hold of the attention than fable: the passions excited by Dryden are the pleasures and pains of real life, the scene of Pope is laid in imaginary existence; Pope is read with calm acquiescence, Dryden with turbulent delight; Pope hangs upon the ear, and Dryden finds the paffes of the mind.

Both

Both the odes want the essential constituent of metrical compositions, the stated recurrence of settled numbers. It may be alleged, that Pindar is said by Horace to have written *numeris lege solutus*; but as no such lax performances have been transmitted to us, the meaning of that expression cannot be fixed; and perhaps the like return might properly be made to a modern Pindarist, as Mr. Cobb received from Bentley, who, when he found his criticisms upon a Greek Exercise, which Cobb had presented, refuted one after another by Pindar's authority, cried out at last, *Pindar was a bold fellow, but thou art an impudent one.*

If

If Pope's ode be particularly inspected, it will be found that the first stanza consists of sounds well chosen indeed, but only sounds.

The second consists of hyperbolical common-places, easily to be found, and perhaps without much difficulty to be as well expressed.

In the third, however, there are numbers, images, harmony, and vigour, not unworthy the antagonist of Dryden. Had all been like this—but every part cannot be the best.

The next stanzas place and detain us in the dark and dismal regions of mythology, where neither hope nor fear, neither joy nor sorrow, can be found: the poet however faithfully attends us; we
have

have all that can be performed by elegance of diction, or sweetness of versification; but what can form avail without better matter?

The last stanza recurs again to common places. The conclusion is too evidently modelled by that of Dryden; and it may be remarked that both end with the same fault, the comparison of each is literal on one side, and metaphorical on the other.

Poets do not always express their own thoughts; Pope, with all this labour in the praise of Musick, was ignorant of its principles, and insensible of its effects.

One of his greatest though of his earliest works is the *Essay on Criticism*, which,

which, if he had written nothing else, would have placed him among the first criticks and the first poets, as it exhibits every mode of excellence that can embellish or dignify didactick composition, selection of matter, novelty of arrangement, justness of precept, splendour of illustration, and propriety of digression. I know not whether it be pleasing to consider that he produced this piece at twenty, and never afterwards excelled it: he that delights himself with observing that such powers may be so soon attained, cannot but grieve to think that life was ever after at a stand.

To mention the particular beauties of the *Essay* would be unprofitably tedious; but I cannot forbear to observe, that

that the comparison of a student's progress in the sciences with the journey of a traveller in the Alps, is perhaps the best that English poetry can shew. A simile, to be perfect, must both illustrate and ennoble the subject; must shew it to the understanding in a clearer view, and display it to the fancy with greater dignity; but either of these qualities may be sufficient to recommend it. In didactick poetry, of which the great purpose is instruction, a simile may be praised which illustrates, though it does not ennoble; in heroicks, that may be admitted which ennobles, though it does not illustrate. That it may be complete, it is required to exhibit, independently of its reference, a pleasing image;

image; for a simile is said to be a short episode. To this antiquity was so attentive, that circumstances were sometimes added, which, having no parallels, served only to fill the imagination, and produced what Perrault ludicrously called *comparisons with a long tail*. In their families the greatest writers have sometimes failed; the ship-race, compared with the chariot-race, is neither illustrated nor aggrandised; land and water make all the difference: when Apollo, running after Daphne, is likened to a greyhound chasing a hare, there is nothing gained; the ideas of pursuit and flight are too plain to be made plainer, and a god and the daughter of a god are not represented much to their
advan-

advantage by a hare and dog. The simile of the Alps has no useless parts, yet affords a striking picture by itself; it makes the foregoing position better understood, and enables it to take faster hold on the attention; it assists the apprehension, and elevates the fancy.

Let me likewise dwell a little on the celebrated paragraph, in which it is directed that *the sound should seem an echo to the sense*; a precept which Pope is allowed to have observed beyond any other English poet.

This notion of representative metre, and the desire of discovering frequent adaptations of the sound to the sense, have produced, in my opinion, many wild conceits and imaginary beauties.

All

All that can furnish this representation are the sounds of the words considered singly, and the time in which they are pronounced. Every language has some words framed to exhibit the noises which they express, as *tbump, rattle, growl, hiss*. These however are but few, and the poet cannot make them more, nor can they be of any use but when sound is to be mentioned. The time of pronunciation was in the dactylick measures of the learned languages capable of considerable variety; but that variety could be accommodated only to motion or duration, and different degrees of motion were perhaps expressed by verses rapid or slow, with very little attention of the writer, when the image had full possession

sion

tion of his fancy; but our language having little flexibility, our verses can differ very little in their cadence. The fancied resemblances, I fear, arise sometimes merely from the ambiguity of words; there is supposed to be some relation between a *soft* line and a *soft* couch, or between *hard* syllables and *hard* fortune.

Motion, however, may be in some sort exemplified; and yet it may be suspected that even in such resemblances the mind often governs the ear, and the sounds are estimated by their meaning. One of the most successful attempts has been to describe the labour of Sisyphus:

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With

With many a weary step, and many a
groan,

Up a high hill he heaves a huge round
stone;

The huge round stone, resulting with
a bound,

Thunders impetuous down, and smoaks
along the ground.

Who does not perceive the stone to move
slowly upward, and roll violently back?
But set the same numbers to another sense;

While many a merry tale, and many
a song,

Chear'd the rough road, we wish'd the
rough road long,

The rough road then, returning in a round,
Mock'd our impatient steps, for all was
fairy ground.

We

We have now surely lost much of the delay, and much of the rapidity.

But to shew how little the greatest master of numbers can fix the principles of representative harmony, it will be sufficient to remark that the poet, who tells us, that

When Ajax strives—the words move slow.
Not so when swift Camilla scours the
 plain,
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims
 along the main ;

when he had enjoyed for about thirty years the praise of Camilla's lightness of foot, tried another experiment upon *sound and time*, and produced this memorable triplet ;

Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught
 to join
 The varying verse, the full resounding
 line,
 The long majestick march, and energy
 divine.

Here are the swiftness of the rapid race,
 and the march of slow-paced majesty,
 exhibited by the same poet in the same
 sequence of syllables, except that the
 exact prosodist will find the line of *swift-*
ness by one time longer than that of
tardiness.

Beauties of this kind are commonly
 fancied; and when real, are technical and
 nugatory, not to be rejected, and not to
 be solicited.

To

To the praises which have been accumulated on *The Rape of the Lock* by readers of every class, from the critick to the waiting-maid, it is difficult to make any addition. Of that which is universally allowed to be the most attractive of all ludicrous compositions, let it rather be now enquired from what sources the power of pleasing is derived.

Dr. Warburton, who excelled in critical perspicacity, has remarked that the preternatural agents are very happily adapted to the purposes of the poem. The heathen deities can no longer gain attention : we should have turned away from a contest between Venus and Diana ; the employment of allegorical persons always excites conviction of its own ab-

furdity; they may produce effects, but cannot conduct actions; when the phantom is put in motion it dissolves; thus *Discord* may raise a mutiny, but *Discord* cannot conduct a march, nor besiege a town. Pope brought into view a new race of Beings, with powers and passions proportionate to their operation. The sylphs and gnomes act at the toilet and the tea-table; what more terrifick and more powerful phantoms perform on the stormy ocean, or the field of battle, they give their proper help, and do their proper mischief.

Pope is said, by an objector, not to have been the inventor of this petty nation; a charge which might with more justice have been brought against the
author

author of the *Iliad*, who doubtless adopted the religious system of his country; for what is there but the names of his agents which Pope has not invented? Has he not assigned them characters and operations never heard of before? Has he not, at least, given them their first poetical existence? If this is not sufficient to denominate his work original, nothing original ever can be written.

In this work are exhibited, in a very high degree, the two most engaging powers of an author. New things are made familiar, and familiar things are made new. A race of aerial people, never heard of before, is presented to us in a manner so clear and easy, that the

reader seeks for no further information, but immediately mingles with his new acquaintance, adopts their interests, and attends their pursuits, loves a sylph, and detests a gnome.

That familiar things are made new, every paragraph will prove. The subject of the poem is an event below the common incidents of common life; nothing real is introduced that is not seen so often as to be no longer regarded, yet the whole detail of a female-day is here brought before us invested with so much art of decoration, that, though nothing is disguised, every thing is striking, and we feel all the appetite of curiosity for that from which we have a thousand times turned fastidiously away.

The

The purpose of the Poet is, as he tells us, to laugh at *the little unguarded follies of the female sex*. It is therefore without justice that Dennis charges the *Rape of the Lock* with the want of a moral, and for that reason sets it below the *Lutrin*, which exposes the pride and discord of the clergy. Perhaps neither Pope nor Boileau has made the world much better than he found it; but if they had both succeeded, it were easy to tell who would have deserved most from publick gratitude. The freaks, and humours, and spleen, and vanity of women, as they embroil families in discord, and fill houses with disquiet, do more to obstruct the happiness of life in a year than the ambition of the clergy in many

many centuries. It has been well observed, that the misery of man proceeds not from any single crush of overwhelming evil, but from small vexations continually repeated.

It is remarked by Dennis likewise, that the machinery is superfluous; that, by all the bustle of preternatural operation, the main event is neither hastened nor retarded. To this charge an efficacious answer is not easily made. The sylphs cannot be said to help or to oppose, and it must be allowed to imply some want of art, that their power has not been sufficiently intermingled with the action. Other parts may likewise be charged with want of connection; the game at *ombre* might be spared, but if
the

the Lady had lost her hair while she was intent upon her cards, it might have been inferred that those who are too fond of play will be in danger of neglecting more important interests. Those perhaps are faults; but what are such faults to so much excellence!

The Epistle of *Eloise to Abelard* is one of the most happy productions of human wit: the subject is so judiciously chosen, that it would be difficult, in turning over the annals of the world, to find another which so many circumstances concur to recommend. We regularly interest ourselves most in the fortune of those who most deserve our notice. Abelard and Eloise were conspicuous in their days for eminence of merit.

rit. The heart naturally loves truth. The adventures and misfortunes of this illustrious pair are known from undisputed history. Their fate does not leave the mind in hopeless dejection; for they both found quiet and consolation in retirement and piety. So new and so affecting is their story, that it supercedes invention, and imagination ranges at full liberty without straggling into scenes of fable.

The story, thus skilfully adopted, has been diligently improved. Pope has left nothing behind him, which seems more the effect of studious perseverance and laborious revival. Here is particularly observable the *curiosa felicitas*, a fruitful foil, and careful cultivation.

Here



Here is no crudeness of sense, nor asperity of language.

The sources from which sentiments, which have so much vigour and efficacy, have been drawn, are shewn to be the mystick writers by the learned author of the *Essay on the Life and Writings of Pope*; a book which teaches how the brow of Criticism may be smoothed, and how she may be enabled, with all her severity, to attract and to delight.

The train of my disquisition has now conducted me to that poetical wonder, the translation of the *Iliad*; a performance which no age or nation can pretend to equal. To the Greeks translation was almost unknown; it was totally
unknown

unknown to the inhabitants of Greece. They had no recourse to the Barbarians for poetical beauties, but sought for every thing in Homer, where, indeed, there is but little which they might not find.

The Italians have been very diligent translators; but I can hear of no version, unless perhaps Anguillara's Ovid may be excepted, which is read with eagerness. The *Iliad* of Salvini every reader may discover to be punctiliously exact; but it seems to be the work of a linguist skilfully pedantick, and his countrymen, the proper judges of its power to please, reject it with disgust.

Their predecessors the Romans have left some specimens of translation behind them,

them, and that employment must have had some credit in which Tully and Germanicus engaged; but unless we suppose, what is perhaps true, that the plays of Terence were versions of Menander, nothing translated seems ever to have risen to high reputation. The French, in the meridian hour of their learning, were very laudably industrious to enrich their own language with the learning of the ancients; but found themselves reduced, by whatever necessity, to turn the Greek and Roman poetry into prose. Whoever could read an author, could translate him. From such rivals little can be feared.

The chief help of Pope in this arduous undertaking was drawn from the
versions

versions of Dryden. Virgil had borrowed much of his imagery from Homer, and part of the debt was now paid by his translator. Pope searched the pages of Dryden for happy combinations of heroic diction; but it will not be denied that he added much to what he found. He cultivated our language with so much diligence and art, that he has left in his *Homer* a treasure of poetical elegancies to posterity. His version may be said to have tuned the English tongue; for since its appearance no writer, however deficient in other powers, has wanted melody. Such a series of lines so elaborately corrected, and so sweetly modulated, took possession of the publick ear, the vulgar was enamoured

moured of the poem, and the learned wondered at the translation.

But in the most general applause discordant voices will always be heard. It has been objected by some, who wish to be numbered among the sons of learning, that Pope's version of Homer is not Homeric; that it exhibits no resemblance of the original and characteristic manner of the Father of Poetry, as it wants his awful simplicity, his artless grandeur, his unaffected majesty. This cannot be totally denied; but it must be remembered that *necessitas quod cogit defendit*; that may be lawfully done which cannot be forborn. Time and place will always enforce regard. In estimating this translation, consideration

must be had of the nature of our language, the form of our metre, and, above all, of the change which two thousand years have made in the modes of life and the habits of thought. Virgil wrote in a language of the same general fabrick with that of Homer, in verses of the same measure, and in an age nearer to Homer's time by eighteen hundred years; yet he found, even then, the state of the world so much altered, and the demand for elegance so much increased, that mere nature would be endured no longer; and perhaps, in the multitude of borrowed passages, very few can be shewn which he has not embellished.

There

There is a time when nations emerging from barbarity, and falling into regular subordination, gain leisure to grow wise, and feel the shame of ignorance and the craving pain of unsatisfied curiosity. To this hunger of the mind plain sense is grateful; that which fills the void removes uneasiness, and to be free from pain for a while is pleasure; but repletion generates fastidiousness; a saturated intellect soon becomes luxurious, and knowledge finds no willing reception till it is recommended by artificial diction. Thus it will be found, as learning advances, that in all nations the first writers are simple, and that every age improves in elegance. One refinement always makes way for ano-

ther, and what was expedient to Virgil was necessary to Pope.

I suppose many readers of the English *Iliad*, when they have been touched with some unexpected beauty of the lighter kind, have tried to enjoy it in the original, where, alas! it was not to be found. Homer doubtless owes to his translator many *Ovidian* graces not exactly suitable to his character; but to have added can be no great crime, if nothing be taken away. Elegance is surely to be desired, if it be not gained at the expence of dignity. A hero would wish to be loved, as well as to be revered.

To a thousand cavils one answer is sufficient; the purpose of a writer is to be

be read, and the criticism which would destroy the power of pleasing must be blown aside. Pope wrote for his own age and his own nation : he knew that it was necessary to colour the images and point the sentiments of his author ; he therefore made him graceful, but lost him some of his sublimity.

The copious notes with which the version is accompanied, and by which it is recommended to many readers, though they were undoubtedly written to swell the volumes, ought not to pass without praise : commentaries which attract the reader by the pleasure of perusal have not often appeared ; the notes of others are read to clear difficulties,

ties, those of Pope to vary entertainment.

It has however been objected, with sufficient reason, that there is in the commentary too much of unseasonable levity and affected gaiety; that too many appeals are made to the Ladies, and the ease which is so carefully preserved is sometimes the ease of a trifler. Every art has its terms, and every kind of instruction its proper style; the gravity of common criticks may be tedious, but is less despicable than childish merriment.

Of the *Odyssy* nothing remains to be observed: the same general praise may be given to both translations, and a particular examination of either would require a large volume. The notes were

written

written by Broome, who endeavoured not unsuccessfully to imitate his master.

Of the *Dunciad* the hint is confessedly taken from Dryden's *Mac Fleckno*; but the plan is so enlarged and diversified as justly to claim the praise of an original, and affords perhaps the best specimen that has yet appeared of personal satire ludicrously pompous.

That the design was moral, whatever the author might tell either his readers or himself, I am not convinced. The first motive was the desire of revenging the contempt with which Theobald had treated his *Shakespeare*, and regaining the honour which he had lost, by crushing his opponent. Theobald was not of bulk enough to fill a poem, and

therefore it was necessary to find other enemies with other names, at whose expence he might divert the publick. In this design there was petulance and malignity enough; but I cannot think it very criminal. An author places himself uncalled before the tribunal of Criticism, and solicits fame at the hazard of disgrace. Dulness or deformity are not culpable in themselves, but may be very justly reproached when they pretend to the honour of wit or the influence of beauty. If bad writers were to pass without reprehension, what should restrain them? *impune diem consumpsit ingens Telephus*; and upon bad writers only will censure have much effect. The satire which brought Theobald and Moore

Moore into contempt, dropped impotent from Bentley, like the javelin of Priam thrown at Neoptolemus.

All truth is valuable, and satirical criticism may be considered as useful when it rectifies error and improves judgement; he that refines the publick taste is a publick benefactor.

The beauties of this poem are well known; its chief fault is the grossness of its images. Pope and Swift had an unnatural delight in ideas physically impure, such as every other tongue utters with unwillingness, and of which every ear shrinks from the mention.

But even this fault, offensive as it is, may be forgiven for the excellence of other passages; such as the formation and
dissolu-

dissolution of Moore, the account of the Traveller, the misfortune of the Florist, and the crowded thoughts and stately numbers which dignify the concluding paragraph.

The alterations which have been made in the *Dunciad*, not always for the better, require that it should be published, as in this edition, with all its variations.

The *Essay on Man* was a work of great labour and long consideration, but certainly not the happiest of Pope's performances. The subject is perhaps not very proper for poetry, and the poet was not sufficiently master of his subject; metaphysical morality was a new study, he was proud of his acquisitions, and,

supposing himself master of great secrets, was in haste to teach what he had not learned. Thus he tells us, in the first Epistle, that from the nature of the Supreme Being may be deduced an order of beings such as mankind, because Infinite Excellence can do only what is best. He finds out that *all the question is whether man be in a wrong place.* Surely if, according to the poet's Leibnitian reasoning, we may infer that man ought to be, only because he is, we may allow that his place is the right place, because he has it. Supreme Wisdom is not less infallible in disposing than in creating. But what is meant by *somewhere* and *place*, and *wrong place*, it had been

been

been vain to ask Pope, who probably had never asked himself.

Having exalted himself into the chair of wisdom, he tells us much that every man knows, and much that he does not know himself; that we see but little, and that the order of the universe is beyond our comprehension; an opinion not very uncommon; and that there is a chain of subordinate beings *from infinite to nothing*, of which himself and his readers are equally ignorant. But he gives us one comfort, which, without his help, he supposes unattainable, the position *that though we are fools, yet God is wise.*

This Essay affords an egregious instance of the predominance of genius,
the

the dazzling splendour of imagery, and the seductive powers of eloquence. Never were penury of knowledge and vulgarity of sentiment so happily disguised. The reader feels his mind full, though he learns nothing; and when he meets it in its new array, no longer knows the talk of his mother and his nurse. When these wonder-working sounds sink into sense, and the doctrine of the Essay disrobed of its ornaments, is left to the powers of its naked excellence, what shall we discover? That we are, in comparison with our Creator, very weak and ignorant; that we do not uphold the chain of existence, and that we could not make one another with more skill than we are made. We may
learn

learn yet more ; that the arts of human life were copied from the instinctive operations of other animals ; that if the world be made for man, it may be said that man was made for geese. To these profound principles of natural knowledge are added some moral instructions equally new ; that self-interest, well understood, will produce social concord ; that men are mutual gainers by mutual benefits ; that evil is sometimes balanced by good ; that human advantages are unstable and fallacious, of uncertain duration, and doubtful effects ; that our true honour is not to have a great part, but to act it well ; that virtue only is our own ; and that happiness is always in our power.

Surely

Surely a man of no very comprehensive search may venture to say that he has heard all this before ; but it was never till now recommended by such a blaze of embellishment, or such sweetness of melody. The vigorous contraction of some thoughts, the luxuriant amplification of others, the incidental illustrations, and sometimes the dignity, sometimes the softness of the verses, enchain philosophy, suspend criticism, and oppress judgement by overpowering pleasure.

This is true of many paragraphs ; yet if I had undertaken to exemplify Pope's felicity of composition before a rigid critick, I should not select the *Essay on Man* ; for it contains more lines unsuccessfully

cessfully laboured, more harshness of diction, more thoughts imperfectly expressed, more levity without elegance, and more heaviness without strength, than will easily be found in all his other works.

The *Characters of Men and Women* are the product of diligent speculation upon human life; much labour has been bestowed upon them, and Pope very seldom laboured in vain. That his excellence may be properly estimated, I recommend a comparison of his *Characters of Women* with Boileau's Satire; it will then be seen with how much more perspicacity female nature is investigated, and female excellence selected; and he surely is no mean writer to whom Boileau

shall be found inferior. The *Characters of Men*, however, are written with more, if not with deeper, thought, and exhibit many passages exquisitely beautiful. The *Gem and the Flower* will not easily be equalled. In the women's part are some defects; the character of *Atlossa* is not so neatly finished as that of *Clodio*; and some of the female characters may be found perhaps more frequently among men; what is said of *Philomede* was true of *Prior*.

In the Epistles to Lord Bathurst and Lord Burlington, Dr. Warburton has endeavoured to find a train of thought which was never in the writer's head, and, to support his hypothesis, has printed that first which was published

last. In one, the most valuable passage is perhaps the *Elogy on Good Sense*, and the other the *End of the Duke of Buckingham*.

The Epistle to Arbuthnot, now arbitrarily called the *Prologue to the Satires*, is a performance consisting, as it seems, of many fragments wrought into one design, which by this union of scattered beauties contains more striking paragraphs than could probably have been brought together into an occasional work. As there is no stronger motive to exertion than self-defence, no part has more elegance, spirit, or dignity, than the poet's vindication of his own character. The meanest passage is the satire upon *Sporus*.

Of the two poems which derived their names from the year, and which are called the *Epilogue to the Satires*, it was very justly remarked by Savage, that the second was in the whole more strongly conceived, and more equally supported, but that it had no single passages equal to the contention in the first for the dignity of Vice, and the celebration of the triumph of Corruption.

The Imitations of Horace seem to have been written as relaxations of his genius. This employment became his favourite by its facility; the plan was ready to his hand, and nothing was required but to accommodate as he could the sentiments of an old author to recent facts or familiar images; but what

is easy is seldom excellent; such imitations cannot give pleasure to common readers; the man of learning may be sometimes surpris'd and delighted by an unexpected parallel; but the comparison requires knowledge of the original, which will likewise often detect strained applications. Between Roman images and English manners there will be an irreconcilable dissimilitude, and the work will be generally uncouth and party-colour'd; neither original nor translated, neither ancient nor modern.

Pope had, in proportions very nicely adjusted to each other, all the qualities that constitute genius. He had *Invention*, by which new trains of events are formed, and new scenes of imagery displayed,

played, as in the *Rape of the Lock*; or extrinſick and adventitious embellishments and illustrations are connected with a known ſubject, as in the *Essay on Criticiſm*. He had *Imagination*, which ſtrongly impreſſes on the writer's mind, and enables him to convey to the reader the various forms of nature, incidents of life, and energies of paſſion, as in his *Eloifa*, *Windſor Foreſt*, and the *Ethick Epistles*. He had *Judgement*, which ſelects from life or nature what the preſent purpoſe requires, and by ſeparating the eſſence of things from its concomitants often makes the representation more powerful than the reality: and he had colours of language always before him, ready to decorate his matter with

every grace of elegant expression, as when he accommodates his diction to the wonderful multiplicity of Homer's sentiments and descriptions.

Poetical expression includes sound as well as meaning; *Musick*, says Dryden, *is inarticulate poetry*; among the excellencies of Pope, therefore, must be mentioned the melody of his metre. By perusing the works of Dryden, he discovered the most perfect fabrick of English verse, and habituated himself to that only which he found the best; in consequence of which restraint his poetry has been censured as too uniformly musical, and as glutting the ear with unvaried sweetness. I suspect this objection to be the cant of those who
judge

judge by principles rather than perception; and who would even themselves have less pleasure in his works, if he had tried to relieve attention by studied discords, or affected to break his lines and vary his pauses.

But though he was thus careful of his versification, he did not oppress his powers with superfluous rigour. He seems to have thought with Boileau, that the practice of writing might be refined till the difficulty should overbalance the advantage. The construction of his language is not always strictly grammatical; with those rhymes which prescription had conjoined he contented himself, without regard to Swift's remonstrances, though there was

no striking consonance; nor was he very careful to vary his terminations, or to refuse admission at a small distance to the same rhymes.

To Swift's edict for the exclusion of Alexandrines and Triplets he paid little regard; he admitted them, but, in the opinion of Fenton, too rarely; he uses them more liberally in his translation than his poems.

He has a few double rhymes; but always, I think, unsuccessfully, except once in the *Rape of the Lock*.

Expletives he very early ejected from his verses; but he now and then admits an epithet rather commodious than important. Each of the six first lines of the *Iliad* might lose two syllables with
 very

very little diminution of the meaning; and sometimes, after all his art and labour, one verse seems to be made for the sake of another.

I have been told that the couplet by which he declared his own ear to be most gratified was this :

Lo, where Mœotis sleeps, and hardly
flows
The freezing Tanais through a waste
of snows.

But the reason of this preference I cannot discover.

It is remarked by Watts, that there is scarcely a happy combination of words, or a phrase poetically elegant in the English language, which Pope has
not

not inserted into his version of Homer. How he obtained possession of so many beauties of speech, it were desirable to know. That he gleaned from authors, obscure as well as eminent, what he thought brilliant or useful, and preserved it all in a regular collection, is not unlikely. When, in his last years, Hall's Satires were shewn him, he wished that he had seen them sooner.

New sentiments and new images others may produce; but to attempt any further improvement of versification will be dangerous. Art and diligence have now done their best, and what shall be added will be the effort of tedious toil and needless curiosity.

After

After all this, it is surely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, Whether Pope was a poet? otherwise than by asking in return, If Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by a definition will only shew the narrowness of the definer, though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past; let us enquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry; let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed. Had he given the world only his version, the name of poet must have been allowed him:

him : if the writer of the *Iliad* were to class his successors, he would assign a very high place to his translator, without requiring any other evidence of Genius.





THE following Letter, of which the original is in the hands of Lord Hardwicke, was communicated to me by the kindness of Mr. Jodrell.

“ To Mr. BRIDGES, at the Bishop of
“ London’s at Fulham.

“ S I R,

“ The favour of your Letter, with your Remarks, can never be enough acknowledged; and the speed, with which you discharged so troublesome a task, doubles the obligation.

“ I must own you have pleased me very much by the commendations so ill bestowed

bestowed upon me; but, I assure you, much more by the frankness of your censure, which I ought to take the more kindly of the two, as it is more advantageous to a scribler to be improved in his judgement than to be soothed in his vanity. The greater part of those deviations from the Greek, which you have observed, I was led into by Chapman and Hobbes; who are (it seems) as much celebrated for their knowledge of the original, as they are decryed for the badness of their translations. Chapman pretends to have restored the genuine sense of the author, from the mistakes of all former explainers, in several hundred places: and the Cambridge editors of the large Homer, in Greek and Latin,

attri-

attributed so much to Hobbes, that they confess they have corrected the old Latin interpretation very often by his version. For my part, I generally took the author's meaning to be as you have explained it; yet their authority, joined to the knowledge of my own imperfectness in the language, over-ruled me. However, Sir, you may be confident I think you in the right, because you happen to be of my opinion: (for men (let them say what they will) never approve any other's sense, but as it squares with their own). But you have made me much more proud of, and positive in my judgement, since it is strengthened by yours. I think your criticisms, which regard the expression, very just, and

and shall make my profit of them: to give you some proof that I am in earnest, I will alter three verses on your bare objection, though I have Mr. Dryden's example for each of them. And this, I hope, you will account no small piece of obedience, from one, who values the authority of one true poet above that of twenty critics or commentators. But though I speak thus of commentators, I will continue to read carefully all I can procure, to make up, that way, for my own want of critical understanding in the original beauties of Homer. Though the greatest of them are certainly those of the Invention and Design, which are not at all confined to the language: for the distinguishing excellencies

cellencies of Homer are (by the consent of the best critics of all nations), first in the manners, (which include all the speeches, as being no other than the representations of each person's manners by his words :) and then in that rapture and fire, which carries you away with him, with that wonderful force, that no man who has a true poetical spirit is master of himself, while he reads him. Homer makes you interested and concerned before you are aware, all at once; whereas Virgil does it by soft degrees. This, I believe, is what a translator of Homer ought principally to imitate; and it is very hard for any translator to come up to it, because the chief reason why all transla-

tions fall short of their originals is, that the very constraint they are obliged to, renders them heavy and dispirited.

“ The great beauty of Homer’s language, as I take it, consists in that noble simplicity, which runs through all his works ; (and yet his diction, contrary to what one would imagine consistent with simplicity, is at the same time very copious.) I don’t know how I have run into this pedantry in a Letter, but I find I have said too much, as well as spoken too inconsiderately ; what farther thoughts I have upon this subject, I shall be glad to communicate to you (for my own improvement) when we meet ; which is a happiness I very earnestly desire, as I do likewise some opportunity

portunity of proving how much I think
myself obliged to your friendship, and
how truly I am,

Sir,

Your most faithful,

Humble servant,

A. POPE.





THE Criticism upon Pope's Epitaphs, which was printed in *The Visitor*, is placed here, being too minute and particular to be inserted in the Life.

EVERY Art is best taught by example. Nothing contributes more to the cultivation of propriety than remarks on the works of those who have most excelled. I shall therefore endeavour, at this *visit*, to entertain the young students in poetry, with an examination of Pope's Epitaphs.

To define an epitaph is useless; every one knows that it is an inscription on a tomb. An epitaph, therefore, implies no particular character of writing, but

may be compos'd in verse or prose. It is indeed commonly panegyric; because we are seldom distinguished with a stone but by our friends; but it has no rule to restrain or modify it, except this, that it ought not to be longer than common beholders may be expected to have leisure and patience to peruse.

I.

On CHARLES Earl of DORSET, in the Church of Wyrbyham in Sussex.

Dorset, the grace of courts, the Muse's pride,
 Patron of arts, and judge of nature, dy'd.
 The scourge of pride, tho' sanctify'd or great,
 Of fops in learning, and of knaves in state;
 Yet soft in nature, tho' severe his lay,
 His anger moral, and his wisdom gay.
 Blest satyr! who touch'd the mean so true,
 As show'd, Vice had his hate and pity too.
 Blest courtier! who could king and country
 please,
 Yet sacred kept his friendship, and his ease.

Blest peer ! his great forefathers every grace
 Reflecting, and reflected on his race ;
 Where other Buckhursts, other Dorsets shine,
 And patriots still, or poets, deck the line.

The first distich of this epitaph contains a kind of information which few would want, that the man, for whom the tomb was erected, *died*. There are indeed some qualities worthy of praise ascribed to the dead, but none that were likely to exempt him from the lot of man, or incline us much to wonder that he should die. What is meant by *judge of nature*, is not easy to say. Nature is not the object of human judgment ; for it is vain to judge where we cannot alter. If by nature is meant, what is commonly called *nature* by the criticks, a just representation of things really existing, and actions really performed, nature cannot be properly opposed

posed to *art*; nature being, in this sense, only the best effect of *art*.

The scourge of pride—

Of this couplet, the second line is not, what is intended, an illustration of the former. Pride, in the Great, is indeed well enough connected with knaves in state, though knaves is a word rather too ludicrous and light; but the mention of *sanctified* pride will not lead the thoughts to *fops in learning*, but rather to some species of tyranny or oppression, something more gloomy and more formidable than foppery.

Yet soft his nature—

This is a high compliment, but was not first bestowed on Dorset by Pope. The next verse is extremely beautiful.

Blest satyrist!—

In this distich is another line of which Pope was not the author. I do not

mean to blame these imitations with much harshness; in long performances they are scarcely to be avoided, and in shorter they may be indulged, because the train of the composition may naturally involve them, or the scantiness of the subject allow little choice. However, what is borrowed is not to be enjoyed as our own, and it is the business of critical justice to give every bird of the Muses his proper feather.

Blest courtier!—

Whether a courtier can be properly commended for keeping his *ease sacred*, may perhaps be disputable. To please king and country, without sacrificing friendship to any change of times, was a very uncommon instance of prudence or felicity, and deserved to be kept separate from so poor a commendation as care of his ease. I wish our poets would
attend

attend a little more accurately to the use of the word *sacred*, which surely should never be applied in a serious composition, but where some reference may be made to a higher Being, or where some duty is exacted or implied. A man may keep his friendship *sacred*, because promises of friendship are very awful ties; but methinks he cannot, but in a burlesque sense, be said to keep his ease *sacred*.

Blest peer!—

The blessing ascribed to the *peer* has no connection with his peerage: they might happen to any other man, whose ancestors were remembered, or whose posterity were likely to be regarded.

I know not whether this epitaph be worthy either of the writer, or of the man entombed.

II.

On Sir WILLIAM TRUMBUL, one of the principal Secretaries of State to King WILLIAM III. who, having resigned his place, died in his retirement at East-hamsted in Berkshire, 1716.

A pleasing form, a firm, yet cautious mind,
 Sincere, tho' prudent; constant, yet resign'd;
 Honour unchang'd, a principle profess'd,
 Fix'd to one side, but moderate to the rest:
 An honest courtier, yet a patriot too,
 Just to his prince, and to his country true.
 Fill'd with the sense of age, the fire of youth,
 A scorn of wrangling, yet a zeal for truth;
 A generous faith, from superstition free;
 A love to peace, and hate of tyranny;
 Such this man was; who now, from earth
 remov'd,
 At length enjoys that liberty he lov'd.

In this epitaph, as in many others, there appears, at the first view, a fault which

which I think scarcely any beauty can compensate. The name is omitted. The end of an epitaph is to convey some account of the dead; and to what purpose is any thing told of him whose name is concealed? An epitaph, and a history, of a nameless hero, are equally absurd, since the virtues and qualities so recounted in either, are scattered at the mercy of fortune to be appropriated by guess. The name, it is true, may be read upon the stone; but what obligation has it to the poet, whose verses wander over the earth, and leave their subject behind them, and who is forced, like an unskilful painter, to make his purpose known by adventitious help?

This epitaph is wholly without elevation, and contains nothing striking or particular; but the poet is not to be blamed for the defects of his subject.

He

He said perhaps the best that could be said. There are, however, some defects which were not made necessary by the character in which he was employed. There is no opposition between an *honest courtier* and a *patriot*; for an *honest courtier* cannot but be a *patriot*.

It was unfuitable to the nicety required in short compositions, to close his verse with the word *too*; every rhyme should be a word of emphasis, nor can this rule be safely neglected, except where the length of the poem makes slight inaccuracies excusable, or allows room for beauties sufficient to overpower the effects of petty faults.

At the beginning of the seventh line the word *filled* is weak and prosaic, having no particular adaptation to any of the words that follow it.

The

The thought in the last line is impertinent, having no connection with the foregoing character, nor with the condition of the man described. Had the epitaph been written on the poor conspirator * who died lately in prison, after a confinement of more than forty years, without any crime proved against him, the sentiment had been just and pathetic; but why should Trumbul be congratulated upon his liberty, who had never known restraint?

III.

*On the Hon. SIMON HARCOURT, only Son
of the Lord Chancellor HARCOURT, at
the Church of Stanton-Harcourt in Ox-
fordshire, 1720.*

To this sad shrine, whoe'er thou art, draw near,
Here lies the friend most lov'd, the son most dear:

* Bernarri.

Who ne'er knew joy, but friendship might divide,
Or gave his father grief but when he dy'd.

How vain is reason, eloquence how weak!
If Pope must tell what Harcourt cannot speak.
Oh, let thy once-lov'd friend inscribe thy stone,
And with a father's sorrows mix his own!

This epitaph is principally remarkable for the artful introduction of the name, which is inserted with a peculiar felicity, to which chance must concur with genius, which no man can hope to attain twice, and which cannot be copied but with servile imitation.

I cannot but wish that, of this inscription, the two last lines had been omitted, as they take away from the energy what they do not add to the sense.

IV.

On JAMES CRAGGS, *Esq; in Westminster-Abbey.*

JACOBVS CRAGGS,
REGI MAGNAE BRITANNIAE A SECRETIS
ET CONSILIIS SANCTIORIBVS,
PRINCIPIS PARITER AC POPULI AMOR ET
DELICIAE:

VIXIT TITVLIS ET INVIDIA MAJOR,
ANNOS HEV PAUCOS, XXXV.
OB. FEB. XVI. MDCCXX.

Statesman, yet friend to truth! of soul sincere,
In action faithful, and in honour clear!
Who broke no promise, serv'd no private end,
Who gain'd no title, and who lost no friend;
Ennobled by himself, by all approv'd,
Prais'd, wept, and honour'd, by the Muse he
lov'd.

The lines on Craggs were not originally intended for an epitaph; and therefore some faults are to be imputed to
the

the violence with which they are torn from the poem that first contained them. We may, however, observe some defects. There is a redundancy of words in the first couplet: it is superfluous to tell of him, who was *sincere, true, and faithful*, that he was *in honour clear*.

There seems to be an opposition intended in the fourth line, which is not very obvious: where is the wonder, that he who *gained no title*, should *lose no friend*?

It may be proper here to remark the absurdity of joining, in the same inscription, Latin and English, or verse and prose. If either language be preferable to the other, let that only be used; for no reason can be given why part of the information should be given in one tongue, and part in another, on a tomb, more than in any other place, on any other

other occasion; and to tell all that can be conveniently told in verse, and then to call in the help of prose, has always the appearance of a very artless expedient, or of an attempt unaccomplished. Such an epitaph resembles the conversation of a foreigner, who tells part of his meaning by words, and conveys part by signs.

V.

Intended for Mr. ROWE. In Westminster-Abbey.

Thy reliques, Rowe, to this fair urn we trust,
 And sacred, place by Dryden's awful dust:
 Beneath a rude and nameless stone he lies,
 To which thy tomb shall guide inquiring eyes.
 Peace to thy gentle shade, and endless rest!
 Blest in thy genius, in thy love too blest!
 One grateful woman to thy fame supplies
 What a whole thankless land to his denies.

Of this inscription the chief fault is, that it belongs less to Rowe, for whom it was written, than to Dryden, who was buried near him; and indeed gives very little information concerning either.

To wish, *Peace to thy shade*, is too mythological to be admitted into a christian temple: the ancient worship has infected almost all our other compositions, and might therefore be contented to spare our epitaphs. Let fiction, at least, cease with life, and let us be serious over the grave.

VI.

*On Mrs. CORBET, who died of a Cancer
in her Breast.*

Here rests a woman, good without pretence,
Blest with plain reason, and with sober sense:
No conquests she, but o'er herself desir'd;
No arts essay'd, but not to be admir'd.

Passion

Passion and pride were to her soul unknown,
 Convinc'd that Virtue only is our own.
 So unaffected, so compos'd a mind,
 So firm, yet soft, so strong, yet so refin'd,
 Heaven, as its purest gold, by tortures try'd,
 The faint sustain'd, but the woman dy'd.

I have always considered this as the most valuable of all Pope's epitaphs; the subject of it is a character not discriminated by any shining or eminent peculiarities; yet that which really makes, though not the splendor, the felicity of life, and that which every wise man will choose for his final and lasting companion in the languor of age, in the quiet of privacy, when he departs weary and disgusted from the ostentatious, the volatile, and the vain. Of such a character, which the dull overlook, and the gay despise, it was fit that the value should be made known, and the dignity

established. Domestic virtue, as it is exerted without great occasions, or conspicuous consequences, in an even unnoted tenor, required the genius of Pope to display it in such a manner as might attract regard, and enforce reverence. Who can forbear to lament that this amiable woman has no name in the verses?

If the particular lines of this inscription be examined, it will appear less faulty than the rest. There is scarce one line taken from common places, unless it be that in which *only Virtue* is said to be *our own*. I once heard a Lady of great beauty and elegance object to the fourth line, that it contained an unnatural and incredible panegyrick. Of this let the Ladies judge.

VII.

On the Monument of the Hon. ROBERT DIGBY, and of his Sister MARY, erected by their Father the Lord DIGBY, in the Church of Sherborne in Dorsetshire, 1727.

Go! fair example of untainted youth,
 Of modest wisdom, and pacifick truth:
 Compos'd in sufferings, and in joy sedate,
 Good without noise, without pretension great.
 Just of thy word, in every thought sincere,
 Who knew no wish but what the world might
 hear:

Of softest manners, unaffected mind,
 Lover of peace, and friend of human kind:
 Go, live! for Heaven's eternal year is thine,
 Go, and exalt thy moral to divine.

And thou, blest maid! attendant on his doom,
 Pensive hast follow'd to the silent tomb,
 Steer'd the same course to the same quiet shore,
 Not parted long, and now to part no more!

Go, then, where only blifs sincere is known !

Go, where to love and to enjoy are one !

Yet take thefe tears, Mortality's relief,
And till we fhare your joys, forgive our grief ;
Thefe little rites, a ftone, a verfe receive,
'Tis all a father, all a friend can give !

This epitaph contains of the brother only a general indifcriminate character, and of the fifter tells nothing but that ſhe died. The difficulty in writing epitaphs is to give a particular and appropriate praife. This, however, is not always to be performed, whatever be the diligence or ability of the writer ; for the greater part of mankind *have no character at all*, have little that diftinguiſhes them from others equally good or bad, and therefore nothing can be ſaid of them which may not be applied with equal propriety to a thouſand more. It is indeed no great panegyrick, that there

is

is inclosed in this tomb one who was born in one year, and died in another; yet many useful and amiable lives have been spent which yet leave little materials for any other memorial. These are however not the proper subjects of poetry; and whenever friendship, or any other motive, obliges a poet to write on such subjects, he must be forgiven if he sometimes wanders in generalities, and utters the same praises over different tombs.

The scantiness of human praises can scarcely be made more apparent, than by remarking how often Pope has, in the few epitaphs which he composed, found it necessary to borrow from himself. The fourteen epitaphs, which he has written, comprise about an hundred and forty lines, in which there are more repetitions than will easily be found in

all the rest of his works. In the eight lines which make the character of Digby, there is scarce any thought, or word, which may not be found in the other epitaphs.

The ninth line, which is far the strongest and most elegant, is borrowed. The conclusion is the same with that on Harcourt, but is here more elegant and better connected.

VIII.

On Sir GODFREY KNELLER. In Westminster-Abbey, 1723.

Kneller, by heaven, and not a master taught,
Whose art was nature, and whose pictures
thought;

Now for two ages, having snatch'd from fate
Whate'er was beauteous, or whate'er was great,
Lies crown'd with Princes honours, Poets lays,
Due to his merit, and brave thirst of praise,

Living,

Living, great Nature fear'd he might outvie
Her works ; and, dying, fears herself may die.

Of this epitaph the first couplet is good, the second not bad, the third is deformed with a broken metaphor, the word *crowned* not being applicable to the *honours* or the *lays*, and the fourth is not only borrowed, but of very harsh construction.

IX.

On General HENRY WITHERS. In Westminster-Abbey, 1729.

Here, Withers, rest! thou bravest, gentlest
mind,

Thy country's friend, but more of human kind,
O! born to arms! O! worth in youth approv'd!
O! soft humanity in age below'd!

For thee the hardy veteran drops a tear,

And the gay courtier feels the sigh sincere.

Withers, adieu! yet not with thee remove
Thy martial spirit, or thy social love!

Amidst

Amidst corruption, luxury, and rage,
Still leave some ancient virtues to our age:
Nor let us say (those English glories gone)
The last true Briton lies beneath this stone.

The epitaph on Withers affords another instance of common places, though somewhat diversified, by mingled qualities, and the peculiarity of a profession.

The second couplet is abrupt, general, and unpleasing; exclamation seldom succeeds in our language; and, I think, it may be observed that the particle O! used at the beginning of a sentence, always offends.

The third couplet is more happy; the value expressed for him, by different sorts of men, raises him to esteem; there is yet something of the common cant of superficial satirists, who suppose that the insincerity of a courtier destroys all his
sensa-

ensions, and that he is equally a dissembler to the living and the dead.

At the third couplet I should wish the epitaph to close, but that I should be unwilling to lose the two next lines, which yet are dearly bought if they cannot be retained without the four that follow them.

X.

*On Mr. ELIJAH FENTON. At Easthamsted
in Berkshire, 1730.*

This modest stone, what few vain marbles
can,
May truly say, Here lies an honest man :
A poet, blest beyond the poet's fate,
Whom Heaven kept sacred from the Proud and
Great :
Foe to loud praise, and friend to learned ease,
Content with science in the vale of peace.
Calmly he look'd on either life, and here
Saw nothing to regret, or there to fear ;

From

From Nature's temperate feast rose satisfy'd,
 Thank'd heaven that he had liv'd, and that he
 dy'd.

The first couplet of this epitaph is borrowed. The four next lines contain a species of praise peculiar, original, and just. Here, therefore, the inscription should have ended, the latter part containing nothing but what is common to every man who is wise and good. The character of Fenton was so amiable, that I cannot forbear to wish for some poet or biographer to display it more fully for the advantage of posterity. If he did not stand in the first rank of genius, he may claim a place in the second; and, whatever criticism may object to his writings, censure could find very little to blame in his life.

XI.

On Mr. GAY. In Westminster-Abbey,
1732.

Of manners gentle, of affections mild;
In wit, a man; simplicity, a child:
With native humour tempering virtuous rage,
Form'd to delight at once and lash the age:
Above temptation, in a low estate,
And uncorrupted, even among the Great:
A safe companion, and an easy friend,
Unblam'd through life, lamented in thy end.
These are thy honours! not that here thy bust
Is mix'd with heroes, or with kings thy dust;
But that the Worthy and the Good shall say,
Striking their pensive bosoms—Here lies GAY.

As Gay was the favourite of our author, this epitaph was probably written with an uncommon degree of attention; yet it is not more happily executed than the rest, for it does not al-

ways happen that the success of a poet is proportionate to his labour. The same observation may be extended to all works of imagination, which are often influenced by causes wholly out of the performer's power, by hints of which he perceives not the origin, by sudden elevations of mind which he cannot produce in himself, and which sometimes rise when he expects them least.

The two parts of the first line are only echoes of each other, *gentle manners* and *mild affections*, if they mean any thing, must mean the same.

That Gay was a *man in wit* is a very frigid commendation; to have the wit of a man is not much for a poet. The *wit of man*, and the *simplicity of a child*, make a poor and vulgar contrast, and raise no ideas of excellence, either intellectual or moral.

In the next couplet *rage* is less properly introduced after the mention of *mildness* and *gentleness*, which are made the constituents of his character; for a man so *mild* and *gentle* to *temper* his *rage* was not difficult.

The next line is unharmonious in its sound, and mean in its conception; the opposition is obvious, and the word *lass* used absolutely, and without any modification, is gross and improper.

To be *above temptation* in poverty, and *free from corruption among the Great*, is indeed such a peculiarity as deserved notice. But to be a *safe companion* is praise merely negative, arising not from the possession of virtue, but the absence of vice, and that one of the most odious.

As little can be added to his character, by asserting that he was *lamented in his end*.

end. Every man that dies is, at least by the writer of his epitaph, supposed to be lamented, and therefore this general lamentation does no honour to Gay.

The eight first lines have no grammar; the adjectives are without any substantive, and the epithets without a subject.

The thought in the last line, that Gay is buried in the bosoms of the *worthy* and the *good*, who are distinguished only to lengthen the line, is so dark that few understand it; and so harsh, when it is explained, that still fewer approve.

XII.

*Intended for Sir ISAAC NEWTON.
In Westminster-Abbey.*

ISAACUS NEWTONIUS :

Quem Immortalem

Testantur, *Tempus, Natura, Cælum :*

Mortalem

Hoc marmor fatetur.

Nature, and Nature's laws, lay hid in night,
GOD said, *Let Newton be!* And all was light.

Of this epitaph, short as it is, the faults seem not to be very few. Why part should be Latin and part English, it is not easy to discover. In the Latin, the opposition of *Immortalis* and *Mortalis*, is a mere sound, or a mere quibble; he is not *immortal* in any sense contrary to that in which he is *mortal*.

In the verses the thought is obvious, and the words *night* and *light* are too nearly allied.

XIII.

*On EDMUND Duke of BUCKINGHAM,
who died in the 19th Year of his Age,
1735.*

If modest youth, with cool reflection crown'd,
And every opening virtue blooming round,
Could save a parent's justest pride from fate,
Or add one patriot to a sinking state;
This weeping marble had not ask'd thy tear,
Or sadly told, how many hopes lie here!
The living virtue now had shone approv'd,
The senate heard him, and his country lov'd,
Yet softer honours, and less noisy fame,
Attend the shade of gentle Buckingham:
In whom a race, for courage fam'd and art,
Ends in the milder merit of the heart;
And chiefs or sages long to Britain given,
Pays the last tribute of a saint to heaven.

This

This epitaph Mr. Warburton prefers to the rest, but I know not for what reason. To *crown* with *reflection* is surely a mode of speech approaching to nonsense. *Opening virtues blooming round*, is something like tautology; the six following lines are poor and prosaick. *Art* is in another couplet used for *arts*, that a rhyme may be had to *heart*. The six last lines are the best, but not excellent.

The rest of his sepulchral performances hardly deserve the notice of criticism. The contemptible *Dialogue* between HE and SHE should have been suppressed for the author's sake.

In his last epitaph on himself, in which he attempts to be jocular upon one of the few things that make wise men serious, he confounds the living man with the dead :

Under this stone, or under this fill,
Or under this turf, &c.

When a man is once buried, the question, under what he is buried, is easily decided. He forgot that though he wrote the epitaph in a state of uncertainty, yet it could not be laid over him till his grave was made. Such is the folly of wit when it is ill employed.

The world has but little new ; even this seems to have been borrowed from the following tuneless lines :

Ludovici Areofsi humantur offa
Sub hoc Marmore, vel sub hac humo, feu
Sub quicquid voluit benignus hæres
Sive hærede benignior comes, feu
Opportunius incidens Viator ;
Nam feire haud potuit futura, fed nec
Tanti erat vacuum fibi cadaver

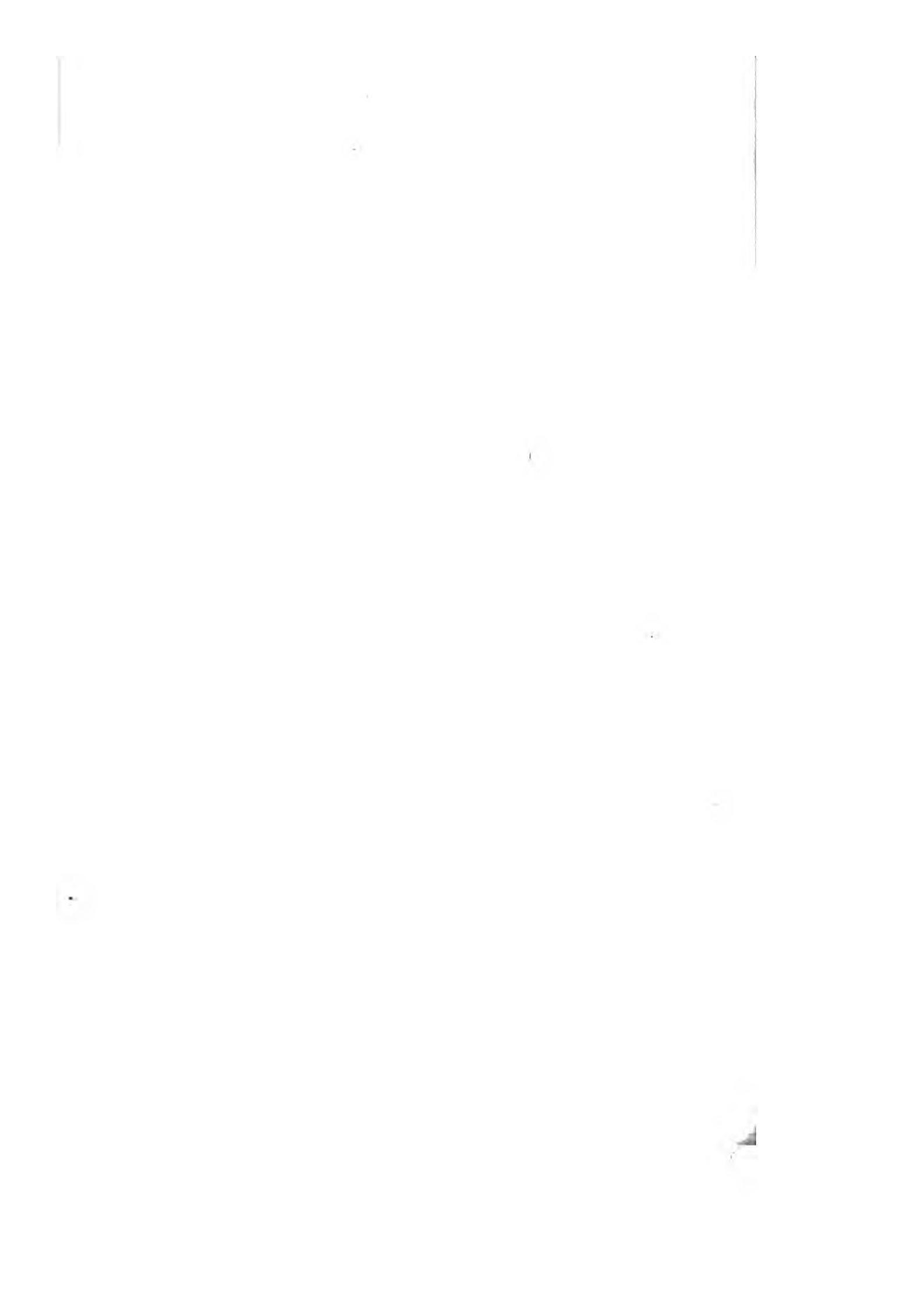
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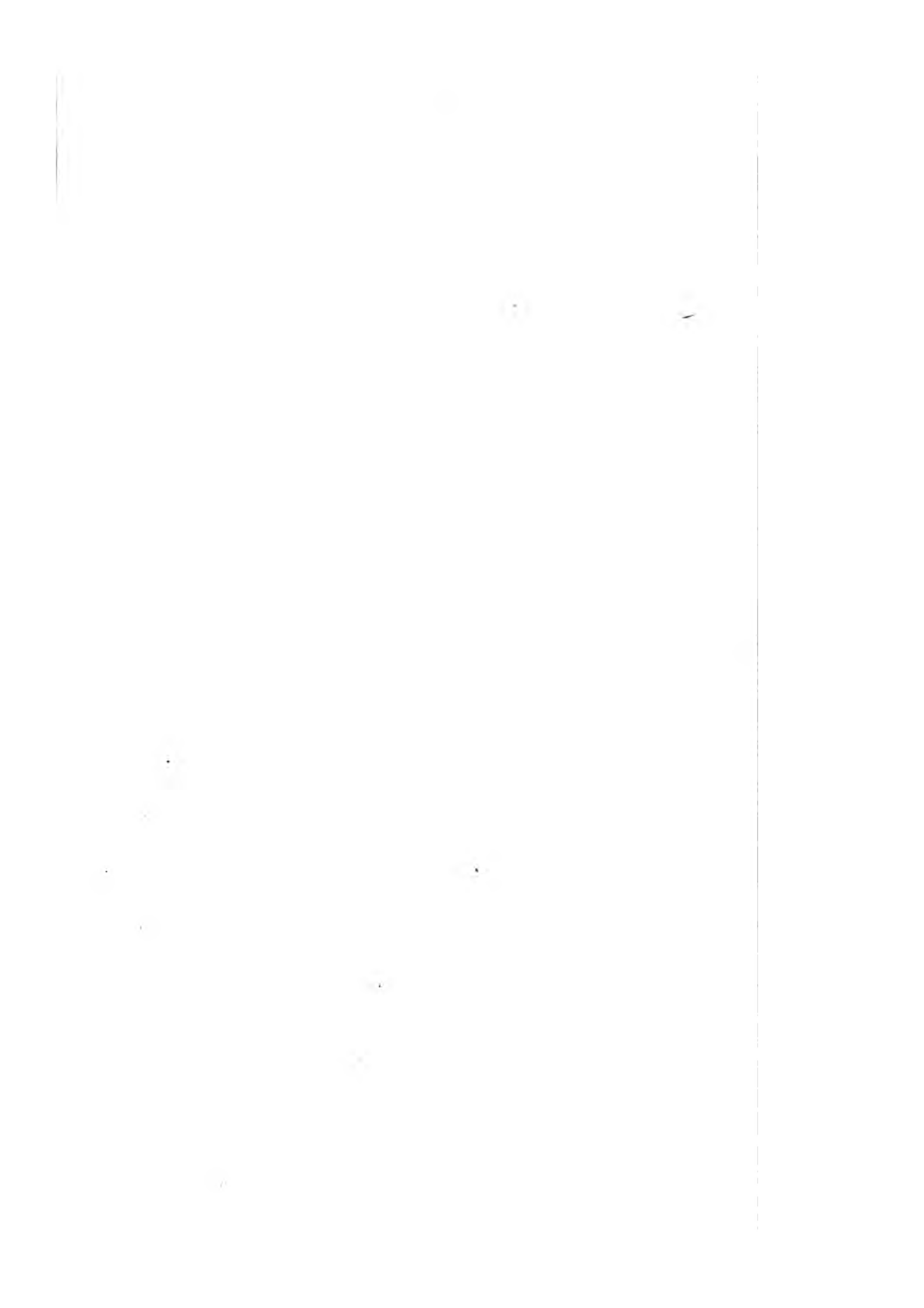
Ut utnam cuperet parare vivens,
Vivens ista tamen sibi paravit.
Quæ inscribi voluit suo sepulchro
Olim siquod haberet is sepulchrum.

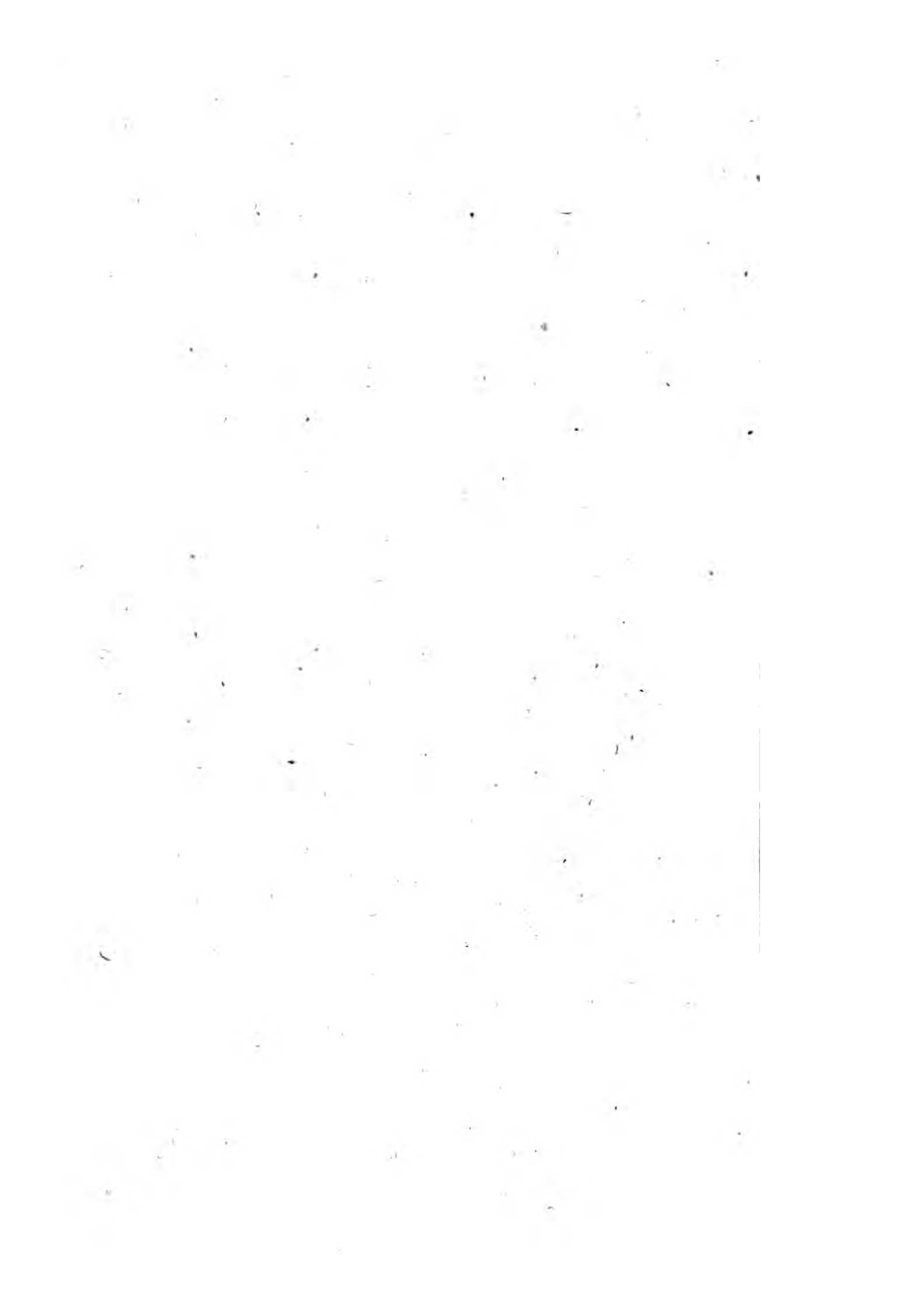
Surely even the writer of these lines did not venture to expect that he should have ever had such an illustrious imitator.

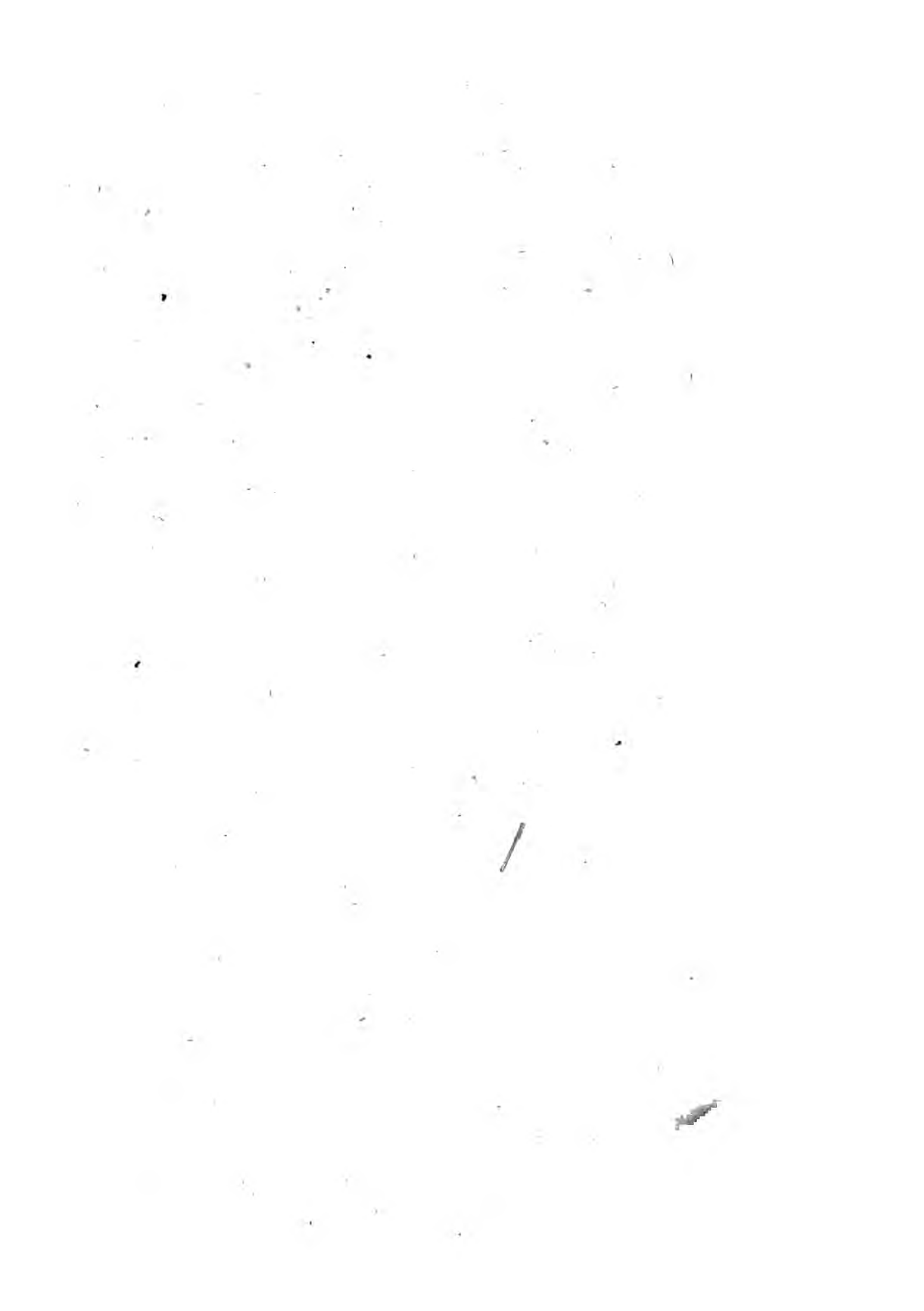


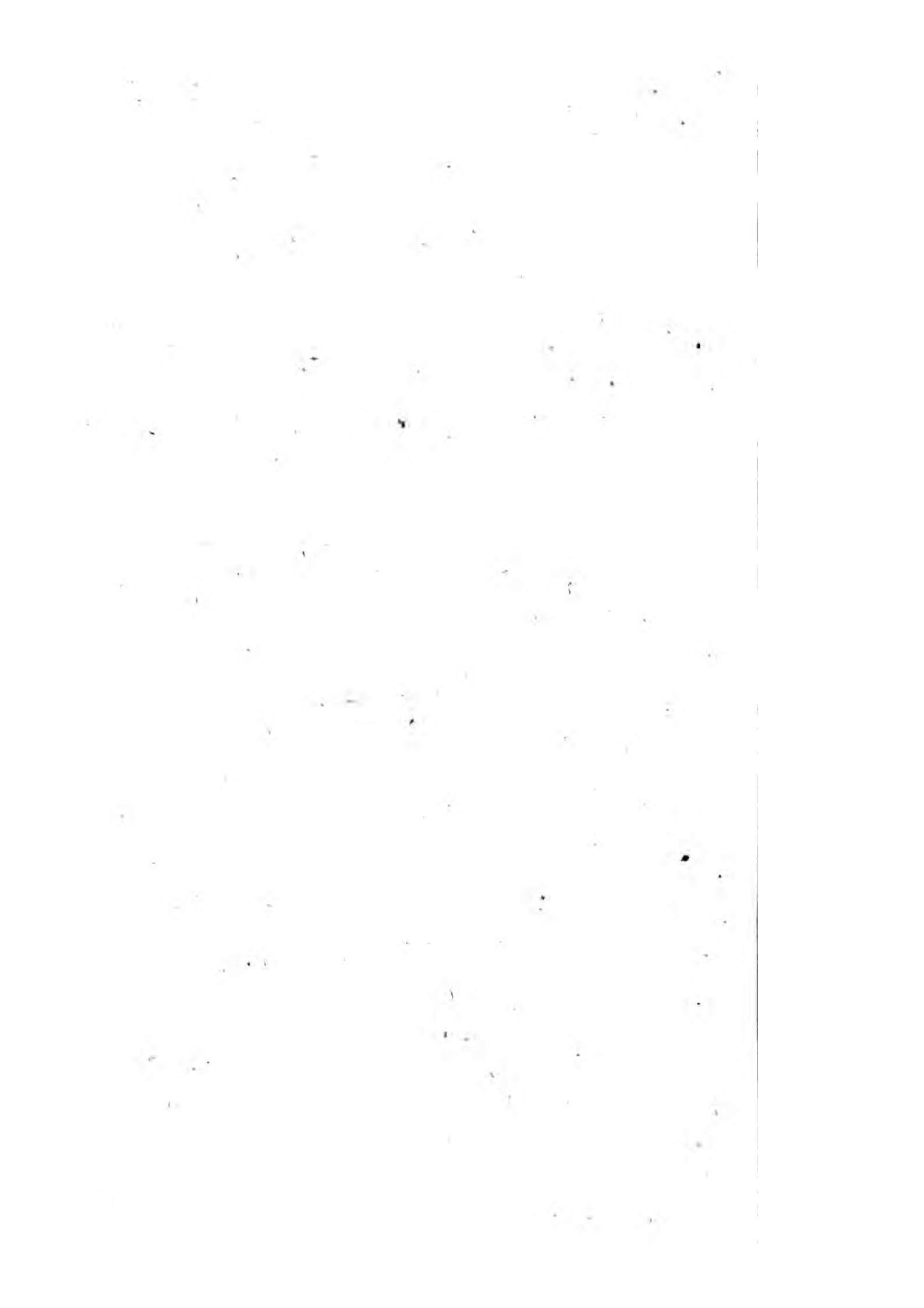












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